



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Boori Primary Girls School
Boori Village – Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 3 - 5 October 2011

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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 national authority, attached to the Cabinet and set up under Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008, amended by the Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. 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 three days, by a team of ten 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		Boori Primary Girls School												
School's type		Government												
Year of establishment		1997												
Age range of students		6-12												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary			Middle					High				
		13			-					-				
Number of students		Boys			Girls			356			Total		356	
Students' social background		Majority of the students belong to moderate family income, and a unified sociability background.												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	3	2	2	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Town /Village		Boori Village												
Governorate		Northern												
Number of administrative staff		12												
Number of teaching staff		35												
Curriculum		Ministry of Education curriculum												
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic												
Principal's tenure		One year												
External assessment and examination		QAAET National Examinations												
Accreditation (if applicable)		-												
Number of students in the following categories		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties			
		172			8			11			29			
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointing a new principal in 2010-11 Appointing a senior mathematics teacher for current academic year 2011-12 												

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	3	-	-	3
Students' personal development	2	-	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3	-	-	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	2	-	-	2
The quality of support and guidance for students	2	-	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	2	-	-	2

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 performance is satisfactory. Its overall performance was good in the previous review of March 2009. The change in performance is attributed to the satisfactory academic achievement of students and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes. Overall, the students' achievement levels are satisfactory due to the varying effectiveness of the teaching methods. Work provided for students does not consider their individual differences enough and this slows students' acquisition of basic skills, especially in English for both cycles. Teaching is satisfactory due to the impact of professional competency-raising programmes on teachers' performance and the outcomes of the feedback they receive from the frequent class visits made by the school management. Other school aspects are good due to the effective practices that are used.

- How strong is the school's capacity to improve?**

Grade: 2 Good

The school has an ambitious strategic plan that is based on an accurate self-assessment of the school's situation in most aspects of its work. The impact of the plan on performance is clearly seen in many areas, especially personal development and in promoting a culture of development among the school community. Despite the challenges facing the school, especially around teachers' performance in lessons and the impact on learning processes, action is being taken to bring improvement. The awareness of the school's leadership of the aspects of strength and those needing development, its joint strategy in decision-making and its encouragement of working with a good team-spirit is enabling the school to improve.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students' achievement is too varied; some students do not progress as well as they should, even though attainment is high. First cycle students attain high pass rates in school examinations, which correspond to their levels of performance in lessons, especially in English and science for the first and second primary grades. Students' achievement levels are best in good lessons due to effective teaching methods, activities and the written work provided. However, achievement is not this good in other parts of the school. Pass rates are lower and vary considerably in the second cycle. This is attributed to the varied effectiveness of the teaching methods and the quality of the work and materials presented to students. Students master the basic skills in Arabic and mathematics well, especially in the second cycle. Students' scientific skills are satisfactory, but their proficiency in reading and writing in English were poor for both cycles due to the limited support provided.

Over the past three years, students' progress is broadly satisfactory in most subjects. In good lessons, the majority of students make progress that corresponds to their levels of ability due to the variety of strategies and activities used. However, their progress in other lessons and in written work in particular is satisfactory because performance is inconsistent.

The students' progress varies too much according to their abilities. Most students with learning difficulties make good progress compared to their abilities because of the support and guidance they are provided with in their special programmes. In addition, outstanding and talented students make progress that is commensurate with their abilities. This is helped by their participation in extra-curricular and external activities and competitions such as 'Nusaibah for Cultural Distinction'. However, low achieving students do not make progress that corresponds to their abilities due to the shortage of remedial programmes.

Students of the third and sixth grades attained above the national average in the national examinations for the years from 2009 to 2011 for most subjects.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

Most students come to school and attend lessons punctually. This is attributed to students' awareness and the school's strategies, which clearly contribute to improving attendance.

Students effectively participate in school life by taking part in various extra-curricular activities, such as the 'students' council' and the 'flowers team'. They also participate in various school committees such as order and cleanliness', school broadcasts and 'little nurse', which help students' enjoyment of the school and the development of their self-confidence and leadership abilities. Good lessons give students several opportunities to express their opinions and take leading roles, such as in 'the young teacher' and 'the group leader' cooperative activities. However, where teachers limit students' participation by using lecturing then the development of students' personal skills during lessons is diminished.

Students feel safe. Relationships among students and with their teachers are based on mutual respect inside and outside of classes. Most students look after the school well and have good personal awareness.

The majority of students showed clear understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture. Students are given various opportunities form values and principles by participating in national events and making visits to local sights such as 'Bahrain's Fort' and 'Ein Adhari'. In addition, many classroom corners are enriched with heritage-related artefacts.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The quality of teaching varies but on balance it is satisfactory. The teachers' subject knowledge of their study material is good. This is reflected in many lessons. Good lessons have effective class management and use various teaching strategies that focus on students' learning as the core of the educational process. Such strategies included learning using electronic games in an Arabic lesson for fourth grade and using smart boards, which contributed to increasing students' enthusiasm and participation in these lessons. Additionally, students were given questions and activities that catered for their individual differences and challenged their abilities, such as phrase and language fluency in some lessons in the first cycle. This enabled students to acquire the skills, concepts and knowledge to an adequate level. However, the performance in the other lessons was not at the same level. Teaching strategies often use dialogue and discussion for most of the lesson period, during which time the teacher is the centre of the process, and students have secondary roles in answering questions and doing the same writing activities. Students' higher level

thinking skills and their abilities are challenged only in very limited ways, despite the recommendation in the previous review for these aspects to be considered.

