



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Isa Town Intermediate Girls School  
Isa Town - Central Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 16 - 18 April 2012**

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## The Schools Review Unit

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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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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 eight 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

<b>School's name</b>		Isa Town Intermediate Girls School											
<b>School's type</b>		Government											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1968											
<b>Age range of students</b>		13-15 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>			
		-				7-9				-			
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	-	<b>Girls</b>	832				<b>Total</b>	832			
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most students belong to limited-income families											
<b>Classes per grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Classes</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	8	9	-	-	-
<b>Town /Village</b>		Isa Town											
<b>Governorate</b>		Central											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		30											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		87											
<b>Curriculum</b>		Ministry of Education (MoE)											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		Arabic											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		Three months as acting principal											
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>		MoE's examinations and QAAET's national examinations											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		-											
<b>Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>				<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>			<b>Physical Disabilities</b>			<b>Learning Difficulties</b>	
		114				74			2			27	

<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not having a school principal for two consecutive years 2009-11, and assigning the assistant principal as acting school principal</li><li>• Appointing two assistant principals in the current academic year 2011-12</li><li>• Appointing 8 teachers of different majors in the current academic year</li><li>• Allocating a class for merged students</li><li>• Appointing 3 social workers in the current year.</li></ul>
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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	-	3	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	3	-	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	-	2	-	2
The quality of support and guidance for students	-	2	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	-	3	-	3

### Key:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

## Review judgements

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### 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 being judged good in the previous review in April 2009 to satisfactory in this one. Leadership and management, students' academic achievement, teaching and learning and students' personal development are satisfactory. However, support and guidance and curriculum implementation are still judged to be good. The reason overall performance is no better than satisfactory is because of instability in the school leadership for the past two years and having many new teachers. The school management has made considerable efforts to improve the school environment and to use facilities well, especially the learning resources centre, guidance programmes to regulate students' behaviour and the provision of various activities to increase the progress of the merged students and those with learning difficulties. Students and their families are pleased with the school.

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

The school's capacity to improve is good, as it was judged in the previous review. The school has a strategic plan that is based on analysing the school situation. The plan focuses on regulating students' behaviour using good guidance programmes. However, the school has faced several challenges, most significantly the instability of the leadership and the old school building, which in part is in danger of collapse. Nevertheless, at a human level, the school is able to overcome these challenges by providing an atmosphere of encouragement and motivation, and improving much of the school environment to become a healthy and educational one. It uses the educational facilities such as the learning resources centre and extra-curricular clubs effectively, and implementing guidance and discipline programmes in ways which positively impact on students' conduct.

## Students' achievement

### □ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

#### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students in Grade 9 attained rates that were broadly average in Arabic, mathematics, science and English over the academic years 2010-11, which are similar to students' actual levels of achievement in lessons. They attained high pass rates in school examinations in Arabic, which ranged between 92% and 97%. However, the rates in the other core subjects were between 63% and 85% and are in contrast with the proficiency rates in all core subjects, especially science and mathematics which are low. The high rates mirror the students' levels of achievement in good lessons, as a result of the teaching methods that give students many opportunities to learn. However, in more than half of the lessons achievement is no better than satisfactory as a result of the variations in teaching not meeting students' educational needs.

The students' acquisition of the scientific skills, arithmetic skills and writing skills in English and Arabic varies considerably, with skills in reading being better than writing in most lessons as a result of the variation in the quality of teaching methods being used.

Students' attainment levels have generally regressed over the past three years in most core subjects except in Arabic where the pass rates remain high, despite not being echoed in the students' levels of progress in Arabic lessons. Good progress corresponds to well taught lessons in English, while most students make an adequate progress in satisfactory lessons in science and mathematics, especially in Grade 8, and in written work, due to the variation in the quality of support and activities provided.

Students with learning difficulties and the merged students achieve good progress that is commensurate with their abilities as a result of the effective support and activities provided that meet their educational needs. Outstanding students make satisfactory progress that is commensurate with their achievement in lessons, written work, and enrichment activities. Enrichment activities and opportunities that challenge their abilities are provided frequently so that able students achieve relatively well. However, low achieving students do not show progress at the same rate due to the poor support they receive both in lessons and remedial activities.



## **□ How good is the students' personal development?**

### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Most students are given the opportunities to effectively participate through discussion and expressing their views with confidence, but only in the good lessons. In other lessons the teacher is too much at the centre of the process. Overall, students' participation is more evident outside class in extra-curricular activities and school committees, such as the 'awareness and guidance' and the 'theatre' committees, the morning broadcast activities and the recess activities such as the sport contests and the healthy diet week, than in lessons. The role performed by the good order committee of students and guides, has a good impact on the development of the students' self-confidence and responsibility. Students have good relations among each other in class and outside, and when they work together they feel appreciated, respected, safe and secure. Students show awareness of their responsibilities, especially in class. They generally observe good attendance, with the exception of a few frequent cases of absence, arriving late and dropping-out.

Students have a clear understanding of Islamic values, which is evident in their participation in religious contests and the school morning programmes, such as the 'My way of life', and in celebrating 'My country's National Day' and using 'cultural' corners and display boards that show Bahrain's present and past.

## **The quality of provision**

### **□ How effective are teaching and learning?**

### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Most teachers are familiar with their study materials and this is reflected in the various teaching methods that they use. These include discussion and conversation, group work and students' participation in shaping lesson goals and effective introductory activities, but mainly in the good lessons. Students are encouraged and motivated by using educational cards, games and shows, which effect their motivation and enthusiasm for learning and participation. However, too many lessons are teacher-centred where the focus is on imparting knowledge without linking it to the skills students need. This style has a negative impact on the students' motivation to learning and their acquisition of the concepts, knowledge and skills of the core subjects, especially in science and mathematics.

