



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

# **Schools Review Unit**

## **Review Report**

**Talent International and The Infant School**  
**Manama – Capital Governorate**  
**Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 3 - 5 October 2011**

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## The Schools Review Unit

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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:

<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 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

<b>School's name</b>		Talent International and the infant school											
<b>School's type</b>		Private											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1971											
<b>Age range of students</b>		5-18 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>			<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>				
		1-6			7-9				10-12				
		Key Stage 1 (Grades 1 and 2), Key Stage 2 (Grades 3 to 6) Key Stage 3 (Grades 7 and 9), Key Stage 4(Grades 10 and 11) Key Stage 5 (Grades 12 and 13)											
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	184	<b>Girls</b>	139	<b>Total</b>							323
<b>Students' social background</b>		Various social backgrounds											
<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>	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Town /Village</b>		Manama											
<b>Governorate</b>		Capital											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		3											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		34											
<b>Curriculum</b>		English National Curriculum											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		English											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		4 years											
<b>External assessment and examination</b>		International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), Advanced Subsidiary level, Advanced Level											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		None											
<b>Number of students in the following categories</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>			<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>			<b>Physical Disabilities</b>			<b>Learning Difficulties</b>		
		NA			NA			2			2		

**Major recent changes in the school**

In 2007, the school gained recognition as an international training and examining board for Edexcel

## Table of review judgements awarded

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

### 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: 4 Inadequate

The overall effectiveness of Talent International and The Infant School is inadequate because of limitations on the students' progress. This stems from management of the curriculum and a passive learning atmosphere where the pace of teaching and learning is too slow. Teaching in the school utilises too few strategies to help students learn in ways that capture interest and motivate them to do well. Students are given too little guidance in how to express themselves fully, work in groups, solve problems and acquire new skills.

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

#### Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's capacity to improve is inadequate because the school's self-evaluation is not yet sufficiently well developed and not closely linked to strategic planning. Therefore planning is currently not focused sufficiently on those key areas that need to be improved. Raising students' attainment and improving their academic achievement and the quality of provision across the school are not being well enough monitored to bring about necessary improvements. Therefore, the overall effectiveness of the school is not being lifted. The school premises are in need of improvement and procedures for ensuring students' and staff safety are not as they should be. Students are not sufficiently supported in and outside lessons so that their academic and personal need can be well met.

## Students' achievement

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

#### Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students achieve high pass rates in internal examinations in Key Stages 1 to 3, but these are not externally moderated and the actual standards achieved lack benchmarking. Performance in external examinations in Key Stage 4 is significantly lower. Students in Year 10 achieved below average pass rates in the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) examinations in June 2011, reaching 50% in Arabic, about 60% in English and 47% in mathematics. Pass rates in biology, chemistry and physics were well below average ranging from 31% to 63%. Too few students completed AS and A level examinations successfully with only some entering advanced level General Certificate English (GCE).

Students' levels of understanding and knowledge vary too much within and across the lessons in Key Stage 1 and 2 due to the inconsistent teaching they receive. However, most students reach expected levels in core subjects except in mathematics and the aspects of inquiry in science. This is due to a lack of investigative and practical skills. This also applies to the investigative aspects of science where attainment is below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. The standards achieved by students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in lessons are below the expected average due to the limited range of teaching and assessment methods. This is evident in students' class-work where activities and tasks are not set at levels which provide challenge for many students.

Analysis of performance data shows a decrease in students' progress in all core subjects over the past three years, more particularly in the senior school. The progress of the majority of students in English lessons is satisfactory, while students' progress in other core subjects is inadequate throughout the school. Students have good oral and reading skills in English but the majority has difficulty in reaching the expected level in their extended writing, particularly in senior grades. In Arabic, students writing skills do not reflect the expected progress. In mathematics and science students rely on memory recall rather than using and applying their knowledge and understanding of the subjects through appropriate skills.



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

### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Most students attend school regularly and punctually, and the school sensitively monitors these. They enjoy lessons where opportunities are provided for participation. A few secondary students develop self-confidence through taking leadership roles and responsibilities as members of the Talent Student Council, but this provides opportunities for only a few students. There is a narrow range of extra-curricular activities which do benefit those students who participate. In lessons, most students demonstrate adequate levels of confidence, though they are rarely asked to work independently or collaboratively.

Students are well-behaved and value the help they receive. They feel safe and secure and do not report any intimidating behaviour in the school. Rare incidents of unacceptable behaviour are handled quickly and effectively and students appreciate this. Students show a well-developed understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture, expressed during citizenship lessons and through excursions to the museum and heritage sites. They show pride in celebrating National Day and display a sound understanding of Islamic values, with mutual respect and tolerance evident in the interactions between students. Respect is not only shown for teachers and students but also for the fabric of school, which is evident from the students' considerate behaviour during break times and their care of classrooms and other school buildings.

## **The quality of provision**

### □ How effective are teaching and learning?

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate because too many lessons are teacher-centered and teaching approaches cater insufficiently for students' individual differences. Most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and often provide clear explanations. Teaching places too great an emphasis on students' acquisition of knowledge without sufficient practice and development of skills with a deepening of understanding. Some teaching supports students in acquiring skills and understanding, such as the use of adverbs and adjectives when writing a story. In the many less effective lessons, there is limited

planning for teaching to match the different abilities of students and activities to develop understanding are few.

