Schools Review Unit
Review Report

Ibn Tufail Primary Boys School
Hamad Town - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date 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 five 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: Boys
Number of students: 724
Age range: 6-10 years

Characteristics of the school

Ibn Tufail Primary Boys School, founded in 1990 and located in Hamad city, is one of the Northern Governorate schools. The age range in the school is from 6 to 10 years, and there are 724 students. Most students come from limited-income families. Students are distributed across 26 classes from first through to fourth grade: six classes each for the first and second grades; seven classes for each of the third and fourth grades. Students are categorised as follows: 5% are talented and creative, 27% are outstanding, 22% are students with learning difficulties and 1.3% are students with physical disabilities. Of the 68 teaching staff, 10 are substitutes. There are 14 administrative staff. The Principal is in her first year, having spent five years as an assistant Principal in the same school.

Overall effectiveness

☐ **How effective is the school in meeting the needs of students and their parents?**

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The overall effectiveness of Ibn Tufail Primary Boys School is satisfactory. Students and their parents find the school satisfactory.

Students' academic achievement is satisfactory. First cycle students achieve high pass rates and proficiency levels compared to those of second cycle students. These rates, to some extent, match the satisfactory achievement levels observed during lessons. The teacher is at the centre of the educational process centre in most lessons, which hampers some students' acquisition of the basic skills, especially in English. Students' pass rates in the past two years have fallen slightly, although they are making satisfactory progress in lessons where appropriate class activities and teaching strategies are used. Students are also making progress in their written work, but are not achieving at levels appropriate to their abilities, as individual differences are not considered sufficiently, inside or outside the classroom.

The personal development of students is satisfactory. Most students attend regularly and punctually. Some students have the self-confidence and the ability to work independently and take responsibility. They work and share with one another enthusiastically when given opportunities to contribute to school life through certain roles and tasks. They are not, however, given enough opportunities to develop their analytical thinking skills. Some students' conduct shows a lack of awareness and responsibility inside and outside the classroom and there is some inappropriate behaviour. Students do, however, feel well treated, secure and safe in the school.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process is satisfactory. Most teachers have satisfactory subject and course knowledge, which they show in their teaching methods and the strategies used to presenting materials. In some good lessons, such as some of the Arabic lessons, the student is placed at the centre of the teaching process and teachers help students to acquire skills, understanding and knowledge. Some teachers manage their lessons effectively, but students' abilities are not generally challenged enough. Most homework assigned to students is the same for all students and individual differences are not taken into consideration. Some teachers, in the good lessons, use varied assessment methods to meet students' educational needs, which contributes to the good levels of achievement in those lessons.

The curriculum presentation and enrichment are satisfactory. Curriculum enrichment is achieved through good use of the school's environment. The curriculum itself, however, is presented in a way that often relies on textbook content. Students acquire better basic skills in Arabic, Mathematics and Information Technology than in English. The school makes few links between curriculum subjects in the first cycle. Students develop an understanding of their rights and duties as well as a sense of citizenship; these characteristics are not, however, reflected in some students' conduct during and outside some lessons. The school provides many varied extra-curricular activities but they do not include all student groups.

Support and guidance for students are satisfactory. The school inducts newcomers appropriately to help them settle in. Students are not, however, prepared well for their transition to the next stages of education; this preparation is limited to what is covered in lessons and the participation of some students in contests. The school diagnoses and meets personal needs adequately. It further diagnoses educational needs but does not always meet them effectively in all lessons or remedial classes. Students are given appropriate advice and guidance to help solve problems they face; these efforts have contributed to reducing problems, improving student conduct and increasing students' motivation for learning. The school also communicates with students' parents in a satisfactory manner.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school has a clear vision centred on achievement, which is shared by most of the school's staff and has had a positive effect on the school's practices. The school also has a strategic plan centred on development and improvement. The plan contains performance indicators, which is based on a SWOT analysis of the school's situation. Use of the indicators has helped to bring about a slight reduction in conduct problems but has not had a noticeable effect on the development of the teaching and learning process. The school's self-evaluation is not accurate enough, and shortages in middle management and some support functions have held back the school's progress in this area. The school encourages its teachers to work cooperatively and contribute to development projects. It provides training programmes to raise teachers' professional competency but these programmes have not raised teaching standards consistently. The school uses its facilities effectively to meet students' personal and educational needs. It responds sometimes to the views of students and their parents, within the available resources.

☐ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The school's capacity to achieve development and improvement is satisfactory. The school's leaders are motivated and work enthusiastically towards change and development. The school has an ambitious strategic plan based on identifying aspects of strength and weakness. The performance indicators in the plan have already been used effectively to bring about a slight improvement in students' conduct, but have not had sufficient impact on the development of the teaching and learning process and promoting students' academic achievement. The school takes care to evaluate all its activities, and uses its findings to develop its plans. This evaluation, as set out in the school's self-evaluation form, is not accurate enough; the results vary from the review findings in most aspects. The school has focused, for the past few years, on improving students' conduct and taking forward development projects, in an aim to raise the level of students' achievement. It is held back from achieving further improvement by challenges such as dealing with multi-cultural students; the presence of new teachers; the high turnover of teachers; and the shortage in middle management and support functions.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Pass rates and proficiency levels in the first cycle
- Regular and punctual attendance
- Students' confidence and enthusiastic participation in school life
- School environment
- Induction programmes for new students
- Meeting students' personal needs
- Strategic planning.

Areas for development

- Students' conduct inside and outside the classroom
- Self evaluation
- Considering individual differences and challenging students' abilities
- Analytical thinking skills
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Basic skills, especially in English.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Develop student awareness to limit inappropriate conduct and promote positive values

- Develop teaching and learning strategies, taking into consideration:
  - Challenging students' abilities
  - Developing analytical thinking skills
  - Developing basic skills. especially in English
  - Using evaluation to meet educational needs of all student groups
  - Linkage between subjects.

- Raise interest in comprehensive self-evaluation of the school as an educational institute

- Make up for the shortage in administrative and teaching staff.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	**3: Satisfactory**
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory
Students' academic achievement	3: Satisfactory
Students' progress in their personal development	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3: Satisfactory
The quality of the curriculum delivery	3: Satisfactory
The quality of guidance and support for students	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	3: Satisfactory