Lessons are well managed. Activities and goals are set within a specific timeframe. However, the effectiveness of time management varies across lessons, especially where the pace in class activities means that they are not completed on time.

In good lessons students are challenged by analytical and deductive questions that develop their higher level thinking skills, enabling them to achieve above the expected progress. In other lessons the activities and questions given rely too much on memory recall and are not thought provoking. Most teaching is satisfactory rather than good because not enough consideration is given to students' individual differences. For example, proper amounts of homework are given, but it tends to be the same work for the whole group and the marking is too general. This is also true for feedback, which does not identify the areas needed for further improvement in order to help different students make appropriate progress relative to their performance.

Students are given support to make progress and teachers use various oral and written assessment methods effectively, such as observation and final evaluations especially in good lessons. The use of findings from assessments in satisfactory lessons is not so effective, which variedly effects the extent to which the students' educational needs are met.

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

The school promotes students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities and the Bahraini culture, especially through the loyalty and citizenship committee. This is represented in promoting citizenship, instilling Bahraini identity, celebrating the national Eid and designing shapes of ancient places and displays such as the 'My rights and responsibilities'.

The school environment is improved by enrichment through displays, educational boards and guidelines throughout the school halls which celebrate students' work. Educational facilities, such as the learning resources centre and clubs, such as the English and Arabic clubs and workshops enhance the curriculum.

Students' participation in extra-curricular activities is good. School committees such as the 'theatre', 'broadcast' and 'press' committees, and internal and external contests provide a variety of experiences. Memos and summaries support curriculum implementation. These help students overcome difficulties and in turn contribute to broadening their experiences,

based on their needs and interests. However, monitoring the implementation of these activities and events is varied and reflects on the students' different rates of acquiring skills. Students are provided with many opportunities to study a logical and coherent curriculum by way of linking different subjects together and with real life situations. However, these opportunities are too varied in quality for students to transfer and use their acquired knowledge and skills consistently well across subjects.

### **□ How well are students guided and supported?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Students are welcomed through programmes that include lectures about expectations at the intermediate school level, the 'discipline board' and school facilities. They are prepared for their next stage through relevant guidance and visits to other schools. This support contributes to raising students' awareness of their coming studies.

In-kind assistance, such as the winter support package, is available. Students' needs are diagnosed and met through remedial and enrichment programmes, both for individuals and groups. These include students with learning difficulties who are offered programmes in Arabic and mathematics and the merged students who are given effective support activities to acquire the basic skills. This support has good impact on their progress outside class, but what is provided during lessons for these groups is not as good. Outstanding and talented students are supported through extra-curricular activities suited to their talents and interests. Students who face problems receive behavioural adjustment programmes, which aim to promote positive attitudes and instil good behaviour and values. These are successful.

Parents are regularly updated on their daughters' academic and personal progress by various effective means. The school makes every effort to provide a safe healthy environment by monitoring safety issues such as food, hygiene, and health facilities. Students are trained on evacuation and fire-drill.

## **Leadership, management and governance**

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

### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory rather than good because there is too little impact on improving key elements of the school's performance, namely students' achievement and teaching. The senior leadership team is new. The school has a clear vision and mission that have been formulated with the participation of the school community. The aims focus on creating a quality educational environment characterised by creativity. This is variedly reflected in the teachers' performance and students' achievement. The school has analysed its performance in several ways and assessed its events and activities by means of evaluation forms, such as surveys of parents, students and stakeholders views. These surveys have included teaching and learning and the performance of middle leadership. Responses have contributed to identifying areas of strength and those needing improvement. Findings from the assessments are used in developing the school's strategic plan, which focuses on priorities of raising students' academic achievement and improving teachers' professional competency.

The school encourages and motivates its people through good relationships and respect. It fosters a healthy spirit of competition and delegates authority well, such as assigning leadership tasks to teachers to perform and organise training workshops. The teachers' training needs are identified and met by holding workshops and discussion sessions on topics such as 'challenging abilities' and 'cooperative learning'. Class visits and visits between teachers, and different departments are conducted to share educational expertise. In addition, the external improvement team offers good support in raising the teachers' professional competency, which is reflected in the performance of most teachers in class, especially in the good lessons. The financial resources at the school are used to serve the educational process and maintain the school's old facilities, such as the learning resources centre, clubs and workshops, in order to be able to continue to hold activities, events and competitions for the students.

The school communicates with parents, students and the local community. It explores their views and responds to the suggestions through the parents' and students' councils over issues such as the cleanliness of the health facilities, the examination schedules and improving the school environment. Several events with the traffic directorate, civil defence department, crafts centre, Yuko House and the nutrition department at the Ministry of Health have contributed to broadening and enriching the students' educational experiences.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- The induction programmes for new and transferred students, and preparation for the students' next stage of education
- The support given for students with learning difficulties and for merged classes
- The good relationships among the school community and the motivation of students to improve their school work
- The behavioural improvement programmes and their impact on improving students' behaviour.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, the school should:**

- provide immediate repair and construction for those school buildings requiring attention
- raise academic achievement by improving teaching and learning, so as to include:
  - the development of skills in core subjects, especially in science and mathematics
  - better support for low achieving students in lessons
  - more challenge that develops students' higher order thinking skills
  - links between subjects so as to enable students apply their knowledge and skills more effectively across a comprehensive and coherent curriculum
- monitor the impact of professional development programmes on improving teachers' performance in classrooms
- address the shortage in staffing, represented in an assistant principal, senior mathematics teacher, gifted and talented specialist.