



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Roqaya Primary Girls School
Qalali – Muharraq Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 26 - 28 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 eight 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		Roqaya Primary Girls School											
Year of establishment		1960											
Age range of students		6 - 12 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1- 6				-				-			
Number of Students		Boys	-		Girls	597		Total	597				
Students' social background		Majority of girls come from middle income families with a settled background											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	3	4	3	4	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Qalali											
Governorate		Al-Muharraq											
Number of administrative staff		20											
Number of teaching staff		60											
Curriculum		Ministry of Education											
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic											
Principal's tenure		One year											
External assessment and examination		QAAET national examinations											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the School's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties	
		103				25			-			47	

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appointing a new principal in the previous school year 2010/11• 11 new teachers joined the teaching staff in the current year• Opening the first floor in the new academic building for the fourth grade classes in the current school year.
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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
Students' personal development	2	-	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2	-	-	2
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: 2 Good

The school's overall performance changed from satisfactory in the previous review in November 2008 to good in this review. The school achieved good in all areas of work and has the approval of students and their parents for the services it provides. The educational practices reflect noticeable improvements in teaching and learning and the effective assessment methods used in lessons and extra-curricular activities. These practices support the curriculum, which contribute to raising the level of performance of most students academically and personally. This is attributed to several factors, most importantly the working-team spirit, effective teaching and the continuous follow-up of activities, and programmes with self-assessment. Priorities are identified accurately based on the previous review recommendations, which clearly reflect in the improvement in the school's overall performance.

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

Grade: 2 Good

The school's capacity to improve was good in the previous review. Despite the shortage of senior teachers and the addition of 11 new teachers, the school's leadership is aware of the areas of strength and those needing development. It is aware of the priorities required to raise the school's overall performance. A comprehensive strategic plan based on accurate self-evaluation focuses development based on these priorities. The plan includes performance indicators relating to all areas of the educational process, especially teaching and learning. Social relations among the school community have improved, reflected in the performance of teachers who support change. It is seen in their contribution to the enrichment of the environment and use of facilities. This capacity contributes to future progress in academic levels and students' personal development.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 2 Good

The students from both cycles achieved high pass rates in the school examinations of 2010-2011 in all subjects. The rates were between 90% and 100% and were commensurate with proficiency rates in both cycles, but higher in the first cycle, especially for the first grade students. The achievement of the majority of the students in more than half of the lessons is good because of effective teaching methods which consider their individual differences in class activities and written work. The students' acquisition of the reading and writing skills in Arabic, arithmetic skills in mathematics, skills in IT and grammar are particularly good in sixth grade because students are given opportunities to develop these skills during learning. However, their skills in English are not as good, especially in the second cycle.

Monitoring students' results over three consecutive years shows that the high pass rates are stable in most subjects in the first cycle. They are better in the second cycle in mathematics, and are stable in science and Arabic. In English pass rates are lower in both cycles. The majority of students make good progress in lessons and in their written work. Most students are able to master the basic skills in English, especially in the first cycle. However, their progress in English in the second cycle is generally satisfactory because the support they receive varies too much and the consideration given to individual differences is not enough.

Students with learning difficulties achieved good progress based on their abilities in the special education programme. This is attributed to the effective support they receive. However, the progress of lower achieving students is not at a similar level due to the varied support in lessons. Majority of outstanding and talented students make good progress throughout the lessons, in their written work and in enrichment activities, because they are challenged well.

Third grade students achieve levels slightly above the average in the national examinations throughout 2009-2011, except for mathematics which is within the national average in 2011. Sixth grade students achieved levels above the national average in all primary subjects and especially in Arabic.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

Students attend regularly and punctually and the school follows up the limited cases of coming late effectively, which has a positive impact on discipline.

Most students are enthusiastic and enjoy contributing to school life. They participate in leading morning assemblies. They take part in recess activities and competitions, which give them opportunities to develop their self-confidence. They demonstrate responsibility and good skills in working independently because of the opportunities to take leading roles in committees, such as the 'Young Nurse', which is responsible for giving first-aid when needed. Students work together well in different situations. This contributes to improving their ability to express their opinions and provide suggestions, such as choosing trip locations and areas for agriculture at the school.

Students have good relations among each other and with their teachers based on mutual respect. They observe rules and look after the school. Students' positive behaviour is reinforced by implementing several projects, such as the 'Limiting behavioural issues' project, which build students' feelings of being safe. Students show good understanding of the Bahraini culture and heritage, gained through several activities and committees such as 'Belonging and citizenship' and 'Folk games', in addition to celebrating national events. Islamic values are observed and promoted by projects such as 'Our Prophet values'.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 2 Good

The majority of teachers are familiar with their study material as reflected in their lesson planning and the various effective teaching and learning strategies they use. These include learning by playing, discussion, dialogue, acting and story-telling, which result in raising students' academic achievement. Cooperative learning techniques are effectively used in most lessons, which give students opportunities to learn from each other and contribute to them take leading roles. Most teachers use the available educational resources effectively, such as the smart board, cards, illustrations, models and live examples. These resources contribute to attracting most students effectively towards their learning.

Most of the teachers manage lessons effectively and the lesson time is used to achieve the learning outcomes. This creates an atmosphere conducive to effective learning and to students' good acquisition of the basic concepts, knowledge and skills in most subjects. However, students' acquisition of English skills is not at a similar level to that in other subjects. Teachers pay special attention to motivating and encouraging students verbally and using rewards, which has a clear and positive impact on their participation in the various educational activities. Most of the teachers adopt teaching methods which take into consideration the differences among students by using various explanations and activities

based on their different levels of understanding. Students are given several opportunities in which their abilities are challenged, such as research and exploration, especially for outstanding students in mathematics. Such opportunities contribute to meeting students' needs and achieving the expected outcomes. However, challenging the abilities of lower achieving students is varied in and across lessons.

