



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Al Diraz Intermediate Boys School
Al Diraz - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 5-7 April 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 seven 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: Boys

Number of students: 858

Age range: 13-15 years

Characteristics of the school

Al Diraz Intermediate Boys School is one of the Northern Governorate schools and was founded in 1977. The age range in the school is from 13 to 15 years, and there are 858 students. Students are distributed across 28 classes: nine classes for each of the first and second levels and 10 for the third level. Most students come from middle-income families. The school categorises 140 of its students as outstanding, 16 as talented and 10 as having special educational needs. The number of administrative and teaching staff is 80. The Principal is in his third year at the school. The school has vacancies for senior teachers of Arabic, practical subject teachers, social advisors, talented and special education specialists and support technicians. It is also short of facilities such as a sports hall, storerooms and meeting rooms. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future Project.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The overall effectiveness of Al Diraz Intermediate Boys School is inadequate. The students and their parents are satisfied with what the school delivers.

Students' academic achievement is inadequate. Students achieve varied pass rates and poor proficiency levels in most core subjects; this was clear in their levels of attainment in most lessons and written work. Their proficiency in basic skills, especially in Arabic, English and Mathematics, is noticeably weak. Students' levels are declining in most subjects and are at their lowest in the intermediate level, even for some outstanding students. Students make limited progress, and their written work does not indicate any clear progress in their performance. The school provides some weekly remedial lessons for lower-achieving students and special activities for talented and outstanding ones; however, the lack of consideration of individual differences in lessons and homework and the rareness of challenging opportunities limits students' ability to make progress in line with their abilities.

Students' personal development is inadequate. Most students attend school regularly, and the school takes appropriate measures to deal with absence and lateness. Some students contribute to school life and some of them take on leadership roles. The ineffective teaching methods in some lessons limit students' ability to express themselves, contribute in the classroom and gain self-confidence. Students are given few opportunities to work together and develop their analytical thinking skills in most lessons. Most students feel safe at school and respect each other and their teachers but a few students show some behaviour that lacks awareness, such as skipping classes and tampering with school property. The remedial programmes to eliminate such behaviour are insufficient, which allows such behaviour to occur from time to time.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is inadequate. Most teachers know the study materials well, and some use effective teaching strategies such as cooperative learning. Most observed lessons, however, were instructional in style; few effective strategies were used, which limited students' ability to acquire basic skills and develop their higher thinking skills and reduced their enthusiasm to participate. Although some lessons were managed effectively, time management was weak in many. Assessment is largely based on verbal questioning related to measuring lower thinking skills. Little consideration is given to students' individual differences when giving homework. Teachers give insufficient feedback to students to put them on the right track for improvement.

The effectiveness of curriculum enrichment and delivery is inadequate. The school promotes students' sense of citizenship and their understanding of their rights and duties by having students participate in indoor and outdoor activities and events. Most teachers rely on presenting the content of textbooks in most lessons, in an instructional style. Students' work is not celebrated enough in most classrooms and school buildings. The school does not have enough educational and guidance resources that stimulate learning. A large number of students have poor proficiency in basic skills such as reading and writing in Arabic and English and in Mathematics skills.

The effectiveness of guidance and support programmes is inadequate. The school inducts new students adequately before they join the school. The school gives an induction to students for their move to the secondary level but students' low proficiency in basic skills leaves them academically unready for this level. Students' personal needs are met appropriately, by giving financial aid and health care, for example. Their educational needs in the classroom are not adequately met, however; teaching and assessment methods seldom consider students' individual differences. The special lessons and activities provided outside the classroom for lower-achieving students and outstanding or talented students are not sufficient to raise their achievement. The school's efforts to limit poor conduct are insufficient. The school contacts parents through many channels but parents indicated that these activities were not well organised. Although the school makes efforts to provide a safe and healthy environment, students had not been trained in evacuation procedures during the current school semester.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate. The school has a vision but it is not translated effectively into most school practices and some staff are not familiar with its content. The school has a strategic plan that lacks accurate performance indicators and regular monitoring and assessment mechanisms, which limits its role in improvement. A self-evaluation committee evaluates some aspects of the school's work but the evaluation and follow-up mechanisms are not standardised across departments, which reduces the effectiveness of this work. Senior school managers maintain a good relationship with other staff. The school provides a set of professional development programmes, but these programmes have had insufficient effect on improving teachers' performance in most lessons. The school seeks, and responds to, the opinions of some students and their parents according to its capacities.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The school's capacity to improve is inadequate. In spite of the school's leaders being aware of its strengths and areas for development and their efforts to make changes and use strategic planning, the school has insufficient methods for evaluation, monitoring and measuring of its performance and what it provides. The school has made insufficient improvements during the past three years to overcome the significant challenges it faces. High among these challenges are students' low academic achievement, their poor motivation for learning and the presence of many conduct problems. The school is incapable of bringing about major improvements without external support.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Induction programmes
- Students' regular attendance at school
- Good relationship between school leaders and other staff
- Students' respect for each other and their teachers.

Areas for development

- Self-evaluation
- Strategic planning
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Challenging students' abilities
- Higher thinking skills
- Considering individual differences
- Cooperative learning
- Basic skills in Arabic, English and Mathematics
- Supporting special groups of students in lessons and homework
- Using evaluation to meet educational needs
- Raising students' awareness
- Enriching the school and classroom environment.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Draw on external support to improve the school's overall performance
- Develop strong self-evaluation mechanisms and use their findings to improve the overall performance of the school
- Include accurate and measurable performance indicators in the strategic plan, together with clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
- Use effective guidance programmes to raise students' awareness about the importance of looking after school property and good behaviour, and to encourage them to contribute effectively to school life
- Develop teaching and learning strategies to include:
 - Developing basic skills in core subjects, especially in English, Arabic and mathematics
 - Considering individual differences in lessons and homework
 - Giving students more opportunities to work together and learn from each other
 - Challenging students' abilities
 - Developing higher thinking skills
 - Using assessment to diagnose and meet students' educational needs.
- Support lower-achieving, talented and outstanding students inside and outside lessons
- Enrich the school and classroom environment and use educational resources more effectively to create a motivating environment for learning
- Address the shortages in human and physical resources.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
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 delivery	4: Inadequate
The quality of guidance and support for students	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	4: Inadequate