



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Mariam Bint Omran Primary Girls School  
Muharraq – Muharraq Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 20 – 22 February 2012**

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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 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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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 nine 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

<b>School's name</b>		Mariam Bint Omran Primary Girls School											
<b>School's type</b>		Government											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1948											
<b>Age range of students</b>		6 – 12 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>			
		1 - 6				-				-			
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	-	<b>Girls</b>	568				<b>Total</b>	568			
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most students come from stable limited-income families											
<b>Classes per grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Classes</b>	3	3	3	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Town /Village</b>		Muharraq											
<b>Governorate</b>		Muharraq											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		34											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		44											
<b>Curriculum</b>		Ministry of Education											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		Arabic											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		Three months											
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>		Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training national examinations											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		-											
<b>Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>				<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>			<b>Physical Disabilities</b>			<b>Learning Difficulties</b>	
		136				130			1			51	

**Major recent changes in the school**

- A new principal was appointed for the current school year 2011-12
- The improvement partner commenced its work with the school as of this year.

## Table of review judgments 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	2	-	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3	-	-	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	2	-	-	2
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

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### Overall effectiveness

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

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

The school's overall performance has changed from good as judged in the previous review in March 2009 to satisfactory in this review. This is due to several challenges encountered by the school, the most important of which is the lack of stability in the teaching staff, linked to insufficient financial and human resources. Water and electricity interruptions adversely affect teaching and learning also. These factors give rise to substantial variations in the quality of teaching and limit the achievement of the various groups of students. Aspects are satisfactory, with the exception of personal development and curriculum implementation and enrichment which are good. Students are committed to behaving well and actively participate in extra-curricular activities as a result of the school's improved management. Students and parents are well-satisfied with the school.

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

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

The school faces a number of challenges that limit its capacity to improve. These include frequent changes in the teaching staff and a shortage of senior teachers. Although the school's senior leadership is aware of the main strengths and areas for improvement identified in its strategic plan, capacity to improve is no better than satisfactory. The plan covers several performance improvement programmes and activities such as those relating to improving students' personal development and their active participation in extra-curricular activities, but the lack of performance indicators and effective monitoring mechanisms hinder progress in improving teaching and learning. The role played by the senior leadership team, in cooperation with the improvement partner which commenced its activities this year with workshops for teachers, provides confidence that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Students' achievement

### □ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

#### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Grade 3 students' results in the national examinations for Arabic and mathematics for the years 2009 – 2011 were slightly higher than the national average. Grade 6 students' results in most core subjects were higher than national average, with the exception of Arabic in 2010 where students' results in both cycles were well above the national average. These overall results are therefore above average in terms of attainment and in line with students' satisfactory academic achievement when judged alongside their progress and skills acquisition.

Students achieved high pass rates in school examinations for the school year 2010-11 in core subjects. These high pass rates occur in most core subjects for Grades 1 and 2, whereas results vary in Grade 3 and second cycle classes, particularly in English. While high pass rates reflect the ability levels of most students in good lessons, which account for one sixth of all lessons, students do not demonstrate similar levels in satisfactory lessons which account for two thirds. The majority of students' acquire good arithmetic skills especially in Grades 4 and 5 and satisfactory scientific enquiry skills in Grades 5 and 6. Arabic and English language skills are acquired to varying degrees. The majority of students achieve appropriate levels in Arabic and English in the second cycle, but these levels dip in the first cycle.

Students' pass rate results from 2008 to 2011 are consistent in all core subjects in the second cycle, but declined in the first cycle, with the exception of English where levels remained unchanged. The majority of students make good progress in well taught lessons such as in mathematics in Grades 4 and 5 due to the variety of educational activities in which they are engaged. However their progress in the remaining lessons and in their written work is only satisfactory, particularly in English in the first cycle mainly due to inaccurate assessment.

