



# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Sitra Secondary Girls School  
Sitra - Central Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 10 - 12 December 2012**

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## The Schools Review Unit

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The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. 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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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 eleven 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

<b>School's name</b>	Sitra Secondary Girls School												
<b>School's type</b>	Government												
<b>Year of establishment</b>	2002												
<b>Age range of students</b>	16 – 18 years												
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>	<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>				
	-				-				10 – 12				
<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Boys</b>	-	<b>Girls</b>	1040				<b>Total</b>	1040				
<b>Students' social background</b>	Most students come from middle level income families.												
<b>Classes per grade</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>
	<b>Classes</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	12	11
	Second level: literary stream (4 classes), commercial stream (4 classes), scientific stream (4 classes). Third level: literary stream (3 classes), commercial stream (4 classes), scientific stream (4 classes).												
<b>Town /Village</b>	Sitra												
<b>Governorate</b>	Central												
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>	20 administrative and 17 technicians												
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>	100												
<b>Curriculum</b>	Ministry of Education (MoE)												
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>	Arabic												
<b>Principal's tenure</b>	3 months												
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>	MoE examinations												
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>	-												

Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented	Physical Disabilities	Learning Difficulties
	216	74	11	12
Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointment of the school principal at the beginning of current academic year 2012-13</li> <li>• Implementation of the improvement programmes started in the past academic year.</li> </ul>			

## Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	-	2	2
Students' personal development	-	-	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	-	2	2
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

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### Overall effectiveness

- How effective is the school in meeting the needs of students and their parents?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

The school's overall performance has improved from satisfactory in the previous review in December 2009 to good in this one. Students attain high pass rates in the MoE examinations and their achievement exceeds average expectations in most lessons. This is attributed to effective teaching and learning which result in good acquisition of basic skills in most subjects, except for literary and commercial streams in English, where it is satisfactory. Most students enjoy high self-confidence, behave maturely and responsibly and participate enthusiastically. They are supported with creative programmes that facilitate learning. However, low achieving students have too little support. The school uses its facilities and resources to enrich the curriculum. The school's administration follows a strategic plan with clear performance indicators and comprehensive self-evaluation. The school has the approval of students and parents.

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

The schools' capacity to improve has also changed from satisfactory to good. This is attributed to strategic planning based on accurate self-evaluation which is supported by clear performance indicators based on the school's priorities. The leadership's adoption of projects to improve the teaching and learning processes and academic achievement, through cooperative work and professional competency improvement programmes is effective. Thanks to the delegation of authorities, good administrative organisation and serious implementation of effective strategies, the school has succeeded in overcoming the challenges it faced due to the shortage of senior teachers. The school has managed to improve students' academic performance, boost their personal development and turn the school into an educationally motivating environment; all these factors give the school the ability to sustain improvement and performance.

## Students' achievement

### □ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

#### Grade: 2 Good

Students attained levels that were above average in MoE examinations for the year 2011-12 in Arabic and science and achieved levels that were slightly below average in mathematics and English. Students also attained high pass and proficiency rates in most core subjects, which reflect their achievement levels in lessons, especially in outstanding and good lessons. These lessons use effective teaching methods which provide motivating learning opportunities.

Students demonstrate high levels of performance in most core subjects and their acquisition of Arabic language concepts and skills is outstanding, such as their grasp of the concepts of literary texts and application of grammar rules. They can apply mathematical skills and rules in solving problems. Students' acquisition of scientific skills is also good, especially in chemistry and biology. However, first level students' acquisition of scientific and commercial skills varies too much. Marketing and financial management skills and use of information technology to make databases and circuit boards surpass the commercial stream students' acquisition of banking skills. Most scientific stream students' acquisition of English speaking and reading skills are good; however, literary and commercial streams students' acquisition of these skills is too varied. The acquisition of English writing skills varies too widely across all streams for achievement to be judged better than good.

The school's overall pass rates rank between 12th and 17th place among the 32 secondary schools. Students attained stable high performance levels over four consecutive academic semesters in Arabic, science and mathematics and achieve well in most English courses, except for the literary stream's English 217. Students' progress is in line with this achievement in most lessons and written work, especially in Arabic and mathematics, which is attributed to effective in-class activities and homework that challenge their abilities. Overall, scientific stream students achieved better progress than literary and commercial streams students in English language lessons.

