



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Al Muharraq Secondary Boys School
Al Muharraq - Muharraq Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Dates Reviewed: 19 – 21 April 2010

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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 body set up under Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008 amended by Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. It was established to raise standards in education and training.

The SRU is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in schools
- Establishing success measures
- Spreading best practice
- Making recommendations for school improvement.

Review involves monitoring standards and evaluating the quality of provision against a clear set of indicators. The Reviews are independent and transparent. They provide important information for schools and the Ministry of Education about strengths and areas for improvement in schools to assist in focusing efforts and resources as part of the cycle of school improvement in order to raise standards.

Review grades are awarded on a four point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
Outstanding (1)	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all respects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.
Good (2)	This is the norm which is expected and describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
Satisfactory (3)	This describes a basic level of adequacy, there are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what students, or significant groups of students, achieve. Some features may be good.
Inadequate (4)	This describes situations where there are major weaknesses which affect the outcomes for students.

Introduction

Scope of the Review

This Review was conducted over three days, by a team of eight Reviewers. During the Review, Reviewers observed lessons and other activities, examined students' written and other work, analysed the school's performance data and other documents, and talked with staff, pupils and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Information about the school

Gender of students: Boys

Number of students: 720

Age range: 16 – 18 years

Characteristics of the school

Al Muharraq Secondary Boys School, founded in 2000, is one of the Muharraq Governorate schools. The age range in the school is from 16 to 18 years, and there are 720 students. Most students come from middle-income families. Students are distributed across 24 classes: eight classes for each of the tenth, eleventh and twelfth grades. Each of the classes in the eleventh and twelfth grades has the following tracks: five commercial, two scientific and one for literature (Arts). The school has identified 38 students as outstanding, 16 as gifted and talented and three as having learning difficulties; seven students have a physical disability. There are 67 teaching staff and 36 administrative and technical staff. The Principal is in his second year at the school. The school lacks senior teachers in English and Science and has no gifted and talented specialist or learning difficulties specialist. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The effectiveness of Al Muharraq Secondary Boys School is inadequate. Students and their parents, however, are broadly satisfied with the school.

Students' academic achievement is inadequate. Students achieved levels below the expected in almost half the observed lessons, where ineffective teaching and learning methods were used. Most students achieve high pass rates in ministry examinations but students' real levels in most lessons are not high. Students make little progress in most lessons: the activities they are given do not meet their learning needs and neither teachers nor students have high expectations. A few of the lower-achieving students make appropriate progress when joining remedial classes. Outstanding students are not offered appropriate programmes to develop their talents and make limited progress. Students with learning difficulties do not receive sufficient care and make inadequate progress.

Students' personal development is inadequate. Most students attend throughout the academic year but a majority of them arrive late in the first and last weeks of an academic semester, as shown by the school's computerised attendance records. Students are not given sufficient opportunities to be effectively involved in lessons and few of them participate fully. Only a few students take part in extra-curricular activities, such as sports competitions. These activities are not having a clear impact on their personal development. Students' higher-thinking skills are only developed to a limited extent in lessons. Although a high proportion of students feel safe in the school there is some inappropriate behaviour, such as truanting and smoking, especially in bathrooms during the break.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is inadequate. Almost half the observed lessons were inadequate. The inadequate lessons were equally distributed across all core and commercial subjects and were more prevalent in English lessons. Most teachers do not translate their subject knowledge into effective teaching and learning strategies. Most class activities lack differentiation. Students are not given sufficient opportunities to work together and learn from each other. Although homework activities are assigned, they too lack differentiation. Assessment methods are not used effectively to meet students' learning needs. Little use is made of assessment results in planning for learning in lessons.

