



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa
Secondary Boys School
Al-Adliyah – Capital 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	Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Secondary Boys School													
School's type	Government													
Year of establishment	1979													
Age range of students	16-18 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High					
	-				-				10-12					
Number of Students	Boys	572	Girls	-						Total	572			
Students' social background	Most students come from middle-level income families													
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	Classes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	7	7
		Level 1 has six classes Level 2 has two classes for the scientific stream, chemistry and biology, physics and mathematics one class for the literary stream and three classes for the commercial stream Level 3 has one class for the scientific stream, chemistry and biology, one class for physics and mathematics, one class for the literary stream and four classes for the commercial stream												
Town /Village	Al-Adliyah													
Governorate	Capital Governorate													
Number of administrative staff	14													
Number of teaching staff	63													
Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE) curriculum													
Main language(s) of instruction	Arabic													

Principal's tenure	5 years			
External assessment and examination	Ministry of Education Examinations			
Accreditation (if applicable)	-			
Number of students in the following categories	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented	Physical Disabilities	Learning Difficulties
	70	15	-	2
Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new assistant principal for the school was appointed in the school year 2010-11 • Three new teachers joined the school in the current school year 2011-12 • Ten teachers moved to other schools in the current school year • The school joined the Improving Schools Project at the beginning of the current year 			

Table of review judgments awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	-	3	3
Students' personal development	-	-	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	-	3	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	-	-	3	3
The quality of support and guidance for students	-	-	3	3
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	-	-	3	3

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

Shaikh Abdul Aziz bin Mohammed Al Khalifa Secondary Boys School's effectiveness has remained satisfactory, as have most aspects, since its previous review in February 2009. Its capacity to improve and develop has changed to an inadequate level due to the lack of evident improvement in aspects recommended in the previous review report. These relate to improving teaching and learning, the accuracy of monitoring and evaluation in judging the impact of the strategic plan on improving the performance of teachers, and raising students' achievement. Students and parents are satisfied with the school due to its 'open door' policy and the manner in which the school deals with their requests. This translates into students' good behaviour both in and out of class.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's capacity to improve has changed since the previous review from satisfactory to inadequate due to the lack of progress in implementing the recommendations in that report. Teaching has not improved significantly. The school assessed its effectiveness in the self-evaluation form as outstanding, whereas its performance is only satisfactory, mainly because of a lack of clarity in the actions to be taken. The strategic plan does not include precise performance indicators for monitoring progress against objectives. Moreover, most improvements focus on improving the school environment and providing and utilising certain school facilities and not enough on identified priorities. The role of the external improvement team coupled with insufficient middle leadership for the science, English, Islamic education and computer departments have not been effective. The family atmosphere in the school does contribute to students' good behaviour and the school's positive atmosphere.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The majority of students achieve high pass rates in most of the MoE examinations. These are in line with the students' proficiency levels in scientific courses, particularly mathematics and physics. This is clearly evident in students' levels of understanding and knowledge demonstrated in good lessons, which account for nearly one-third of lessons. Good lessons use appropriate teaching strategies based on diverse and effective assessment methods. These characteristics are less evident in the other two-thirds of lessons. In these, teaching is less effective because teachers too often merely dictate knowledge, which reduces students' motivation to question and learn. Moreover, students, particularly talented students, are not given opportunities to challenge their abilities and develop self-confidence, which in turn adversely affects their acquisition of skills and concepts. Lack of progress in implementing the recommendations in the previous review are particularly evident in the second level core subjects.

Students' acquisition of basic concepts and skills is satisfactory in mathematics, Arabic, science and computer technology. This is evident in many aspects of mathematics and the varying levels of acquisition of speaking and reading in English. Writing skills in levels 1 and 3 and certain practical skills in physics are less secure. However in the second level, most skills are below expectations, particularly in commercial subjects due to teaching these subjects in Arabic rather than English.