Different groups of students exceed average expectations, especially in the outstanding and good lessons which constituted two-thirds of lessons seen during the review. These lessons support and challenging students' abilities according to their abilities. Opportunities to learn from each other during curricular and extra-curricular activities are good. Outstanding and talented students make outstanding progress and low achieving students make good progress, especially in mathematics, which is reflected in their achievement in lessons.



## **□ How good is the students' personal development?**

### **Grade: 2 Good**

The majority of students demonstrate deep understanding of Islamic values and Bahrain's culture and history, which is reflected in their good behaviour, respect for each other and for the school, through presenting constructive drama, wearing traditional costumes, displaying work around the school and celebrating religious holidays.

Most students attend school and lessons regularly and punctually due to their awareness of school regulations and policies. Most are enthusiastic and highly motivated to learn, which reflects in their active participation and effective questions, comments and explanations; the things that develop their self-confidence in lessons, programmes and different school activities. However, the reason that personal development is not outstanding is because some students do not show enough enthusiasm about participating in school committees such as the students' council and school activities specifically the morning assembly.

The relations between the students with one another and with their teachers are characterised by harmony and are reflected in the friendly relations and good team work. Awareness and responsibility is high among outstanding students who assist their colleague students to observe school rules, preserve facilities and help many to attend classes after recess. The success is attributed to the school's efforts to promote good behaviour through honoring punctual students and outstanding classes, which reflects positively in turn on the students' safety.

## **The quality of provision**

### **□ How effective are teaching and learning?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

The teacher's familiarity with the content of their academic subjects and their broad experience are reflected in their enthusiasm and performance in lessons, in which they used a wide variety of appropriate strategies such as brainstorming, problem-solving and cooperative learning. These are most prevalent in outstanding and good lessons, which in turn reflect positively on students' performance and achievement. Effective and productive class management, apart from time management, results in constructive learning and focuses the students' efforts on the assigned tasks. Using a variety of teaching resources, such as white boards, smart boards, computers, models and projectors, have a positive impact on the effectiveness and productivity of lessons. Teachers facilitate students'

acquisition of concepts, knowledge and basic and higher order thinking skills well. These include skills such as inference and exploration in science, analysis and critical thinking in Arabic, evaluation, contemplation and interpretation of answers in mathematics, and problem-solving and finding alternative solutions in most subjects. Teaching challenges students' abilities with varied exercises that consider differentiation across students' different levels of ability and contribute to broadening their mental and creative capacities, especially in Arabic and mathematics lessons.

Teachers' effective support and motivating attitudes towards students are effective. Teachers use thanking and praising phrases, as well as competition between groups, which have a significant impact on most students' enthusiasm and enjoyment of lessons. Students at all levels are attracted to their learning, however, low achieving students need more support in some lessons, such as in English.

Students are assigned an appropriate amount of varied homework, enriching and remedial activities which take their different achievement levels into account in most subjects and are corrected and graded regularly, especially in Arabic. Moreover, good feedback is provided through motivating comments. Teachers use a wide variety of effective assessment methods such as oral and written assessments, both individually and collectively in all academic subjects. Assessment is included in daily planning, which is school policy designed to meet the students' different needs and which is reflected in their progress that exceeds average expectations.

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

The school offers a wide range of support programmes which address the students' varied needs. Creativity lessons offer good opportunities to develop students' talents. Moreover, students are given the opportunity to participate in scientific, literary, artistic, sports and cartoon contests, where they perform extremely well. The school organises field trips, such as to Almoayyed's Nissan automobiles showroom, which develops students' knowledge and experiences well. The curriculum is analysed, reviewed and summarised. Enriching booklets are made which helps to improve student's performance in most lessons.

The school environment is educationally motivating and supports the curriculum through teaching and guidance methods and celebrating students' work by displaying those works in classes and corridors. Moreover, the school develops students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities by signing agreements between the school and the students, and by reinforcing good behaviour through rewarding the cleanest and the most discipline

classes. In addition to guidance lessons and morning assembly, other activities embed citizenship effectively. All these strategies build students' awareness and reinforce their affiliation with the school.

