



الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Ibn Al-Hytham Islamic School
Campus A – Manama – Capital Governorate
Campus B – Mugshaa – Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 15-18 October 2012

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The Schools Review Unit

The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. 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 four days, by a team of 11 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	Ibn Al-Hytham Islamic												
School's type	Private												
Year of establishment	1989												
Age range of students	6-18 Years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High				
	1-5				6-8				9-12				
Number of students	Boys	905	Girls	994	Total	1899							
Students' social background	Most come from lower and middle income families												
Classes per grade	Campus	A			B								
	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	9	9	8	8	8	6	6	5	5	5	3	3
Town /Village	Campus A in Manama and Campus B in Mugshaa												
Governorate	Campus A in Capital and Campus B in Northern												
Number of administrative staff	13												
Number of teaching staff	133												
Curriculum	The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Delhi, India												
Main language(s) of instruction	English												
Principal's tenure	5 years												
External assessment and examinations	All India Senior School Certificate Examination (AISSCE) for Grade 12 All India Secondary School Examination (AISSE) for Grade 10												
Accreditation (if applicable)	None												
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties					
	347	230			1			-					
Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgraded to senior secondary level in 2010-11. 												

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3 : Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	3 : Satisfactory			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	3	3	3	3
Students' personal development	2	2	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3	3	3	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	3	3	3	3
The quality of support and guidance for students	3	3	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	3	3	3	3

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 effectiveness is satisfactory as are all aspects except for the personal development of students, which is good. Most students are well-disciplined, well-behaved and show proper respect for others. Academic achievement is satisfactory. Students achieve the highest standards in mathematics, while in science achievement is consistently satisfactory, unlike other core subjects where it is inconsistent. With the exception of the better lessons, progress of students in lessons is often too slow as a result of the narrow range of teaching strategies used. The school develops its community spirit well and sensitively supports students when they have problems. Senior management has a clear vision focused on improving achievement and promoting Islamic values, but self-evaluation is not rigorous enough. The majority of parents and students are satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

In recent years, a significant improvement has been the concentration on creating effective infrastructure for the school. There is a plan for the school to leave the current old campus and move to a new one being built with better facilities, such as a multi-purpose hall. Another significant improvement is registering for external examination in secondary school. AISSCE is providing more credibility to the school's performance. Senior management is committed to making necessary improvements, particularly in teaching and learning through direct observation. However, self-evaluation is not sufficiently systematic and action planning is inconsistent. The school is facing many challenges that affect its drive for improvement. These include the high turnover of teachers and the planning necessary for effective individual professional development programmes for staff.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students' achievement across the school in core subjects is in line with standards expected by the CBSE. In internal examinations in the lower primary school, almost all students score very high grades, while these decrease in Grades 7 to 10. About 95% of Grade 10 students are attaining the significant 60% benchmark or above in AISSE 2012 for English. This high percentage of students drops to approximately 68% and 62% for science and mathematics respectively. Low achievers make expected progress in the majority of lessons; however, in too many lessons high achievers make limited progress. Cursive handwriting is good. Progress students make in their work is satisfactory overall.

Students' achievement in mathematics is good in the primary and secondary schools. In the primary school, students generally express mathematical ideas clearly when dealing with basic operations. Middle school students achieve less well but can correctly solve equations involving fractions and similar work. Senior students work skilfully with algebraic and geometric sequences. However, a small minority of students across all grades lack confidence in applying problem-solving skills.

In science, most students' standards are in line with age-related expectations and they recall factual knowledge with accuracy. For example, in environmental science, primary students demonstrate good awareness of life in water and middle school students appropriately identify methods of reproduction. Secondary students appropriately classify plants and senior students apply concepts learned in science in everyday life. Generally however, students have under-developed investigative skills.

In English, most students possess good speaking, reading and listening skills and use age-appropriate vocabulary and grammar. However, creative and independent writing are very limited and skills of analysis and interpretation of literary texts are inadequately developed. For example, only a few Grade 10 students are able to give meaning to vocabulary used in the poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.

