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

Schools Review Unit
Review Report

Sitra Primary Boys School
Sitra - Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 9-11 April 2012

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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 seven 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	Sitra Primary Boys School												
School's type	Government												
Year of establishment	1934												
Age range of students	6-12 years												
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	**Primary**				**Middle**				**High**				
	1-6				-				-				
Number of students	**Boys**	451	**Girls**		-			**Total**		451			
Students' social background	Most students belong to middle income families												
Classes per grade	**Grade**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**	**9**	**10**	**11**	**12**
	Classes	2	2	1	2	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village	Sitra												
Governorate	Central												
Number of administrative staff	9												
Number of teaching staff	41												
Curriculum	Ministry of Education (MoE)												
Main language(s) of instruction	Arabic												
Principal's tenure	Two years												
External assessment and examinations	QAAET's 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**			
	75			32			2			58			
Major recent changes in the school	• Appointing school principal and assistant principal in 2010-11.												

Table of review judgements awarded

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

The school's overall performance has changed from being judged satisfactory in the previous review in February 2009 to inadequate in this one. This is because students' academic achievement has declined, teaching and learning is often ineffective and the quality of curriculum implementation and enrichment is inadequate. Teaching is not meeting the various needs of students due to poor classroom and time management by most teachers, weak curriculum support and few enrichment programmes. The school leadership's efforts have contributed to diagnosing the school's current situation and are motivating teachers, while supporting and guiding students to promote their personal development, which is satisfactory. The services the school provides are regarded as good by the students and their parents.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's capacity to improve has changed from being judged good in the previous review to satisfactory in this one. . Nevertheless, the school has an ambitious leadership team that has a clear vision for improvement. This is evident through its commitment to developing its strategic plan based on accurate self-assessment, adopting a shared decision-making approach and delegating authority well, such as assigning the learning resources specialist to monitor the talented students' programme. The leadership's efforts are focused on motivating its stakeholders, building good relations among them, raising professional competence according to training needs, giving effective support to students when they face problems and improving the school's environment and shaded its squares. These factors have contributed to the students' personal development, especially in terms of discipline and enhanced the school's ability to improve its performance.

Students' achievement

☐ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Grade 3 students attained results that are below and well below average in the national examinations in Arabic and mathematics respectively, from 2009 to 2011. However, their levels of achievement in lessons are at a higher level than these results would indicate. Grade 6 students attained results that are below and slightly below the national average in most subjects except for science in 2010, which were average, and which reflect their overall achievement in lessons.

The students attained high pass rates in the school examinations for 2010-11 in all core subjects. The rates range between 91% and 100% are consistent with the percentages of proficiency in the first cycle only. The high pass rates are reflected in the students' levels in good lessons, as a result of the more effective teaching. However, their proficiency rates are not at this level in satisfactory and inadequate lessons which account for two thirds of the lessons, many in Grades 4 to 6. This is because of poor consideration of students' individual differences, which often results in ineffective teaching.

The students' basic skills in Grades 1 to 3 are developed to satisfactory levels. Such skills include reading in Arabic and arithmetic skills in mathematics. However, most of the students in Grades 4 to 6 do not build on these and have poor basic skills, except in Arabic which are satisfactory.

The majority of students in Grade 1 to 3 make satisfactory progress in lessons and in their written work. However students in Grade 4 to 6 do not achieve the progress expected of them. Grade 4 students make adequate progress in Arabic, English, and mathematics, while Grade 5 and Grade 6 students do not make the expected progress in most lessons as a result of less than effective teaching, poor classroom and time management and poor consideration of students' individual differences in class activities and when assigning homework.

Most of the students with learning difficulties make good progress in remedial lessons, while outstanding students only make progress in some lessons when written activities match their abilities. However, the enrichment and remedial programmes given outside the classroom are not commensurate with their abilities; as the activities limited on the participation of a limited class of gifted students. Low achieving students have not made enough progress due to the poor educational provision in lessons and the few remedial programmes available to support them additionally.