Class and time management are poor in some classes. Some end without assessment or covering the planned objectives. Cooperative learning strategies are used in most lessons. However, their effectiveness is varied due to some poor levels of planning in terms of tasks, clarity and role distribution.

Students are given homework in most lessons by second cycle teachers who coordinate the quantity of homework given. However, most homework set does not take into consideration the students' levels except in mathematics in the second cycle. Most teachers mark homework and provide limited feedback.

Assessment methods are used to determine students' levels and to prepare activities that meet their various needs. However, these are not used effectively enough when considering lesson content that might be appropriate to students' levels of prior achievement.

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

Grade: 2 Good

Curriculum implementation and enrichment is good. The curriculum provision is only satisfactory in terms of the use and content in textbooks and their impact on expanding students' intellectual knowledge and experiences. Adequate links are made between subjects in most lessons and they are good in the first cycle and in mathematics in the fifth grade. The curriculum is reviewed by analysing the textbooks content and taking account of parents' opinions of over how it might be enhanced, such as in mathematics and science. Weekly lessons provide demonstrations to help a better understanding of these subjects. These aspects of curriculum implementation are good ways of making adjustments which suit students' changing needs.

Citizenship is promoted among students through lessons, writing activities and participation in national events such as the National Day. This develops a sense of belonging among students. Students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities is good. This is achieved through using various activities and taking part in school committees, such as the students' council, and theatre and play committee. Students' awareness is raised through plays performed during the morning assembly.

Participation in local and external competitions, such as the timetable for third grade, and the creative writing committee in Arabic have a good impact on building up students' experiences. Guidance boards and art paintings in addition to well maintained and

resourced classroom environments make it the curriculum enjoyable, interesting and helpful to learning.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 2 Good

New students and their parents are made to feel welcome and student settle in quickly. The school has various programmes and organises class visits for third grade students to prepare them for the next stage in their education, although orientation for sixth grade students is limited to receiving good advice in class. Students' personal needs are well met by identifying those who need help and providing support. Special programmes exist for those with learning difficulties and for outstanding students and through extra-curricular activities. Weekly lessons using Braille are arranged for a blind student. These aspects reflect the school's progress in providing good guidance, although meeting the needs of low achievers is not as effective as it might be, due to variations in the quality of support provided in classes.

Students can meet with the social adviser and administrative supervisor when they wish and receive individual and group guidance and counselling programmes during the morning assembly and on holidays. This is done in cooperation with institutes of the local community such as health centres. Parents are regularly contacted and receive weekly publications for both cycles. Parents are appreciative of the school.

The school is safe, due to the health and safety committee's efforts in assessing and correcting potential dangers. The committee organises courses on healthy diets and first aid, which raise students' awareness.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 2 Good

The school has a shared vision which has been effectively realized in several respects. The three-year strategic plan is recent and has been developed after accurately assessing the school situation based on the recommendations of the previous review of March 2009. An action plan with a unified mechanism for improvement is now in place for all departments. The plan's procedural objectives are ambitious and include clear performance indicators, based on QAAET standards. Parents' views are considered and used.

Impact is visible in several aspects, such as students' personal development and the trust established between the administrative and teaching staff. The senior leadership has made considerable effort in achieving this through promoting cooperative working practices and positive relationships. Transparency in making decisions in addition to using financial support to encourage teachers has also helped. Furthermore, delegation of authority has been effective in filling staff shortages, mainly in senior teachers' posts and a learning resources centre specialist. This has resulted in increasing teachers' motivation to develop and improve.

The school worked on raising teachers' performance through frequent class visits to meet their needs and in giving them the opportunity to take part in professional development programmes, such as the workshop on linking between subjects for the second cycle. However, the impact of these programmes on performance in other cycles is not yet at the same level, so the effectiveness of teaching and learning is only satisfactory.

Financial and educational resources are used effectively, especially in enriching the curriculum. The school communicates with students and parents and asks their opinions through educational meetings, the parents' council and student groups. These have influenced the scheduling of examinations and the way the school gathers views about its performance. The school responds to some of their suggestions when it issues a weekly publication. Many links with the local community have been established. Collaborative events such as the World Health Day festival held in cooperation with nearby health centres and with Al-Amal Hospital have been successful. These contribute to broadening students' experiences. The school has not joined the central school improvement programme yet.

The school's main strengths

- Strategic planning is based on a comprehensive, accurate self-assessment of the aspects of school work according to the recommendations of the previous review
- Students' good achievement and proficiency in basic skills in Arabic and mathematics
- Students' personal development is good because of the safe atmosphere the school provides, and the good programmes and extra-curricular activities
- The personal support provided for most students, especially students with special needs
- Leadership which has inspired and motivated the administrative and teaching staff to improve and make up lost ground
- Leadership which responds to the opinions of students and their parents, in addition to developing students' experiences through their participation in the local community.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- make use of positive practices to raise students' achievement and develop teaching and learning strategies more, so as to:
 - improve students' acquisition of basic skills in English for both cycles
 - plan to meet the needs of different student groups in lessons and homework
 - use cooperative learning strategies to a greater and more effective extent
 - use assessment more effectively to diagnose and meet students' academic achievement needs

- monitor and evaluate the impact of class visits and professional competency-raising programmes in raising achievement and improving the educational provision.