Teachers employ various assessment methods in most lessons such as verbal and written questions in order to make sure that students' achieve the objectives of the lessons. In addition, the findings of assessment activities and examinations are used to determine students' levels to meet their different educational needs. Students are given a proper amount of homework which is previously determined in the lesson plans and is regularly followed up with regular correction, verbal encouragement and feedback. This is especially good in mathematics, which results in improving the majority of students' performance. However, the homework which is given to students in the other subjects varies too much in terms of the quality of differentiation and marking.

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

Grade: 2 Good

Good expertise is used in implementing the curriculum. The curriculum implementation provides various activities such as the weekly activity classes, the morning assemblies, and students' committees which promote students' interests. Programmes are well suited to students' needs, such as the enrichment in computer subjects that contribute to students' acquisition of the basic skills required for their next educational stage. These skills include those for personal, reading, writing, arithmetic and IT, meanwhile English is to a less extent. Links between subjects are good in the first cycle, such as those between science and Arabic. These enable the students to study a connected and logical curriculum. The curriculum is continuously reviewed. It is monitored for its content and how well it fits students' different needs. This contributes well to the preparation of remedial and enrichment materials.

Students' understanding of their rights and duties is promoted through implementing rules, and promoting positive values. The school instils a spirit of citizenship through students' participation in national events such as the 'Bahrain Nour El-Ein' festival, field visits to the Bahraini national museum and by taking part in local events.

The school environment is enriched with 'living walls' that display students' work. It uses facilities well and participate in local event with the community, to enrich students

experiences, such as the use of the sports hall for the complementary elections of 2011, which has created a motivating learning environment that encourage citizenship.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 2 Good

New students receive effective induction programmes which include hosting cartoon characters and puppet-plays, which help students to settle. The school organises educational meetings for parents and conduct the 'Girls' Secrets' and 'Shore of Wishes' programmes for the sixth grade students, which enhance their personal awareness and readiness for their next stage of education.

The school identifies and meets students' personal needs, such as providing them with school uniform. The findings of the diagnostic tests are effectively used to prepare remedial and enrichment programmes for students, such as ones given by the learning difficulties specialist for the relevant students and the follow-up by the excellence and talent specialist through the 'Court', 'talent' and research programmes. The school develops students' talents in drawing and poetry through contests and exhibitions. However, the programmes for lower achieving students are not at a similar level because of the varied support they receive in lessons.

Parents are informed of their daughters' academic and personal development through educational meetings and regular reports. They also participate in implementing effective guidance programmes, which promote good behaviour among students. The safety and security committee regularly checks maintenance of the school's facilities and arranges practices on evacuation drills. It provides health and nutrition information during the safety and security week, which contributes to the school members feeling safe and secure.

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 has a vision and mission that focus on academic achievement and raising teachers' professional competency to ensure creativity and distinction in learning. The vision

and mission, collaboratively developed by all groups in school and parents, are clearly reflected across the school.

The strategic plan is based on diagnosing the school situation with priorities based on the recommendations set by the first review and the findings of the school's accurate self-assessment. These have been used in planning and developing teaching and learning strategies resulting in a significant improvement in students' achievement.

The school holds training programmes and workshops to raise teachers' professional competency, such as strategic planning and how to prepare various activities to develop students' higher level thinking skills. Class visits are used to monitor and assess teachers' performance and the impact of training on their practices. Further, exchange visits are organised in order to share expertise and spread good educational practice. The impact of these is evident in teachers' performance in two-thirds of lessons.

Senior leadership motivates members of the administrative and teaching staff effectively. This is achieved by delegating responsibility and shared decision-making, such as adopting the middle leadership suggestions on planning, monitoring and implementation of training and leading professional development. As a consequence the school community is motivated towards change and development and takes responsibility in this regard.

The school uses its educational facilities effectively, especially the learning resources centre and the e-learning classroom, which contributes to raising students' academic levels. The financial resources are also used effectively to meet students' different educational needs.

The school explores the opinions of students and their parents regarding its provision and responds based on the available resources. An example of this was the response in turning the Parents' Council into the Mothers' Council, which resulted in the participation and contribution of all its members. The school is connected to the local community in a fruitful manner in order to enrich students' educational experiences, such as cooperating in the 'Diyar Al-Muharraq' project by planting spaces to make them green. It also contacts cooperating schools under the 'improvement associate' to exchange teaching expertise.

The school's main strengths

- The strategic plan and monitoring its implementation
- Making use of the middle leadership role effectively, delegating responsibilities, making shared decisions and training
- Students' acquisition of basic skills in most core subjects, especially mathematics and Arabic
- The students' self-confidence and sense of responsibility in most lessons and extra-curricular activities
- Effective use of teaching and learning strategies and the various educational resources used in most lessons
- Induction programmes provided for new students and preparation for the next educational stage
- The school environment with rich boards that promote learning, behavioural and health values.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- spread best practices further across the school
- develop teaching and learning to a better extent, so as to ensure:
 - students' acquire the basic skills in English, especially in the second cycle
 - students improve creative, critical and analytical skills in Arabic and science
 - more variety is added to homework that meets students' individual differences.
- direct more attention to extra-curricular activities and student support programmes according to their different educational levels, inside and outside of class, especially in the second cycle.