



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Hamad Town Primary Girls School
Hamad Town – Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Dates Reviewed: 13 – 15 December 2009

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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: 599

Age range: 6 – 12 years

Characteristics of the school

Hamad Town Primary Girls School is one of the Northern Governorate's schools. It was established in 1985. The school has 599 students and the age range in the school is from 6 to 12 years. Most students belong to limited-income, stable families. The school has 21 classes in two cycles: four classes for each of grades 3, 4 and 6, and three classes for each of grades 1, 2 and 5. In addition, the school has one integrated class.

The school classifies 200 students as outstanding, 60 as gifted and 60 as having learning difficulties. There are six students with a physical disability and 11 students in the integrated class. There are 55 teachers in the school, of whom three are substitute teachers, and 15 administrative and support staff. The Principal is running the school for the third year. The school lacks senior teachers for English and Science. It has a learning difficulties specialist, a specialist for gifted students and an integrated class specialist, who also has an assistant. 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 Hamad Town Primary Girls School is good. It has a high degree of consistency in the quality of its teaching and learning processes. There are some outstanding practices such as the support offered to the integrated class and the use of the school's buildings to enrich the curriculum. Students and their parents are highly satisfied with the school.

Students' academic achievement is good. Most students achieved higher standards than expected in two-thirds of the observed lessons; the teaching methods used in these lessons are good. Students in the integrated class make outstanding progress; the care provided to them, particularly by the special needs specialist and her assistant, is excellent. Low attainers make good progress, too, benefiting from the school's support and guidance programmes. Gifted and talented students and those with learning difficulties, however, make less consistent progress; the programmes offered to them vary in their effectiveness.

The personal development of students is good. The great majority of students attend school regularly and punctually. Most students contribute enthusiastically and actively to school life, both in lessons and through students' committees such as "Buds of Wisdom", in the weekly period of activities, or through contests and festivals that foster students' personal development. Independent learning and higher thinking skills, however, are not consistently developed in students. Most students feel safe in school and enjoy good relations that are based on care and mutual respect for each other and their teachers.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is good. The teaching and learning processes are highly consistent across lessons, and are good or outstanding in two-thirds of the lessons. Most teachers effectively use both the question and answer and discussion and dialogue techniques, and in a way that appropriately challenges the less able students. In satisfactory lessons, too few opportunities are provided for students to work together and learn from each other. Most teachers manage lessons effectively. They engage most students in lessons with motivational techniques that help to gain and maintain students' interest. Teachers use various assessment methods adequately but do not use them consistently to monitor progress.

Curriculum enrichment and delivery programmes are good. The school develops students' awareness of their rights and duties well. The school uses its environment to enrich the curriculum in an excellent manner; heritage corners and murals are used exceptionally well to create a stimulating environment. Extra-curricular activities enhance most students' experiences and broaden their various interests, particularly for most students in the second cycle. The school develops students' basic skills in Arabic very well, but writing skills in English are less well developed. The development of students' basic skills in IT is hampered by a shortage of IT resources and lack of maintenance. Links between subjects are satisfactory in the first cycle.

The support and guidance programmes for students are good. The school adequately inducts new students but provides only guidance lectures for students moving to the next stage of their education in grades 3 and 6. The school meets students' personal needs appropriately. It also provides good remedial programmes and support classes for lower ability students, and cares exceptionally well for students in the integrated class. Weekly newsletters are sent to parents of students in the first cycle, as well as monthly reports. The school makes sure that its staff and students work in a healthy and safe environment.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management is good. The school has a shared vision focused on achievement. It conducts a comprehensive self-evaluation based on questionnaires, SWOT analysis and root analysis, which are used in developing its action plans. The school's strategic plan focuses on improvement in its programmes, although it has no accurate mechanism to measure the progress of different student groups. The management inspires teachers well and this has encouraged them to take up initiatives such as "Save a Life". The school uses a number of communication channels with parents to seek out their views, and responds to parents well.

Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 2 (Good)

The school's capacity to improve is good. Its recent improvements include: implementing strategic planning to bring about identified changes; developing marking mechanisms for school examinations that are more oriented towards ensuring quality; and promoting positive relations with teachers. This last improvement is reflected in teachers suggesting projects to improve performance.

The school conducts a comprehensive self-evaluation to identify strengths and areas for improvements, which makes it able to set appropriate priorities. It sets out appropriate

programmes in its strategic plan that have been successful in many respects, especially in maintaining a high rate of consistency in the quality of lessons and employing the school environment to enrich the curriculum.

The school's leaders and managers are fully aware of the requirements of the school, and work skilfully to improve the school's performance. They have been successful in many areas, particularly in moving forward the achievement of low attainers. Nevertheless, key challenges for the school in the next stage are to establish well-structured mechanisms to monitor the progress of different student groups and use a broader range of effective teaching and learning methods.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- School examinations results
- Students' standards in lessons
- Progress of students in the integrated class
- Progress of the low attaining students
- Teaching and learning processes
- Personal development
- Employing the school environment to enrich the curriculum
- Support and guidance programmes
- Leadership and management
- Self-evaluation
- Strategic planning

Areas for development

- Basic writing skills in English language
- Higher thinking skills
- Challenge to students with high abilities
- Students working together and learning from each other
- Mechanisms to monitor progress of different student groups

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Develop diverse and effective teaching and learning strategies in order to:
 - Make use of and disseminate good practices
 - Provide more opportunities for students to work together and learn from each other
 - Develop writing skills, especially in English language
 - Further develop students' higher thinking skills
 - Challenge the abilities of the most able students to a greater extent.

- Introduce well-structured mechanisms to monitor the progress achieved by different student groups

- Stabilize the top management in the school, and fill shortages in human resources such as senior teachers for English and science, a second gifted and talented specialist and a learning difficulties specialist

- Remedy shortages in physical resources, particularly IT resources, to ensure continuous improvement and development in the school.

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	2: Good
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