



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Sitra Secondary Girls School
Sitra – Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date Reviewed: 7 – 9 December 2009

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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 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 seven 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, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Information about the school

Gender of students: Girls

Number of students: 1,141

Age range: 16-18 years

Characteristics of the school

Sitra Secondary Girls School is one of the Northern Governorate schools. It was established in 2002. It currently has 1,141 students enrolled, aged between 16 and 18 years old. Most of the students live in nearby areas and belong to limited-income families. The students are distributed among 33 classes: 10 classes in the first level, 11 in the second, and 12 in the third. The school classifies 6% of students as gifted and talented, 23.4% as creative, 0.5% as disabled, and 3.2% as having learning difficulties. The school is run by a Principal, who is in her seventh year at the school, and two assistant principals. The school's administrative and teaching staff number 130. The school is currently 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 effectiveness of Sitra Secondary Girls School is satisfactory overall, with some good aspects. The school also gains a good level of satisfaction from parents and students.

The students' level of academic achievement is satisfactory. Students achieve high success rates in Ministry of Education examinations in most subjects. Success rates are lower in English language and some mathematical subjects, where teaching strategies do not take sufficiently into account individual differences. Most students have good skills in the Arabic language and Information Technology (IT). When comparing the results of students over three consecutive years, students showed remarkable progress in the Arabic language, while there is little variance in Mathematics. Students make satisfactory progress in their written work, which is followed up and corrected regularly, but some of them are not given enough feedback. Girls are making progress in line with their abilities. Satisfactory remedial programmes are provided outside lessons for groups of students who need them, as well as activities and creative programmes for gifted and talented students.

The personal development of students is satisfactory. Most students attend school regularly and on time, with only a few students who arrive late to class after the break. Some students participate enthusiastically in internal and external activities and make outstanding contributions. Good lessons, in which varied teaching methods are used, are also characterised by the same enthusiasm and motivation. Students are, however, given few opportunities to develop higher thinking skills. A few students are given some opportunities to take leadership roles and responsibility in some of the lessons and extra-curricular activities. Most of the students enjoy good relationships with each other and with their teachers. They feel safe in the school and free from intimidatory behaviour. Most of the students act responsibly and conscientiously; the few instances of poor conduct are dealt with appropriately by both the educational and administrative staff.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. Most of the teachers have a good knowledge of their subjects and they effectively employ a variety of teaching strategies in some lessons. Some teachers manage their lessons in an orderly and productive manner and allow students some opportunities to stretch their abilities. The students are assigned planned homework in some lessons but it is not marked systematically and does

not take into account individual differences, making it less effective. In some lessons, teachers adopt a wide variety of oral assessment methods and writing activities to ensure the achievement of the lesson objectives.

The presentation and enhancement of the curriculum are satisfactory. The curriculum is presented in a number of lessons by focusing on the acquisition of knowledge in a traditional teaching manner without focusing on basic skills, particularly of the English language. The development of Arabic language skills is good. The school develops students' awareness of their rights and responsibilities through extra-curricular activities, although these opportunities are often limited to the gifted group. The school develops a sense of citizenship for all students through the revival of festivals related to national and religious holidays and its outstanding environmental projects. The school environment is attractive and clean and its green spaces are being employed effectively to support the enrichment programmes. The effect of such programmes can be clearly seen in the students' sense of active citizenship, behavioural values, and respect for the school environment.

The quality of support and guidance for students is good. Induction programmes are organised for students who join the school to help them settle in easily. Students are prepared well for the next stage of education through field trips and lectures on the labour market. The school assesses security and safety risks regularly and makes sure that students work in a healthy and safe environment. The school also diagnoses the personal and educational needs of students effectively in order to meet these needs. This has had a good impact on students' stability and progress, and on their satisfaction with the school. When they have problems, students can meet members of the administrative body, as well as receiving advice and guidance when needed. The school communicates with parents but does not keep them closely enough informed of their daughters' progress.

The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management are good. The school has a clear vision that focuses on achievement; it is reflected in the school's achievement and teaching and learning in a satisfactory manner. The school also has a strategic plan that is built on the basis of a thorough self-assessment of all aspects of the school system. The school evaluates all its activities and uses the results well in planning to meet effectively the needs of students and develop the school. The school inspires its staff and motivates them well. The school also upgrades the competence of its teaching staff, beginning with a survey of their training and professional needs. The presence of a large number of new teachers and a high turnover of experienced staff limits the ability of the school to run some development programmes regularly to ensure improved performance. The school uses its various buildings and facilities effectively, although IT classes are affected by frequent power outages and many technical problems.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The school has a satisfactory capacity for improvement and development. Its leadership is good and is actively working on improving all areas of the school. The school's comprehensive strategic plan focuses on meeting the needs of all students and improving their performance. The plan has had a satisfactory impact on students' levels of performance and progress in developing basic skills. The school evaluates its own performance well and has a comprehensive knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement, as appeared accurately in its self-assessment form. The school's performance is affected by a high turnover of skilled and experienced teachers and the existence of new teachers, as well as the absence of many teachers for long periods because of health conditions. This limits the school's ability to achieve further progress.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Success rates in the Ministry of Education examinations
- Security and safety
- Cooperative learning
- The school environment
- Assessing and meeting the personal needs of students
- Strategic planning

Areas for development

- Catering for individual differences between students in lessons
- Use of assessment
- Range of teaching and learning strategies
- Basic skills in the English language
- Planning of homework
- Challenging students' abilities

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Develop teaching and learning strategies in terms of:
 - Using assessment to meet students' needs
 - Taking into account individual differences
 - Developing higher-order thinking skills
 - Planning homework
- Develop students' basic skills, particularly in the English language
- Use existing expertise in the school to raising the level of performance through spreading good practices
- Retain experienced teachers to help raise the level of academic achievement.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory
Students' academic achievement	3: Satisfactory
Students' progress in their personal development	3: Satisfactory
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