



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Modern Knowledge Schools
Al-Ghuraifa – Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 17 – 19 October 2011

Table of Contents

The Schools Review Unit.....	1
Introduction	2
Characteristics of the school	2
Table of review judgements awarded	4
Review judgements.....	5
Overall effectiveness	5
Students' achievement.....	6
The quality of provision	7
Leadership, management and governance	9
The school's main strengths	11
Recommendations	12

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		Modern Knowledge Schools (MKS)												
School's type		Private												
Year of establishment		1995												
Age range of students		5-17 years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High				
		1-6				7-9				10-12				
Number of students		Boys	969			Girls	656			Total	1625			
Students' social background		Middle to upper social backgrounds												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	5	5	4	4	4	6	6	6	7	7	10	9	
Town /Village		Al Ghuraifa, Manama												
Governorate		Capital												
Number of administrative staff		25												
Number of teaching staff		109												
Curriculum		American curriculum K-12. In Grades 9-12 an American Diploma and the International Baccalaureate (IB) programme. All grade levels follow the Ministry of Education Arabic, Arabic Social Studies and Islamic Studies curricula												
Main language(s) of instruction		English												
Principal's tenure		16 Years												
External assessment and examination		California Achievement Test for Grades 6&7, PSAT, ACT, SAT, EXPLORE, PLAN												
Accreditation (if applicable)		From December 2010, MKS received 5 year renewal of accreditation N-12 from Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools												

Number of students in the following categories	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented	Physical Disabilities	Learning Difficulties
	-	-	-	-
Major recent changes in the school	During academic year 2008-09 the boys and girls were integrated into a middle school programme and a separate campus was designed to support the developmental needs of the middle school child			

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	2	2	2	2
Students' personal development	2	2	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2	2	2	2
The quality of the curriculum implementation	2	2	2	2
The quality of support and guidance for students	2	2	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	2	2	2	2

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: 2 Good

The Modern Knowledge Schools' overall effectiveness is good because it performs consistently well across the different aspects of its work. The majority of students meets or exceeds the expected standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science as a result of effective teaching and learning that is carefully planned to enhance students' understanding, knowledge and skills. The good personal development is a result of the effective support and guidance provided as well as the opportunities given to participate enthusiastically in school life. Students enjoy whole-school events and the diverse range of educational experiences and subjects offered by the school. The leadership, management and governance are good because of the commitment and drive of senior leadership to school improvement. Parents are pleased with the school's work.

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

Grade: 2 Good

The school's capacity to improve is good, mainly because of the commitment to and belief in the school's motto, Making Kids Successful. Senior leaders and staff are prompt in their responses to bring change and improvement. Team work is a key strength. The superintendent shares decision-making well. Staff are efficiently deployed with a dedicated and well-informed educational consultant for curriculum development. Rigorous self-evaluation is carefully linked to improvement planning. Benchmarking against international standards has been helped by the Middle States Association accreditation process and IB authorisation process. Furthermore, detailed strategic planning with on-going monitoring provides clearly prioritised goals and actions. Well-developed systems track students' performance and inform planning to ensure that the good progress and standards of the students are maintained and enhanced.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 2 Good

Lesson observations, students' work and the results of internal and external tests indicate that the majority of students meet or exceed the expected standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In the Elementary School, the vast majority of students attain 80% and above in internal examinations, in all the core subjects. Analysis of *EXPLORE* results indicate that Grade 8 students' performance is close to the given national average and is better in science than in mathematics and English. The IB Diploma results indicate that the average scores in the majority of the core subjects are in line with world averages, with biology Standard Level well above the world average.

Most students have good communication skills in English and are confident in expressing themselves clearly, using extended vocabulary. They can read a range of texts in all subjects with expression, fluency and good comprehension. Students show good understanding of key concepts in science and in mathematics. Most students show sound scientific knowledge. They confidently handle apparatus, collect data and are secure in dealing with mathematical calculations while processing empirical results. In mathematics, most students apply their knowledge and understanding skilfully, when constructing and interpreting graphs. Senior high school students achieve a high level of understanding with sophisticated discussion of 'Theory of Knowledge' ideas. However, in a minority of lessons in all grades, students' reasoning and enquiry skills are less effectively developed.

