



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

School Review Unit

Review Report

Al Farabi Intermediate Boys School

Hamad - Northern Governorate

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date reviewed: 24-25-27 November 2008

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The School Review Unit

The School 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 drive up standards.

Review grades are awarded a four point scale:

- | | | |
|----|--------------|---|
| 1. | Outstanding | 1 |
| 2. | Good | 2 |
| 3. | Satisfactory | 3 |
| 4. | Inadequate | 4 |

Introduction

This Review was conducted over three days, by a team of six Reviewers led by a Lead Reviewer.

During the Review, Reviewers observed lessons and other activities, examined students' written and other 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: 820

Age range: 12-15 years

Characteristics of the school

Al Farabi Intermediate School for Boys is one of Muharraq's modern schools in the Northern governorate. It provides education for students aged 13 – 15 mainly from middle income backgrounds. The number on roll is 820. The number of administrative and teaching staff is 75. The principal and the assistant principal were appointed in the current academic year. The school does not have a full complement of administrative and support staff; it has one social guide and one learning difficulties specialist.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The school's overall effectiveness is inadequate. Students' overall progress is difficult to assess because attainment is not measured on entry to the school. Test results are analysed quantitatively and qualitatively but are not used to inform progress. Success rates decline in grades 1 and 3 where the results do not reflect the actual attainment of students in classes, especially in basic subjects. Students' active participation in classes also declines and there is a number of repeat students in most classes.

Students' personal development is inadequate. Few actively participate in class and extra-curricular activities, and the school's environment demonstrated students' lack of responsibility and awareness. Their safety is compromised by intimidation by other students and some teachers. The school tries, however, to tackle such practices and apply the appropriate measures.

Most teachers possess satisfactory subject knowledge. However in 25% of the lessons teaching was inadequate because students are not at the centre of the learning process and planning does not address the full range of ability in the class. Moreover, many lessons did not present enough challenge to deepen learning, or provide opportunities for creativity. Assessment was not used to diagnose and plan for individual students' needs.

Curriculum delivery and enhancement were inadequate. Most teachers focus on communicating knowledge during teaching, though a few address skill development. Enrichment and remedial programmes are few and not sufficiently planned to meet students' experiences and interests.

Support and guidance for students was generally inadequate. Provision for their development and welfare is not made either within the curriculum or the organisation of the school. Communication with parents is poor and students are not prepared for the next stage of learning. Furthermore, security and safety procedures are ineffective in dealing with the ongoing threat despite the school's endeavour to minimize such threats.

Leadership and management in the school are inadequate, in spite of the principal's awareness of the aspects requiring development. Monitoring mechanisms were ineffective and collaborative planning with middle management was inadequate.

Evaluation of teaching and learning did not receive the appropriate attention. These were compounded by a high turnover of the teaching staff and administrative staff.

Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The school encounters tremendous challenges that hinder its progress. The students' poor cultural backgrounds and achievements, the various behavioural problems and teachers' disparate performance in addition to lack of sufficient support for students are all factors. The weak self evaluation and strategic planning as well as the lack of performance measurement by the middle and top management make the school's capacity to improve and advance, inadequate.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4

Students' achievement in their academic work is inadequate

The school keeps some records of students' achievements during the year. Additionally mid and final year tests results for most subjects are analysed in a quantitatively and qualitatively. The academic levels of children with learning needs are monitored. However the school has no overall process for tracking the progress of students precisely.

Results in most subjects are not analysed sufficiently to measure achievement and to inform teachers of how to plan for future progress. This is particularly relevant to those students of low achievement.

Levels of attainment are inadequate. From school records students in grades 1 and 2 reach average levels of attainment. However, these results do not reflect the levels of knowledge and understanding in class. The results decrease in grade 3 in Arabic, English, math and science, which do not represent the actual level of students' understanding and proficiency. Records showed that attainment of students in grade 3 for 2007-2008 compared to other schools is 49.84%. Of note is the decline in standards in basic subjects particularly in reading and writing in English.

Students' progress compared to their previous achievements is satisfactory. Analysis of the records for the period 2005 – 2008 revealed satisfactory progress for grades 1 and 2 in 2005 – 2006, but a decline in 2007 – 2008. In lessons observed progress was satisfactory in 42.2% of classes and inadequate in 34.7%. However, in grade 3, progress in some basic subjects was less good particularly in math and English.

The school supports some students in the mid and final tests by providing remedial lessons and training, particularly in basic subjects. However, this support is limited. In lessons most teachers employed traditional, didactic methods. Most class activities and homework did not take individual differences into account. In particular more able students were not sufficiently challenged and therefore most failed to make the progress of which they were capable.

□ What progress do students make in their personal development?

Grade: 4

Students' progress in their personal development is inadequate

Students' personal development is inadequate. Attendance and punctuality is satisfactory. Attendance varies from 95% to 99%.; however, a large number of students are late on daily basis. There is some internal truancy but the school is monitoring such cases and taking appropriate measures.

Very few students showed enthusiasm to participate in lessons or extracurricular activities. Moreover, opportunities to learn from each other or take responsibility are limited though a few teachers do provide these informally.

Behaviour is inadequate and there were examples of inappropriate conduct. The majority of students showed little enthusiasm for their studies, and some of them fell asleep during lessons. Little care was shown for school property and vandalism and graffiti were common

Some students said that they felt unsafe at school due to verbal and physical punishment by some teachers in addition to threats and assaults by other students. This was confirmed by the fighting observed and the comments of the social worker and parents.

The school does not carry out risk assessment and has no evacuation procedures in place. Some serious safety risks were observed

The Quality of Provision

□ How effective is the teaching and learning?