The standards students attain in Hindi are satisfactory. The majority of students have good listening skills and adequate reading and speaking skills. However, their skills in creative and independent writing, as in English, are too limited.

A very small minority of students study Arabic and for most of them it is not their mother tongue. Whilst their standards in Arabic are satisfactory overall, their reading and speaking skills are below age-related expectations. The majority of students can understand spoken Arabic and write simple words.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

The vast majority of students are well disciplined, very respectful of the feelings and beliefs of their peers and they work together in harmony. Around the school, students show good relationships, follow behavioural expectations and, in the most effective lessons, older students cooperate well to accomplish tasks including, for example, organising a science exhibition and participating in the discipline committee. However a small minority of primary students less effectively develop their collaborative skills. Most students feel safe and secure and are appreciative of the quick resolutions to rare incidents of poor behaviour and the support from student volunteers.

Students' attendance is high and punctuality is good, maintained through careful monitoring including students' diaries. Most students are enthusiastic, willing to ask and respond to questions and volunteer ideas. They are keen to contribute to activities such as sports and competitions. However, in the less effective lessons, where there are fewer interactive sessions, they show less enthusiasm. Although most students take on responsibilities and leadership roles whenever possible, in a minority of lessons, students show insufficient independence, self-confidence and responsibility for their own learning with limited opportunities offered to them. Students demonstrate the values of Islam, promoted through Islamic studies lessons and activities such as Qur'an recitation competitions, but a minority do not sufficiently develop an understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Almost all teachers have sound subject knowledge and in the majority of lessons they give clear instructions with confident delivery. However, in language lessons, specifically in

Arabic and Hindi, teaching too frequently relies on English, with students being given limited exposure to the language being learned and too few opportunities to practise language skills. Lesson plans have insufficient detail and lack planning for differentiation and appropriate use of resources to guide teaching which caters for the different learning abilities of students. Although in good lessons, particularly mathematics, students are given opportunities to practise skills and use role-play to increase understanding of concepts, too few opportunities are given in the majority of lessons for students to work independently or develop co-operative skills in groups. Additionally, with the main focus on knowledge acquisition, insufficient activities are provided to promote understanding and develop skills, particularly their analytical, creative thinking and investigative skills. Only the most effective lessons offer possibilities for students to justify their opinions and think divergently.

Well-organised lessons and established routines lead to appropriate pace and focused learning in the majority of lessons. Resources are basic, mostly textbooks, worksheets and whiteboards. Teaching generally makes limited use of those available, particularly technology. However, the majority of lessons are motivating and encourage students' participation, especially when teachers and students put effort into making or using additional resources such as posters and models. In the most successful lessons teaching provides challenge to students, but this is limited throughout the school, particularly for high and low achievers. Whilst most students receive appropriate support, in a minority of lessons, insufficient attention is given to low achievers and insufficient extension activities are offered to high achievers.

The majority of teaching makes adequate use of a narrow range of strategies, such as whole-class instruction and question and answer sessions. In the most effective lessons, students are more engaged and respond enthusiastically during opportunities for group work, independent work and open discussion. Homework is given regularly, mostly to consolidate work in lessons, and is most effective when opportunities are also given for extension and research. Oral assessment is appropriately used in the majority of lessons, whilst only in good lessons are the results of written and oral assessments used to diagnose and adjust teaching to meet the different needs of all students.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school successfully focuses on developing community spirit and encourages students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities through citizenship lessons and activities, such as value-based lectures and voluntary leadership roles. Curriculum implementation

provides an appropriate range of subjects from Grades 1 to 10, along with sufficient options for students to study a third language, as well as appropriate stream choices for students in Grades 11 and 12. Review processes mostly evaluate textbook appropriateness and syllabus coverage, but give limited attention to additional planning for modifications which ensure relevance for students with different learning needs and experiences. Provision is made via additional classes for Grade 12 science students to prepare for examinations; nevertheless, curriculum implementation, particularly in science throughout the school, gives insufficient attention to developing students' investigative and practical skills. Teachers make useful connections across subjects in some primary lessons, although overall, cross-curricular links are too limited, especially in the middle and secondary schools. A narrow range of extra-curricular activities are offered with a specific focus on physical training. Teachers make some use of local resources to enrich the curriculum. Field trips are rarely curriculum-related and informative visits and lectures by parents or members of the community are too infrequent. Students' work is celebrated in the majority of classrooms and used well in the best lessons.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