Comparing students' results over three consecutive years shows they achieve consistent progress in most common core courses, with the exception of English language courses in the literary stream. Most students make satisfactory progress in most lessons and in their written work as a result of teaching which provides at least adequate levels of support to students. Good progress is made in about one-third of lessons, such as in level 3 mathematics and level 1 chemistry, due to better challenge of students' abilities. Achievement is weakest in level 2 English writing and commercial lessons.

Low-achieving students make satisfactory progress due to the supporting activities they are provided with in class. Talented and outstanding students' progress is broadly in line with their above average levels of attainment, but not enough is done to extend their achievement.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students attend school regularly and punctually in proper uniform as a result of thorough monitoring and the actions by the Social Guidance Office and social workers.

Most students participate with enthusiasm. They take part in extra-curricular activities including plays and enrichment clubs, such as Injaz Bahrain and the School Stock Exchange. In good lessons where they are provided with opportunities to present their work in front of their class mates, this contributes to building their self-confidence and ability to take responsibility and assume leadership roles. Examples of good personal development are seen in taking part in the morning broadcast and the activities of the students' council. Yet, this participation is not at a similar level in many lessons, especially where dictation-based teaching methods limit students' opportunities for self-development.

Most students look after school property and make sure classrooms are orderly places. They are aware of their responsibilities towards learning and appreciate and respect their teachers in an atmosphere of friendliness. Behaviour during lessons, break times and sports activities is good. Students feel safe and secure both in and out of classes. Students and parents say that nothing threatens their safety.

The development and enhancement of the Bahraini heritage and identity is not clearly evident in lessons or around the school, apart from the Heritage Area near the school's entrance.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most teachers have good knowledge of their subjects, which is reflected in lessons through their ability to provide examples to help students understand. In good lessons teachers employ effective teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, discussion, and brainstorming and provide students with concepts, skills and knowledge in interesting ways, such as rhythmic and lexical analysis of poems in Arabic, determining atomic and mass numbers in chemistry and installation and connection skills in computer applications. In some satisfactory lessons, however, teaching is mostly limited to the dictation methods, which result in varying levels of students' acquisition of learning skills. Inadequate lessons

accounted for almost one quarter of all lessons and were mostly concentrated in the second level where teachers merely dictate knowledge far too often and where students are not given sufficient opportunities to learn independently or cooperatively. Teachers do not challenge students' abilities nor develop their self-confidence enough. Support is insufficient to help students achieve the levels of which they are capable in too many lessons. For example, the opportunities for students to develop critical and analytical thinking skills are insufficient in most lessons. Activities too often do not cater for students' differences, nor meet their educational needs sufficiently well. This shows in the students' failure to progress in line with their abilities, particularly in English language courses and commercial subjects and for the more able. Progress in implementing the recommendations relating to improving teaching and learning provided in the previous review is insufficient.

Learning objectives are shared with students but, their achievement is monitored inconsistently. Some teachers utilise available resources effectively, such as e-class using 'Hot Potato' software, teaching cards and educational films. These have varying degrees of impact on students' motivation and enthusiasm to learn. Few teachers assign homework, particularly in mathematics courses. Where homework is given, it is mostly textbook-based and unexciting.

Teachers employ oral and written assessment methods in classes differently, focusing in the good lessons on individual written assessment, the results of which are used to support students of various abilities. Outstanding students' own participation in assessment and support is insufficient.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Practical and enrichment courses in creativity centres, such as Injaz Bahrain and the School Stock Exchange are strengthening curriculum implementation. The majority of students are provided with opportunities to take part in extra-curricular activities and external competitions, such as sports, for example where the school ranked first in inter-school basketball.

Curriculum implementation helps first and second level students to acquire practical and life skills which prepare them for university life or the labour market. The majority of courses are helpful in this. However, it does not enable the majority of second level students to acquire sufficient basic skills due to teachers' focus on textbook content and which does not provide students with opportunities to enrich their experiences and knowledge in ways

that can be applied. The majority of teachers do not base lesson plans on integrating subjects in ways that encourage students to transfer and apply knowledge accordingly.

