



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**The British School of Bahrain
Hamala - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 23-25 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 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	The British School of Bahrain													
School's type	Private													
Year of establishment	1995													
Age range of students	5-18 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)	Primary				Middle				High					
	1-6				7-9				10-13					
	Key Stage (KS) 1: Years 1&2; KS 2: Years 3-6; KS 3: Years 7-9; KS 4: Years 10&11; KS 5: Years 12&13.													
Number of students	Boys	616	Girls	644	Total	1260								
Students' social background	Middle class socially advantaged families													
Classes per grade	School	Infant			Junior				Senior					
	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	Classes	6	6	6	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
Town /Village	Hamala													
Governorate	Northern													
Number of administrative staff	55													
Number of teaching staff	117 teachers + 45 learning assistants													
Curriculum	English National Curriculum with adaptations and post 16 curriculum based on British examinations													
Main language(s) of instruction	English													
Principal's tenure	2 years													
External assessment and examinations	National Foundation of Educational Research (NFER), Edinburgh Reading Test, National Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), Cambridge Checkpoint tests, General Certificate for Secondary Education (GCSE), General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Subsidiary Level (AS level), Advanced Level (A level).													
Accreditation (if applicable)	None													

Number of students in the following categories as per school classification	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented	Physical Disabilities	Learning Difficulties
Major recent changes in the school	-	73	-	54
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in the senior management and expansions in school buildings. 			

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	1: Outstanding			
The school's capacity to improve	1: Outstanding			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	1	2	1	1
Students' personal development	1	1	1	1
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	1	1	1	1
The quality of the curriculum implementation	1	1	2	1
The quality of support and guidance for students	1	1	1	1
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	1	1	1	1

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: 1 Outstanding

Students' academic achievement and personal development are outstanding. This is largely as a result of the exceptional use of teaching and learning strategies that enable students to be critical independent learners and results in attainment that is well-above average in external assessments. Students also show outstanding self-confidence, a well-developed sense of responsibility and excellent behaviour as they participate enthusiastically in the school's different activities. Moreover, support and guidance are highly successful in monitoring students' academic and personal development and providing extremely effective programmes that assist them in making excellent progress, both academically and personally. The curriculum is rigorously reviewed and enriched with a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which make the curriculum implementation outstanding. Leadership, management and governance are outstanding since planning is strongly focused on self-evaluation of the different aspects of school processes. Parents and students are very satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school is highly committed to its ambitious vision that provides clear and focussed direction to its overall work. This is mainly due to the effective leadership and management that have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement through rigorous self-evaluation of its different processes, highly effective planning and careful monitoring to ensure successful implementation. The school is also supported by the experienced Board of Trustees which makes a significant contribution to the school's overall development and most effectively holds the school accountable for its performance. This has proved to be highly effective, particularly with the rapid expansion of the school over the past few years. The school has proved to be successful in facing those challenges, maintaining high quality teaching, exceptional support to students and an enriching curriculum.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Students' levels of attainment in UK curriculum assessments and external examinations including SATs, Cambridge Checkpoint tests, GCSE and GCE are consistently well above UK averages. Significant numbers of students reach the highest grades in end of key stage assessments. In lessons and in scrutiny of students' work, excellent progress is evident and students take great pride in their work.

In Arabic, students make good progress in listening, speaking and reading aloud. Their writing skills are less developed however, especially in Key Stage 3, than their reading and speaking skills, students taking Arabic as an additional language are making very good progress.

In English, the standards and progress of students, across the school are outstanding. Students' comprehension skills are exceptional and their command of critical analysis and interpretation is particularly well developed. Students are able to analyse and infer from poems and excerpts using excellent comprehension and communication skills.

In mathematics, students' standards are well above age-related expectations across the school. Students skilfully apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding when tackling challenging problem-solving activities. Primary school students perform basic arithmetic operations with great confidence and demonstrate excellent understanding when dealing with mathematical activities. Middle school students are showing good progress and understanding of the various mathematical skills, however, their problem-solving skills are less developed in a few lessons. High school students work very confidently with the calculus rules and show excellent understanding.