Most students show good progress in almost all the core subjects and most senior high school students show outstanding progress in English. In Arabic, although students' reading and speaking skills are satisfactory, they use writing and grammar skills with less confidence and they make slow progress overall.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

The personal development of students is helped by effective provision. Students' attendance is high and they are punctual, influenced positively by the school's system for recording and monitoring absence and lateness.

They participate enthusiastically and work together well. They enjoy whole-school events, such as carnival day, and for high school students, a range of extra-curricular activities.

Students' motivation is high, they ask and respond to questions, share their ideas readily and work collaboratively in pairs and small groups.

Students are confident independent learners, The majority have developed good research skills appropriate to their age. Opportunities to develop self-confidence and responsibility are well taken. There are many examples. High school students run a very effective student council and they take part in the international Model United Nations conference. In the Middle School a peer-mentoring reading scheme with Grade 1 students is effective and in the Elementary School older students take responsibility for a playground 'safety patrol', which includes helping students to co-operate as part of a community.

Students are well behaved, feel safe and show respect for each other and school property. They have positive relationships with each other and their teachers. Most students have a clear understanding of Bahrain's heritage, culture and Islamic values. A range of opportunities to develop this includes visits to local heritage sites, celebrating National Day and citizenship lessons.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 2 Good

Most teachers have good subject knowledge and show enthusiasm. They present students with clear explanations and examples to illustrate points of learning, and have effective class management with well-organised lessons. In the best lessons, teaching is carefully planned to enhance students' understanding, knowledge and skills. Students are encouraged to participate actively. They are motivated by appropriate incentives in Elementary School, and praised for their good achievements in the Middle and High Schools. In IB lessons, teaching places a particularly strong emphasis on the development of higher order skills giving students opportunities to use problem solving, reasoning and analytical skills. Throughout the school, teachers promote independent thinking, imagination and creativity, for example the practice of critical reading in English and other subjects, and the opportunities given to students in extended writing. In most lessons, students of different abilities are challenged through open activities that cater for most students' interests and abilities. Support is also provided to low achievers to overcome their difficulties. However in less effective lessons, planning and teaching do not sufficiently match the different abilities of students. Consequently in these lessons students are not sufficiently challenged or supported to make the expected progress.

Teachers use a range of effective strategies in the majority of lessons, where, for example, students have opportunities to take an active part in their learning. In the most successful lessons, students are engaged, highly productive and clearly show their enjoyment. Open discussions are a strong feature and ensure the participation of most students with opportunities to express their points of view. Lessons generally involve whole-class teaching. However, some lessons, particularly in the Elementary School, use group-work very effectively to encourage students to work together. Similarly, high school students enthuse and interact well when making presentations to their classmates. Students are assigned homework which not only provides practice for work started in lessons, but also consolidates their learning, for example in completing research projects in the Middle and High Schools. Effective assessment is used in the majority of lessons where students are assessed regularly and immediate feedback is given. Written work is regularly marked but with limited written comments to help students improve their work. In those very few less effective lessons, students' class work is not regularly checked and teachers depend too heavily on limited assessment techniques.

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

Grade: 2 Good

A diverse range of experiences and subject choices are provided. The number of IB subjects offered has steadily increased and the school is again offering IB certificate courses. The curriculum is reviewed on annual and five year cycles, with areas for improvement identified and comprehensive objectives set for raising students' achievement, particularly in Arabic. Links between subjects are explored so as to provide a coherent curriculum. However, the school has not yet developed a K-12 curriculum map which would help identify more opportunities.

The school's 'Stop and Think' programme cultivates good relationships and sets clear expectations for students' contributions to the school life. Helpful course selection guidance is provided in the Middle School and in Grade 10. The curriculum promotes authentic learning related to real life experiences, which prepare students well for entry to further and higher education and to the work force. The High School's extra-curricular programme offers a wide range of inter- and intra-school sports and activities. Students take responsibility through the senior student committee and the student councils. Elementary and middle school students have only limited access to extra-curricular activities.

