



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**East Riffa Primary Girls School  
East Riffa - Southern Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 3 - 5 January 2012**

## Table of Contents

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<b>The Schools Review Unit .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>2</b>
Characteristics of the school .....	2
<b>Table of review judgements awarded .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Review judgements .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Overall effectiveness .....	5
Students' achievement.....	6
The quality of provision .....	7
Leadership, management and governance .....	10
<b>The school's main strengths.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Recommendations.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## The Schools Review Unit

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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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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 nine 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

<b>School's name</b>		East Riffa Primary Girls School											
<b>School's type</b>		Government											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1984											
<b>Age range of students</b>		6-12 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>			
		1-6				-				-			
<b>Number of Students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	-	<b>Girls</b>	966				<b>Total</b>	966			
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most students belong to middle-level income families											
<b>Classes per grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Classes</b>	5	4	5	5	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Town /Village</b>		East Riffa											
<b>Governorate</b>		Southern											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		20											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		62											
<b>Curriculum</b>		Ministry of Education											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		Arabic											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		One year											
<b>External assessment and examination</b>		National Examinations, QAAET											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		-											
<b>Number of students in the following categories according to the School's classification</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>			<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>			<b>Physical Disabilities</b>			<b>Learning Difficulties</b>		
		30			54			8			30		

<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Instability in students number (an increase of 80 students over different intervals this year without a corresponding increase in accommodation)</li><li>• 16 novice teachers who do not have an educational qualification</li><li>• The availability of two senior class teachers.</li></ul>
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## Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	2	-	-	2
Students' personal development	2	-	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2	-	-	2
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

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### Overall effectiveness

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

#### Grade: 2 Good

The overall effectiveness of East Riffa Primary Girls School is good. It has received 'good' in all areas, while its effectiveness in the previous review in March 2009 was satisfactory. This improvement can be attributed to the impact of the school's vision on its performance, its strategic planning based on accurate self-assessment and the effectiveness of the teaching and learning and support provided to students. Most students achieve well and make progress at rates that are above those expected in all subjects. They show good discipline, self-confidence and effectively participate in school life. The school's efforts enrich the curriculum through extra-curricular activities and the effective use of its environment and available resources. Students' perceptions of their experiences are positive, thus gaining good satisfaction ratings from students and their parents.

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

#### Grade: 2 Good

The school's capacity to improve and develop changed from satisfactory in the previous review to good in the current one. This is attributed to the well organised work carried out by the management and leadership team. Joint planning and decision-making, with accurate self-assessment has informed a comprehensive, flexible strategic plan with specific objectives and accurate performance indicators. The plan is regularly assessed and monitored, especially with regard to developing teaching and learning. This is important due to the number of novice teachers and lack of senior teachers of main subjects, such as Arabic, English and science. The school has implemented several improvement projects to meet the training needs of the teaching and administrative staff, through training and communicating with other schools to exchange expertise and internal development programmes.

## Students' achievement

### □ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

#### Grade: 2 Good

The students achieve high pass rates in most of the school examinations. These are commensurate with proficiency rates in the first and second cycles, except for the third and fifth grades where the rates are more varied in all main subjects.

The high pass rates reflect students' good performance in most lessons and in their written work, which is attributed to the effective teaching that gives students appropriate opportunities to learn and which consider their different educational needs in class activities and homework.

Most students acquire listening, speaking and reading skills in Arabic and English, and applied skills in science and IT to good levels in both cycles. Additionally, students of the first cycle acquire the skills of addition in mathematics due to the various and effective teaching and learning strategies that are used. However, their acquisition of writing skills in Arabic and English and multiplication skills in mathematics for both cycles varies too much, especially for the fourth grade students.

Students have achieved significantly well in school examinations over the past three years. This is especially so in Arabic and mathematics, and in their written work in Arabic, due to the nature of the class activities and homework which consistently take into consideration students' different abilities.

Students with learning difficulties make good progress in the special education programme. Progress is commensurate with their abilities in reading and writing. Effective support is provided to secure this good progress. Low achieving students achieve progress that is commensurate with their abilities in lessons because of the variety of remedial programmes and the consideration of differentiation in the activities they are offered throughout the intensive remedial lessons. Furthermore, most outstanding students also make good progress that is commensurate with their abilities, due to lessons and extra-curricular activities which challenge their abilities and the effective enrichment programmes they are offered.

