



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Sabaa Primary Girls School
Hamad Town - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 17 – 19 October 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 nine 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		Sabaa Primary School for Girls												
School's type		Government												
Year of establishment		1990												
Age range of students		6 – 12 years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High				
		1 - 6				-				-				
Number of students		Boys	-	Girls	573					Total	573			
Students' social background		Most students come from limited income families												
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	3	3	4	3	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Town /Village		Hamad Town												
Governorate		Northern Governorate												
Number of administrative staff		12 members												
Number of teaching staff		62 teachers												
Curriculum		Ministry of Education curriculum												
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		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties		
		14				12			5			11		

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changes in the teaching staff where 16 of the most experienced teachers have left and 15 new teachers joined the school to teach core subjects, including Arabic, English, mathematics and computer science for the new academic year 2011-12• Changes in senior leadership including the assistant principal in 2011-2012
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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

Sabaa Primary School's effectiveness is satisfactory in terms of students' academic achievement and the quality of teaching and learning, whereas its effectiveness in these was judged as good in the previous review. This is because of inconsistent teaching in most of the core subjects, which results in satisfactory students' performance. The school's effectiveness in other areas is good, as a result of its clear vision and mission which are based on an accurate evaluation of the school's situation and students' effective participation in school life and their growing self-confidence. Extra-curricular activities and curriculum enrichment are good, especially where the school and wider environments are used well. Students receive effective induction and their personal needs are met because of the good advice and guidance they receive. 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 is good, compared to its outstanding capacity as judged in the previous review. The school's leadership has an effective management system that is based on empowerment, shared decision making and implementation of improvement projects such as the Distinguished Bahraini School project. The leadership focuses on meeting the training needs of all school staff by conducting a comprehensive diagnosis of requirements and following flexible plans. A comprehensive strategic plan is based on using accurate performance indicators which cover all aspects of the educational process, particularly teaching and learning. The school utilises the experience of staff, is focusing on improving the competency of teachers wherever necessary and is striving actively to raise students' academic achievement and improve their personal development further.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

In the previous review, students' academic achievement was judged to be good, whereas in this visit it was satisfactory. This is due to wide variations in the students' progress and their proficiency rates in the second cycle in mathematics, science and English for Grades 5 and 6. Students achieved high pass rates in school examinations for the school year 2010-11, ranging between 93% and 100% in core subjects. Proficiency levels are more in line with pass rates in the first cycle, particularly in English and science for Grade 1. Standards are too varied in their written work, mainly because students' individual differences are not catered for sufficiently in class activities and in written work which is set. Most students acquire reading and writing skills well in both Arabic and English in Grades 3, 5 and 6, but less so in other grades. They also acquire arithmetic skills well in Grades 4 and 6. By contrast, most students' acquisition of scientific and information technology skills, is satisfactory.

Students' progress over the past three years has been steady in Grades 1 and 2. There is a slight decrease in the high pass rates in Grade 3 in most core subjects in the first cycle, with the exception of English. High pass rates are stable in most core subjects in the second cycle and most students progress well by these measures with time when they move from one cycle to the next. Good progress is made in good lessons due to varied activities and the challenge made of the different ability groups of students. Nevertheless, progress in most lessons is only satisfactory due to less effective teaching.

The most outstanding students achieve high results in line with the abilities they show in lessons, their written work and in enrichment activities. However, lower achieving students do not progress as well as they might because of insufficient support in lessons and the lack of impact of inconsistently taught remedial programmes.

Students' results in core subjects in national examinations are on the national average in Grades 3 and 6 for the years from 2009 to 2011.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

The school has maintained its good performance in this aspect since the previous review. Students attend school and lessons regularly and punctually, helped by effective

supervision. They participate in extra-curricular activities such as organising morning broadcast and a range of committees, for example the girl guides committee where they achieve well in competitions such as 'Kids Forum' and 'My Prophet Is My Role Model' poetry recital. Other committees for e-learning, environmental, order and 'friends of the library' help students' develop responsible personalities.

Most students develop self-confidence by expressing their views freely in the Students' Council and Loyalty and Citizenship Committee. Relationships between most students are characterized by harmony, agreement and awareness, which show in the respect they have towards each other, staff and visitors. Most students feel safe as a result of good relationships between everyone which contributes to family-like atmosphere.

The school pays good attention to Bahrain's heritage and culture and the development of a spirit of citizenship and loyalty. It promotes Islamic values and social principles through lectures such as the 'Cleanliness Is Next to Godliness'. It, displays the 'List of Rights and Duties' in most classes and around the buildings. Programmes that enhance positive behaviour and a sense of citizenship, such as honesty and environmental awareness, are effective in helping to build students' good personal development.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

In the previous review, the school received a good judgement in the areas of teaching and learning, whereas in this visit its judgement is only satisfactory. This is due to a lack of variation in the teaching and learning strategies, which tend to rely on the teacher being at the centre of the process where students' participation and enthusiasm is hindered. In good lessons, slightly more than one third of lessons observed, teachers' have secure knowledge of their subjects and use various teaching methods and strategies that are appropriate for the age groups, such as learning through play, cooperative learning and singing. These help increase students' motivation to learn and make them the centre of the educational process.

Most teachers use learning resources well, such as flashcards, films, graphics, models, and smart-boards, particularly in the first cycle. This helps to catch students' attention and encourages them to learn. Lessons are orderly and utilize different class activities, which lead to the lesson objectives being achieved and ensuring satisfactory learning. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in planning for some lessons affect the time management, which in turn leads to inconsistencies in the learning and the achievement of the lessons' objectives.

