



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Middle East Educational Schools  
Manama – Capital Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 24 - 26 October 2011**

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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>		Middle East Educational Schools											
<b>School's type</b>		Private											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		2001											
<b>Age range of students</b>		5-18 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>			<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>				
		1-6			7-9				10-12				
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	304		<b>Girls</b>	166			<b>Total</b>	470			
<b>Students' social background</b>		Middle class 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	2	3	2	1	2	1	2	1
<b>Town /Village</b>		Manama											
<b>Governorate</b>		Capital											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		16											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		35											
<b>Curriculum</b>		English National Curriculum/International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE)/Ministry of Education (MoE)											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		English/Arabic											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		1 year											
<b>External assessment and examination</b>		International General Certificate of Secondary Education IGCSE/Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS level)/Advanced Level (A level)											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		None											
<b>Number of students in the following categories</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>			<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>			<b>Physical Disabilities</b>			<b>Learning Difficulties</b>		

	87	9	1	-
<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>	Recruitment of 13 new teachers in the school Implementation of the e-activity programme for Grades 1-3 from 2011-2012			

## 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	2	3
Students' personal development	2	2	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3	3	3	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	3	3	3	3
The quality of support and guidance for students	3	3	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	3	3	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

Middle East Educational School's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Students' personal development is good. Even though students achieve well in High School, their achievement in the Middle and Elementary Schools across the core subjects is satisfactory and could be improved. Students achieve better in mathematics than in science, which is largely due to teaching and learning strategies that do not focus sufficiently on developing students' investigative skills in science. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The school has a well-conceived strategic plan that focuses on improving achievement, but monitoring the impact of teaching and learning is not bringing rapid and consistent improvement, therefore at this time leadership and management are satisfactory. For similar reasons, support and guidance and curriculum implementation are also satisfactory. Parents are well-satisfied with the school in meeting their children's needs.

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

#### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory because there are no major weaknesses in the school's processes for assuring and improving quality. Teaching and learning and students' progress in their academic achievement is satisfactory. The school's strategic plan has clear priorities and achievable targets. The action plan is also monitored and reviewed regularly. However, the school does not yet have a sufficiently rigorous and systematic approach towards monitoring the teaching and learning processes and newly implemented curriculum programmes. It has the support of the governing body, which contributes well to its development and to strategic planning. There are certain challenges for the school to overcome, mainly the limited resources and facilities.

## **Students' achievement**

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

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

Students' academic achievement is satisfactory in Elementary and Middle Schools, but good in High School. Lesson observations, students' work and the results of internal and external testing indicate that the majority of students meet the expected standards in the core subjects with higher performance in mathematics. Most students taking IGCSE mathematics secured A\* to C grades and the majority of students attain 80% and above in internal examinations, though these are not externally moderated.

Lesson observations and students' work indicate that students in the elementary and middle schools have sound basic skills in mathematics. Senior students confidently apply the knowledge and understanding, to solve various mathematical problems successfully. In Arabic the majority of students read a range of texts with fluency and good comprehension. Fifty per cent of a small group of students who took IGCSE in Arabic secured the higher A\* to C grades. However, most students show limited understanding and incorrect use of grammar when speaking and writing. In science students show sufficient subject knowledge. High School students confidently collect data and are secure in dealing with mathematical calculations while processing the data drawn from their scientific work. Although practical work is undertaken, students' investigative skills are insufficiently developed. In English, the majority of students can express their views effectively and confidently. A few elementary students' oral and written English is less well-developed and they use only limited vocabulary, as do many middle school students when writing descriptive paragraphs and stating their reason-based opinions. Most high school students confidently use a range of writing techniques and form well-sequenced plans for their writing about different topics. Overall, most students show satisfactory progress in the core subjects of Arabic, English and science, with better progress in mathematics.

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Personal development is good. Students attend school regularly and are punctual. They participate enthusiastically, taking part in a range of extra-curricular activities, for example the morning broadcast, scouts, and discipline and health committees. They play sports at the break-times. During these games, students take full responsibility for organising and leading each other. High school students also conduct extra classes in English for Elementary School



children after-school. As a result both groups of students develop greater self-confidence and improve their capacity to work independently. The ability of High School students to organise themselves is a strength of the school.

Most students can work together effectively, in pairs, groups and teams. They express their opinions and share their ideas cooperatively, showing respect for each other and different views. They behave in a responsible way, for example when participating in the student council. They make decisions and propose solutions for enhancement, such as modifying last year's internal exams' schedule, and they set the roles and responsibilities of student committees. Students feel safe and free of intimidation.

On the whole, students show a good understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture, including a sound appreciation of Islamic values. The school celebrates National Day and the student scout group takes part in the 'Bahrain 1<sup>st</sup>' event. Students also welcome Eid Adha with traditional practices.

## **The quality of provision**

### **□ How effective are teaching and learning?**

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

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The majority of teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well to extend students' learning. These teachers have an enthusiasm for their subject which often leads to high motivation in the students. However, in a small minority of subjects teachers have insecure subject knowledge, which leads to confusion and unsound learning by the students.

The majority of teachers plan lessons well, using a range of activities to enable students to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. Activities include, for example, practical work and oral exercises, individual and group work. Additionally, teachers challenge students to enable them to develop higher-order thinking skills. However, in a minority of lessons teachers do not use questioning techniques skilfully enough to enable students to achieve their full potential since students do not have the opportunity to respond to searching open questions that encourage them to reflect carefully on their work.

