



الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Karrana Primary Girls School
Karrana - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 19 – 21 November 2012

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The Schools Review Unit

The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. 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		Karrana Primary Girls School											
School's type		Government											
Year of establishment		1989											
Age range of students		6 - 12 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1 – 6				-				-			
Number of students		Boys	-	Girls	739				Total	739			
Students' social background		Most of the students come from limited income families.											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	4	4	4	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Karrana											
Governorate		Northern											
Number of administrative staff		11											
Number of teaching staff		69											
Curriculum		Ministry of Education (MoE)											
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic											
Principal's tenure		6 years											
External assessment and examinations		NAQQAET's national examinations											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties	
		347				86			5			76	
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of senior teachers for Arabic and Islamic studies shared with another school in the academic year 2011-12. 											

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	1: Outstanding			
The school's capacity to improve	1: Outstanding			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	1	-	-	1
Students' personal development	1	-	-	1
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	1	-	-	1
The quality of the curriculum implementation	1	-	-	1
The quality of support and guidance for students	1	-	-	1
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	1	-	-	1

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: 1 Outstanding

The school's outstanding effectiveness reflects the efforts made to bring about improvements since being judged good in the previous review in 2009. All aspects are outstanding and the school receives high levels of approval from students and parents. Performance by Grades 3 and 6 in the national examinations is above or well above average, which reflects the students' outstanding achievement. This is due to the brilliant use of exciting teaching and learning strategies, in addition to the enthusiastic participation by students in lessons and their ability to take on responsibility and leadership roles. Various programmes enhance the curriculum and meet students' learning needs well, especially merge students and students with learning difficulties. Results from school self-evaluation are used well in strategic planning, which correctly focuses on training teachers and improving students' achievement.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school's capacity to improve has also improved. The school has used accurate self-evaluation of its educational practices and the various school activities to construct its strategic plan, from which have emerged the departments' academic plans with clear performance indicators. The internal improvement teams have implemented the plans effectively, which has led to excellent progress and outstanding achievement by different groups of students according to their various abilities. Students' leadership spirit and behavioural values are developed and supported well, because actions are thoroughly based on their learning and personal needs. The school constantly works on improving teachers' professional competency and the school's environment. The senior administration encourages team work, outstanding practices, positive change and collective responsibility in creating a productive future based on effective evaluation and consequent action.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Students in Grades 3 and 6 achieved great progress and high levels of performance in all core subjects from 2010 to 2012, reflected in their attainment in test and examination results over those years. In national examinations their levels were above and well above the national average, which reflects clearly their standards and progress in lessons across the school.

The students attained high pass rates ranging between 93.9% and 100% in all core subjects in the academic year 2011-12, which were commensurate with their high competency rates. This improvement reflects the students' high levels which exceed expectations, especially in outstanding and good lessons, which represent the vast majority of lessons, and in their written work. This is mainly attributed to effective teaching methods which aim to challenge students' abilities and improve their achievement. This helped them achieve proficiency in basic skills and to acquire speaking, listening and reading skills, particularly in English in the first cycle. Students also use mathematical skills in solving mathematical problems, Arabic skills well in reading and use syntax and rhetoric well in their creative writing. These skills help them participate effectively in related extra-curricular activities. Students acquire scientific and practical skills such as inference, interpretation and experimentation. Computer skills are gained and used in real life situations.

Students make consistently outstanding progress in the vast majority of lessons and in their written work in all core subjects in both cycles. From 2010 to 2012 pass rates in all core subjects are high and stable. Outstanding English performance in the first cycle is due to continuously effective use of varied activities that take students' different prior learning and standards into consideration.

Outstanding and talented students' make excellent progress inside and outside the classroom. They develop their scientific research skills through the 'Future Debates' programme. The students' performance in different competitions is outstanding because of enrichment programmes that challenge their abilities. Moreover, low achievers, merge students and those with learning difficulties make outstanding progress in lessons. Special education programmes and external competitions test advanced skills such as multiplication and writing. The high levels of achievement are attributed to the provision of effective programmes both inside and outside the classroom.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Students participate enthusiastically through interaction, debate, discussion and taking on leadership roles. This improves their motivation to learn and helps them acquire practical life skills to take on responsibility and express their opinions. Most students enjoy participation in the different activities and committees, such as the student council where they discuss different issues. These include educating students about examinations, training them on finding solutions for emergencies, medic-training on the provision of first aid and deciding participation in competitions. Merge students participate well in events which help develop their personalities and boost their self-confidence.

The vast majority of students are well behaved with high moral standards. They enjoy good relations with each other and show considerable respect for their teachers and colleagues. Such qualities improve their cooperation in different programmes. This is reflected in their highly mature behaviour and responsibility, evident in the care they show for school property, observation of the school's rules and regular and punctual attendance. This results in a collective feeling of peace and stability as everybody works in a safe, healthy and social environment.

The vast majority of students show a deep understanding of Islamic values and knowledge and understanding of the Bahraini traditions and culture. This is mainly attributed to their effective participation in religious events, festivals and national celebrations.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Teachers' familiarity with their study material is reflected in their enthusiasm in lessons, where they use a balance of outstanding introductory activities in different teaching situations according to their objectives and apply a variety of effective teaching strategies. These include brainstorming, cooperative learning and problem solving in mathematics, science and English. These are supported with motivating teaching techniques where the student is placed at the centre of the learning and teaching process. These motivate self-learning and reflect positively on their participation and achievement. Teachers use many of the various teaching resources well, such as the white boards, smart boards, data-shows and

educational cards. Such use has a great impact on the students' enthusiasm and their interaction with class activities.

