



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Khadeja Al Kubra Intermediate Girls School
Muharraq - Muharraq Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 3 - 5 October 2011

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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 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:

Grade description	Interpretation
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 seven 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

School's name		Khadeja Al Kubra Intermediate Girls School													
School's type		Government													
Year of establishment		1928													
Age range of students		13-15 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary			Middle				High						
		-			9				-						
Number of students		Boys		Girls		349			Total		349				
Students' social background		The majority of students belong to middle class background													
Classes per grade		Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Classes		-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3	3	-	-	-
Town /Village		Muharraq													
Governorate		Muharraq													
Number of administrative staff		8													
Number of teaching staff		38													
Curriculum		Ministry of Education Curriculum in Kingdom of Bahrain													
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic													
Principal's tenure		Two years													
External assessment and examination		Ministry of Education Examinations and QAAET National Examinations													
Accreditation (if applicable)		-													
Number of students in the following categories		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties				
		21			34			-			20				

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementing expansion of school day project• Current principal appointed in 2009-10; assistant principal joined in 2011-12• Three new teachers joined recently.
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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	3: Satisfactory			
	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	-	3	-	3
The quality of support and guidance for students	-	3	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	-	3	-	3

Key:

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

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's overall performance is satisfactory, which was similar to its performance in the previous review visit in October 2008. The school is satisfactory because there are no major weaknesses. However, it is not good because of inaccurate self-evaluation, limited impact of professional development programmes on teachers and shortages of senior teachers in most subjects. Consequently, teacher's performance is inconsistent and student's acquisition of basic skills is weak, particularly in English. However, the school has put more effort into providing a safe environment and using its facilities and resources effectively. This is contributing to the enrichment of the curriculum, improved student behaviour and in keeping the school environment clean. The Arabic programmes had a positive effect on students' achievement levels in final examinations, which was appreciated by students and their parents.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory, which is similar to that of the previous review in 2008. The lack of development is due to several factors, most importantly the shortage of some middle and senior staff and inadequacy of procedures used to measure the impact of professional development programmes on teachers' performance and students' achievement. The implemented procedures for self-evaluation are not sufficiently comprehensive and accurate. Nevertheless, the awareness of both the teaching and administrative staff of the need to improve the school's overall performance has a positive impact on strategic planning, which staff appreciate. Better planning has resulted in higher pass rates in Arabic, the improved safety of students, increased enthusiasm and commitment to preserving the school environment.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most first intermediate level students achieved high pass rates in core subjects that were in line with their proficiency levels. However, the rates were lower in the second and third intermediate levels especially in English and science, which reflected the different levels in students' understanding of required concepts and skills in these stages. Most students make progress in mastering Arabic skills, such as reading and conversation using classical Arabic in the first intermediate level and solving algebraic equations in mathematics in the second level. More than half of the students make good progress in understanding concepts in science because of the effective teaching strategies used. However, many only make satisfactory progress. Most English lessons are not as effective as they might be because students are not able to acquire the basic skills of the intermediate stage.

Students' results over three years show that they make good progress in Arabic. However, their progress in the other subjects increased in 2009-10 and decreased in 2010-11 compared to their levels when they first joined the school. The students' progress in written work and in most lessons is satisfactory but teaching does not cater for students' different abilities enough, except in good lessons.

Most students with lower abilities achieved satisfactory progress. They made most progress in remedial lessons in Arabic, which are pitched at the correct levels for their learning. However, their progress in other subjects is not at the same level because of the limited remedial lessons provided in those subjects. Students with learning difficulties achieve good progress because their linguistics needs are well met through programmes such as 'Butterflies of Hope' and their participation in some extracurricular activities such as 'I am a treasure'. Outstanding and talented students achieve limited progress because of fewer opportunities provided in extracurricular activities for them. However, their progress in most lessons is satisfactory because adequate teaching and learning strategies are used, but these do not challenge their abilities enough.

The third intermediate level students attained just above the national average in the national examinations for 2010 and 2011 in Arabic, English, science, and mathematics. Their progress is steady.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students are punctual. Procedures taken by the school and the students themselves have led to good commitment and discipline. Students take responsibility because of the leadership skills they have acquired. This is due in part to their effective participation in councils and committees, such as the students' and municipality councils and extra-curricular activities. Personal development is satisfactory due to effective teaching and learning strategies, but these are too limited due to the teachers not encouraging students to be at the core of the process.

Students do gain self-confidence through enrichment lessons, such as the 'readers' club and the 'good cause' projects, but this is not the majority. Strategies used give them opportunities to work independently and together in an organised manner. However, most lessons do not use such strategies.

Students show respect for each other and their teachers because of the direct guidance they receive. They feel safe and secure and look after school property, their personal possessions and the cleanliness of the school. They are proud to be part of the first government school in Bahrain. This was confidently expressed by members of the students' council. Values are reinforced through historical materials, such as a picture of the first teaching staff and the "water heart" shape in the school yard, which contribute to increasing understanding of Bahraini culture and identity.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers have knowledge of their subjects. This is reflected in using effective teaching and learning strategies in addition to answering students' questions, which are based on knowledge and taking a logical approach in lesson planning, which enables students to acquire knowledge and concepts and meet lesson objectives. However, teachers' knowledge is not lifting students' performance above satisfactory because they are not adapting a sufficiently learner-centered approach. This is reflected in students' satisfactory rather than good achievement.

Most teachers managed their lessons effectively. They ensure the students' participation by being clear about learning goals and guidelines. Lessons end smoothly and according to plan, although occasionally they do run over time.