The majority of excellent students achieve good progress that matches their abilities in extra-curricular programmes, whereas their progress in lessons and written work is only satisfactory, mainly due to the inconsistent challenge of their abilities. Students with learning difficulties make appropriate progress through the special education programme. Weaker students who are not on that programme do not progress at a similar pace, due to the inconsistent teaching support provided to them in lessons.



## □ How good is the students' personal development?

### Grade: 2 Good

Most students participate in school life actively and with enthusiasm by taking part in extra-curricular activities, including morning broadcast, school committees such as the 'Globe committee', cultural weeks, international events, 'Disabled Child's Day' and several external competitions in poetry and religion. On the other hand, students do not participate as enthusiastically in lessons. Their participation varies between cycles and they do not initiate questions and ideas enough.

Self-confidence is evident in most students who demonstrate good ability to work independently and take responsibility in extra-curricular activities. Students play a prominent role in maintaining order during morning line-up and breaks. Yet, only a few students have good self-learning skills. Most students attend school regularly and punctually, partly due to the school's effective measures and monitoring.

Most students are responsible in their behaviour in lessons and throughout the school by adhering to rules and caring for the schools' facilities. Most students also work appropriately together, respect each other's opinions and feel safe and stable. Most students show interest in understanding Bahrain's heritage and culture by participating in national festivals, such as the Bahrain First National Day's events and field trips to certain heritage sites such as Arad castle and oasis.

## The quality of provision

### □ How effective are teaching and learning?

### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and lesson plans that highlight different levels of objectives. They appropriately utilise educational resources, such as projectors, educational cards and models, and carry out interesting introductory activities to attract students to lessons. Teachers manage lessons well in terms of providing clear instructions about expected behaviour, which creates a learning and motivating quietness. Yet, only a few teachers use this effectively to make lessons productive. A limited number of teachers employ good teaching and learning strategies such as cooperative learning and role play, which are reflected in the majority of students' achievement and in their acquisition of skills, concepts and knowledge. This is particularly so in Arabic and mathematics in the second cycle. Meanwhile, the majority of teachers use teaching and learning strategies to

varying degrees of effectiveness. Question and answer methods often only gain limited answers and do not require thinking and so do not spark students' motivation and enthusiasm to learn. Teachers also offer support and encouragement which focuses on in-class activities that only target a specific group of students; which results in varying levels of acquisition of skills, particularly in English lessons in the first cycle. Students are not provided with adequate opportunities to develop higher order thinking skills, such as critical analysis and problem solving, except in good lessons where most students demonstrate the ability to draw conclusions, provide explanations and justify answers. Teachers do not receive sufficient information about students' previous achievements to help them draft objectives and design activities that meet students' needs.

Students are given homework suited to them and is marked regularly. Yet, in most cases, little feedback is provided to help students identify and correct their mistakes in order to achieve better progress.

Teachers check students' learning effectively in good lessons through verbal questions and written work, which is reflected in most students' progress and achievement. Assessment results are not used to plan activities that meet students' needs and support different categories of students effectively, particularly in inadequate lessons which are mainly in class teaching and in English in the first cycle, and represent one sixth of lessons. Inadequate management of time causes lessons to end without proper assessment of students' learning and progress.

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

**Grade: 2 Good**

The school develops a sense of belonging and citizenship in students and their understanding of rights and obligations, as in 'The Bill of Rights and Obligations', and the 'Children's Rights' festival. Students also participate in national events and competitions such as the 'My Beloved Country' competition. The school utilises and organises visits to the available nearby resources, for example the health centre and certain heritage sites. It also invites a member of the Shura Council to speak to the students. School corners contain artistic drawings and decorative and guiding educational aids, which makes an attractive environment and celebrate students' work. The class environments in the first cycle are better than those in the second cycle because the environment is enriched with educational aids that support the curriculum.

Students' interests in extra-curricular activities are developed well in activity classes, such as the Qur'an recitation classes, break time events and morning broadcast. The school presents the contents of the curriculum by covering an adequate range of experiences in lessons and translates its plans into enrichment and remedial programmes in core subjects. It also analyses some of its curricula, such as the second cycle mathematics curriculum, and has good plans that explain the order of curriculum contents and establishes links between subjects.

