



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Halima Al Saadeya Intermediate Girls School
Al Segaya - Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 10 - 12 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		Halima Al Saadeya Intermediate Girls School													
School's type		Government													
Year of establishment		1959													
Age range of students		13 - 15 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High					
		-				7-9				-					
Number of students		Boys		-		Girls		508		Total		508			
Students' social background		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most families are from middle level income families • The educational level for most of the families is relatively high. 													
Classes per grade		Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Classes		-	-	-	-	-	-	7	5	5	-	-	-
Town /Village		Al Segaya													
Governorate		Capital Governorate													
Number of administrative staff		10													
Number of teaching staff		43													
Curriculum		Ministry of Education Curriculum													
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic													
Principal's tenure		One month													
External assessment and examination		Ministry of Education Examinations and QAAET National Examinations													
Accreditation (if applicable)		-													
Number of students in the following categories		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties	
		360				-				-				26	

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current principal appointed in 2011-12• 19 new teachers joined the school in 2011-12• Transfer the science senior teacher and the the talent and excellence teacher for the current year 2010-2011
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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	-	3	-	3
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 changed from good in the previous review of November 2008 to satisfactory in the current review. Performance has changed in the aspects of: leadership and management, academic achievement, teaching and learning, curriculum implementation while stabilising in both personal development and support. This is attributed to the nonexistence of some senior teachers for core subjects. The instability of the teaching staff, because of the joining of a large number of new teachers, which lead to a disparity in the overall performance of the school.

However, the school's efforts to improve are reflected in strategic planning based on accurate self-evaluation of most of the school's work. Students and their parents are satisfied in a good way with the school.

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

Grade: 2 Good

The school's capacity to improve changed from outstanding in the former review to good in the current review because of the instability of the administrative and teaching staff and the disparity in the overall performance of the school. However, the school has a dependable ability to continue to improve due to its administration's consciousness of the importance of change and improvement and its dependency in shared decision-making and its creation of a new vision for the school's future in sync with modern technology. It diagnoses the school reality in order to raise the overall performance of the school. It identifies students' educational needs, employs effective programmes, such as the 'Discipline Queen' for teachers, and promotes a strong team and national loyalty among them. The opinions of students and their parents are sought and used to shape procedures, particularly regarding students' behaviour. This has resulted in improved student behaviour and relations among them. They have opportunities to express their opinions by posting ideas on the 'free podium' board. Teachers are entrusted with important responsibilities, which contributes towards addressing the teacher shortage and reduces the impact of the staffing instability.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students pass rates in the school examinations for primary subjects are quite wide ranging, between 58% and 98% in 2011. Monitoring students' results over three consecutive years shows that students' pass rates in all primary subjects decreased specially in the English language. Also, proficiency levels and rates of progress displayed by students in lessons do not correspond to their high pass rates in the second and third intermediate classes, especially in Arabic and English. High pass rates reflect students' achievement levels in good lessons in many subjects and especially mathematics in the first intermediate classes, simply because effective teaching gives students the opportunity to learn well. However, similar levels of achievement are not evident in other lessons and in students' written work, where teaching is less effective. This comes as a result of varied quality in planning to cater for students' individual differences, both in classroom activities and in their written work assignments.

The majority of the students' acquisition of skills in information technology, mathematics lessons are better than their development of basic skills in English and Arabic. This is due not only to weaknesses in planning, but also because teaching strategies do not consider the different difficulties pupils experience in English and Arabic lessons. Arabic and English speaking and writing skills are insufficiently developed, especially in the first and second intermediate classes. Support provided for students in these lessons does not match their educational needs well enough.

Outstanding students make varied progress in lessons and in written work as insufficient opportunities and challenge of their opportunities was afforded to them. Lower achievers progress adequately through the school to third intermediate and in their written works based on their abilities appropriately as a result of the regular support in remedial lessons.

Students' attainment in the third intermediate level in the national examinations for the years 2010 and 2011 was above the national average in all core subjects.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

Students attend regularly and punctually because of the school's encouragement and effective monitoring. They enthusiastically participate in school committees and events such

as the morning broadcast and theatre performances. They take opportunities to lead, for example as library friends or members of the students' council. These opportunities and others build self-confidence and their ability to work individually and take on responsibility. They express their opinions. Teachers raise issues to stimulate students' thinking and encourage them to answer questions and share ideas through 'The Free Podium' project and 'The Wise Girl' board. Competitions, such as essay and short story writing, also help students' personal development.

Most students have good relations with their teachers and classmates, based on mutual respect and fair treatment inside and outside of class. Students feel secure and psychologically safe and this reduces behavioural problems. School property is well cared for and students take good care of themselves as a result of effective counselling and guidance programmes. Students' understanding of Bahraini culture and identity is encouraged by preserving common heritage through popular games. Students visit the Chamber of Industry and Commerce to become familiar with Bahraini jobs and crafts. Islamic values are promoted through projects such as 'Halima's Civilized Girl', which promotes students' understanding and commitment to Islamic morals and values.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers have relevant subject knowledge, which is reflected in their use of appropriate teaching methods, such as discussion and brain-storming to present the material. They often use educational resources, such as pictures, wall educational aids and power point presentations to make their teaching more interesting. Teaching and learning on balance are satisfactory, and there are some good lessons.

Teachers motivate the majority of students to acquire knowledge and concepts which are linked to key life skills. This stimulates and motivates them to learn through their participation. Lessons use varied teaching methods routinely. However, these methods often tend to focus on teaching cognitive aspects without linking these to practical skills in addition the different of support provided to students in those lessons. Most teachers manage lessons effectively, taking care that planned objectives are achieved and students' commitment to good behaviour is secured.

