



الهيئة الوطنية  
للمؤهلات وصفاان جودة التعليم والتدريب  
National Authority for Qualifications &  
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

# **Schools Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

**Pakistan Urdu School**  
**Isa Town - Central Governorate**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 17 and 20-22 January 2013**

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## The Schools Review Unit

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The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. 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 4 days, by a team of 15 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>		Pakistan Urdu School											
<b>School's type</b>		Private											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1956											
<b>Age range of students</b>		6-18 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>			
		1-3				4-8				9-12			
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	1,016			<b>Girls</b>	907			<b>Total</b>	1,923		
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most come from low and middle 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>	6	4	5	5	5	7	6	6	8	7	7	7
<b>Town /Village</b>		Isa Town											
<b>Governorate</b>		Central											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		49											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		184											
<b>Curriculum</b>		Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Islamabad, Pakistan (FBISE).											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		English											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		2 years for each of the senior, junior, and primary school principals.											
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>		FBISE Examinations, Islamabad, Pakistan.											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		Not applicable											
<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>		
		260				50		None			None		
<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The separation to 3 schools each with its own principal</li> <li>• Reviewing the curriculum of grades 1 to 8</li> <li>• New facilities such as the auditorium, senior school science and computer laboratories.</li> </ul>											

## Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate			
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	4	4	4	4
Students' personal development	3	3	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	4	4	4
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: 4 Inadequate

Although attainment and standards are satisfactory overall, progress in lessons and academic achievement are inadequate because of ineffective teaching. In too many lessons, teaching focuses too much on repetition, does not properly check students' understanding and gives little opportunity for students to engage in their learning. This reflects the limitations of the professional development programmes for teachers. Nonetheless, students are well-behaved, self-disciplined, and show high regard for others. The curriculum for Grades 1 to 8 has been reviewed and is being changed. Students are supported when they have problems. The top management team, along with the board of trustees, is effective in strategically planning for the school by using self-evaluation. However, pedagogical leadership is under-used and there is insufficient involvement of staff, parents and students. The majority of parents and students are satisfied with the school.

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

#### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school has been making significant changes in recent years. These have included building a high standard of facilities, restructuring the whole school into three separate schools, and reviewing the curriculum. These changes are a result of effective strategic planning and self-evaluation that involved the board of trustees and the top management team. Although they are successful in improving the infrastructure, they are not so successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning inside classrooms. Despite the challenges that the school is facing, such as low salaries, the school has dedicated and loyal teachers who have positive attitudes towards change. Budgeting does not focus enough on the training needs for teachers to improve in lessons. Nonetheless, with the right re-prioritising, the school has the capacity to make the necessary improvements through the principals' leadership.

## **Students' achievement**

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

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

Most students from Grades 9 to 12 attained a pass rate of 33 per cent or more in most core subjects in the FBISE examinations in 2012. The school's records indicate that the percentage of students attaining the pass rate on board examinations is higher than other overseas schools. However, standards in lessons are inconsistent and generally below those expected. The competency rate is higher in Grades 9 and 10 than in Grades 11 and 12. In internal examinations, the pass rates are high for Grades 1 to 8, with the minimum being 88 per cent. Standards inside classes are not good enough and achievement overall is inadequate. Nevertheless, in English, the majority of students have good speaking and listening skills. They confidently express themselves and read fluently in different subjects. In Urdu also, students achieve age appropriate skills in primary and senior school and they are able to read at grade level. However students' grammar and writing skills in Urdu and English are not sufficiently developed throughout the school, since they mostly rely on memorization rather than understanding. Students study Arabic from Grades 1 to 8 only. Their standards are below expectation and they have poor Arabic skills, both as first and additional language learners. In mathematics, the majority of students acquire basic skills and concepts throughout the school. However, the majority of students lack understanding and they are unable to apply their skills and knowledge to solve problems. Similarly in science, students' standards are below those expected and students' have limited capacity to apply practical and investigative skills because these are insufficiently developed.