The quality of curriculum delivery and enrichment is inadequate. The school promotes students' sense of citizenship appropriately by celebrating national events. Some extra-

curricular activities are provided but they do not involve a large number of students and do little to enhance their experience. Most teachers use an instructional style of teaching that does not help students' acquisition of basic skills in most subjects, particularly in English. The school uses its community service stream to make improvements to the school's environment. Educational aids and displays are appropriately posted at the school entrance and in some, but not all, classrooms. The school fails to provide a motivating learning environment. The lessons provided in creativity clubs have limited effectiveness in meeting students' various interests.

The quality of support and guidance for students is inadequate. The school provides an appropriate induction programme for new students. Its efforts to prepare grade 12 students for university or employment are insufficient, however. The school meets students' personal needs satisfactorily. The results of diagnostic testing are not used effectively in most lessons to meet students' learning needs. Most remedial classes have limited effectiveness. The school only provides some advice and guidance during guidance periods and these sessions have had little effect on reducing students' inappropriate behaviour. The school communicates with parents through various channels including sending a descriptive report to parents to keep them informed of their sons' progress. Although the school takes appropriate measures to ensure students' safety, some hazards remain, such as electric wires without appropriate covering.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate. The school has a vision that focuses on achievement, but not all teaching staff were involved in developing the vision and it is not reflected in most teachers' practices during lessons. The school's strategic plan is new and not clearly implemented. The strategic plan is based on an evaluation of the school's position, which identifies areas for improvement, and analysis of students' results. The school does not make sufficient use of the findings of self-evaluation and analysis of results to improve students' achievement in lessons. Top management issue directions about teaching and learning processes at meetings but most of these directions do not end up being implemented in the classroom. Most staff are not sufficiently inspired to give of their best; most of them resist change, especially the school's job discipline measures. Although the school organises a number of professional development workshops, such as differentiation in teaching, the impact of such workshops on teaching practices is not clear. While the school seeks the views of parents and satisfactorily responds to them, it does little to seek and respond to the students' views. The students' council is not effectively employed.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The school has inadequate capacity to improve. It has made some recent improvements such as introducing a computerised system to record and monitor students' attendance and punctuality and measures to control teachers' job discipline. It has also made some improvements to the school environment and has produced an accurate analysis of students' results starting from the previous academic year.

The school's leaders identified some areas for improvement through self-evaluation, particularly in terms of teaching and learning strategies, but have had limited success in bringing about improvement. Although the school's leaders have issued many directions and instructions and built an educational plan focusing on continuous diagnosis, their success in changing the school's real situation is poor. Similarly, although the school's strategic plan has clear objectives it has had very little effect on improving teaching and learning and academic achievement.

The most important challenge facing the school is to bring together all the staff to share a vision to improve the performance in classrooms and raise students' achievement.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Results in ministry examinations
- Students' attendance
- Developing students' sense of citizenship.

Areas for development

- Management Style
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Taking individual differences into account
- Basic skills, particularly in English
- Assessment methods and use of its results
- Developing higher thinking skills
- Students working together and learning from each other
- Monitoring the impact of professional development programmes
- Students' behaviour management strategies
- Support for various categories of students
- Involvement of staff in formulating mechanisms to implement school's policies.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Draw on external support to carry out the required performance improvements, particularly in the classroom
- Develop varied and effective teaching and learning strategies that focus on:
 - Taking individual differences into account in lessons and homework assignments
 - Developing basic skills, particularly in English
 - Involving students and engaging them in lessons
 - Developing students' higher thinking skills
 - Providing sufficient opportunities for students to work together and learn from each other.
- Make use of assessment results to effectively meet students' learning needs
- Provide more effective programmes to enhance the abilities and skills of various categories of students
- Ensure higher involvement of staff in formulating mechanisms to implement school's policies
- Devise more effective mechanisms to monitor the impact of professional development programmes on lessons
- Develop more effective strategies to manage students' behaviour
- Fill the shortages in human resources such as senior teachers of English and Science.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate
Students' academic achievement	4: Inadequate
Students' progress in their personal development	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4: Inadequate
The quality of the curriculum delivery	4: Inadequate
The quality of guidance and support for students	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	4: Inadequate