In the Elementary and Middle Schools, most classrooms provide lively learning environments whilst the IB Community Action and Service (CAS) programme provides rich

and varied opportunities to enhance students' awareness of local society and the environment.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade2 Good

Support and guidance are good with outstanding features. The school has a warm, friendly atmosphere where students are well-known by staff. New students follow a good orientation programme and settle-in quickly. Students receive highly sensitive support, which includes counsellors employing effective monitoring procedures for each student's personal development and offering individual and group, counselling. Students know that there is someone there to listen to them and act on their concerns.

There are robust procedures to assess and track students' academic progress. These include effective use of 'Admin-Plus' software to monitor and identify students who are doing well and those under-achieving. Respective students receive commendations or invitations for after-school support to enable them to achieve expected progress. However, the analysis of data is not always used well to inform lesson planning, especially given students' differing abilities.

Guidance about students' future educational options is outstanding. Students are informed about the requirements of universities at an early stage, receive help with their portfolios, have the opportunity to attend a wide range of university and college fairs and meet international university representatives at school. Parents are well informed about students' progress. An efficient on-line system enables everyone to keep up-to-date. Students' progress reports are also sent home regularly. The school is a healthy and safe environment because of good maintenance and risk assessment procedures.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 2 Good

The school motto, 'Making Kids Successful' is enthusiastically shared and promoted by senior leaders and teachers. The school's vision is clearly articulated with a sharp focus on

students' achievement, personal development and responsibility to society. Self-evaluation is thorough and firmly linked to improvement planning. All aspects of the school's provision and performance are regularly evaluated and all members of staff are able to contribute. The school has well-developed systems in place for the collection and analysis of student performance data, which are used well to inform decisions on curriculum development. Strategic planning is detailed, includes prioritised actions, and distinct responsibilities with regular review. The planning shows the school's strengths and areas needing development, with a realistic commitment to continuous improvement.

Well-qualified and experienced teachers are recruited and provided with regular professional development activities. The teacher appraisal process varies across the schools, from short weekly drop-in visits to less regular formal lesson observations. The outcomes from these processes are used effectively to prioritise whole-staff development needs. However, the management of teachers' performance lacks sufficient rigour to identify areas for improvement in individual teaching practices, with subsequent well-targeted professional development and monitoring.

Resource allocation is well planned to meet the needs of the curriculum and schemes of work. For example, the IB programme and science laboratories are well resourced and care has been taken to prioritize upgrades to technology. In the Elementary School additional materials to support the use of selected textbooks and programmes are provided. Restrictions imposed by increased student numbers and small classrooms are identified and plans are advanced to build a new high school campus on adjacent land, already purchased.

The school responds positively to parents' views, which it actively seeks through the Parent Teacher Association. Student feedback is also considered important. Through the councils, students have influenced the choice of field trips and helped bring about an increase in middle school extra-curricular activities. Outstanding links are developed within the community, with committed charity involvement which enriches students' understanding of their responsibilities to the community. The Board has a strong commitment to its role, with members giving knowledgeable strategic guidance, effective support and sound advice to the school leadership. A comprehensive structure, including meetings and reports, ensures the educational leaders are held accountable for the school's performance.

The school's main strengths

- The commitment and drive of senior leadership to school improvement
- Students' good behaviour and enthusiastic contributions, which lead to their good personal development
- The outstanding and highly sensitive support provided to students
- Students' use of well-developed communication skills in English
- Good classroom management
- The diverse range of educational experiences and subjects offered.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- use rigorous systems of performance management to identify teachers' needs and link these carefully with their professional development and subsequent evaluation of impact on learning
- use assessment more effectively in lessons to better inform planning and teaching, to cater for the different needs of all students
- ensure that the best teaching practices are shared by teachers between subjects and schools
- give increased attention to the provision of Arabic language, including the implementation of the curriculum and particularly focusing on improving the use of grammar and writing.