



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Tariq Ben Ziyad Intermediate Boys School
Muharraq - Muharraq Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 24 - 26 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 ten 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		Tariq Ben Ziyad Intermediate Boys School											
School's type		Government											
Year of establishment		1966											
Age range of students		13-15 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		-				7-9				-			
Number of Students		Boys	833	Girls	-				Total	833			
Students' social background		Most students come from families of medium to good economic and social levels.											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	8	8	-	-	-
Town /Village		Muharraq											
Governorate		Muharraq											
Number of administrative staff		10 members											
Number of teaching staff		62 teachers											
Curriculum		Ministry of Education (MoE)											
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic											
Principal's tenure		6 years											
External assessment and examination		MoE's assessment system and national examinations (QAAET)											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties	
		-				-			3			8	
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The appointment of a learning difficulties specialist in the school this year 2011-12 • The appointment of two new assistant principals during 2010-11. 											

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
Students' personal development	-	4	-	4
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	-	4	-	4
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	-	4	-	4

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 satisfactory as judged in the previous review in October 2008 to inadequate at the time of this review. All school aspects are judged to be inadequate. The reasons for this are attributed to several factors, most importantly, the students' low academic achievement, particularly their poor proficiency in writing skills and application of grammar in Arabic. Most students' lack proficiency in practical skills in science and in using skills of arithmetic. Also, there is insufficient evaluation of provision and therefore actions for improvement are not known, particularly the impact of professional development on teaching. There is a serious absence of prioritising school work and management action in line with the recommendations in the previous review report. Parents and students are satisfied with what the school provides.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school's capacity to improve has declined, since its previous review in October 2008, from satisfactory to inadequate. This is attributed to several factors but mainly the absence of comprehensive and accurate evaluation procedures. The impact of what the school provides is not evaluated and therefore actions to improve are not understood. Despite the school's senior leadership's adoption of some strategic planning procedures, the lack of identified priorities promoted by the leadership for improving the school's work is a highly constraining factor. The recommendations in the previous review report have not been used to drive improvement despite the crucial challenges the school faces, mainly low academic achievement by students and varying with sometimes incompetent performance by some teachers.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Students in Grades 7 and 8 achieve higher pass rates than those in Grade 9. Yet, pass rates in general vary substantially and do not correspond to the low levels of proficiency demonstrated by students in the core subjects, particularly in mathematics and science. While the high pass rates are reflected in students' levels in the very limited number of good lessons, as a result of good learning opportunities provided to them, they do not achieve satisfactory levels in most written work. Satisfactory and inadequate lessons, which accounted for more than three quarters of lessons observed during the review, did not meet students' academic needs well enough and contribute to students' inadequate achievement and progress.

The majority of students are proficient in information technology skills and can read aloud with verbal expression in both Arabic and English. However their level of proficiency in writing skills and their application of grammar is inadequate. Most students do not learn adequate practical skills in science and skills in arithmetic because teachers do not use methods which focus on helping students develop these skills.

Students make slow but better progress in the core subjects as they move through Grades 7 and 8, than they do in Grade 9, where their progress falls back in all subjects. Students also make better progress in English lessons than Arabic and science lessons, apart from in writing. In most mathematics lessons, particularly in Grade 7, students' progress is slow because the activities provided do not cater for students' individual differences and levels of understanding, so students cannot learn skills at a level appropriate to their needs. Because of this, students with special educational needs, as well as those with learning difficulties and low achievers, make limited progress in the majority of lessons. There is limited support and ineffective remedial programmes for these groups, whereas outstanding students achieve some advanced places in external competitions, such as first place in the 'Speaking Standard Arabic' competition. They make progress in a limited number of lessons, such as some English lessons, but often they do not due to insufficient and ineffective enrichment programmes and insufficient support.

Grade 9 students achieved slightly higher than the national average in national examinations in English and mathematics and near the national average in science in 2011, whereas their levels in Arabic are below average.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The vast majority of students attend school regularly. Cases of absence are genuine and addressed by the school appropriately. Students' participation in school life and extra-curricular activities is limited, as only a few students take part in sports activities, boys' scouts and school committees, such as the discipline and housekeeping committees. Students work together and take limited leadership roles through the Students' Council and in group activities assigned to them in a few lessons. Some students have self-confidence and good ability to express themselves. Yet failure to involve students' actively in the teaching and learning process in the majority of lessons, constrains their personal development. Consequently, this has a substantial and negative impact on their motivation to learn and decreases their enthusiasm and ability to take responsibility.

Most students demonstrate appropriate understanding of Bahrain's culture and Islamic values and some of them demonstrate appropriate respect for their colleagues and teachers and have good relationships among themselves. However, some display highly inappropriate behaviour which includes quarrelling, smoking and littering school yards which, despite the seemingly appropriate actions taken by the school, continue to exist.

The school takes appropriate action towards threats to the safety and security of its staff and students yet some students and parents expressed their concern about the use of harsh methods by some members of the administrative and teaching staff to direct and monitor behaviour. This has a negative impact on some students' sense of security.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and in a few lessons implement effective strategies. In science and Arabic lessons cooperative learning groups are encouraged and resources such as data-shows and educational films are used to enhance students' participation and involvement. A few teachers manage their lessons effectively, they strive to provide students with knowledge, skills and concepts and use praise in a manner that motivates students.

Many teaching methods are used that do not meet students' educational needs because they do not cater for the individual differences between students. This is despite a recommendation to this effect in the previous review.

