



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Isa Town Primary Boys School  
Isa Town – Central Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 18 – 20 January 2010**

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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 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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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**

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### **Scope of the Review**

This Review was conducted over three days, by a team of six 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: 549

Age range: 6 – 12 years

### **Characteristics of the school**

Isa Town Primary Boys School is one of the Central Governorate's schools and was established in 1970. The school caters for students aged between 6 and 12 years old. There are 549 students in the school, distributed across 21 classes: six classes for the first cycle and 15 for the second. The school categorises 156 of the students as outstanding, 24 as gifted and talented and eight students as having learning difficulties. Most students belong to limited income families. The Principal is in his fourth academic year in the school. There are 60 teaching and administrative staff, as well as a talented and gifted students' specialist.

## Overall effectiveness

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

#### **Grade: 4 (Inadequate)**

The overall effectiveness of Isa Town Primary Boys School is inadequate. Students and their parents, however, are satisfied with the school

Students' academic achievement is inadequate. Most students achieve high pass rates in school examinations in most basic subjects; their performance in lessons, however, does not match this success. Most students make limited progress in lessons and in written work; teaching methods used lack variety and activities do not take individual differences into account or challenge their abilities. The activities and programmes provided within and outside lessons for outstanding and gifted students, less able students and those with special education needs are ineffective; they do not adequately meet students' needs and students make limited progress.

Students' personal development is inadequate. Most students attend school regularly. A minority of students participate in extra-curricular activities, such as the students' council, the musical band and sports. These opportunities are few, however, and students do not show the ability to take on leadership roles or assume responsibility. In most lessons, teaching strategies do not place the student as the centre of the educational process and students get limited opportunities to participate enthusiastically. Teaching focuses on simple thinking skills in most lessons and students' analytical thinking skills are inadequately developed. Students show little awareness of their responsibility towards the school and the behaviour of some students reflected this. Some students are concerned about the threatening behaviour of some of their schoolmates. Some teachers use inappropriate behaviour management methods, although the school takes the necessary action against such methods.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process is inadequate. Most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge but do not reflect this in their performance in most lessons; teachers relied on teaching strategies based on lecturing and question and answer in three-quarters of the observed lessons. Students' enthusiasm and attention in lessons declined when such methods were used. Students' abilities are not challenged in most of the lessons, in which teaching focuses on simple thinking skills. Collaborative learning is not effectively employed; it is not planned sufficiently to incorporate effective allocation of roles and responsibilities. Homework is given to students but it does not take into account students'

individual differences and is not regularly checked. Assessment methods are not used effectively to ensure that students achieve their lesson objectives; this has a negative impact on the ability of most students to make progress in most lessons.

The quality of curriculum presentation and enrichment is inadequate. The school effectively seeks to develop students' sense of citizenship and promote their sense of belonging. Its development of students' understanding of their rights and duties, however, is limited to some programmes in the school broadcasts. Most lessons in the first cycle do not make links across subjects so that students learn to transfer skills as well as knowledge between basic subjects. The curriculum is enriched in a limited manner through some extra-curricular activities to broaden students' experiences. There are few of these activities, however, and they are available only to a minority of students; they are not having a positive effect on students' relations with each other or sufficiently contributing to developing their personalities. The school makes limited use of its environment and facilities to enrich the curriculum, broaden students' horizons and attract them to learning. Students acquire low levels of basic skills as a result of the lecturing methods used in presenting the curriculum.

The effectiveness of support and guidance is inadequate. The school prepares new students well to help them settle in the school but students are not given sufficient help to acquire the skills necessary for the next stage of their education. The school assesses and meets students' personal needs appropriately but does not sufficiently meet their learning needs. The school sometimes communicates with parents at meetings and by telephone in emergencies, but parents are not informed about their children's progress regularly. The school does not make sure that students and staff work and learn in a safe and healthy environment; many health and safety risks to students were observed.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate. The school has a vision that was established by its planning team, but it is not clearly reflected in the school's plans, practices and activities. The school also has a strategic plan but it is not based on an analysis of its current situation and does not identify priorities. The plan also lacks accurate performance indicators and follow-up mechanisms. The school has no departmental plans to organise its work across the school and its classroom and extra-curricular programmes. The school does not self-evaluate all areas of its work and cannot target its improvement programmes to increase the school's level of performance. The school seeks parents' and students' views in a very limited manner, although it did build shaded rest areas in the school yard at the request of parents. The school's buildings and resources are used satisfactorily to serve the teaching process. The school provides some professional development for teachers and administrative staff through organising internal and external courses and workshops; the impact of such programmes, however, is not reflected in lessons.

**□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?**

**Grade: 4 (Inadequate)**

The school's capacity to develop and improve is inadequate. The school drew up a strategic plan two years ago, but this plan does not focus on areas for improvement and lacks performance indicators. The school faces a number of challenges: for example, its self-evaluation processes are ineffective and it has no mechanisms to measure the impact of professional development programmes on teachers' performance. The school has been unable to bring about improvement in students' academic attainment in recent years.

## **The school's main strengths and areas for development**

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### **Main Strengths**

- Students' standard in school examinations
- Meeting students' personal needs
- Attendance and punctuality.

### **Areas for development**

- Self-evaluation and strategic planning
- Professional development programmes
- Standards in lessons
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Differentiation in teaching and learning
- Basic skills in core subjects
- Use of assessment
- Challenging students' abilities
- Security and safety
- Links between subjects
- Higher thinking skills
- Students' behaviour
- Homework
- Collaborative learning.



## What the school needs to do to improve

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

- Develop a strategic plan that has specific objectives and procedures, and which is based on the results of self-evaluation
- Ensure that the strategic plan has clear and accurate performance indicators and focuses on students' academic achievement and personal development
- Develop positive behaviour among students and enhance their attitudes towards learning
- Develop teaching and learning strategies that:
  - Help students acquire basic skills
  - Take individual differences into account when planning lessons and assigning homework
  - Develop students' higher thinking skills
  - Challenge students' abilities
  - Link between subjects
  - Provide students with opportunities to learn together and collaboratively.
- Use professional development programmes to improve teachers' performance and follow up the impact of the programmes on raising students' academic attainment
- Use assessment effectively to diagnose and meet students' learning needs
- Take necessary actions to maintain a healthy and safe environment for students
- Engage the necessary external support to improve performance
- Urgently replace the wooden classrooms, which are an inappropriate environment for learning.

## Overall judgements

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Aspect	Grade: Description
<b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4: Inadequate</b>
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate
Students' academic achievement	4: Inadequate
Students' progress in their personal development	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4: Inadequate
The quality of the curriculum delivery	4: Inadequate
The quality of guidance and support for students	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	4: Inadequate