The majority of teachers use effective teaching and learning strategies, such as 'cooperative learning', 'discussion' and 'brainstorming'. In addition, in some lessons, they choose good resources, such as maps, learning cards, and projectors, especially in social studies, Arabic and mathematics, which attract most students to their learning. However, using a lecturing method in many lessons where the teacher is restrictively the centre of the educational process reduces students' participation and interaction. Students are given opportunities to work together and learn from each other, which was clear in some science and English lessons. However, the lack of clear differentiation and expectations about what different students might achieve reduces the effectiveness of the teaching in meeting lesson objectives as well as they might.

Students are given homework that is shown in the lesson planning. Individual differences are considered in some lessons and are monitored by most teachers through regular marking. However, some homework lacks feedback and grading.

Some teachers use effective individual and group verbal and written assessment where students' abilities are clearly challenged. However, it was not similarly effective in most lessons. Additionally, some teachers rely too heavily on individual and group verbal assessment, which does not give a clear indication to students about their learning and the next steps they should take.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school provides a set of various activities, programmes and competitions that broaden students' experiences and attract their interests such as the 'Globe' programme, 'Beautiful Cultural Corner' competition, 'Bahrain's Beauty in Arabic Letters' and 'Literature Text Analysis'. However, class activities in most lessons do not cater for students' different abilities well. Except in good lessons, which represent a quarter of lessons, students are able to learn the basic skills in Arabic, mathematics, science and information technology despite their different levels of ability. However, students were not able to master adequately the skills in most English lessons, which are needed for the next stage of their education.

The school has plans, programmes and activities that show how the curriculum is arranged and taught. Additionally, the school has action plans for the departments and for daily lessons. The effectiveness of these plans is satisfactory in meeting the educational and personal needs of students. Most lessons try to link subjects to life but the curriculum is not planned to facilitate this well.

Rights and responsibilities are understood as students express their opinions and give suggestions through the students' council, social guidance and school principal. Students express their devotion to their country by participating in national occasions, such as the festivals and other activities such as 'Cords for the country' and field visits to Yoko's Home.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Induction programmes ease new students' settlement and engagement into the school life. The school also conducts field visits to neighbouring secondary schools and gives guidance about the next stage of education.

Personal needs are met by providing a school uniform, school bags and winter aid. The findings of assessments and diagnostic tests are used to classify students according to their level to meet their needs, especially in Arabic where there are effective remedial lessons for the different students' levels in dictation, reading and diction. Students with learning difficulties achieved satisfactory progress in Arabic and mathematics because of the support they receive from the learning support specialist. The school provides various activities for outstanding and talented students, such as the mental maps, drawing and poetry activities. In addition, students participated in contests and local and external programmes which increased their self-confidence. However, the teaching strategies used did not meet students' educational needs according to their levels.

Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, the school communicates with parents in cases of absence and coming late. Guidance programmes for students helps solve problems facing students through advice, awareness and religious lectures on topics such as smoking and mouth hygiene to promote good behaviour and values. This contributed to good discipline. The health and safety committee maintain appropriate standards across the school.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school has a vision and mission that focus on nurturing a mature generation that is academically competent. These were created with the participation of both the administrative and teaching staff. This satisfactorily reflects on the school's educational practices. The school has an action plan that is based on the recommendations of the previous review. A SWOT analysis has helped inform, a self-evaluation guide, a development plan and the monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance. The plan was used during 2009-10, which resulted in limiting behaviour issues. However, the procedures implemented for self-evaluation are not comprehensive and accurate enough to ensure the achievement of more improvement.

The school inspires its members and provides them with continuous encouragement to achieve the school's vision and objectives, which is achieved by working with a united team spirit. The school has clear systems for rewards and incentives that are well used by the majority of teachers. The administration exert clear efforts to provide its teachers with support, especially new teachers. A policy of role delegation addresses shortages in its teaching staff.

The school encourages teachers to attend training programmes and workshops to develop teaching expertise. This includes cooperating with other schools and talented centres. In addition, the training needs for the teaching staff are identified and met through various professional development programmes, such as strategic planning, self-evaluation, differentiated learning, mental maps and exchange visits. However, the absence of middle management in some school sections such as the mathematics, English and Arabic departments is limiting the effectiveness of these programmes and the monitoring of their impact.

The school's use of its facilities and educational resources to serve the educational process is satisfactory. It is no better than satisfactory because the availability and use of rooms such as the e-learning room, science laboratory and learning resources room which are used inconsistently. Seeking the opinions of students and their parents and responding to them are satisfactory. This is done by surveys about the school's performance and examination schedule. The school received suggestions through various channels including the parents'

and students' council. Some of the suggestions the school has responded to include making a change in the study classrooms' distribution so as to suit the number of students, and decorating the school building. This is appreciated by students and their parents.

The school's main strengths

- Healthy school environment, which contributes to increasing students' enthusiasm, discipline and their commitment to looking after the school environment
- Enriching the curriculum by the effective use of the environment and educational resources
- Students' understanding of the Bahraini heritage and culture and respect for Islamic values
- Arabic department programmes, which contribute to improving students' progress and levels achieved in final examinations.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop students' basic skills especially in English
- use effective teaching and learning strategies that include:
 - developing students' higher level thinking skills and challenging their abilities in core subjects
 - using effective evaluation methods
 - providing students with opportunities for individual and cooperative work
 - catering for students different abilities
- develop an accurate self-evaluation mechanism for the various aspects of school work to determine, achieve and follow up with its priorities to achieve greater improvement
- address the shortage in human resources represented in senior teachers of Arabic, English and mathematics.