The majority of teachers try to adopt ways to help students learn by arranging cooperative groupings of students, but many of these are implemented without clear instructions or an appropriate definition of roles. Consequently, this limits their effectiveness and defeats the purpose. Support provided by teachers in most lessons often takes the form of a few passing comments, so many students resort to copying answers from their colleagues, rather than relying on themselves or asking for the teachers' assistance. This lack of teacher support seriously hinders students' progress. Developing students' higher thinking skills and tasks which challenge their abilities do not extend beyond to some introductory activities.

Teaching resources are not used to improve lessons, particularly technological resources. Facilities such as the e-classroom and the Learning Resources Centre are not used enough. Time is not managed effectively in some lessons where the teacher is slow to set the students working, for instance, a teacher waited 30 minutes in one lesson observed before distributing activities. This reduced the lesson's effectiveness considerably.

Assessment is not used effectively in most lessons. Teachers use verbal questions addressed only to a specific group of students. Homework is assigned in many lessons, however it does not cater for students' individual differences. Very little written feedback is provided so students tend not to follow-up or develop this written work. Moreover, when marking does occur, it is often inaccurate, which contributes further to preventing the majority of students from making the progress that they should.

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The curriculum is implemented with little enrichment of the students' learning. The majority of lessons focus on providing knowledge from text books by using dictation as the main method of teaching which fails to cater for students' different needs. Some academic departments analyse the curriculum, but the results of such analysis are not used in lesson planning or curriculum development. Most teachers' attempts to link subjects are tenuous. The students' inability to learn basic skills plays a substantial part in limiting the use of different skills across subjects and the curriculum is not designed in ways that address this need. Students are not well prepared for the next phase of their education because of this.

Most classrooms and corridors lack educational boards and students' work is rarely celebrated. The learning environment is not enhanced by curriculum materials. Students' experiences are extended by utilizing the resources available in the local community, such as organising visits to Aluminium Bahrain and the Social Welfare Centre. The school also develops citizenship values in students through morning radio, displaying heritage images and singing relevant songs, in addition to organising field trips to local monuments.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

The school detects behavioural problems but do so without adequate documentation. Procedures are insufficient to address many of the problems and so monitoring and the behaviour modification methods used are often inappropriate.

Students in Grades 7 and 9 are guided through special programmes where students in Grade 7 are introduced to the nature of the intermediate stage and school rules and Grade 9 are prepared for their secondary stage, by organising visits to secondary schools..

The school diagnoses and monitors students' personal needs and chronic diseases and meets them by providing necessary financial aid. It also supports students with special needs, but to a very limited extent. Programmes intended to support students with learning difficulties are under preparation. The learning difficulties specialist was only appointed at the beginning of the current school year (2011-12) and so far the educational needs of these students are not assessed or met in the majority of lessons.

The school communicates with parents through the open day and SMS, but communication with respect to their children's academic progress and personal development is not sufficient. The school's Health and Safety Committee assesses risks, but does not follow up on them sufficiently. The school environment is still exposed to risks despite recommendations in the previous review report.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Although the school's vision and mission focus on achievement some teachers stated that they are unaware of this. Satisfactory achievement is not reflected in the school's overall performance. The school has a strategic plan that ends this year and was based on analysis of the school's situation, yet it did not include different departments' goals and priorities or specific reference to the recommendations in the previous review. Moreover, it is not linked to operational plans and does not include timescales or clear success indicators. Self-evaluation mechanisms lack regularity and impact. Teachers' performance is monitored by class observations carried out by school's leadership yet, the results of such observations are not adequately utilised to bring about improvements.

A family-like spirit prevails among the staff. Those who demonstrate job discipline are honoured on a monthly basis. However, the impact of this on improving in-class practices is limited, mainly due to insufficient monitoring and evaluation.

The school utilises its financial resources and some of its facilities adequately, such as when holding workshops and in making good use of the laboratories. However, technological resources, the Learning Resources Centre and e-classroom are not adequately utilised.

The school organises some professional development programmes after identifying teachers' training needs, but the impact of these on teachers' performance in most lessons is not evident. The school demonstrates limited practices in its attempt to seek students' and parents' views and respond to them. It only requests parents' opinion regarding the open day and their participation, as with students' council, in school life is limited. The school communicates with some local community institutions with respect to implementing certain joint programmes such as educational lectures given by the Community Service Police and the visit to Aluminium Bahrain. These help extend students' experiences and expand their knowledge. The school communicates with the Schools' Superintendent in order to improve the school's overall performance but, the impact of this recent communication has not yet shown.

The school's main strengths

- Students' regular attendance at school
- Guidance programmes for Grade 7 students' induction and Grade 9 students' next educational phase
- Students' understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- obtain external support to improve procedures and ensure students' sense of security by eliminating inappropriate methods of monitoring and modifying students' behaviour
- assess levels of risk in all the school's facilities and take urgent action towards reducing these levels
- utilize accurate and comprehensive self-evaluation of the school's work to develop a strategic plan which includes a timetable for implementation and clear performance indicators
- facilitate monitoring and evaluation of efforts that should impact on improving the school's performance, particularly with respect to teaching and learning and the raising of students' academic achievement and personal development
- develop teaching and learning strategies to ensure better provision and outcomes for students
- strive to make the school environment an attractive place for learning and utilise teaching resources effectively, particularly the Learning Resources Centre and e-classroom.