The way the curriculum is presented facilitates most students' acquisition of those basic and life skills needed to prepare them appropriately for the next stage of education, including in information technology. Moreover, the quality of links across subjects and life-skills varies in most lessons, such as linking between Arabic and Islam, as well as between numerical concepts and financial transactions, which could be improved.

### **□ How well are students guided and supported?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

The school provides students and parents with excellent induction programmes to familiarise them with the school systems and facilities. It also prepares students for the next educational stage by assisting them to choose the correct streams, organising field trips such as the one to the vocational exhibition, coordinating lectures with some Irish universities and developing special guidebooks.

The school meets students' personal needs appropriately by providing them with breakfast vouchers and meets their educational needs by providing them with good support during lessons. Outstanding and talented students participate in various programmes and the school provides low-achieving students with remedial lessons, which result in improving most students' academic achievement.

The social guidance department provides students with advice which helps them solve their problems, such as lateness and attendance issues, through implementing programmes that improve their behaviour. However, the shortage in social workers sometimes hinders meeting students' needs. Moreover, parents are appropriately informed of their daughters' personal and academic progress through several channels, among which are phone calls, text messages and educational meetings.

The school ensures the safety and welfare of its members through regular maintenance and cleaning of the canteen and school facilities. It checks the validity of fire extinguishers and list names of those suffering from chronic inherited diseases so that proper basic care is provided

## Leadership, management and governance

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

### Grade: 2 Good

The school's vision is on improving achievement, creativity and excellence. It is translated into goals that serve all areas and educational practices within a strategic plan that aims to improve the school's overall performance. The plan was designed according to school's priorities based on the previous review's recommendations and on comprehensive self-evaluation and the Outstanding Bahraini School standards, from which operational plans with accurate indicators emerged. The school has made good progress in realising its strategic goals, especially those related to improving academic achievement, students' personal development, and professional competency, which were translated practically in most lessons. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of staff and their willingness to change, the school has benefited greatly from the support of its improvement partners through workshops and class visits.

The higher and middle leadership encourage the administrative and teaching staff to adopt development projects and promote collaboration. The leadership also delegates authority well, as it has assigned four teachers to perform the coordinating tasks of senior teachers and involved several teachers in administrative affairs. Moreover, they have paid significant attention to improving the teachers' professional competency through providing various training programmes that correspond to teachers' needs and encouraging them to attend workshops about topics such as 'Cooperative Learning', 'The Characteristics of Good Lessons' and 'Icebreaking Activities'. Organising class visits to assess quality and following-up with training for improvement, as well as exchanging experiences has brought about improved performance in most lessons.

The school has sought the opinions of students and parents through questionnaires and has responded to some of their suggestions, such as lengthening the second recess to perform prayers and reducing traffic jams at the school gate. However, the activities of the student and parent councils are not adequate enough. The school communicates with the local community in order to enrich students' experiences as it coordinates workshops with Sitra Health Centre and Sitra Community Centre, in addition to the students' participation in cleaning Sitra's coast.

The school uses its resources and educational facilities to improve the teaching process, especially the learning resources centre, computer laboratories, simulation room and utilises

data shows. Issues are often discussed to bring about improvements in teaching and students' achievement across the school's different departments, administration board and technical committee.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- Strategic planning based on comprehensive self-evaluation and close connections with the local community
- Effective and motivating teaching and learning strategies as well as varied assessment methods
- Students' mature and responsible behaviour, their safe and enthusiastic participation in school life, self-confidence and ability to assume responsibility
- The school environment and enrichment of the curriculum and the variety of extra-curricular activities which meet the students' different interests.

## Recommendations

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### **In order to improve, the school should:**

- spread outstanding practices, especially in the Arabic and mathematics departments, to better develop the teaching and learning, that includes:
  - supporting students and particularly low achieving students
  - developing basic skills in English, especially for students in the literary and commercial streams
  - using up-to-date teaching techniques.
- address the shortages in staffing the social guidance department.