Higher order thinking skills are developed only in a few of the good lessons. Skills such as investigation, comparison, analysis and forming conclusions, in addition to opportunities

provided to challenge students' abilities, however, these were not at the same level in the rest of the lessons. Questions based on lower level thinking skills, such as remembering and simple recall, without stimulating students' abilities to think deeply, were used much more frequently. Opportunities for children to work together and learn from each other by cooperative working are provided but these are not sufficiently well planned in terms of roles and responsibilities.

The students are given homework. However, some of it did not contribute to development of their understanding as a result of poor planning and lack of care for differentiation in an appropriate way. Teachers regularly check students' work and provide them with appropriate feedback. This led to the majority of them identifying their strengths and their needs for improvement in order to improve their levels.

Most teachers use appropriate assessment methods, such as individual and group verbal and written questions, to gauge students' progress. However, these methods are used inconsistently and most do not consider students' different needs and levels of ability.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The curriculum helps develop in the students a spirit of citizenship. Most students are aware of their rights and responsibilities through the morning assembly programme and their participation in the national celebrations and cultural competitions. This enriches their knowledge of the Kingdom of Bahrain. Students are given lessons in agriculture and pottery and visit places which specialise in handicrafts. The devotion and citizenship committee is active in sharing ideas about Bahrain through topics such as, 'My favourite spot in my country'. Opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities are numerous, such as in school sports teams, the order and advisers committee and the e-learning team. Activities include preparation for the 'pen pulse' magazine through the journalism committee and 'Halima's civilised girl' project, which is concerned with promoting positive values. These enhance students' experiences and increase their self-confidence.

Making links between different subjects, as was recommended in the previous review report, is of varied success. Curriculum analysis and the preparation of semester plans and materials help students to use their basic skills in mathematics in most lessons better than their reading and writing skills in English and Arabic. The school enriches its environment in most subjects, both inside and outside classrooms, by using different displays and exhibits. These include various wall boards for popular games, the free podium, the solar

system board and displays that celebrate students' work and which encourage them in their learning.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 2 Good

New students have a programme called 'Welcome Students', which helps them settle quickly and well. They are oriented to the next educational stage by having lectures and workshops about 'educational tracks', for the third intermediate students as a preparation for movement to the secondary stage which give them opportunities to select the suitable tracks independently.

The social guidance department identifies students' personal needs and provides financial and in kind support where necessary. The school performs scanning and diagnostic tests and uses their findings to identify students' personal and educational needs. As a result, students are provided with support, for example in individual and group remedial lessons, especially for the third intermediate students. The school uses guidance lessons through different programmes such as 'Halima's Civilised Girl' to promote positive moral and behavioural values in students, which is reflected clearly in their behaviour.

The academic support provided for students is adequate. Students from the school help others with reading and participating in plays, through the 'Angels of Mercy' programme. This results in improving their progress. Talented students participate in enrichment activities, local and external competitions and the 'talented and outstanding' student support programmes, which are effective.

Communication with parents is effective through a variety of means, including open days and written reports about progress. The school has good procedures in place to ensure the students' safety and security and regular maintenance of its facilities.

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 clear vision and mission that were jointly developed by members of the school community. These are used effectively in planning the direction of good lessons and reflected in the good personal development of students and the support and guidance provided by the school. Impact on other practices and activities, including teachers' performance is less marked. The school has a strategic plan for improvement based on accurate evaluation of the school's situation. School staff and some parents participated in several questionnaires and the results have been used to shape priorities to achieve further improvement. The plan is comprehensive and includes performance indicators, monitoring mechanisms and regular assessment.

The school raises teachers' professional competency by organising many local and external workshops, such as 'multiple intelligences' as well as exchange visits among teachers to share educational practices. However, the impact of this in some teachers' lessons is low.

Senior leadership encourages positive relationships among its members. Staff in turn express their approval of the school's motivating approach and readiness to consider their opinions and criticism. The administration delegates authority well to address the shortages in staffing, such as senior teachers for some departments such as science and mathematics. This contributes to the smooth workflow in the school however, all of this did not defectively impact on the teaching practices during lessons. The school administration effectively deploys the various school facilities for learning such as the use of the learning resources centre and the science laboratory. Financial resources are directed at meeting the educational needs of students.

The school asks the opinions of students and their parents and responds to them. Students' and parents' councils and regular meetings are used to gain their views, which contribute to students and their parents feeling satisfied with the school. Communication with the local community is effective. Students participate in external activities and cooperate with some of the nearby institutes such as 'the Modern Institute' to provide intensive lessons for low achieving students. This substantially contributed to the improvement of these students' academic achievement and personal development. The school regularly contacts the relevant authorities to discuss particular educational issues pertaining to the school.

The school's main strengths

- Accurate self-evaluation of the school's work and making use of its findings to set the strategic plan containing clear performance indicators and preparing action plans
- Students' behaviour , their conscious and responsible actions inside and outside the classroom
- Support of students in consolidating their self-confidence through their participation in the various school activities and taking on leadership roles.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise achievement by developing teaching and learning strategies that secure:
 - students' acquisition of the basic skills, especially in Arabic and English
 - better use of effective assessment
 - improved support for different student groups to meet their educational needs at their different academic levels and provide appropriate challenge
 - deeper analytical and critical thinking by students
 - more cooperative learning
- evaluate the impact of professional competency programmes on teachers' performance and follow up with appropriate actions to improve the quality of teaching further
- address the shortages in staffing, especially the excellence and talent specialist and the senior teachers for science and mathematics.