



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Isa Town Secondary Boys School
Isa Town - Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 1-3 November 2010

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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 ten 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: 912

Age range: 15-18 years

Characteristics of the school

Isa Town Secondary Boys School is a Central Governorate school that was founded in 1987. The age range in the school is from 15 to 18 years and there are 912 students. Most students come from middle-income families. Students are distributed across 29 classes: eight classes for the first level, nine for the second and twelve for the third. The school categorises 196 of its students as talented and creative and 120 as outstanding; it has seven students with special educational needs, including visual impairment and learning difficulties. There are 98 teaching staff and 22 administrative staff. The principal is in his first year at the school, and the school implement His Highness King Hamad project of Future schools.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The overall effectiveness of Isa Town Secondary Boys School is inadequate. It has satisfactory aspects in students' personal development, guidance and support for students and the quality of curriculum delivery and leadership and management. Students and their parents are broadly satisfied with the school.

The students' academic achievement is inadequate. Although students achieve high results in ministry examinations in most subjects their performance in most observed lessons was no more than satisfactory. The teacher is at the centre of the educational process in most lessons. Students' individual differences are not considered in most activities and written work; in some lessons, where differences are considered, a small number of students achieve a level that matches their abilities. Students' average success rates in core subjects are improving to varying degrees. Students do not make progress in most lessons.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Most students attend school regularly. They show an awareness and sense of responsibility through their behaviour in lessons and around the school. Most students participate enthusiastically in activities, clubs and school committees, which helps raise their self-confidence; they showed less enthusiasm in classes, where the teaching and learning strategies were not motivating and they were given few opportunities to take leadership roles throughout the learning process. Most lessons were limited to presenting knowledge without developing higher thinking skills; students' analytical thinking skills are, however, developed in some scientific lessons.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process is inadequate. Most lessons are based on an instructional method in which the teacher is at the centre of the educational process. Strategies for teaching and learning and class management were not effectively used in observed lessons. The students' abilities are not challenged and only in some lessons are they given activities that consider individual differences. Although students are given homework in several subjects, the work does not take into account their individual differences; homework does not necessarily meet students' educational needs, expand their perceptions or enrich their school work. Students are given some opportunities for cooperative learning but roles within these activities are not distributed effectively. Although varied assessment methods are applied in most lessons they are not used

effectively to give students regular feedback. The planning of activities and lessons to meet students' educational needs is ineffective.

The quality of curriculum delivery is satisfactory. The school develops students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities appropriately through various activities and events and by participating in research and in cultural and environmental competitions. The school provides a variety of extracurricular activities, as well as cultural, scientific and commercial forums, which help to enrich the experiences and broaden the interests of students. The school makes limited use of the school and classroom environments to enrich the study curriculum and celebrate students' work; this does not sufficiently strengthen the students' confidence in their work. Students' acquire better skills in mathematics and information technology (IT) than in English and Arabic.

The quality of guidance and support for students is satisfactory. The school provides an appropriate set of induction programmes for students as they join the school, which helps them to settle. It also offers programmes to prepare students for the next stage of their education; the vocational groups project is considered to be a good example for guiding students for further education or joining the world of work. The school ensures that its students and staff are working in a safe and healthy environment by monitoring health and security matters effectively. Students are given adequate guidance and support in relation to their courses of study and some of the problems they face; the support provided for students in most lessons is insufficient, however, and does not consider individual differences. The school communicates with parents through an open day each term and uses the available communication channels appropriately to inform parents of their children's progress; the school will telephone parents about urgent matters, such as those related to conduct.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management is satisfactory. The school has an ambitious vision and mission as well as a strategic plan; it has not, however, established performance indicators to measure the impact of these initiatives. The school is working on forming a new vision and mission and a strategic plan, based on self-evaluation involving staff, in order to improve the school's performance in developing students' personal and educational skills. The school provides several professional training programmes for teachers but the impact of this training was not seen in teachers' performance in observed lessons. School staff are inspired and motivated because the school consults with them and encourages them to make suggestions about development; they also have a role in managing the school. The distribution of staff incentives and rewards is carried out transparently by the new administration. The school uses its financial resources effectively but does not make satisfactory use of school facilities. The school responds to the views of students and their parents appropriately; this is reflected in their approval of the school.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The school's capacity to develop and improve is satisfactory. Its strategic plan focuses on achievement and the improvement of the teaching and learning process but it lacks appropriate performance indicators. The school's new leadership is developing a new vision and mission and a strategic plan that addresses the limitations of the current plan. These activities are based on analysing the school situation, identifying areas for development and establishing effective mechanisms to measure impact on the various aspects of school work. The new leadership has made several improvements over a short period of time, such as restructuring the human resources and improving some of the administrative facilities. An electronic system for monitoring employees' attendance, which is used in other schools, has been introduced. The school performs self-assessment of some aspects of its work and environment, such as monitoring the time needed for students to move between the different school facilities in order to use school time effectively. The school still faces challenges in executing a development plan that is based on the findings of comprehensive self-evaluation of all aspects of its work, especially those related to the development of teaching and learning strategies.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Spreading enthusiasm and motivation among school staff
- Students' results in ministry examinations
- Developing students' understanding of their rights and duties through committees and activities
- The induction programmes, especially the vocational groups project under the vocational guidance programme.

Areas for development

- Strategic planning and self-evaluation
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Considering individual differences throughout the teaching and learning process
- Using the findings of self-evaluation
- Students' higher thinking skills
- Challenging students' abilities in lessons
- Students' skills in English and Arabic
- The enrichment of the school environment
- Professional development of teachers
- Communicating with parents.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Build a strategic plan, based on the findings of self-evaluation of all performance aspects, which includes clear and measurable performance indicators.
- Use the findings of the assessment in lesson planning and to cater for individual differences in activities and homework.
- Use teaching and learning strategies that suit students' needs, so as to:
 - give opportunities for effective cooperative learning
 - develop higher thinking skills
 - challenge students' abilities
 - develop better basic skills, especially in Arabic and English
- Follow up and measure the impact of professional development programmes.
- Use the school environment for curriculum enrichment.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory
Students' academic achievement	4: Inadequate
Students' progress in their personal development	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4: Inadequate
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