Most teaching places too great an emphasis on learning knowledge through repetition. In some better lessons teachers use open questions and students develop higher order thinking skills, but questioning often only requires students to recall facts and there is little emphasis on investigative and problem solving skills, especially in mathematics and science and particularly in the senior grades. Lessons are organized, but in many the learning objective are not made clear and they lack a plenary session to summarize students' learning. In addition, many lessons lack sufficient activities that use students' interests to motivate and encourage them to participate fully.

Lessons throughout the school do not appropriately provide challenge for students of different abilities because this is insufficiently catered for in teachers lesson planning. This results in lessons that do not provide students with a balance of opportunities to work independently, collaboratively and develop responsibility. Tasks set are often too long and the pace of lessons is slow. Consequently, the majority of students achieve below the expected level during lessons.

Resources in most lessons tend to be restricted to textbooks and the white board. Additionally, the laboratory has limited equipment and materials, and is not being effectively used, especially for practical and investigative science lessons in the senior grades.

Although records are kept of students' results and most of their notebooks and homework is corrected and marked, the results do not effectively inform lesson planning for the next steps in students' learning. Assessment of student performance is weak with too great a focus on oral questioning to the whole class, which does not rigorously measure each individual student's progress.

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

**Grade: 4 Inadequate**

Curriculum implementation and enrichment is inadequate. The school provides a satisfactory range of subjects in Years 1 to 9, based on the English National Curriculum. Low

student numbers in Years 11 and 12 limit the subjects available. Despite this, few students have progressed to higher education. Subjects are mostly text-book driven, with insufficient attention given to modifications and additional planning by teachers to cater for students' interests and different abilities. The science and mathematics curricula give insufficient attention to developing students' investigative and practical skills. Sporting activities are limited, with no physical education for girls in the upper years. Subjects have schemes of work, but these are insufficiently developed to ensure progression and continuity across all years. Reviews of subject curricula lack rigour. There are very limited links between subjects to encourage the application of core skills, particularly across Years 1 to 6. The school organises a range of field trips in every year level, which are related to the curriculum and these are good. However, too few extra-curricular activities are provided and the majority of students do not participate. Classrooms have limited teaching displays and almost no celebration of students' work or curriculum material.

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

#### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

Teachers and individual students do their best to ensure new students are made welcome and settle quickly. The school assesses students' academic progress through end of unit and termly tests, but this information is rarely analysed with the weakness compounded by the limited assessment made during lessons. Consequently, many high achievers are not sufficiently challenged and they make slower progress than they should. A similar picture is found in relation to students who have learning difficulties. In addition, plans used to direct the work of staff who are supporting students with identified special education needs are inadequate.

Individual teachers provide satisfactory support for students who have personal problems but the regular monitoring of students' personal needs is inadequate. The school does not have a clear enough picture about how well these needs are being met. This limits its ability to intervene or make changes to the provision. Parents receive sufficient information to keep them informed about their children's progress through reports and meetings with teachers. Staff make informal arrangements for students to access advice and guidance about future education and employment. Although students show care and respect for one another, the school does not always ensure that students and staff work in a healthy environment. Few policies or risk assessments have been completed to identify potential hazards or control the risks.

## Leadership, management and governance

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

### **Grade: 4 Inadequate**

School leadership has a set mission that aims to develop teaching and learning. This is shared with teachers, although parents and students were not involved in its formulation. There is little self-evaluation evident within the school, except for limited attempts by school leaders to monitor teachers' performance through class visits. Whilst oral feedback is provided, there is little follow-up to evaluate whether teachers' performance has improved. As a result the school has little understanding of students' actual performance over time in both internal and external examinations and tests. The school has a short-term strategic plan, which lists goals relating to its priorities for improvement. However, it does not contain any work plan which identifies timelines, people responsible for its execution, actions taken to address the main issues or monitoring arrangements to demonstrate what has been achieved.

The principal manages staff deployment on a day-to-day basis effectively. There are few professional development opportunities available for teachers to improve their practice. Where they do occur these focus more on implementing new curriculum rather than on methodology of teaching.

The school provides some practical equipment in class for the different subjects such as mathematics and English. However, school resource centres such as the library and science laboratory have limited and sometimes out-dated resources that are rarely used. Teachers' use of practical equipment to enhance students' learning is insufficient despite its availability.

Parents' and students' opinions are rarely sought formally through questionnaires and surveys. Indeed, the majority of students and parents expressed their dissatisfaction with the degree to which the school sought and responded to their views. However, views are sometimes gathered informally such as during open days and break times and there have been positive outcomes.

The school has limited links with the local and wider community, an example being a trip to Bahrain's stock market. However, further opportunities to develop stronger links with the curriculum are not sufficiently explored. The school has a parent-teacher association which holds regular meetings. It discusses matters related to students' needs and helps to organise activities such as the National Day. The governing body does not hold the leadership of the school accountable for matters such as planning, monitoring and standards. Consequently, it has insufficient impact on improving the school.

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

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- Students' good oral skills in English
- The confidence and positive attitude of students
- Students' good relationships, which are encouraged across all ages.

## Recommendations

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

- develop and implement rigorous self-evaluation, including monitoring the impact of teaching on learning
- implement a written strategic plan which identifies appropriate priorities for improvement
- extend the professional development programmes for teachers using results from classroom observation to inform specific training needs
- develop the quality of teaching and learning to ensure:
  - the use of effective assessment to guide planning and teaching to better meet the need of all students
  - the use of a variety of teaching methods and learning resources to enhance productivity and engagement
- develop plans and schemes of work in all subjects to ensure continuity, progression and coverage of skills and understanding, as well as knowledge
- develop and implement procedures for undertaking risk assessments across all aspects of school.