The majority of lessons are purposeful with students responding well to established routines. In these lessons teachers maintain firm discipline and make effective use of time to enable students to learn well. However, in other lessons, time is not managed well, which

often leads to a lack of pace in the lesson. As a result, students lose concentration and misbehave.

Differentiated tasks cater for the needs of learners. However, a minority of teachers do not do this nor provide effective one-to-one support for less-able students to enable them to make progress in line with their ability.

In the majority of lessons teachers use a range of teaching and learning methods to promote effective learning. For example in English, students have the opportunity to read poetry silently, followed by paired discussion and teacher-led questions and answers. Almost all students respond well to teachers using a variety of strategies and this enables them to refine and consolidate their learning. Across the school there are not enough classroom resources to further extend teaching strategies and students' learning through practical engagement with appropriate materials.

Teachers set homework appropriate to students' abilities; this enables students to consolidate and extend their learning. Teachers often refer to the learning objectives and assess their students work both orally and in their work books. Although written work is marked regularly, the marking does not tell students enough about what they need to do to improve.

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

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

The quality of curriculum implementation is satisfactory because the school provides an adequate range of subjects based on the English National Curriculum. Regular curriculum review leads to appropriate changes in the subjects to cater for students' different abilities. However, planning and monitoring of the English-activity programmes is too limited to ensure that content and skill development is well connected to other subjects. In a few lessons, teachers make natural links between subjects. However, there are no planned links between subjects to ensure coherence and enable students to make connections. Students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities within the school community is well developed, for example through opportunities to take on the responsible role of micro-teachers working with less able Elementary students after school. The student council organises fund-raising events such as a walkathon and bazaar.

Students are appropriately prepared in most subjects. However, there is limited development of practical and investigative skills in science and an over-emphasis on

theoretical understanding in computer technology. The school offers a range of special events which are well attended, such as sports and competitions. However, there are fewer opportunities for all students to participate in regular extra-curricular activities to promote wide-ranging interests. The bright and welcoming campus has sports and shaded areas and these are further enhanced by students planting trees in celebration of Tree Day.

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

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

Support and guidance are satisfactory. The social worker helps new students settle into school but there is no induction process for new students joining during the year. The school evaluates students' progress appropriately through diagnostic tests at the beginning of the year to determine their learning needs. These are analysed and remedial sessions are provided to groups of students who have not achieved the expected levels. Lesson planning addresses students' different learning needs inconsistently. Although the social worker supports students who approach her, the school lacks a clear mechanism to better meet the personal needs of all students. The school takes care to identify behavioural issues and takes appropriate action through the school's students' discipline policy. Class teachers provide interventions and the social worker and supervisors are readily available with advice and guidance. The school prepares students well for the next stage of their higher education through visits to universities, lectures, hosting representatives from the Al Amal Institute for Educational Services and through guidance from teachers. Parents are regularly informed of their children's progress through many channels. Students and staff work in an acceptably healthy and safe environment, but the school has not yet conducted an evacuation drill this year.

### **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 senior leadership and the staff share a clear vision that is well focused on developing creative lifelong learners. This is clearly evident in the most successful lessons but is yet to be realised consistently throughout the school. The staff feel supported and motivated by the senior leadership through various means. For example, teachers are rewarded at the end

of the year with appreciation certificates and an increase in salaries has been recently introduced.

The school's three year strategic plan, which was set last year, is based on the results of a thorough analysis of the school's situation. An action plan sets targets to achieve the objectives and the school monitors certain aspects of the plan. However, other aspects of the school's performance have not been rigorously evaluated, such as the implementation of the English Activity programme and teachers' performance. Professional development is presented to teachers based on analysis of lesson observations. Workshops have been conducted on assessment and differentiation.

The school's environment is welcoming and attractive and the grounds are well-maintained despite the facilities being a little old and the classrooms small, restricting students' movements and learning, particularly in the lower grades. The school also has a swimming pool that is only being used by the kindergarten and students from Grades 1 to 4. Although the school praises the governing body for the availability of the learning resources, they make little use of these in lessons. Furthermore, the computer and science laboratories are insufficiently used to enhance students' learning.

The school seeks and responds to students' views through the student council. For example, the school has organized a camp and a carnival in response to their views. It also seeks and responds to parents' views and concerns. The school has links with the local community as students participate in various activities such as Think Pink and the Walkathon.

The governing body and the general manager have well-defined roles and responsibilities. The governing body is supportive and contributes well to the school's development. For example, it recently approved an improvement in the transportation system without any additional fees to students. It also holds the school accountable through oversight of the school's strategic planning and annual reports.

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

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- The school's strategic planning which is well-based on the results of a thorough analysis of the school's situation
- The well-defined roles and responsibilities of the governing body and its contribution to the overall development of the school
- Students' obvious respect for each other and their harmony and enjoyment around the school
- The attention given to maintaining a welcoming and attractive environment around the school grounds
- Preparing students well for university entrance and their future destinations.

## Recommendations

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

- use self-evaluation results more rigorously in improvement planning, especially the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning
- challenge students more and in line with their abilities and develop their reasoning and investigative skills, particularly in science
- provide and make more effective use of school resources to facilitate students' learning
- plan for links between the different subjects to ensure a coherent curriculum and enable students to apply their knowledge and skills across subjects
- monitor students' academic progress and personal development more systematically
- make better use of available data to plan lessons which cater for different students' abilities and interests and help to raise their attainment and improve their achievement.