Board examination results have remained largely stable over the past three years with the exception of mathematics in the Grade 9 arts stream which shows a significant decline in 2012. However, students' progress during most lessons and their written works is limited due to ineffective teaching and learning strategies. Students' achievement is inadequate in almost half the lessons, particularly in science and Arabic. Additionally the progress of low and high achieving students is limited because teaching does not sufficiently differentiate in ways that suit their different learning needs.

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

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

Most students behave in a mature and responsible way. Mutual respect and appreciation of each other and their teachers prevail. They are committed to school rules and this is reflected

in most students feeling secure and safe. Most students participate adequately in school life, where talented students participate in activities and competitions such as cricket, sports days and theatrical activities. However, their enthusiasm, contributions and self-confidence in lessons varies. There is enthusiastic involvement in good lessons, especially English, but personal development is no better than satisfactory because in most other lessons students have limited interest, especially ineffective science lessons where too few opportunities are provided for cooperative and independent learning. The majority of students attend school regularly and are punctual to lessons.

Students who participate in the school committees, such as the Students' Council and the prefects who responsibly control student behaviour, show leadership, enjoy self-confidence, and the ability to work independently and this is reflected in the peaceful and welcoming atmosphere of the school. Nevertheless, a minority of students insufficiently develop skills of working in group and the capacity to work independently in lessons. Most students show appropriate understanding of the culture of Bahrain and Islamic values; through celebration of national occasions, their enthusiastic chanting of the National Anthem and participation in Quran and Hadith competitions.

## **The quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

In the majority of lessons, teachers' choice of methodology and of teaching and learning activities does not sufficiently meet the different needs of students. However, most teachers demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge, and in the most effective lessons good subject knowledge is reflected in clear explanations, especially in English and mathematics. Teaching mostly focuses students on repetition and memorisation. Over-reliance on copying from textbooks and boards leads to limited learning experiences and little or no opportunity to practise and develop skills and understanding. In only a few most effective lessons teachers use open-ended and probing questions, such as 'how' and 'why' questions, and most teaching requires choral responses which allows only extremely restricted opportunities for students to give opinions, think creatively or justify answers.

Students' self-discipline contributes to orderly lessons throughout the school. Nevertheless, ineffective use of time in too many lessons and limited learning objectives contribute to a lack of purpose and productivity, with students completing set tasks and sitting with no extension activities, and lessons finishing before time. Teaching mostly focuses on one ability level and fails to identify students capable of more demanding work. This leads to



insufficient challenge for many students, especially high achievers. Additionally, in most lessons, teachers provide insufficient encouragement and support, particularly for low achievers. Teachers' expectations of students' potential to participate in lesson activities are frequently too limited. For example, in a language lesson, the teacher asks questions yet does not wait for students to answer, but provides the correct response.

Teaching centres on the teacher rather than the students, with strategies and resources that are too restricted. Utilising resources are mostly ineffective. Lessons mainly rely on whole-class instruction with few opportunities provided for students to work independently or in collaborative groups. Primary and junior students have little or no access to science laboratories and appropriate practical work in classrooms, which seriously constrains opportunities to develop practical, investigative and research skills.

Homework is unsystematic and inconsistently applied. Almost all homework tends to be pre-reading, copying from the textbook or completing exercises. Assessment in lessons is mainly verbal and rarely used to diagnose students' learning needs. Marking of workbooks is inconsistent. Almost all students' work is identical, and little constructive feedback is given by teachers.

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

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

The school offers a range of appropriate subjects that prepares students for higher education. However, curriculum implementation in lessons does not sufficiently meet the educational needs of all groups of students, especially the high achievers. Additionally, limited programmes are provided for low ability or gifted students. The school develops a sense of citizenship among students and furthers an understanding of their rights and responsibilities by providing opportunities for older students to participate in the students' council, discipline committee and charity events. The school's facilities provide an appropriate learning environment and students' work, from science, English, computer studies and Urdu is celebrated throughout the school. However, there is under-use of local resources, such as curriculum-related field trips which are restricted to one per year for each grade level. Links across subjects are not planned and occur only incidentally in lessons. The curriculum is enhanced through a broad range of extra-curricular activities, for example sports activities, speech contests, short plays and general competitions. These activities help develop students' expertise and interests, however are not available regularly to all students. The school has reviewed the curriculum from Grade 1 to 8. The planned new curriculum,

submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval, will be linked with the International General Certificate for Secondary Education.