☐ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students participate in school life with enthusiasm. This is evident through their participation in the students' committees and various school activities such as the morning broadcast, the little journalist and the environment friends committees. However, their participation varies in terms of enthusiasm, questions asked or offering thought provoking ideas because of differences in the quality of teaching in different lessons.

Most students show self-confidence and the ability to take responsibility in extra-curricular activities. This is evident in their participation in the cultural contests and the sports league during break-times, and in the Students' Council, and the scout group, which provides suitable opportunities to express opinions and take responsibility. However, the opportunities they are given in lessons to take leading roles, effectively work together and improve their capacity to self-study are not good due to variations in the effectiveness of the teaching and learning strategies.

The majority of students feel safe due to the good relations among them, and with their teachers. They respect school property, keep it clean and are punctual to lessons with some cases of absenteeism and frequent late morning, which is followed up by sections of administrative supervision and guidance of social stimulation who are diligent in helping students maintain this. Most students have an adequate understanding of Bahraini culture and Islamic values, which are promoted by activities and the displays in classroom corners, such as 'the culture and values tree', and contests like the 'old crafts' competition.

The quality of provision

☐ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The teachers prepare lesson plans and share lesson goals with students but their familiarity with the study materials is inconsistent and teachers only use effective teaching strategies in about one third of lessons. Such strategies include role playing, learning by playing and effective use of the teaching aids such as the smart board and educational cards to meet the students' needs. These motivate students to participate in lessons and enable them to acquire basic skills. However, most practices are not adequate because of teachers' insufficient familiarity with their study material, such as using colloquial dialects in teaching Arabic, using Arabic in some of the English lessons and limited use of teaching aids. In

addition, these lessons lack sufficient motivation to enthuse students to acquire the required basic skills, especially in lessons for Grades 4 to 6.

The recommendations of the previous review focused mainly on improving teaching and learning. However, teachers still rely too heavily on conveying knowledge and facts through direct instruction and recall questioning that do not develop students' higher order thinking skills or challenge their abilities. The lessons generally lack interest and effective classroom and time management, which have a negative impact on the students' achievement. Nevertheless, some lessons offer students opportunities to learn from one another through cooperative learning strategies. These opportunities vary in quality due to the often poor implementation of rules and principles and the distribution of roles among students, which limit their participation.

Students are given homework that is referred to in the lesson plans. Some teachers appropriately consider students' individual differences, but different departments in Grades 4 to 6 are not in agreement about the amount of homework given to students. Students' homework is regularly corrected but without proper feedback, especially in English and science.

Teachers use various assessment techniques, such as monthly and trimestral tests. Verbal and written formative assessments are used in good lessons, which contribute to diagnosing students' needs and measuring their progress. However, assessment in most lessons is not effective, especially in mathematics and science in Grades 4 to 6. Assessment tends to be limited to measuring the level of students' knowledge rather than their level of basic skills acquisition This reflects the weakness of support provided for students to meet their educational needs , especially in English.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school has extended the curriculum through extra-curricular activities such as the morning broadcast, the students' committees, for example 'the little journalist committee', and the 'challenge programme' for sports and games during break-times. Additionally, the school provides programmes for students with learning difficulties and activities to support talented students such as the 'Volcano of Letters' contest, which adequately contributes to broadening the students' experiences. However, curriculum activities are limited and not enough is done to support the outstanding and low achieving students, especially in Grades 4 to 6. The impact of curriculum implementation on the students' acquisition of basic skills

needed for the next educational stage is inadequate. Links between subjects in Grades 1 to 3 and some lessons in Grades 4 to 6,particulary in Arabic ,enable students to study a more logical and coherent curriculum . The school's efforts in revising the curriculum are limited and obvious in mathematics.

The school promotes spirit of citizenship among students properly, through the establishment of national events, as National Day, "Bahraini traditional puzzles", and enrich some of the pillars of the school environment, that promote positive behaviour, and the participation of students, the "Friends of the Environment Committee", in cleaning the yards during the break, develop students' understanding of their rights, duties and responsibilities to the school and the community.

