



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

School Review Unit

Review Report

West Riffa Secondary Girls School

West Riffa - Southern Governorate

Kingdom of Bahrain

Date reviewed: 2 – 4 March 2009

Contents

The School Review Unit	3
Introduction	4
Characteristics of the school.....	4
Overall effectiveness	5
The school’s capacity to improve	6
The school’s main strengths and areas for development	7
What the school needs to do to improve	8
Overall judgement	9

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 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 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: Girls

Number of students: 1430

Age range: 15 -18 years

Characteristics of the school

West Riffa Secondary Girls School is located in the Southern Governorate. It was established in 1975. A modern administrative and academic building sits alongside the school's old buildings, and has extensive grounds. The school principal took up her position two years ago, and the two assistant principals were appointed at the beginning of the present year. Most senior teachers are new. The school currently applies the unified track system. It is one of the first schools to apply for involvement in HM King Hamad's future schools project. The school has some staffing difficulties and also has experienced problems with communication, including poor internet connection. The number of students is 1430. Students are distributed between 45 classes. The students enjoy relative economic and social stability, but there are a small percentage of students who are from low income families or have difficult personal circumstances. The school has 150 teachers.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

West Riffa Secondary Girls School is satisfactory overall. Parents and students are satisfied with the quality of education it provides.

Students' achievement is satisfactory. Students' success rates in most subjects are high but this does not reflect the actual level of attainment and knowledge observed in lessons. Students generally make satisfactory progress in core subjects as do those from lower abilities and those with special educational needs. These students are also provided with additional support and special lessons. However, students are not achieving standards that they are capable of or that reflect their abilities due to inadequate provision in lessons and lack of planning for students different abilities.

The students' personal development is satisfactory. Some students come late to morning assembly and to lessons. Some students behave well, act responsibly and have a good awareness of others inside the classrooms, however behaviour outside the classroom, is only satisfactory. The school tries hard to reinforce the need for good behaviour. However it is not effective enough and, as a result, students' self-confidence and their abilities to take on responsibility suffer. Students' participation in school life and lessons is variable. Students say they feel safe in school, but some of them expressed concerns about bullying by other students. Opportunities to develop students' analytical thinking skills are insufficient.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some teachers have good subject knowledge. This was particularly evident in good and outstanding lessons observed, by their enthusiastic teaching and the varied use of teaching strategies. Nevertheless, the majority of teaching strategies used in most of the lessons observed were very traditional; teacher rather than student-centred and based on repetition and recall of facts. Students were passive and were not challenged enough and this affected their participation and learning in lessons. Different assessment methods are used but the results are not used effectively to meet students' different needs. Homework assignments are too few and do not cater for individual abilities.

The quality of the curriculum, its presentation and enrichment is satisfactory. The school offers a lot of extra-curricular activities that develop students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities, however, not enough is done to make students committed to observing school rules and to promote their individual talents. The school environment is enriched with students' work to help motivate learning and classrooms are clean. Students' standards in IT and Arabic are better than in other core subjects, this is particularly so for students of

Grade 10. Links between curriculum subjects are limited, and only evident in the promotion of life skills. This limitation has had a negative impact on students' acquisition of basic skills. The quality of support and guidance is satisfactory. The school inducts new students well. In addition, the school assesses the students' personal and educational needs and provides them with support and guidance through support classes, which has led to these students' showing an improvement in their achievement in some subjects. There are some efforts to follow up health and safety issues. The school informs the parents of the progress their daughters are making but currently, this is insufficient.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school's vision and strategic plan focus on improvements and developments needed, but the school has failed to achieve its overall objectives. The school has evaluated its performance effectively and the results were used to make changes to some school practices. The school's management team is working hard to inspire administrative and teaching staff to improve students' achievement and personal development, however, the impact of this is yet to be seen across the whole school and all members of staff.

Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The school's capacity to improve and develop is satisfactory. The strategic plan the school has put in place has helped achieve some improvements in the students' achievement and their personal development. Results of the comprehensive self-assessment, conducted by the quality committee, have underpinned this. However the present difficult staffing situation, including the new middle management team, the shortage of some support staff and the poor performance of some teachers has hindered the management's efforts in improving the school's performance. Other barriers to school improvement include the size of the school site and the large number of students on roll and their diverse backgrounds. The school is looking to prepare a new strategic plan to address these challenges and continue to improve achievement and personal development.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- High results in Ministry exams.
- Induction programmes.
- Transition programmes.
- Extracurricular activities.
- Meeting students' personal needs.

Areas for development

- Planning for differentiation.
- Higher order thinking skills.
- Use of assessment.
- Strategic planning.
- Collaborative learning.
- Cross curriculum links.
- Behaviour.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Improve teaching strategies by:
 - Developing higher order thinking skills.
 - Developing cooperative learning.
 - Ensuring that planning and self evaluation are effective and meet students' needs.
 - Developing cross-curricular links
 - Sharing good practices between teachers.

- Ensure lesson planning takes into account students' individual differences.

- Use self-evaluation to build up a new strategic plan to help move the school forward.

- Ensure appropriate support from the social councillor and supervisor in the school to reduce incidents of poor behaviour.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade
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	3: Satisfactory
The quality of guidance and support for students	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	3: Satisfactory