



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Hamad Town Secondary Girls School
Hamad Town- Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 24 - 26 October 2011

Table of Contents

The Schools Review Unit.....	1
Introduction	2
Characteristics of the school	2
Table of review judgements awarded	3
Review judgements	4
Overall effectiveness	4
Students' achievement.....	5
The quality of provision	6
Leadership, management and governance	9
The school's main strengths	11
Recommendations	12

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 twelve 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		Hamad Town Secondary Girls School												
School's type		Government												
Year of establishment		1991												
Age range of students		16-18												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Core			Middle					High				
		-			-					10-12				
Number of students		Boys			Girls		1043			Total		1043		
Students' social background		Majority of students from middle income families												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	6	16	
Town /Village		Hamad Town												
Governorate		Northern Governorate												
Number of administrative staff		31												
Number of teaching staff		92												
Curriculum		Ministry of Education curriculum												
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic												
Principal's tenure		2 years												
External assessment and examination.		Ministry of Education Examinations												
Accreditation (if applicable)		-												
Number of students in the following categories		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties			
		138			23			2			-			
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointment of current principal and one of the assistant principals in 2009/10• 23 new teaching staff for 2011/12• 50% of students in current year are new and distributed on 10 classes for first level and 6 for third												

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Core	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	-	3	3
Students' personal development	-	-	3	3
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	-	-	3	3
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

Significant progress has been made over the past two years as the school has improved from being inadequate overall in 2009 to satisfactory now. Leadership, management and governance are good due to effective planning and self-evaluation, which has had a clear impact on improving curriculum implementation and enrichment, the effectiveness of teaching and learning and students' achievement. Students' pass rates have risen steadily and helped move students' achievement from inadequate to satisfactory. Performance in promoting the students' personal development has remained at satisfactory. Helping students newly joining the school is a challenge because they account for 50% of the total students. The school has gained the support and approval of students and their parents.

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

Grade: 2: Good

The school has increased its capacity to improve from inadequate in the previous review to good. This is attributed to the forward-looking attitude and clear thinking of the school's new leadership. The school is becoming abreast of modern educational practices. Strategic planning is carefully based on priorities drawn from the recommendations in the previous review and accurate subsequent school self-evaluation. Key to improvement is the satisfactory teaching where the use of effective strategies is increasing. More than one third of the teaching is good with implementation of educational projects, such as 'teaching academies' and programmes for outstanding students. The impact of the school's efforts on developing new teachers' performance is limited at this stage.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of students achieve above average levels in the Ministry of Education examinations in most tracks, which is reflected in their achievement in about half of the lessons. This variation in achievement occurs because of variations in the quality of the teaching and the methods used. Students' understanding of concepts and mastery of skills in core subjects are satisfactory.

Students make progress and gain proficiency in most scientific skills. Students' achievement is best in science. In other subjects it is satisfactory and there is room for improvement. Their skills in the commercial track are better than in learning banking and compensation skills. Similarly, they achieve satisfactory proficiency in mathematics skills. Students' proficiency in Arabic skills such as text analysis and grammar varies, but overall are also satisfactory but with room for improvement.

Over three consecutive years, students' have achieved satisfactory progress in the majority of subjects. Progress in science is better than in mathematics and literature. Students in the scientific track achieved good results compared to commercial and literature track students. Students make better progress in outstanding and good lessons which occur most often in the scientific track. Progress is less good in English in the literature track because teaching is not as good. Standards in written work vary too much. This is because the differences in students' abilities are not well catered for by teaching which is pitched to their different levels of abilities with different implementation of the literature curriculum.

Outstanding and talented students make good progress in the programmes they follow about Bahrain's achievement which had an impact on developing their above average abilities. The majority of low achieving students make satisfactory progress because of appropriate adjustments in their programmes and the provision of lessons that re-inforce their learning. However, these adjustment in the teaching strategies do not consider the students' individual differences enough.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of students attend school and lessons on time. The 'early bird', programme has contributed to improving punctuality and students' discipline. Students participate well in the morning broadcast and in the 'I'm a student, I'm creative' project. This project has an impact on improving students' self-confidence and ability to work independently. Students participate well in those lessons which are outstanding and good. Overall their personal development is satisfactory.

Students take opportunities to learn together, accept leadership roles and are active in various groups, such as students' advisory committees and students' union that were formed as a result of students' suggestions. These contribute to reinforcing their self-confidence and sense of belonging to the school.

Positive relationships and mutual respect permeate the school. Students mix well in classes and extracurricular activities despite half of the students being new. Effective programmes contribute to encouraging positive behaviour and limiting poor discipline.

School property and the school environment are well looked after by students. They show awareness and responsibility by contributing to tidying and decorating classrooms, which increase their ownership and responsibility..

Programmes such as 'Proud to be Bahraini' promote respect and an appreciation of national heritage. Popular culture, art paintings and guidance boards that were painted by students all contribute to students' understanding of the Bahraini culture and identity.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers are usually very familiar with the study materials they use. This is particularly the case in good and outstanding lessons, which account for about half the lessons. Effective teaching and learning strategies ensure students' participation in the learning process, and their acquisition of skills, concept, and knowledge. In the best lessons they are encouraged to be active in conversations and in extended dialogue. However, satisfactory lessons are not as effective although teachers carried out their lessons in ways that ensure students do make

progress. Time is used well and lesson objectives are usually achieved, which in turn builds students' progress.

