



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Oqba Bin Nafea Primary Boys School
East Riffa - Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 29 November - 1 December 2011

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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 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 ten 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		Oqba Bin Nafea Primary Boys School											
School's type		Government											
Year of establishment		1995											
Age range of students		6-12 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1-5				-				-			
Number of Students		Boys	873	Girls	-				Total	873			
Students' social background		Limited-Middle class											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	6	5	6	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		East Riffa											
Governorate		Central											
Number of administrative staff		23											
Number of teaching staff		60											
Curriculum		Ministry of Education											
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic											
Principal's tenure		1 year											
External assessment and examination		National Examinations, QAAET											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the School's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties	
		200				15			-			70	

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has a new principal and two deputy principals from the beginning of the current school year 2011-12• A number of technicians were appointed in the current school year• Approximately 50% of the core subject teachers were replaced by new teachers in the current school year• Four social workers were appointed in the current school year.
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Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	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	2	-	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	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: 3 Satisfactory

Although overall effectiveness remains unchanged at satisfactory, compared with the previous review in February 2008, several aspects have improved from satisfactory to good, including personal development, support and guidance, the quality of curriculum and leadership, management and governance. New strategic and action plans have been formulated based on an accurate analysis of the school's situation. There is now effective acquisition of basic skills in core subjects by most students, except in English. Good support for students has brought a slight improvement in their achievement.

The school organises programmes, events and competitions to promote students' self-confidence, to take on responsibilities and to improve their behaviour. These enhance the good relationships among them and their personal development. As a result, behavioural problems have declined. Accordingly, both students and parents are pleased with the school.

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

Grade: 2 Good

The school's capacity to improve changed from satisfactory in the last review to good. This is attributed to the clear vision and mission statements and the senior leadership team's awareness of the strengths and areas for improvement. Moreover, the school's plans set specific goals to improve performance. Teamwork is evident in the implementation of the recommendations of the last review, particularly regarding the use of various teaching strategies and the development of students' high-order thinking skills. Teamwork is also evident in the shaping of the safe and motivating learning environment, rectifying some unacceptable behaviour in cooperation with parents and the encouragement of students to take part in activities. This has raised the students' personal development despite the challenges resulting from moving around 50% of the teachers of core subjects.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of students attain high pass rates in most core subjects such as science and English in the first and second cycles, but less in Arabic in the first cycle. Proficiency rates vary in the two cycles; the lowest in Arabic in the first cycle, and mathematics and science in Grade 5, but better in science and English in Grades 1 and 2. Such rates are reflected adequately in the students' performance in most lessons, but less in English due to the use of inconsistent teaching methods that limit the acquisition of basic skills of the majority of students. However, students' performance in good lessons, that represent one third of lessons, are better as demonstrated in Arabic in the first cycle, and science and mathematics in the second cycle. This is directly linked to the good teaching methods that take into account students' individual differences whilst challenging their abilities as well.

Students' reading skills are good in Arabic, but less developed both in writing and numeracy. Additionally, writing skills in English are inconsistently developed, while in English, IT skills are well developed compared to other core subjects.

Students' results over the last two years indicate that they made adequate progress in both cycles, but better progress is made in Cycle 1. This also matches with the proficiency rate for most core subjects. Despite the fact that students progress well in good lessons, they make slower progress in their written work as a result of variation in the quality of teaching.

Outstanding and talented students achieve the expected level of progress according to their abilities in good lessons. This is due to the effective support and guidance given to them and the differentiation of activities that challenge their abilities. Students with learning difficulties and low achievers make progress that is inconsistent, which depends on the levels of their abilities and the quality of teaching in lessons.

In 2009-2011 national examinations, Grade 3 students achieved levels that are above the national average in mathematics in 2010 and 2011, but lower than the national average in Arabic.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

Students attend morning assembly regularly and are punctual to lessons; clear procedures exist to deal with late arrivals and absences. They participate enthusiastically in the internal

classes and extra-curricular activities. These activities include competitions and school committees such as 'Young Journalist Committee' and 'Open Dialogue Committee', where they discuss some school problems like misbehaviour and provide suggestions through brain storming. They freely express their views and take on leadership roles such as the appointment of a student in charge of late attendants. In addition, they effectively participate in good lessons due to the use of various interesting teaching strategies that enhance their participation, self-confidence and assuming of responsibilities.

The majority of students respect each other inside and outside classrooms, when they work together or during performing activities and programmes. This is evident when a group of students work with the help of parents on the 'Behaviour Programme' which is reflected in the decline of misbehaviour amongst them all over the school.

Students enjoy taking part in Bahrain's heritage, culture activities and events, in addition to the publication of wall paintings and posters about leadership. They also participate in some religious programmes such as 'Prayers', which are reflected in developing their religious values and understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers have good subject knowledge. It is reflected in their performance and enthusiasm in the use of various teaching strategies in the best lessons, such as brain storming, learning through play, dialogue, discussions, electronic presentations and collaborative learning. This has a clear impact on students' participation, enthusiasm and their motivation towards learning, and contributes to their acquisition of knowledge, skills and understanding. Some teachers provide support and care for different categories of students by marking their written work in lessons and enhancing their values, particularly in the first cycle. This has an appropriate impact on their rates of progress.

The least effective lessons vary in their presentations. They are mainly teacher-centred and focus on conveying knowledge only. This has reduced students' participation, which affects their acquisition of basic skills, especially in English.