### □ How well are students guided and supported?

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

The school offers appropriate induction programmes for new students, where students join an induction week from day one. This features plays and educational songs which help students settle. The induction offered to students joining during the school year, particularly non-native speakers of Arabic, is not as effective. The school organises one-day introduction tours to Grade 4 classes and some parents state that the induction upon transition to the second cycle is inadequate. The school also organises a visit to the intermediate school to which Grade 6 students are going.

The school meets students' personal needs by providing school uniform and monitoring their personal development, but in an irregular manner. Extra-curricular programmes and activities, such as competitions, help meet the educational needs of talented students. Programmes offered to weaker students are not effective, due to varying degrees of support offered. Specialist teachers for students with learning difficulties provide adequate support.

The school updates parents on their daughters' academic and personal progress through periodic meetings and weekly newsletters. The school offers counselling classes and one-to-one meetings with students as needed.

Although the school building is old and there are some hazards pertaining to the safety of staff and students, the school effectively monitors safety issues and has trained its staff and students on evacuation and relevant issues.

## 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 developed its vision and mission in a participatory manner with teachers. It has focused on achievement and increasing professional efficiency. Yet, not everyone has translated this into practice. The management is aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, but this analysis focuses more on the availability of financial resources and facilities than the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. The management has exerted adequate efforts in self-evaluation of certain areas. A strategic plan containing sound objectives has been produced, but it lacks performance indicators that focus on raising academic achievement. Moreover, the implementation of programmes relating to teaching and learning are not adequately monitored. Mid-level leadership, despite the shortage in senior teachers, exerts efforts through class visits and exchange visits between teachers, only these have varying impact on the improvement of the teaching and learning processes.

The senior management inspires administrative and teaching staff by strengthening social relationships between them, encouraging them and promoting their enthusiasm and willingness to develop, but this does not produce clear results in lessons. The management also assigns some technical assistants to assist first cycle teachers and offers enrichment programmes in activity classes. Efforts are made to raise teachers' professionalism by organising educational workshops, such as the teaching and learning strategies workshop and introductory activities, but these have varying impact on teachers' performance.

The school uses its financial resources to support the educational process by utilising available educational facilities. The school suffers from frequent water and electricity interruptions which affect the educational process. Despite the lack of certain facilities, such as science laboratory and e-classroom, the school adapted rooms to these functions. Class teachers and Arabic language teachers use the e-classroom and learning resources centre more than teachers of other subjects. The school seeks the opinions of students and parents and responds to some of them within its resources, as in combining first cycle students with second cycle students at break-times. Communication with the local community is maintained by organising certain programmes, such as the students' guidance programme provided by the community service police and participation in events organised by the Municipal Council and Muharraq Governorate. The improvement partner commenced its programme in the school at the beginning of this year by offering certain professional development workshops, but the impact as yet is limited.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- Students' good personal development, represented by their self-confidence when participating in extra-curricular activities
- Commitment to good behaviour, which reflects students' awareness and keenness to work together in the spirit of cooperation
- The development of students' sense of citizenship and their understanding of rights and obligations
- Strengthening the bonds with local community institutions
- The induction programme for new students during the first week of study.

## Recommendations

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

- increase students' academic achievement, particularly in English in the first cycle
- develop teaching and learning strategies so as to include:
  - better utilisation of assessment results to meet students' educational needs
  - designing in-class activities that effectively develop critical thinking and problem solving skills
  - increasing students' independent learning skills
  - planning for links between subjects
  - providing better educational support for students of differing abilities.
- develop more effective mechanisms to monitor the implementation of strategic planning with performance indicators focusing on increasing students' academic achievement and improving teaching and learning
- Cover the shortage in financial resources, namely the science laboratory and e-classroom, as well as the shortage of senior teachers of English and mathematics.