A clear induction process helps students to settle successfully into the school environment. The school tracks students' performance in regular assessments using consolidated records and basic portfolios to monitor their academic progress and personal development. However, this tracking is no better than satisfactory because it lacks sufficient rigour in identifying needs and ways of better meeting these in the planning of teaching. Students who face any problem confidently approach their teachers, coordinators and counsellors who provide sensitive help when they face any problems. Advice and one-to-one discussions are immediately available. This support is supplemented by older students, including members of the student council and volunteers, who give care to younger peers during the school day. The school provides additional coaching classes once a week. Although students receive career guidance with contacts made with local universities, this is not sufficiently tailored to their needs. For example, information regarding university requirements in India is limited. Parents are confident that they are well-informed about their children's progress through monthly parent-teacher meetings, regular reports, and students' diaries. Behavioural expectations are clear and help ensure a safe, secure and healthy environment. However, although first aid is well provided and responsibilities and systems are clear, the school lacks sufficient fire extinguishers in certain areas such as the main hall and science laboratories.

Leadership, management and governance

- **How effective are leadership, management and governance in promoting high achievement, strong personal development and school improvement?**

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's leadership has a clear vision, focused on improving achievement and promoting Islamic values, which is shared with staff. The Principal is inspiring and motivates staff to work with openness to establish a sense of community and cooperation. Priorities target provision of quality facilities, which are evident in the development of the new campus to accommodate all students. Although budgeting and planning are well-linked to improve the learning environment, high staff turnover and the priority to upgrade resources are continuing challenges for the school. The available school resources are appropriate but not always used to the full in order to enhance students' learning experiences, for example the science and computer laboratories.

While self-evaluation is linked to improvement, it is insufficiently systematic and is not properly embedded in the processes of the school. It does not yet include sufficient involvement by parents, students and staff. The school carefully records students' performance in both internal and international examination, but makes only limited analysis of the results in planning. Strategic planning is focused on bringing improvement but it is not sufficiently rigorous. Action planning is inconsistent and lacks clear success indicators, time-frames and identified responsibilities to drive development in all aspects of the school's performance. Regular workshops provide teacher training, for example in how to implement teaching methods in English. However, the impact of such training is insufficiently monitored. Subject coordinators, academic coordinators and senior leaders regularly evaluate teachers' performance against organisational expectations. However, this does not clearly identify school-wide areas for further development and does not sufficiently support teachers' individual professional development.

The views of parents and students are sought through the parents' and students' councils, representation of parents in the Executive Committee and regular parent-teacher meetings. Although the school is responsive to feedback from students and parents, it lacks systems to ensure effective input by parents. The school has appropriate links with the local community such as inviting guest speakers on English and astrophysics and involvement in local competitions. However, field trips are more limited, with the excursions mainly being for entertainment. The respective professional and governance roles are well understood and

respected. The school's professional leadership is firmly held accountable for its overall performance and particularly its students' academic results.

The school's main strengths

- Well-disciplined, well-behaved students with high respect for others.
- Developing of students' understanding of rights and responsibilities.
- Communication with parents about their children's progress.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- Raise students' academic achievement overall, with a focus on:
 - developing better investigative skills particularly in science
 - increasing the amount and quality of creative and independent writing in both English and Hindi
 - developing speaking and reading skills in Arabic.
- Improve teaching and learning effectively through:
 - using assessment results to inform planning and guide teaching to meet different learning needs of all groups of students
 - developing a wider range of teaching and learning strategies
 - challenging high achievers and supporting low achievers more.
- Provide systematic procedures and processes to ensure rigorous self-evaluation with strong links to well-documented strategic and operational planning with consequent action.
- Provide more fire extinguishers in key locations.