



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Hajar Primary Girls School
Bani Jamrah - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 3 - 5 January 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 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: Girls

Number of students: 392

Age range: 6-12 years

Characteristics of the school

Hajar Primary Girls School is one of the Northern Governorate schools. It was founded in 1935 as a building for boys; part of it was made over to girls' education in 1973. The age range in the school is from 6 to 12 years. There are 392 students, most of whom come from higher-income families. Students are distributed across 15 classes: seven classes for the first cycle and eight for the second. The school categorises 135 of its students as outstanding, 57 as talented and creative and 15 as having learning difficulties. The principal is in her second year at the school. The administrative and teaching staff number 47, of whom three are new teachers. The school lacks some main facilities such as a gym and a science laboratory. 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: 2 (Good)

The overall effectiveness of Hajar Primary Girls School is good and it is outstanding in the area of students' personal development. Students and their parents are exceptionally satisfied with the school.

Students' academic achievement is good. Students achieve high standards in school examinations, which is clearly reflected in their performance in lessons. The pass rates are in line with students' proficiency rates in core subjects. Students acquire good basic skills in information and communications technology (ICT) and in Arabic skills such as oral and written expression. Fourth grade students can turn verbal problems into mathematical formulae. In English, they can match pictures with phrases and read new words. Students also master some advanced skills, such as identifying the chronology of a tree in science in the fifth grade. Most students maintain high levels of academic achievement in written work, and make progress in most lessons. Students are set activities that challenge their abilities and give them chances to develop their higher thinking skills; this was not done as effectively, however, in the satisfactory lessons. Most students reach levels that match their abilities: remedial and enrichment lessons for lower achievers in Arabic and mathematics are effective; the programme for students with learning difficulties is successful in developing students' skills in oral expression and Arabic pronunciation. Talented and creative students also make good progress; they are offered a good variety of activities, through which some have achieved success in, for example, short story writing and a 'Space Invasion' competition.

Students' personal development is outstanding. Most students attend school and lessons regularly and punctually. They show full awareness of their duties. Most students are keen and valuable participants in school committees and groups, including the Organizing Committee and the Students' Council, which helps to develop their self-confidence. At the Students' Council, for example, students discussed issues such as the heaviness of their school bag in a sophisticated way, showing the ability to express opinions and think creatively. Students contribute to sections of morning assembly, events and annual occasions. They have had excellent results in a number of competitions such as the Mathematics Olympics and speechmaking competitions. Opportunities such as these allow most students to take on leadership roles and work together efficiently, which develops their ability to work independently and makes them aware of the responsibility of their roles. Most teachers give students sufficient opportunities during lessons to use their mental

abilities and energies to analyse and use information. Most students have good relationships with each other and with all the school staff; such relationships help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and appreciation. Most students take good care of the educational environment and keep it clean; this reflects their sense of belonging to their school and their feeling of security in it.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is good. Most teachers use effective teaching and learning strategies that reflect their subject knowledge. Most achieve the planned goals of their lessons. In observed Arabic lessons in the first and second cycles, students were encouraged to write letters in the air and on their individual boards, as well as to act and play. Sixth grade students used song to help solve verbal problems in mathematics lessons and learnt through exploration in science lessons, which made them more eager and enthusiastic. Most students can apply higher thinking skills such as brainstorming in mathematics and critical thinking in Arabic; teachers believe in the importance of developing those skills. Teachers manage their classes effectively, directing students of different abilities towards learning and ensuring the effective participation of most students in most lessons and class activities. The school's middle managers have implemented a homework organisation project and involved parents in the follow-up process through students' copybooks. The homework is marked and corrected regularly. Teachers use a variety of assessment methods, including group assessment and continuous evaluation. They give instant feedback to meet students' educational needs and inform them about areas they need to develop; these assessment practices help to ensure that most students achieve levels that match their abilities.