Grade: 4

The effectiveness of teaching and learning is inadequate

The quality of the teaching and learning is inadequate. Teachers' subject knowledge and use of teaching and learning strategies is satisfactory. There was some evidence of lesson planning. Although some teachers used effective teaching and learning strategies, including the use of ICT, the majority of lessons were delivered in a teacher-led and didactic manner so did not involve students enough. Lessons were not differentiated to meet individual educational needs especially in English.

The provision of homework was adequate in all subjects. It complemented and extended the work in class but failed to meet the needs of all abilities. However students' response to homework was poor and this was not followed up by teachers

Time in lessons is not effectively used although generally, lessons begin and end on time. Activities were not sufficiently organised or suitable for the time assigned which resulted in noisy classes, early completion of work and bored students. Teachers do not ensure students' participation or motivate them adequately. In a few lessons some students responded to closed questions but in most there was little to challenge or engage them. Where there was a variety of activities these focussed on routine exercises that reinforced previous knowledge through repetition. These neither addressed individual needs nor encouraged analytical or critical thinking

The use of assessment to diagnose and meet student needs is inadequate. Teachers mark work regularly but not always accurately; some errors being marked as correct and true errors not corrected. Grades were rare as was guidance on how to improve. Assessment in class lacks variety and was restricted to verbal questions about comprehension without checking it precisely. This prevents the teacher from diagnosing the progress made by individuals.

□ How well is the curriculum enriched and presented to students?

Grade: 4

The quality of the curriculum enrichment and presentation is inadequate

The quality of the curriculum support and presentation programs is inadequate. The school undertakes some activities that develop citizenship, but this is rare. Students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities is inadequate because of teaching and learning approaches that do not encourage discussion.

Cross curricular links between subjects is inadequate; where they exist it is unplanned.

Extracurricular activities to develop students' experiences and interests are insufficient. Impact on the personal and academic development of students was ineffective because activities were not integrated with the educational process or coherent. Overall participation by students was low.

The school environment is not used effectively to support and enrich the curriculum. Classrooms lack educational material and examples of students' work to support learning.

The planning of the curriculum to provide students with basic skills is inadequate. The students' proficiency in the basic skills in the lower grades was under-developed since most lessons end without evaluating achievement or progress. Strategies used did not address the basic requirements of students and provide them with the required skills for the following stage of education. For example the majority of students did not acquire ICT skills because of the theoretical nature of the teaching.

□ How well are students supported and guided?

Grade: 4

Students are supported and guided inadequately

The degree to which students are guided and supported is inadequate. The school has, in the past, inducted new students for the beginning of the academic year satisfactorily. However no induction was carried out this year. During assembly some guidance was given regarding acceptable behaviour.

The school evaluates and determines the personal and educational needs of students in a satisfactory manner. At the beginning of the school year students who need additional assistance are identified; this includes provision of breakfast, winter aid, stationary and glasses. Support with special educational needs is determined by the special education specialist, the social worker and the gifted and talented students' committee. Nevertheless, programs are not effectively implemented.

The school's support of students who face problems varies, but generally provision is inadequate. Some students trust the social guide. However threats from other students and physical punishment by some teachers, and the ineffectiveness of action has led to brothers or older students becoming involved inappropriately despite the school's efforts to address the issues

The degree to which parents are kept well informed of their sons' progress is inadequate. The school uses the telephone and text messages to communicate with parents but does not keep them fully informed regarding progress. There are no meetings with parents outside of school hours, and meetings in school are limited to open day activities. The school attributed the lack of communications to the weak response of parents.

Provision for a healthy and safe environment is inadequate. The health and safety committee carries out risk assessment of the school's facilities but there is little evidence that any issues are addressed. Unclosed manholes, piles of rocks all around the schools, broken windows and exposed electric cable behind the wooden classes were examples of safety hazards.

The school prepares students inadequately for the following stage of education. Students of Grade 3 intermediate visit secondary schools. Programs are not embedded.

Leadership and Management

- **How effective are leadership and management in promoting good achievement and personal development and in bringing about improvement in the school?**

Grade: 4

The effectiveness of the school's leadership and management is inadequate

Leadership and management in the school are inadequate. The school vision does not focus directly on achievement and is not shared with all students and teachers. Furthermore the vision is not reflected in the school's performance.

The school has a strategic plan but involvement with the plan is limited. It lacks rigour. For example; the absence of performance indicators prevents evaluation of the outcomes of each activity. Moreover, the plan is not based on self-evaluation and does not have clearly identified priorities.

The school keeps records of training courses attended by teachers. Development workshops are available for teachers but, other than a teacher questionnaire, the impact of these on individual practice is inadequately determined. Again, through lack of self-evaluation the school cannot identify training needs and plan their delivery.

The school possesses limited resources, and uses them in a satisfactory manner. Classrooms and other facilities are used appropriately to meet the need of the curriculum. The school utilises the facilities for ICT and the learning resource centre but they are under-used. Similarly more extensive use could be made of the science laboratory.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve, the school should:

- Set up a rigorous and systematic process for self-evaluation which will identify the priorities for school improvement, with particular reference to academic achievement and personal development.
- Develop teaching methodology to:
 - Address the needs of all students.
 - Ensure the acquisition of basic skills.
 - Involve students more fully in taking responsibility for their own learning.
 - Include greater opportunities for analytical thinking, problem-solving and investigation work.
- Use rigorous assessment which diagnoses individual student needs and tracks progress.
- Develop awareness, responsibility and patriotism among students by promoting respect for others and property, encouraging good behaviour, protecting students from threats, and encouraging participation in school life.
- Prioritise health and safety and take swift action to address problems.

Overall judgment

Aspect	Grade
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate
Students' academic achievement	4: Inadequate
Students' progress in their personal development	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4: Inadequate
The quality of the curriculum	4: Inadequate
The quality of guidance and support for students	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	4: Inadequate