



School Review Unit

Review Report

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

Date Reviewed: 27 – 29 April 2009

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The School Review Unit

The School 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 drive up 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 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: Girls

Number of students: 659

Age range: 16 – 18 years

Characteristics of the school

Isa Town Secondary Girls School was established in 1981/1982, and is a public school located in the Central Governorate. It has a total of 659 students enrolled, ranging in age between 16 – 18 years old and these students mainly belong to limited-income families. They are distributed amongst 21 classrooms; 6 in the first level, 6 in the second, and 9 in the third. The school has identified very high numbers of students, 111, as gifted and talented, 168 as outstanding students, and one student with learning difficulties. The school is managed by a principal who is in her eighth year in the school, and there are 21 administrative staff. The school employs 70 teachers, 9 of whom are senior. It is one of the first schools that applied the educational unified tracks, and is in the third stage of His Majesty King Hamad's "Schools of the Future" project.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

Isa Town Secondary Girls School's effectiveness is inadequate even though the school has the students' and their parents' satisfaction.

The students' academic achievement is inadequate. The high success rates are not consistent with the actual level of the students' skills, knowledge and understanding during lessons which are lower. Despite having identified a very large number of gifted and talented and high achievers, this was not reflected in their performance in lessons. The students' progress during lessons and in written work is inadequate due to the lack of catering for students' individual differences. Students are not given sufficient opportunities inside or outside the classroom to help them achieve levels appropriate to their actual level of ability.

The students' personal development is satisfactory. Some students are not punctual to morning assembly and lessons. The school provides students with some opportunities to participate enthusiastically in the school's activities, and take on some roles independently inside and outside the classrooms which develops their self-confidence. The students mainly feel safe and secure in the school although few student complained that a small number of teachers did not treat them with respect. On the other hand, some students do not behave well enough in class. In addition, students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to develop their analytical thinking skills.

The teaching and learning process is inadequate. Except in some good lessons, the way in which teachers manage the classes does not ensure the participation of all students. The teaching and learning strategies used in most lessons do not focus on the students as the centre of the teaching and learning process, nor do they challenge their abilities. In addition, the homework assigned is not well-planned and does not consider the individual differences between students. Furthermore, the assessment results are not effectively used to meet the students' learning needs.

The curriculum enhancement and presentation are satisfactory. The school develops the students' understanding of their rights, duties, and responsibilities by improving their sense of citizenship, however students do not demonstrate sufficient enthusiasm to participate in the activities of the morning assembly. The school made use of the students' talents in decorating the buildings and passageways. However, the classroom walls do not have educational displays unlike the laboratories and workshops. There are some extracurricular

activities, but they are insufficient to enhance the students' various interests and experiences due to the low levels of participation. Furthermore, there was variability in students' basic skills acquisition.

Student support and guidance are satisfactory. The school offers good induction programmes for the first level students upon joining the school and good transition programmes as well. The school meets the students' personal needs, such as winter support. However, the school's efforts towards meeting the learning needs during lessons are insufficient. Although the school communicates with parents, it does not keep them informed of their daughters' progress on a regular basis. The school also takes the appropriate measures to ensure that the staff and students work in a healthy and safe environment.

The overall quality of leadership and management is inadequate. The school's vision and mission statement focus on providing the students with high quality educational services. Though the school's plan is well formulated, its' annual plans did not succeed in achieving most of the objectives aimed at improvement and development. The mechanism for self-evaluation and performance monitoring of all the school's work is unclear, and inaccurate, especially concerning the teaching and learning process. The school utilises its limited financial and educational resources variably. It responds to the students and parents suggestions in spite of the parents' low response.

Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The school's capacity to improve and develop is inadequate. This is in spite of the principal's experience and her knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, the full complement of the administrative and teaching staff, and the availability of suitable facilities. All these factors did not contribute to the school's annual plan and had no effect on enhancing the students' academic achievement and personal development or meeting its objectives. This is due to the inaccurate method of self-evaluation for the school as an educational institution, the lack of a clear mechanism to monitor and evaluate the administrative and teaching staff on a continuous basis. In addition, there was a decline in the performance of the school over the last few years, due to the continuous turnover in the administrative and teaching staff.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main strengths

- Induction Programmes.
- Transition Programmes.
- Meeting students' personal needs.

Areas for development

- Strategic planning.
- Self-evaluation.
- Higher order thinking skills.
- Use of assessment.
- Planning for differentiation.
- Homework.
- Extracurricular activities.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Improve the effectiveness of the various teaching and learning strategies by:
 - Sharing the outstanding and good practices observed in the school.
 - Developing higher order thinking skills.
 - Catering for individual differences in lessons.
 - Making use of assessment results to improve students' achievement.
- Benefit from the comprehensive school self-evaluation results to build up a strategic plan to improve and develop.
- Follow up on the effects of the professional competency programmes that ensure the development of the teaching and learning process.
- Encourage students to be punctual and attend school on time, and respect the school's rules and regulations.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate
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	3: Satisfactory
The quality of guidance and support for students	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	4: Inadequate