The quality of curriculum enrichment and delivery is good. Bahraini traditions are strongly reflected in students, who are proud of belonging to their home and environment; the school works hard to develop this sense of patriotism with interesting projects such as 'The Palm Tree as the Symbol of Giving for the Generous Homeland' project. The school's corridors and yards feature traditional photos and clothes. All students are aware of their rights and duties; they make suggestions for school improvements through channels such as the Students' Council and a suggestions box. They participate enthusiastically in activities that develop their abilities and talents such as the computer group, the Arabic group, the theatre and acting club and an agriculture group. Most students get involved in educational projects such as the mobile library. Students acquire sound basic skills in reading and writing both in Arabic and English, arithmetic skills in mathematics and science and computer skills. The school is full of educational drawings, useful posters and information, much of which celebrates students' contributions and achievements; this helps to make them proud of their educational environment. Most teachers of the first cycle make effective links between subjects in most lessons; students study a coherent and integrated curriculum.

The quality of guidance and support for students is good. The students settle easily at the beginning of the school year after an effective induction programme the school runs for

them and their parents. They are prepared effectively for the next stages of education and acquire the basic and life skills they need. The school uses diagnostic tests to identify students' levels of ability and uses the results appropriately to place students on programmes such as remedial classes, a learning difficulties programme or activity lessons. Teachers use assessment results to prepare classroom activities for different levels of students, which has a positive impact on students making progress according to their abilities. The school's Social Advising and the Administrative Supervision sections provide awareness programmes for students and their parents, such on matters as varied as road safety and personal hygiene, which help to raise awareness and alert students to potential dangers. A variety of communication channels is used to inform parents about their daughters' progress; this has a positive effect on students' behaviour and achievement. All school staff cooperate with parents to make the school safe, by careful monitoring of safety and security; the school gate, however, still presents a danger to students.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The teaching and administrative staff have participated in drawing up the school's vision and mission, which focus on students' achievements and personal development. The vision and mission have had a positive impact on the school's educational practices and activities. The school uses analysis techniques to identify aspects of strength and areas for development and the results of this comprehensive diagnosis are used effectively in strategic planning. The school's plan translates successfully into educational practices that aim at improving students' standards. The school monitors its performance thoroughly and evaluates its educational practices and events. Teachers' training needs are met through a variety of professional competency raising programmes in topics such as modern teaching strategies. In some lessons, however, it was not clear to what extent this training had improved teachers' capacity to develop students' different abilities. School staff work in a social environment built on cooperation, motivation and mutual trust that encourages developmental initiatives and projects. Duties are distributed and responsibilities are delegated efficiently. The school has appointed coordinators for each section and school committee according to their competencies, which is reflected in the effective and enthusiastic way that various programmes and committees operate. Staff work together to make best use of the school's facilities, despite is the lack of a gym and a science laboratory. The school keeps parents well informed about their daughters' academic and personal progress; students and their parents are highly appreciative of the school's efforts.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 2 (Good)

The school's capacity to develop and improve is good. Its current leaders and managers are focused on organising the school's affairs properly and good management of the available

human and physical resources. They operate in an environment built on cooperation, motivation, broad participation and mutual trust among all staff, which enriches the school's work. The school's strategic planning and self-evaluation have been instrumental in raising students' personal and academic levels, by their influence on all the school's educational practices. The school has made improvements to the school environment, managed well some developmental projects for teachers and provides continuous training to teaching and administrative staff that contributes to raising students' level of achievement.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- The comprehensive self-evaluation
- Strategic planning
- Students' standards
- Basic skills in Arabic, English, arithmetic, science and ICT
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Students' feeling of security in the school
- Students' self-confidence, awareness and sense of responsibility
- Extra-curricular activities
- Celebrating students' work
- Communication with parents
- Making best use of educational facilities.

Areas for development

- Developing higher thinking skills
- Challenging and developing students' abilities
- The impact of training programmes on the performance of teachers.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Making use of the outstanding practices, especially in the class teacher system, to improve teaching and learning processes so as to include:
 - Developing higher thinking skills
 - Challenging students' abilities.
- Monitor more effectively the impact of training programmes and workshops on the performance of some teachers.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good
Students' academic achievement	2: Good
Students' progress in their personal development	1: Outstanding
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2: Good
The quality of the curriculum delivery	2: Good
The quality of guidance and support for students	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	2: Good