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

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

An informal induction system involving teachers and counsellors helps new students to settle successfully into the school environment. The school lacks effective procedures for monitoring students' academic progress and personal development. Although support is properly provided for severe cases, not all low achievers receive extra help or coaching classes. The school has an effective approach to managing students' behaviour, which is reinforced by the suitable counselling process whenever needed. Rare incidents of misbehaviour are promptly resolved and students feel secure in approaching their teachers and counsellors who sensitively support them when they have problems. Parents are appropriately informed about their children's academic attainment through diary notes and phone calls, as well as scheduled parent-teacher meetings after each terminal examination. Although senior leaders make arrangements to advise students about streams and subjects that they select in Grades 8, 9 and 11, guidance provided to students regarding their employment is not enough. The school is safe and frequent checks are made to ensure that its buildings and equipment are secure, well maintained and clean. The school has not conducted an evacuation drill recently, but plans to do so.

### **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's caring approach impacts positively on the retention of many loyal staff. The school's mission focuses strongly on students' attainment and ethical values, and this is reflected in their well-disciplined conduct.

Strategic planning is informed by the results of school self-evaluation. Resulting actions include a new senior leadership structure with the creation of three school principals, a planned change for the Grades 1 to 8 curriculum and expansion of the school's

infrastructure. However, there is too little emphasis placed on pedagogical leadership, with minimum involvement of parents, students and staff in self-evaluation and improvement. The strategic aims are clear and guide changes, but the implementation of better teaching and learning strategies is inconsistent. Subject coordinators are not delegated with sufficient responsibilities to ensure their effective involvement in improving the quality of teaching. Lesson observations do not promptly indicate specific areas for improvement in the quality of teaching and learning during lessons, which contributes to the on-going use of ineffective teaching methods in a significant percentage of lessons.

Teachers are recruited and appropriately deployed by the Academic Committee which takes into consideration their qualifications and demonstration lessons. They are provided with some professional development in order to share good practice within subjects and throughout the school. Despite the training conducted on teaching methods for primary teachers, the impact is very limited in lessons.

Budgeting is carefully focusing on developing the infrastructure, such as the auditorium and senior school science laboratories. However, there is insufficient allocation to meet the needs of teachers' training and development. The school is responsive to parents' comments and complaints, providing prompt and positive action, for example terminating a teacher's contract when necessary. The school lacks enough mechanisms for seeking the views of parents and students. There are links with the local community, such as contributions to nearby schools during graduation ceremonies and participation with the Pakistani Club and Pakistan Women's Club in National Day celebrations. The Board of Trustees, along with its Academic Committee, clearly understands its role and is active in making valid contributions to the school's strategic planning. The principals and the advisor of the school are held to account for the school's performance through regular meetings to discuss the school's performance including students' results and improvement plans.

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

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- Well-disciplined, well-behaved students with high respect for others
- Students feel safe and secured
- A high standard of facilities such as the auditorium, laboratories for senior students and sports accommodation.

## Recommendations

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

- raise students' academic achievement and progress during lessons, with a focus on:
  - developing skills in Arabic across the school, and Urdu for the middle school classes
  - practical and investigative skills in science.
- provide a budget for teachers' continuous professional development programmes in order to improve:
  - the use of assessment to identify and meet the different learning needs of all students
  - teachers' skills in using a wider range of learning strategies
  - the level of academic engagement, with challenge and support for all students.
- ensure greater pedagogical leadership, systematic tracking and monitoring of students' achievement.