Students' understanding of rights, duties and responsibilities, which enhance their patriotism and sense of belonging, are developing well. Programmes presented in morning broadcast and celebrations of National Day and patriotic boards, such as the Gilgamesh Epic, all contribute to these values.

The school environment contributes to curriculum enrichment in a satisfactory manner. Science laboratories are still too limited and are an example of insufficient progress in implementing recommendations in the previous review.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Induction programmes for new students and signing the school's code of discipline clarifies expectations and settles students quickly. Third level students have lectures to explain the nature of professions and have visits to universities. Students' personal needs are diagnosed and met well. School uniform is provided for over one hundred eligible students. The school also meets students' educational needs by assigning them to 'creativity centres', although there is some evasion by the commercial students due to insufficient monitoring. The educational needs of low-achieving students are not met sufficiently due to a lack of specific support. Appropriate support for slow-writing students in the third level is provided with special support at examination time.

Students approach social workers with their problems. Counselling lessons are used successfully, in the 'Thoughts' programme. The Academic Guidance Department conducts one-to-one interviews to encourage low-achieving students to raise their skills acquisition levels, and talented students to achieve outstanding results, which help raise their awareness of the importance of learning. This is reflected in their good behaviour both in and out of class.

Parents point out that they do not receive regular reports on their children's progress, a point that was stressed in the previous review of the school. The school observes safety and security requirements, monitors the quality of meals and conducts evacuation drills.

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 quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, whereas the effectiveness of the external improvement team is below expectations as their work is still in the preliminary stages and reflects insufficient capacity for support, monitoring and accountability.

The school has a vision and mission which focus on improving achievement. These were developed with the participation of the school's community. A strategic plan was derived with an annual operational plan based on recommendations provided in the previous review report. However, due to unclear performance indicators and insufficient monitoring of progress, development has been slow. The School Improvement Team monitors and assesses school performance. Yet, the monitoring mechanisms are unclear, as most assessments focus on monitoring the implementation of department plans without assessing their impact on students' progress in relation to the quality of the teaching and learning strategies used.

The school inspires and motivates its community in a family atmosphere that is based on respect and appreciation. This has helped change the convictions of some by authorising them to carry out additional tasks to cover the shortages in middle leadership, such as in the roles as senior teachers for science, English, Islamic education and computer studies.

Teachers' training needs are identified and met by organising internal workshops such as the 'cooperative teaching workshop' and participating in external workshops, but their impact is not reflected clearly enough in teachers' performance in the majority of lessons. Financial resources are effectively utilised to support academic departments and in the use of school facilities to serve learning, such as the e-class. Nevertheless, utilisation of the Learning Resources Centre and other resources, such as laptops, is not as effective as it might be.

The school knows and responds to students' and parents' opinions through the 'open door' policy. Students' and parents' councils offer suggestions to which the school responds, so gaining clients' approval. It cooperates with local community institutions, as with the Globe Team in visiting South Africa to present the Migratory Birds Project, which helped to enhance and enrich students' experiences.

The school's main strengths

- Students' positive behaviour and sense of security, which is reflected by their satisfactory personal development, particularly with respect to their awareness and good behaviour both in and out of class
- Enabling students to acquire skills, concepts and knowledge in courses such as mathematics, and information technology.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- utilise self-evaluation results to ensure improvement in school performance and incorporate clear and measurable performance indicators in planning so as to facilitate effective and regular monitoring and assessment
- raise students' achievement by developing teaching and learning strategies to include:
 - cooperative learning and providing students with sufficient opportunities to take responsibility and develop self-confidence
 - challenge of students' abilities
 - effective utilisation of assessment in lessons
 - meeting students' different educational needs and providing them with appropriate support, particularly outstanding and talented students.
 - developing students' writing skills in English, particularly in commercial subjects taught in English, and providing them with practical skills which enable them to continue higher education or join the labour market.
- enhance teachers' professional development programmes, particularly for new teachers, with monitoring of their impact in classes more
- covering the shortages in staffing needed in the middle leadership of the English, science, Islamic education and computer departments.