Teachers run their lessons effectively and excel in providing class activities of different levels which have a positive impact on the effectiveness and productivity of lessons. They succeed in teaching the students concepts and knowledge and to acquire skills, especially higher order skills, such as inference, exploration and justification of answers in science, analysis and critical thinking in Arabic, estimation and interpretation of answers in mathematics, and scientific research and searching for alternative solutions in most subjects. This success is attributed to the challenge to students' abilities which helps widen their knowledge and creativity. Nevertheless, a few lessons are concluded somewhat ineffectively due to weaknesses in time management. Teachers provide effective support for students, especially low achievers, and motivate students through rewards and competitions. These have a positive impact on students' motivation, enthusiasm and enjoyment while participating in lessons.

The vast majority of teachers assign a variety of appropriate homework, such as projects and reports, in addition to enriching activities and various remedial programmes which enrich the students' learning experience. Students' progress is checked, their assignments are graded regularly and they are given feedback through motivating phrases which improve and enhance their performance.

Teachers use different assessment methods effectively. These include individual and collective, and oral and applied methods. Differentiated activities and practical assessment tests are used well. Teachers use the findings effectively in all subjects, from their day-to-day planning which is a school's policy to meet the different needs of students. This results in progress that exceeds usual expectations.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school provides numerous programmes which support the implementation of the curriculum and meet the different needs of outstanding and talented and low achieving students and those with special educational needs. The school develops students' talents and interests through various activities, such as journalism and research, in addition to participation in internal and external competitions. Its broadcast's cultural competition is a good example, which reflects the students' growing motivation and talents.

The school regularly reviews the curriculum through analysing its content and preparing summaries, booklets and enriching activities. It applies the curriculum in ways that ensure students acquire basic and life skills through their different learning stages. Acquired knowledge and skills are linked to real life and applied across different subjects based on a methodology that was created with great care, such as linking English and mathematics in 'Happy House'.

The school effectively develops students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities through school committees and national events and competitions, which result in exceptional values and a deep sense of citizenship. Its resources are used well to ensure a school environment which is motivating, for example the learning resources centre which helps students develop their basic skills in reading and research. The departments help enrich the school environment through educational murals and displays that celebrate students' works.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school inducts new students through exceptional programmes which include amusements, educational games, sports and songs. These help new students settle into the school community quickly. The school orientates Grade 3 students towards their next stage well, by taking them to visit second cycle classrooms. It cooperates with nearby intermediate schools to offer lectures and guidance for Grade 6 students in order to prepare them for their next stage of education.

Students' personal needs are particularly well met through the provision of financial and in-kind assistance, and lectures on girls' development and healthcare. Their different learning needs are met through diagnostic and scanning assessments and using the findings to prepare remedial and enriching programmes, especially for low achievers. Exemplary individual support for merged students and those with learning difficulties is provided, which is reflected in their progress that exceeds expectations.

The school communicates effectively and creatively with parents through newsletters news groups, open days and meetings. When students face problems, they receive exceptional care through regular counselling, lectures and projects, which ensure the development of their personal and behavioural traits. Risks are regularly assessed and dangers reduced. Policies are implemented, for example for the operation of the canteen, school buses are checked and students trained on evacuation, which provides a healthy, safe environment for all students.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Members of the school have shaped a vision based on raising students' achievement, which is transformed into practices and events. The school has a comprehensive strategic plan based on accurate self-evaluation and diagnosis of the school's situation. Both senior and middle administrations are aware of its areas of strength and those needing improvement. From this knowledge have emerged departmental plans, with clear performance indicators and timetabled implementation. The school's internal improvement team, technical committee and board of directors effectively participate in monitoring plans in order to achieve its general and specific goals with focus on academic achievement. This has contributed greatly to improving all areas of school's work.

Through performance analysis and assessment of class visits, improvements in teachers' professional competency have been achieved by providing high quality training workshops. Various mechanisms have helped middle management perform an effective role in measuring learning performance, where the teacher has increased their role as a mentor for the student-centered learning and has facilitated and simplified the acquisition of knowledge in many lessons. The school has recently begun working with their external improvement team, which ensures maintaining its outstanding performance.

School's administration lifts the faculty's enthusiasm and reinforces strong relationships among members, such as by honoring the Teacher of the Month, involving them in decision-making. It has delegated to some of them the English senior teacher's tasks and encourages staff to spread outstanding practices. These have improved the staff's motivation to change and take on greater responsibility.

The school invests its financial and educational resources well and uses its facilities in the teaching and learning processes effectively. This has brought about improvements in the students' experiences and better provision. This is seen in its motivating learning environment, such as when using the electronic classroom and science laboratory. The school seeks opinions of students and parents through questionnaires and their roles in the students' and parents' councils. The school entrusted the parent council with an effective role in discussing its situation and academic achievement, provided it with the opportunity to participate in school life and responded to parents suggestions to attend classes. Furthermore, the school has cooperative relationships with the local community, reflected in students' and parents' outstanding approval of its efforts.

The school's main strengths

- Use of comprehensive self-evaluation in strategic planning which focuses on important priorities such as the school's teachers training that is carried out according to their needs and reflected on their performance in classes
- Students' high standards of achievement, particularly in Arabic in Grades 3 and 6 and in English in Grade 6 as reflected in their acquisition of reading, speaking and listening skills, as well as scientific and mathematical skills
- Effective and enthusiastic participation of students in school life as well as their respect for one another during activities and cooperative work
- The diversity of exciting teaching strategies, varied assessments and outstanding use of teaching resources
- The outstanding programmes to enrich the curriculum and improve the different groups of students' experiences through meeting their learning and personal needs.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- spread outstanding practices more widely throughout the school and particularly assist educational institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain in elevating their learning outcomes
- manage time in a better manner in order to support outstanding performance in lessons.