



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**East Riffa Secondary Boys School
East Riffa – Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 15 – 17 March 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 student

Introduction

Scope of the Review

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 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: 1,445

Age range: 16 – 18 years

Characteristics of the school

East Riffa Secondary Boys School, founded in 1977, is one of the Central Governorate schools. The age range in the school is from 16 to 18 years, and there are 1,445 students. Most students come from limited-income families. Students are distributed across 33 classes: 10 in the first level, 11 in the second, and 12 in the third. The school categorises 507 students as gifted and talented, 76 as outstanding and two as having learning difficulties; there are also two students with a physical disability. The Principal is in his second year at the school. There are 162 administrative and teaching staff. The school has vacancies for teachers of science and commercial subjects, and for administrative posts such as an information resources technician and accounting specialist. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project, and an e-classroom is under construction.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The overall effectiveness of East Riffa Secondary Boys School is inadequate. Students and their parents are broadly satisfied with the school.

Students' academic achievement is inadequate. Students achieve high success rates in ministry examinations in commercial subjects, Biology and Arabic but the rates are lower in Mathematics, Physics and English. Students' performance in lessons was not in keeping with these high rates. Success rates and proficiency levels vary significantly in all basic subjects. The grades of some low-achieving students have declined over the past three years, especially in Mathematics and English. Results for outstanding students are inconsistent: their English and Mathematics marks are high in some semesters and low in others. Students do not make progress appropriate to their levels in most lessons, where the same activities and assignments are set for all students. The school rarely makes use of the outcomes of diagnostic examinations and tests.

Students' personal development is inadequate. Most students attend regularly. A proportion, however, do not turn up for lessons, arrive late during morning assembly or return late to their classroom after breaks. The school's actions to combat these problems have not been effective. Only a few students get the chance to participate in internal and external activities such as sports competitions. Teachers focus on simple thinking skills during lessons and do not give students opportunities to demonstrate their ability to think critically and develop their mental faculties. Students show respect for their classmates' opinions and for teachers in classrooms, and most of them behave appropriately in most lessons. Nevertheless, unacceptable behaviour, such as fighting and smoking, takes place outside the classrooms. Some students are concerned about such behaviour and feel less secure and safe in the school as a result of it.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is inadequate. Most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge but do not reflect it in effective teaching and learning strategies that ensure students' acquisition of skills, concepts and knowledge and motivate them to learn. Apart from in a few good lessons, teachers mostly use a lecturing style of teaching, which is ineffective in engaging students and challenging their abilities. Most lessons are ineffectively managed in terms of the time allocation, appropriateness and usefulness of the class activities. This has a negative effect on most students' progress in lessons. Homework activities are assigned to students as set out in lesson plans; however,

most activities are the same for all students, assignments are not regularly corrected and students are not given sufficient feedback to help them become aware of their mistakes. Some teachers use varied methods, such as oral and written questioning, to assess students' progress in lessons and some teachers use oral questions to measure how well the lesson objectives have been achieved; most lessons, however, lack proper assessment of how well students have learnt.

The quality of curriculum enrichment and enhancement is inadequate. The school's method of presenting the curriculum does not help students to acquire basic learning skills; most teachers rely on ineffective teaching strategies where teachers are at the centre of the teaching process. Mathematics skills are an exception: they are good in most lessons, where teachers use a diverse range of modern teaching strategies. The school develops students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities through organizing various awareness lectures, educational leaflets, and academic courses. The school provides students with a range of extra-curricular activities that meet their varied interests and enrich their experience; the extra-curricular activities for outstanding and special needs students, however, are limited and uninteresting. The school environment is not used well to enrich the curriculum. The classrooms and school buildings lack educational displays and displays of students' work; the school does not provide a stimulating learning environment.

The quality of support and guidance for students is inadequate. The school provides a satisfactory induction programme for new students, which helps them to settle at school. The school also prepares students for their next phase of education by organising field visits and holding guidance lectures. Students are not, however, given sufficient opportunities to acquire the skills they need for their next stages of education. The school meets some of the students' personal needs and assesses their learning needs; it does not, however, use the assessment results to set up effective programmes that meet students' needs in and outside the classroom. Support for students of different abilities during lessons is inconsistent. The school communicates with parents and keeps them informed of their sons' progress in writing and with SMS text messages; parents' response is limited, however. The school monitors safety procedures and the maintenance of its buildings. Despite this, it suffers regular water supply cut-offs to students' toilets, in addition to defective sewage channels. Although the school has taken up these problems with the relevant authorities, they still constitute an ongoing risk to students' health and safety.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate. The school has a shared vision and mission statement that focuses on achievement, but it has had little impact on school practices, especially in the classroom. The school has made clear efforts to define its strengths and areas for development and use the results to build strategic and action plans for the educational departments. The plans, however, lack clear performance indicators. The school conducts self-evaluation and organises workshops and classroom monitoring visits; limited monitoring of such activities has, however, restricted opportunities to improve and

develop the overall performance of the school. The school inspires and motivates most of its staff, and provides them with professional development; such development has had a clear impact on mathematics teachers' performance but a limited impact in other educational departments. The school's facilities and learning resources are not employed consistently well and are used ineffectively in classrooms. The staff shortages – in the science departments, commercial subjects, occupational health and social sciences as well as in administrative areas such as information resources, accounting and registration – have had a negative effect on the administrative and teaching operations. The school seeks to communicate with parents and students, and responds to their views as far as possible, which is reflected in parents' and students' general satisfaction with the school.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The school has inadequate capacity to improve. The school has a strategic plan based on an analysis of the school's position and focused on controlling students' behaviour, in which respect the school has made progress. Nevertheless, the plan lacks clear performance indicators and has had insufficient impact on improving teaching, learning and achievement. The school has evaluated some of its work but the results have not been used effectively to raise staff performance. The school's monitoring of educational practices, the staff professional development programme, and the supervisory visits by middle managers has not been as effective as required. This weak monitoring has had an impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes in most core and specialised subjects, and this, in turn, has held back students' achievement and progress. The school faces challenges such as truancy from lessons and lateness, as well as the poor motivation for learning among many students.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Success rates in school examinations
- Developing students' spirit of citizenship
- Students' numeracy skills
- Induction programmes for new students.

Areas for development

- Students' performance in the classroom
- Students' behaviour and their awareness towards their environment
- Developing higher thinking skills and challenging students' abilities
- Students' contribution to school life
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Assessment methods
- Taking individual differences into account
- Basic skills, particularly in English and Arabic
- Meeting students' learning needs
- Assessing risks and health and safety aspects
- Strategic planning and performance indicators
- Self-evaluation
- Impact of professional competency programmes on lessons.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Eliminate risks and behaviour that threaten the students security and safety, especially outside classrooms
- Make use of varied assessment methods and employ their results
- Ensure the strategic plan has clear and measurable performance indicators, and follow up its impact on the school's overall performance
- Develop teaching and learning strategies that focus on:
 - Developing basic skills
 - Taking individual differences into account in lesson planning, activities and homework assignments
 - Developing students' higher thinking skills and challenging their abilities
 - Making greater use of assessment and using the results to meet students' learning needs.
- Provide support for various categories of students in the classroom to meet their needs
- Raise teachers' professional competency and monitor the impact of development activities
- Fill staff vacancies and improve teaching facilities and resources, such as classrooms, computers and printers, to improve the overall performance of the school.

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