The school environment is enriched by resorting to limited educational facilities, such as viewing wildlife and other basic educational means at the school. The curriculum is not well supported in the general environment of the classrooms, especially those in Grades 4 to 6 and in the corridors and school halls. Displaying and celebrating students' work is too limited.

☐ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

A varied induction programme for Grade 1 students includes presenting them with gifts, contests and introducing them and their parents to the school facilities. Similarly Grade 5 students are introduced to the school's facilities and rules. Grade 6 students are given guidance through a vocational project and visits to intermediate schools to ensure smooth transition to their new schools.

Students' basic needs are met through providing winter support aid, medical glasses and health care. Meeting their educational needs is varied. Class teachers and learning difficulties specialists provide adequate support for low achieving students and those with learning difficulties. Low achieving and outstanding students in Grades 4 to 6 do not receive support of similar quality as those in Grades 1 to 3 due to the lack of effective programmes and intensive classes.

The school social department and administration play an active role in providing students with support by giving them advice during guidance lessons, discussion sessions and by using rewards to promote good behaviour. The school maintains good communication with parents to update them on their children's academic and personal progress. This has an impact on improving the students' behaviour and discipline.

The school provides a safe and healthy environment. This includes adding shading to some school areas, monitoring the canteen, performing evacuation and fire drills and maintaining fire extinguishers.

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 school has a vision that has been developed with the school stakeholders. The vision focuses on creativity and distinction in the education of students. However, putting this into practice is challenging and varied which affected the academic achievement for most students. The school's leadership is aware of the school's areas of strength and those needing improvement. However, the lack of continued and comprehensive self-assessment reduces effectiveness in improving the teaching and learning processes. Nevertheless, the strategic plan includes working with the Sharing Improvement Partner which extends to three comprehensive years in various areas of school work, to overcome the weaknesses in the accuracy of the performance indicators, monitoring and implementation mechanisms.

The school's administration promotes good social relations among its stakeholders and motivates teachers to develop and improve their skills, which is reflected in some teachers' performance. Additionally, it organises work and delegates authority, such as the duties of a senior class teachers and covering the substitution classes by teachers from the same department. The senior leadership performs periodical class visits. The findings are used to identify and meet the teachers' training needs. Workshops such as 'cooperative learning' and teacher exchange visits are effective in themselves. However, the impact on improving students' achievement is not enough due to the variation in the teachers' performance.

The school uses its available resources to support the educational process in a satisfactory manner, such as the learning resource centre, and the e-learning classroom. Additionally, some of the school rooms are used as laboratories for science, technology and design. The school regularly seeks students and their parent's points of views through the students' and parents' councils, using questionnaires and direct contact. It responds to their suggestions, such as adding shading to the morning line up area and preparing a sand field as an alternative to the gymnasium.

The school communicates with institutes of the local community, and this is observed in its cooperation with the municipality council of the area. In addition, the school is recently in contact with the Sharing Improvement Partner; hence, the impact of this initiative on the educational practices is not yet obvious.

The school's main strengths

- The students' awareness, good conduct and punctual attendance to school and lessons

- The effective role of the social department and administration in solving students' problems, meeting their personal needs and communicating with their parents to notify them of their children's academic and personal development

- The support of the school's administration and its motivation of staff towards development and improvement, through distributing tasks and delegating authority to serve the educational process.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop students' basic skills in all core subjects especially in Grades 4 to 6

- develop teaching and learning strategies, especially in Grades 4 to 6, to contribute to:
    - meeting students' various educational needs and providing them with the proper support
    - more effective use of assessment in lessons and homework
    - developing efficient classroom and time management approaches
    - giving students the opportunities to learn together

- use the findings of self-assessment to ensure improvement in school performance, including clear performance indicators as part of the strategic plan's continuation and regular evaluation

- use the school's environment to display and celebrate the students' work to a better extent in order to enrich the curriculum and achieve effective learning

- meet the shortage in staffing in the middle leadership tier, and in the educational resources such as a multi-purpose hall and specialist laboratories.