In good lessons, students are challenged in ways that make them think and work hard. Satisfactory lessons have few weaknesses and use a variety of appropriate activities, particularly in science for Grade 6, but the challenge provided is less well matched to students' abilities. Most teachers ensure students' participation and motivate them with words of encouragements, rewards and praise, which increase their enthusiasm and progress, especially in the good lessons. However, effective support for lower achieving students is not sufficiently evident in most lessons due to a lack of activities that take into account students' different abilities.

Most teachers assign homework and class activities that are accurately marked. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of the homework assigned as much of it is practice from the textbook and does not cater enough for students' different interests and abilities.

Effective assessment and feedback methods are employed, such as direct observation, oral assessment and recording of progress on work-cards. However, resulting assessment information is not used enough to cater for students' individual differences in the planning of future work and this consequently affects the accomplishment of good learning for all adversely.

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

Grade: 2 Good

Good provision since the previous review has been maintained. The school has developed plans explaining curriculum implementation and assessment methods, and requests students' and parents' feedback. It organises workshops for parents, such as 'The Verbal Problems' and 'English Language Teaching Mechanism'. These have led to students' good progress in most English language skills.

Curriculum implementation is better in Grades 3 and 6 than in the remaining grades, because of the variety of writing activities used. Linking the curriculum to life, knowledge and citizenship in a planned manner is evident in mostly in science in the second cycle.

Citizenship is developed by enriching the school environment, field trips and organising events, such as the 'Love and Loyalty to My Country' event. The school develops students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities through displays and projects, and by promoting the 'Rules Agreement'. All this contributes well to students' awareness and responsibility.

Many extra-curricular activities enhance students' interests. Organising and participating in competitions, such as the 'Best Written Expression of Love for Bahrain' and 'Young Presenter' and plays such as the 'Milk and Cola', provide students with opportunities for reflection.

The school environment is used to encourage learning. Displays that celebrate students' work and exhibits in classroom corners help students appreciate the curriculum and develop their self-confidence.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 2 Good

Good provision since the previous review has been maintained. New students are given an induction week with competitions and educational, health and guidance lectures. Meetings are held with parents. Leaving students have a visit to the school which they are going to join.

Students' personal needs are well met through individual plans. The school provides good support to most students in solving their personal problems through effective guidance programmes, such as through lectures and conducting 'back-up lessons' whenever necessary.

The school communicates with parents regarding their daughters' progress regularly using text messages, open day, good accessibility during office hours, monthly reports and some home visits by social guidance staff in special cases where students and families need this. Such extensive and effective communication contributes to parents' good knowledge and understanding of their daughters' academic progress.

The school takes appropriate action on matters relating to health and safety by rehearsing the evacuation plan, organizing cleaning campaigns, checking the maintenance of fire extinguishers and on the school's canteen and general condition of the buildings. The nurse plays an active role in raising students' awareness through lectures and cooperation with health centres in the area, in addition to training students as 'young paramedics' through the efforts of the First Aid Committee. Good care and support contributes successfully to the students' good personal development.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 2 Good

In the previous review, the school received an outstanding judgement in this area, whereas in this review it was only good. Changes in staffing and the impact of circumstances on students' outcomes are the main causes. The school has a clear vision and mission which are shared with staff members. This has had limited impact on improving teaching and learning, whereas on the remaining areas it is good. The leadership is well aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvements as its evaluation is based on the school's situation in relation to the Distinguished Bahraini Schools Project.

Continuous and accurate self-evaluation determines levels of performance and these are discussed with the School Improvement Team of the Ministry of Education. The school assesses teachers' performance using the school's improvement management system and utilises the school's self-evaluation questionnaire. Self-evaluation results are used to develop priorities in the strategic plan and include clear measurable performance indicators to shape the school's work.

Senior and middle leadership inspires staff incentives and assigning department coordinators to facilitate work requirements efficiently. It also strives to improve teachers' professional competency by organising in-house workshops with its own improvement team of teachers.

Resources and facilities are used well. These include the science laboratory, the assigning of three special rooms for students with different educational needs alongside the utilisation of the Learning Resources Centre. This has had good impact on the achievement of those groups of students with learning difficulties who are not helped well within lessons.

The school responds to parents' views and suggestions through the Parents' Council. Workshops, such as 'Verbal problems' and 'the new curriculum for mathematics' have helped parents to help their daughters. Responses to students' views, such as in organising the morning line-up, have helped make parents and students pleased with the school. The school has strong relations with the local community, such as nearby health centres that supply the school with first aid equipment and provides health awareness lectures for the school staff. Communication with the heads of department across the school's educational district is also helping the implementation of improved programmes through the sharing of experiences between the schools participating in the local improvement project.

The school's main strengths

- The strategic plan which includes school's priorities based on accurate analysis and developed with participation by the advisory groups of teachers, students and parents
- Increasing pass rates in all primary subjects in both cycles and better correlation between proficiency rates and pass rates in the first cycle, particularly in English and science for Grade 1 students
- The sense of safety and security shared by students
- A learning and motivating environment where walls, classroom corners and facilities are used to display curriculum materials and exhibits that promote and celebrate students' work
- Good relationships between most students, which are characterized by harmony, agreement and awareness, both in and out of class, which translate into respect for the feelings of others.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- assess the impact of professional development programmes on raising students' academic achievement and ensure outcomes are improved
- improve teaching and learning by strategies that include:
 - developing basic skills in science and computers and Arabic and English languages skills, particularly in Grades 1, 2 and 4
 - considering individual differences more when planning lessons, providing written activities and homework
 - using more varied assessment methods in lessons to ensure information about students' progress so as to improve their progress and academic achievement
 - providing students with opportunities to work together and learn from one another
- provide support for outstanding and low-achieving students in lessons which is closely matched to their differing abilities so as to meet their educational needs more precisely.