Third grade students have achieved levels that are slightly below the national average in Arabic and mathematics over the past three years. On the other hand, sixth grade students achieve levels slightly above the national average in all main subjects in 2009-10. Their levels



were within the average in Arabic and science in 2011 and slightly below the national average in mathematics and English.

### **□ How good is the students' personal development?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Students attend on time and enthusiastically participate in lessons, events and local and external activities. In lessons they are keen to take part through their interactions, conversations and by taking leading roles in class discussion groups.

Most students enjoy school life and contribute to it well. This is evident through student committees such as the cleanliness committee, which has an effective role in directing students to contribute to keeping the school building clean. In addition, students participate through the Students' Council in many activities, programmes and projects such as the health and safety project and the Globe programme. These activities increase their motivation toward learning and their gaining of practical experience, self-confidence and the taking of responsibility in leading roles.

Most students are well behaved, show good relations and proper respect to all in classes and around school. This contributes to making everyone feel comfortable in a social, healthy and safe atmosphere.

The majority of students demonstrate good understanding not only of Islamic values and culture, but also of Bahrain's heritage. The school gives good attention to this area through the morning broadcast and special touches such as school corners made of palm leaves, which are related to Bahrain's heritage and culture. Moreover, the students celebrate events, festivals and national occasions, organised by the school, such as the 'Chords play for the love of Bahrain' celebration.

### **The quality of provision**

#### **□ How effective are teaching and learning?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Most of the teachers have mastery of their subject knowledge. This is reflected in their ability to explain the study material. They have confidence and show enthusiasm in delivering

information using effective simple techniques. They sequence the flow of ideas well, which encourages most students to participate in lessons through discussion and conversation. Additionally, most teachers use strategies such as cooperative learning and learning through play. They use different teaching aids, such as data projectors, educational cards and smart boards effectively, which has an impact on increasing students' interests, attracts them to lessons and enables them to contribute to achieving the lesson's objectives.

Most Teachers manage their lessons in an organised manner so that students are given opportunities to work together using cooperative learning strategies, especially in the first cycle. This has good impact on increasing students' exchanges of experiences. In satisfactory lessons, teachers give students opportunities for discussion and conversation in which a group of students takes part, but where the teacher remains at the core of the process. Thus students' acquisition of new skills and experiences tend to be limited. In addition, lessons in the first cycle challenge students' abilities and develop their higher level thinking skills, through questions that involve interpretation, deduction and sorting. However, challenging the abilities of students in the second cycle is not at a similarly demanding level.

The teachers use an effective range of assessment methods in most lessons in both cycles, such as formative evaluation snap-shots, written and verbal activities, and correction using puzzles in order to diagnose students' performance and meet their educational needs. This has a positive impact on the progress and achievement of able students. However, assessment in some satisfactory lessons, which made up one third of the classes visited, generally relied on verbal assessment, which limited the achievement of some objectives of lessons, particularly in English and Arabic in the second cycle.

Different student groups are given appropriate homework that includes written activities, exercises from the study books and activity booklets, and specially prepared activities by the teachers. The homework is regularly marked and students are given feedback, which contributed to better progress and skills gained in the first cycle rather than the second.

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

From the curriculum, most students develop the required basic skills for their next educational stage. Their mental abilities in reading and speaking in Arabic is good in the first cycle. The 'Learning Packs' and 'Educational Games' projects and booklets that enhance the curriculum contribute to teaching students skills such as seeing logical links between subjects.

The school provides various extra-curricular activities such as the morning broadcast competition, and sports competitions. Furthermore, school committees such as for 'Environment Protection', the 'Theatre' and the 'Globe', and external competitions including music talents, the Holy Quran and Prophet Mohammad Teachings, encourage most students to perform and rehearse activities to apply knowledge and various gained skills

Special attention is given to students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities through the morning broadcast and national events such as 'Bahrain First' and celebrating the 'National Day'. Students' committees such as the 'Belonging and Citizenship' and field visits to Al-Areen Wild Park, have a positive impact on raising their awareness of the importance of respecting their surroundings. The school environment is used to enrich the curriculum through school display corners, teaching aids and cultural boards. These help to celebrate students' work inside and outside classes. In addition to providing a reading corner in the school courtyard which stimulated most of the students intellectual activities, enriched their information, knowledge and encouraged their self-study activities.