Most teachers use effective teaching and learning strategies, such as learning through enquiry and brainstorming as in science and mathematics, which challenge students' abilities in discussion and deduction. Teachers also use cooperative learning and group work which gives students the opportunity to work and learn together. In the best lessons a wide range of educational materials, cards, projectors and practical experiments makes the teaching more interesting. This attracts students towards learning. This does not happen in satisfactory lessons because teachers use a lecturing style too much, as in some Arabic and commercial subjects. With less interest from the students the effectiveness of students' acquisition of knowledge and concepts is reduced. In most lessons, teachers use teaching strategies which are adjusted to suit the different needs and abilities of the students. This is good but its impact is not as great as it should be due to varied, which reflected on the varied progress students made according to their abilities. Development of higher level thinking skills such as analysis and construction was observed, for example, in some biology lessons, but the development of these skills is not present in the majority of lessons.

Assessment methods are used well in good and outstanding lessons. These include written assessments and formative tests which include checks that students achieve lesson goals. However, assessment in other lessons relies too heavily on individual and group verbal assessment only, which does not do enough to narrow the gaps between different students' achievement and accelerate their progress. Students are given homework where individual differences are considered sometimes. However, monitoring them by regular marking and feedback varies across the different tracks.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The curriculum is enhanced through talent centres and enrichment courses and through extra-curricular activities. These include the stock exchange project, paintings on walls and mosaic tiling. Students have won many distinctions in external competitions, for example in free drawing and in the 'My passion for my country' contest. However, performance in class activities by students of differing abilities is limited, often because of the lack of relevance of curriculum implementation.

The curriculum contributes well enabling students in the scientific and commercial tracks in to acquire the scientific and life skills necessary for preparing them for the university and job market. However, students in the literature track do not acquire the basic skills to the same

level, such as in writing and speaking in English and applying arithmetic skills in mathematics. This is mainly due to the over-use of textbook content presented in an instructional manner. Linking knowledge and skills across subjects is only effective for science and mathematics. Programmes show how the curriculum is organised in schedules and action plans within departments. However, self-assessment, as a part of a self-study is inadequate.

The environment is used effectively to support the curriculum. Facilities, such as the learning resources centre, science laboratory and e-learning classroom are used well. Understanding rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of belonging are achieved through activities such as the morning broadcast programmes, celebrating National Day and field visits to Jasrah Centre for handicraft and the 'Trade World Exhibition'.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

On balance, the guidance and support students receive are satisfactory. The induction programme helps most students settle into school life well. Parents and students are familiarised with the school rules, which contribute to students' organisation and discipline. Cooperation with local universities as part of the community service programmes helps prepare students for the next stage of their education.

Benefits and financial grants help students to access talent centres and intensive programmes. Some of them have stopped due to a shortage of teachers, especially English. The school gives special attention to disabled students, and facilitating their mobility for example. Many programmes, such as how to select an academic track and lectures on 'self-esteem' are effective.

Communication with parents uses various means and is effective. Parents receive reports on their children's academic progress. The reports do not include information about students' personal development. Health and behaviour issues are addressed individually.

The school takes immediate action on safety and security issues in order to make the environment safe for its members. It promotes health awareness among students through educational programmes such as 'how to overcome obesity' and gives lectures on first aid, especially on using chemicals. Students' feel safe and secure.

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 vision and mission that focuses on achievement and personal development. It has secured satisfactory outcomes in these two important aspects. The vision and mission were formed in a collaborative manner with ownership across the school community. The school used SWOT analysis and devoted time and effort to evaluating all the school's work. Continuous monitoring and accurate self-evaluation has been used to develop a strategic plan that has focused on the school's priorities on implementing the recommendations from the previous review. The plan includes clear and measurable performance indicators. This has contributed to organising the school work flow and achieving adequate progress in students' achievement and improvements in teaching and learning. Moving the school from inadequate in the previous review to satisfactory in this review is a significant indicator of good leadership and management. Additionally, the school benefited from the distinguished Bahraini school programme and used the performance management system to assess teachers' performance, the varied effect.

The school management inspires positive relationships and a whole team spirit. It makes efforts to raise professional competency through training and workshops, such as training conducted by the e-learning team, 'Teaching Academy for Learning' and 'Patterns of Class Management' workshops. Teachers' performance has consequently improved, although some new teachers are not educationally qualified and slow the rate of improvement overall. The school management distributes tasks and entrusts authority effectively, whilst checking and assessing progress.

The school's management of resources and educational facilities is good. Its communication with parents and students is well developed, through various means such as the parents' council and students' union. The opinions of students and their parents are heard and the school responds to those suggestions within its capacity and after consideration. The school has accepted students' admission from different locations in cooperation with relevant authorities. The school's responsiveness is appreciated by students and their parents.

The school links with local community institutes, such as hospitals and the Northern Governorate to facilitate its students' work in the social service programme. It stays in close contact with the secondary education administration and the heads of schools and educational support teams to implement school improvement projects. Programmes such as

'Partnership for better performance' and 'The Teaching Academy' have contributed significantly to the improvements made, especially to students' achievement.

The school's main strengths

- School leadership, which has responded to the recommendations of the previous review, and brought about accurate self-evaluation and focused strategic planning that has contributed to the school's improvement
- The science department is successful in achieving good performance in teaching and learning and improvements in students' achievement and personal development.
- Students' understanding of the Bahraini heritage and culture and respect for Islamic values
- Using educational resources to support curriculum and effective use of the school environment.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- use good practices to ensure effectiveness of the teaching and learning to raise students' achievement further by:
 - developing students' basic skills in Arabic, mathematics and English, especially for the literature track
 - giving students more opportunities to learn together
 - developing critical thinking and deduction in core subjects, especially in Arabic, mathematics and English
 - using formative assessment to develop educational activities related to students' different needs and levels of achievement to raise educational outcomes
- provide more opportunities that contribute to students' personal development, especially new students' in the third level.