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

Schools Review Unit
Review Report

Saad Ibn Abi Waqas Primary Boys School
Hamad Town - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 4 - 6 May 2010

Table of Contents

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 six 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: 574
Age range: 6-11 years

Characteristics of the school

Saad Ibn Abi Waqas Primary Boys School is one of the Northern Governorate schools and was founded in 1996. The age range in the school is from 6 to 11 years, and there are 574 students. Students are distributed across 21 classes: 11 classes for the first cycle, nine classes for the second and one merged class. Most students come from limited-income families. The school categorises 29 of its students as talented and creative, 170 as outstanding and 67 as having special educational needs; two students are physically disabled. There are 56 teaching and administrative staff. The headmistress is in her third year at the school. The school has a shortage of senior teachers for core subjects of the second cycle. 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: 3 (Satisfactory)

The overall effectiveness of Saad Ibn Abi Waqas Primary Boys School is satisfactory. It has good aspects in its leadership and management, curriculum enrichment and delivery, and support and guidance for students. Students and their parents are very satisfied with the school's services.

Students' academic achievement is satisfactory. Students' high pass rates match their proficiency rates in the first cycle, and, to a lesser degree, in the second cycle. In lessons in most of the core subjects, however, students' attainment varied; teaching and learning processes were inconsistent, especially in English where students' levels were below the expected. Students have made significant progress in school examination results over the past three years; their progress in lessons and work assigned to them, however, is no more than satisfactory, except in Science and Mathematics, where students make good progress. Students of the merged class reach levels in line with their abilities, assisted by the support they receive. The school provides appropriate remedial lessons to lower-achieving students and enriching lessons to higher-achieving students, which contribute to raising the achievement level of students from different academic categories.

Students' personal development is satisfactory. Most students attend school regularly and punctually; the school takes appropriate action in cases of absence and frequent lateness. Students participate enthusiastically and effectively in the school's activities, committees and indoor and outdoor competitions, which increases their self-confidence and ability to take responsibility, yet boosting student self confidence was evident to a lesser extent in some lessons. Students were less enthusiastically engaged in observed lessons, however, as they were not given enough opportunities to assume leading roles and develop their personalities. The teacher tended to be at the centre of the educational process in lessons. Students are given suitable opportunities to develop analytical thinking skills in some lessons, especially in Science and Mathematics. Some students act in an aware and responsible manner in and outside lessons; they take care of the school's property and behave well with each other and with their teachers. Classroom management is sometimes ineffective and students are sometimes not controlled properly during the break. Most students feel safe and secure; the school deals quickly and effectively with poor conduct.

The quality of teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. The teaching and learning processes are not consistently effective at the school, which affects the academic achievement of students. In the effective lessons, teachers use a variety of teaching and learning strategies and challenge students' abilities whatever their academic level; this helps to increase students' motivation for learning and helps them make progress that matches their ability. Some teachers used technology in observed lessons, which created a sense of excitement and increased students' enthusiasm. In less effective lessons, an instructional style is usually used and students are often just recipients of information. The teachers' good management of the class and of time in some effective lessons contributed to the meeting of class goals and to students making progress academically; in less effective lessons, however, where the pace of the lesson was slow, teachers often did not finish what was planned and there was confusion in the class. Some teachers use varied assessment methods to ensure that students achieve the lesson goals, but in other lessons questions are often superficial and do not allow students to demonstrate the extent of their understanding. Most homework is the same for all students and does not consider their individual differences.

The quality of curriculum enrichment and delivery is good. The school provides students with suitable opportunities to develop their self-confidence through a range of extra-curricular activities in both cycles and the school's various committees and indoor and outdoor activities; this helps to broaden their experiences and develop their different interests. Students' sense of citizenship is developed through participating in national festivals and events and setting up citizenship corners in some lessons. In addition, the school creates a curriculum-enhancing environment through its use of guidance and educational display boards and celebrating students' work in the school corridors. The curriculum is delivered in a way that enables linking between the different subjects appropriately, especially in some of the first cycle lessons. Students acquire appropriate basic skills in reading and writing Arabic, Mathematics and Information Technology (IT) but their skills in English are not at the same level.

The quality of guidance and support for students is good. The school diagnoses students' personal needs and meets them well; for example it offers financial support and a breakfast meal. Students' educational needs are met appropriately through remedial lessons to students in both cycles, as well as the necessary support for students in the merged class, all of which help them make progress. The support provided to students in lessons varies in its quality, in line with the varied quality in the teaching and learning processes. The school inducts new students so as to make them feel part of the school community easily. Students are regularly given support and guidance through lectures and programmes that promote positive conduct and help reduce unwanted behaviour. The school uses a range of methods to communicate with parents, such as setting aside office hours and providing weekly bulletins. It works well to provide a safe environment for staff and students by proper monitoring of risks and communication with the concerned parties about existing risks such as slopes in the school ground.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The school has a shared vision that focuses on achievement, the effect of which was clear in the good classroom practices in the school. The school's leaders are well aware of its strengths and areas for development. It performs accurate self-evaluation, which forms the basis for the school's current plan that has helped to improve the school's work. The impact of the plan can be clearly seen in the school's curriculum enrichment, extra-curricular activities and the level of support and guidance for students; the plan, however, lacks performance indicators. School staff are inspired to give their best: the school offers incentives and rewards and an 'Employee of the Month' programme, all of which the teachers appreciate. Teachers' training needs are suitably identified and they have participated in internal and external workshops to raise their professional capacity; the impact of this training is not, however, evident in the performance of all teachers. The school gives special attention to the new teachers, providing a comprehensive programme to raise their professional competency and monitoring their performance in lessons. The school delegates powers appropriately to cover its teaching shortages; some teachers are given the authority to act as coordinators in some departments.

☐ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The school's capacity to develop and improve is satisfactory. Its most significant improvements can be seen in the school and classroom environments, which are motivating for learning. The school carries out accurate self-evaluation of all aspects of its work and carefully monitors its plans and to what extent its goals have been achieved; this has a significant impact on upgrading some aspects of the school's work. Students' results in school examinations show clear progress. The school faces a challenge, however, in the number of new teachers it has and the turnover of teaching staff; it also lacks senior teachers for core subjects in the second cycle. This is a burden on the current management and reduces its chances of bringing about more improvement.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Leadership and management

- Self-evaluation

- Extra-curricular activities

- Regular attendance

- Development of citizenship

- Enriching the school environment

- Support for students.

Areas for development

- Performance indicators in the strategic plan

- Considering individual difference in lessons and homework

- Assessment in lessons

- English skills

- Higher thinking skills

- Challenging students' abilities

- Developing students' self-confidence

- Reducing staff turnover.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Ensure the stability of the teaching staff at school, fill the vacancies for senior teachers of the second cycle and make up the shortage in educational resources

- Ensure that the parties concerned assist in removing the risk to students' safety represented by the sloping ground

- Develop teaching and learning strategies that take into account:

  - Considering individual differences in lessons and homework
  - Developing basic skills in English
  - Developing students' higher thinking skills
  - Challenging students' abilities
  - Providing opportunities for students to develop their self-confidence and giving them leading roles in lessons.

- Use different assessment methods in lessons and use the results in lesson planning

- Include measurable performance indicators in the current strategic plan and monitor their impact on the overall performance of the school.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	**3: Satisfactory**
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory
Students' academic achievement	3: Satisfactory
Students' progress in their personal development	3: Satisfactory
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3: Satisfactory
The quality of the curriculum delivery	2: Good
The quality of guidance and support for students	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	2: Good