Lessons are well-managed by the majority of teachers, except for few inadequate lessons in which some teachers lose control of students' behaviours due to poor class and time management. Students' higher thinking skills are developed in good lessons as teachers

focus on the use of justification, interpretation, composition, classification and problem-solving strategies. Teachers also challenge students' abilities, such as in some lessons which are class-taught and other subject specialist lessons in the second cycle, for example the interpretation of the phenomenon of acid rain in science. However, this is less developed in the remaining lessons, and reflects on the majority of students' slower progress.

Students are given homework activities by the majority of teachers. Such activities are differentiated enough and feedback is given to students to correct their mistakes and determine their strengths and weaknesses. However, such homework activities are insufficient when assigned from some of the satisfactory and inadequate lessons.

Despite, this the majority of teachers use various assessment methods, such as oral and written questions, and individual and summative assessments that take students' individual differences into account in good lessons, such assessment methods are not as effective as in the remaining lessons. Oral questions focused on measuring recall and knowledge skills only are neither sufficient in meeting students' individual differences nor in checking the achievement of the learning objectives in many lessons.

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

Grade: 2 Good

Students' sense of citizenship is developed by the good curriculum. Students participate in various activities such as 'the design of the world's longest card' by students' paintings dedicated to the King of Bahrain. They take part in National Day festivals, such as 'We are all Hamad', signing the 'Oath of Allegiance' in broadcasts and in posting national displays such as 'Candles of the Nation'. This is well reflected in the students' understanding of their rights and duties. Moreover, students take part in extra-curricular activities such as a 'Tennis competition' and 'Press Caricature', in which the school gained first position, and in a visit to Bahrain's International Air Show.

The school also enhances the enrichment and remedial activities in most of the second cycle subjects, and Arabic in the first cycle. This has a positive impact on improving the performance of students. Furthermore, the school enriches its environment with displays of students' work and educational aids. These help to celebrate students' achievements. The school uses its educational facilities effectively, particularly the learning resources centre and the e-classroom. The curriculum implementation methods enable the majority of students to acquire the skills required for the next phase of education. Links between

subjects are sufficient to convey knowledge and strengthen students' experiences; however, links are better in the second cycle than the first cycle.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 2 Good

New students are inducted successfully through recreational and educational programmes and settle quickly. Students in Grades 3 and 5 are introduced to the next phase of education through visits to the neighbouring schools.

Students' learning needs are diagnosed through the analysis of diagnostic tests in the core subjects. Support and guidance is provided to students with learning difficulties and remedial classes are conducted for low achievers in mathematics. Outstanding and talented students are challenged through their participation in competitions, events and 'open dialogue' club. This is variably reflected in their academic achievement.

The school is characterised by its meeting of students' personal needs and provision of cash and in-kind aids through its continuous communications with the local community. Students' behavioural problems are carefully monitored and corrective actions are taken. Furthermore, some behavioural programmes such as 'I Challenge You' are organised and contribute to limiting such misbehaviours. The school regularly communicates with parents through different channels, such as open days, and provides them with reports on their children's progress, achievements and personal development.

Security and safety issues are regularly assessed through the organisation of awareness programmes and events such as 'Fitness' and 'Oqba Nutrition' programmes. The maintenance of school facilities and buildings, and the training of students and teachers in evacuation procedures help provide a safe environment.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 2 Good

Clear vision and mission statements that focus on excellence are shared with teaching staff, students and their parents. Informed by this vision and mission, the school develops its

strategic and operational plans, which contain clear objectives to develop the school's overall performance. The school accurately assesses its educational practices, events and programmes through questionnaires and analyses the results. This makes the senior leadership team well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It also conducts SWOT analysis and uses its results in developing action plans that are consistent with the strategic plan objectives and priorities to realise more improvement and development. These actions are well-reflected in the students' personal development and enrichment of the school environment. Teachers' professional development is conducted through a number of training programmes and workshops like 'mental maps', 'transfer thoughts to projects' and 'higher order thinking skills'. In addition, observation visits to teachers and exchanges of internal and external visits to disseminate good practice among teachers are made. These are reflected in the levels of performance of teachers, but not enough in English lessons.

Senior leaders inspire staff and motivate them to develop through delegation of powers to senior teachers and by filling the gap in middle management. Success is mirrored in their satisfaction and contributes to forming a family environment in which staff work as a team.

The school uses its various facilities effectively, such as the learning resources centre and electronic classroom. However, the science laboratory is utilised less well and this has a negative impact on the acquisition of students' practical skills.

The school regularly seeks the views of students and their parents with regard to its services through questionnaires and a parents' council where discussion occurs about issues including students' behaviour and achievement. It also responds to their suggestions as much as it can, for example the organisation of 'Karate Art', 'Dialogue Club', and 'Penalties Procedures'.

Communication is carried out with the local community regularly by participating, for example, in the external activities provided by Shaikhan Al Faresi Centre in Handicapped Day festival, and BDF Hospital. In addition, it continuously follows up the education-related issues in cooperation with the Chief of Schools.

The school's main strengths

- Strategic planning based on previous review recommendations and accurate self-evaluation of the school's priorities
- Use of the school environment in enriching the curriculum and celebrating students' work
- Students' good behaviour resulting from the various and effective programmes
- Students' self-confidence and taking on responsibilities when they participate in various activities and events.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- disseminate good practices to develop teaching and learning strategies to include:
 - students acquisition of basic skills in core subjects, particularly reading and writing in English
 - providing support and guidance to raise low achievers' academic achievement in lessons and outside classes
 - using assessment to improve learning and inform lesson planning to cater for various students' needs.
- measure the impact of professional development programmes on teachers' performance in the classroom, particularly English and in some class-teaching
- address the shortages in human resources, namely senior teachers of Arabic and mathematics, in addition to a specialist for outstanding and talented students.