### **□ How well are students guided and supported?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

A diversified induction programme, which includes cartoon characters, competitions and gifts, welcomes students. Students are familiarised with the school's facilities through parents' meetings about the curriculum and are introduced to the teaching staff. Sixth grade students have lectures and visits to intermediate schools and third graders are inducted into the next educational stage.

Students' personal needs are identified and met by using the data from students' questionnaires. The findings of diagnostic tests are used to prepare remedial programmes for students with learning difficulties, such as the 'Learning Bag' programme and the 'Research Enrichment Project' for outstanding students. Intensive lessons for low achieving students positively contribute to meeting their educational needs.

Students are supported to solve their problems, through the behaviour values committee, which studies cases and then suggests suitable programmes, such as religious lectures that focus on instilling values and conducts class visits. Counselling and remedial sessions are used and contact is made with parents regarding their daughters' problems which positively impacted on the students' behaviour. The school regularly contacts and meets with parents to inform them of their daughters' academic progress through multi-channels such as: the

open day, office hours, semester reports, which contributed to their continuous knowledge of their daughters academic progress

The school gives good attention to assessing areas related to health and safety by giving lectures, preparing leaflets, implementing the cleanliness week and training its members on evacuation. The school maintains the facilities well to ensure a safe and secure environment.

## **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 formed a strategic planning committee which rephrased the school vision and prepared an effective and flexible strategic plan that focuses on improving the school's work through determining priorities of school work, which impacted well on all of the educational aspects and practices. The plan is based on an accurate self-assessment where questionnaires were used to collect opinions related to the educational process and which were subsequently analysed. It also includes the most important aspects of school-life such as the school environment, students' achievement, teaching and learning, and leadership and management.

Motivation and encouragement are seen as important practices with all school members. These are promoted through several means, including awarding appreciation certificates and encouraging friendly dealings to establish a positive social atmosphere that enables the staff to work as one team. The school focuses on identifying teachers' professional needs and meeting them through their participation in internal and external training workshops. Some of the school's teachers had the opportunity to present some workshops themselves, especially ones related to the development of teaching and learning strategies, such as cooperative learning, differentiation and lesson planning. The school also makes use of the competent qualified staff to raise professional competency of novice teachers. However, there is too much variance in the impact of these programmes on teachers' performance in some lessons.

The school facilities are effectively utilised, especially the learning resources centre and the science laboratory, which reinforces the effective provision of the curriculum in an interesting and practical manner.

The school uses various means of contacting parents as it believes in the importance of considering their views. It responds to some, such as the implementation of teaching methods in science and mathematics. Requests for explanatory notes for the new curriculum and the participation of one of the mothers in giving a lecture for class teachers about the best ways to improve the teacher-student rapport were all accepted. The school cooperates with the local community in several areas, as in the case of cooperation with a nearby mosque to teach students about prayers and Islamic values.

The school committees such as the school board, parents' council and technical committee have many opinions and roles that have contributed to the development of the educational processes. Checking and evaluating the implementation of plans that contributed to improving the school's overall performance in line with the recommendations in the previous review are prime examples.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- Strategic planning based on an accurate self-assessment of most of the school aspects, which includes objectives that focus on improvement priorities
- Students' distinguished behaviour, represented in punctuality and good relations among them, which are characterised by harmony and awareness inside and outside of class
- Students' sense of responsibility and taking leading roles in committees and school activities, which contribute to stimulating their minds and encouraging them to practise self-learning activities, in addition to the personal and educational support most students are offered to meet their needs.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, the school should:**

- spread the school's good teaching and learning practices and use these to raise students' achievement, particularly in addressing the following areas:
  - students' acquisition of writing skills in Arabic and English, and multiplication skills in mathematics for both cycles
  - making better use of assessment techniques and their findings in Arabic and English lessons in the second cycle
  - challenging students' abilities in the second cycle, especially fourth grade students.
- address the shortage in human and physical resources namely senior teachers of Arabic, English, mathematics and science, and providing the school with additional facilities that can accommodate the increase in student numbers.