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

Schools Review Unit
Review Report

Saar Secondary Girls School
Saar - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 5-7 April 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 11 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: Girls
Number of students: 1,559
Age range: 16-18 years

Characteristics of the school

Saar Secondary Girls School is one of the Northern Governorate schools and was founded in 1993. The age range in the school is from 16 to 18 years. Most students come from middle-income families. The 1,559 students are distributed across 50 classes: 15 classes for the first secondary grade, 17 for the second and 18 for the third. The school categorises 16 of its students as talented, 369 as outstanding, 2 as having learning difficulties and 6 as physically disabled. There are 133 teaching staff and 22 administration staff. The Principal is in her eleventh year at the school. 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 Saar Secondary Girls School is satisfactory. It has good aspects in the fields of leadership and management, support and guidance for students and students' personal development. Students and their parents are very satisfied with the school.

Students' academic achievement is satisfactory. Students achieved high pass rates and varied proficiency rates in the final results for the school year 2008-09. These high pass rates did not match students' levels in lessons, however, which were no more than satisfactory. Most students are able to master information technology (IT) and communication skills but some students have weak basic skills in English and Arabic. Students' pass rates have risen slightly over the past three years. They make satisfactory progress in most lessons and written work. Some students are given support that helps them achieve levels in line with their abilities. Students' individual differences are not sufficiently considered in all lessons.

Students' personal development is good. Most students attend school regularly and participate in school life effectively and enthusiastically through the morning assembly, school committees, creativity centres and different school activities; they show less enthusiasm in lessons. Students are given the opportunity to develop their self-confidence, express their opinions, and take on leadership roles and responsibility, which benefits their personal development. Students are given the opportunity to develop their analytical thinking skills during lessons. Most students' behaviour shows awareness and responsibility in the classroom and around the school. Most students behave well and look after the school's property. Students feel safe and have good relationships with each other and their teachers; teachers treat them well and show mutual respect. Students with physical disabilities are motivated to learn by the care and support they are given and the help they get to move around the school's facilities.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. Some teachers know the study materials well and reflect this knowledge in good teaching methods that hold students' attention and spark their enthusiasm to learn. Some teachers organise lessons well and make effective use of class activities. All teachers let students participate in setting learning goals. In the good lessons in particular, some teachers use effective teaching strategies that place the student at the centre of the educational process. Students are given some opportunities to work together and learn from each other. Their abilities are challenged in some lessons by activities such as putting on performances, which encourages

their participation and desire to gain skills and knowledge. Students are assigned some homework but it is at the same level for all students and is not corrected regularly, which reduces its effectiveness. Some teachers use a range of assessment methods to meet students' educational needs, especially in good lessons.

The quality of curriculum enrichment and delivery is satisfactory. Students' proficiency in basic skills varies according to the different teaching methods and strategies used; their IT, Mathematics and Communication skills are better than their English and Arabic skills. The school develops students' understanding of their rights and duties through some programmes and educational meetings run by the awareness committee. It also tries to promote a sense of citizenship during the morning assembly and by participation in national events. The school offers students different extra-curricular activities that are effective in broadening students' experiences and personal development. The school environment is used appropriately to enrich the curriculum. Classrooms and other school facilities provide a calm and encouraging environment in which to learn. The school displays guidelines that focus on values and celebrates some of the students' work.

The quality of guidance and support for students is good. The school performs a good induction for new students and their parents, which helps students to settle quickly into school life. Students are not prepared as effectively for their next stage of education or employment. The school meets students' personal needs in a way that suits the age group, by giving them financial support. The school also diagnoses their educational needs and provides different groups of students with good remedial or enrichment programmes. Students who are physically disabled get good support outside the classroom from teachers and fellow students but support in most observed lessons was no more than satisfactory. The school provides guidance and advice for its students through educational lectures and guidance classes. It helps students to solve any problems they face, which has a positive effect on students' motivation to learn and their good conduct. The school makes suitable efforts to communicate with parents about their daughters' progress. The school assesses health and safety risks appropriately. It checks and maintains its facilities regularly and performs evacuation drills. The school provides a safe and healthy environment for all staff and students.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. The school has a vision and mission that are clear and focus on achievement. It also has a comprehensive strategic plan and runs programmes aimed at bringing about improvement. The plan and programmes are based on a diagnosis of the school's situation and identification of strengths and areas for improvements; they have had a positive effect on students' personal development, and to a lesser degree, on their academic achievement. The school places great importance on self-evaluation and uses its findings effectively to improve performance; its evaluation of teachers' practices, however, was less accurate than expected. The senior and middle managers inspire, motivate and encourage all the staff to work together and have good

relations. They also put considerable effort into managing all the divisions, monitoring staff performance and raising their professional competency, especially for new teachers; the performance of some teachers, especially in Arabic and English, did not reflect these efforts, however. The school uses its buildings and educational resources to achieve its plans and strategic goals. The school seeks the opinions of students and their parents and responds well to them; the school's services are highly appreciated by students and staff.

☐ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 2 (Good)

The school's capacity to develop and improve is good. The school's managers are motivated and enthusiastic about change and development. The school follows a comprehensive strategic plan that was set after identifying strengths and areas for development. Some of the practices that have come out of the school's planning have had a good effect on students' personal development. The school places great importance on its self-evaluation process and uses its findings effectively to improve performance. Among the school's most significant initiatives to improve educational results are its reshaping of the strategic plan and the attention paid to professional development programmes and creativity centres. The school still faces challenges, particularly in trying to develop teaching and learning processes that are effective for such a large number of students while experiencing shortages in human resources – such as the need for a third assistant principal – as well as a shortage in educational resources, especially computers and their peripherals, and in the number of buildings.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Strategic planning

- Self-evaluation

- Students' participation in school life

- Students' conduct

- Support and guidance programmes.

Areas for development

- Considering individual differences and challenging students' abilities

- Developing analytical thinking skills

- Developing basic skills, especially in English and Arabic

- Using assessment results

- Using the school environment for curriculum enrichment

- Using buildings and educational resources.

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Develop teaching and learning strategies, taking into consideration:

    - Challenging students' abilities
    - Considering individual differences
    - Developing analytical thinking skills
    - Developing better basic skills, especially in English and Arabic
    - Using assessment more effectively to meet students' educational needs.

- Employ the school environment in curriculum enrichment

- Make more effective use of buildings and educational resources

- Address staffing shortages.

Overall judgements

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