In science, students' standards and progress are well above age-related expectations. Their practical and investigative skills are exceptionally well developed. Primary school students work confidently with apparatus, and use their scientific understanding to create simple investigative experiments. They draw precise conclusions from information, make well informed predictions, frame simple hypotheses and justify their inference. High school students show excellent interpretation skills and fully understand the need for validity, reliability, accuracy and precision in experiments. They have an excellent understanding of key scientific concepts and their identification. Their impressive scientific enquiry skills enable them to comprehend important scientific concepts.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Students attend school regularly and punctually. The majority of students arrive early eager to make use of facilities such as the library and work with teachers and colleagues on the enrichment and support programmes. They participate enthusiastically in all school activities, readily work collaboratively, join discussions and give presentations. They are also wholeheartedly involved in extra-curricular activities such as basketball leagues, debating competitions and drama productions. This has developed high levels of self-confidence, mature and highly responsible conduct, for example, in group activities, and in the student council which helps new students settle in. Students take responsibility for their learning through research, lively presentations and they work with excellent productivity in groups to complete tasks and reach targets. They also make very effective and skilful use of the resources provided to them, such as the library, computer room and science laboratories, showing a strong desire to learn and develop high level skills. Students feel safe and secure at school, reflected in their excellent behaviour and mutual respect within the harmonious, close knit community. They are friendly, courteous, approachable and always ready to help fellow students. Students of all ages are justifiably proud of their school and they take great care of the facilities and resources. Students exhibit good understanding of Bahrain's culture and heritage and knowledgeably discuss traditional Bahraini weddings and historical sites such as Bahrain Fort.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Teachers' strong subject knowledge is combined with excellent classroom management skills. As a result, most lessons are well-planned, they are delivered enthusiastically and accurately match students' differing learning needs. Effective teaching enables students to acquire skills and knowledge that are above age-related expectations. Well-chosen reward systems encourage students to do their very best; they are highly motivated and have excellent attitudes towards their work. Students receive very good support throughout the school and teaching assistants are well deployed. They are particularly successful in helping students who find learning difficult to improve their performance.

Across the school, developing students' higher order thinking skills is a priority. Students are encouraged to practise analytical thinking, to state their views and justify their opinions. For example, in science, students successfully use enquiry and investigative skills to analyse results and reach well-reasoned conclusions.

In most lessons, students are provided with an exciting variety of activities that are differentiated to meet their individual needs. They are often given open-ended tasks and written activities that engage them and make them autonomous learners. There are set achievable targets which offer just the right levels of challenge. In a few less effective lessons, in key stage 3 high achieving students are not sufficiently challenged and the work set does not sufficiently extend their learning.

Effective teaching strategies are implemented across the school which focus on meeting students' needs. Excellent opportunities are provided for them to brainstorm, discuss and work in small groups. This engages students' interests and contributes to their enjoyment during lessons. Resources such as interactive whiteboards, flash cards and models are very well used to support the teaching. Innovative use of technology, for example the use of iPads in Year 4, puts students at the forefront of e-learning. Tasks set for students out of school often enable them to use this technology as they consolidate and build on the work done in class.

Outstanding use of assessment is evident across the school and enriches students' learning experience. Teachers skilfully question students to assess their levels of understanding. Students' performance is measured through regular tests which are carefully set and the results accurately reflect students' levels of progress seen in lessons. Students' written work is rigorously monitored and constructive feedback is provided to help them improve their work.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school provides a broad range of subjects based on the English National Curriculum. The curriculum is reviewed regularly ensuring that the correct changes are made to meet the students' needs and interests. Increasing the provision for teaching of Arabic for non-Arabic speakers illustrates where this has been successful. Opportunities provided for all students to study Arabic in primary school are good, however only Arab students take Arabic in senior school. Good links between subjects result in an exciting and coherent curriculum. These links are firmly embedded at primary level, but less well developed in senior school.

Consequently, there are fewer structured opportunities for students to transfer their knowledge gained in one subject to another. Students' excellent awareness of their roles and responsibilities in the school community are clearly enhanced through their organisation of charity fund raising events and in helping to supervise and work with younger students. They contribute well to national and international activities, such as the science fair and 'Jeans for Genes day', developing an active sense of citizenship. The school provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment that is well organised. This contributes significantly to students' learning through colourful displays of work that celebrate their achievements. Students are very well prepared as they transfer to the next stage of their education because the school offers tailor-made support. Students' learning is enriched with the excellent range of extra-curricular activities and field trips. These are complemented by the after school Academies Programme which is used both by students and the local community.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school has excellent induction and transition programmes such as the buddy system and orientation sessions at different year levels that enable students to settle quickly and successfully.

The school rigorously tracks and monitors students' academic progress and personal development, including students with special educational needs. These students are provided with highly effective programmes, for example before school starts and one-to-one sessions during the day. Individual academic targets are set with the student's input in every subject, to ensure their involvement and that their learning needs are successfully addressed.

Students receive careful and extremely effective support to help them if they face any difficulties. This is provided by teachers and older students, such as the Friends and Buddies Investigators (FBI). Students are given wide-ranging guidance for the next stage of their education, which helps them to make well-informed decisions about their future. However, opportunities for career and further education guidance will need to be built on so students' needs continue to be met as numbers grow rapidly.

Parents are very well-informed about their children's progress through a wide variety of approaches which are regular and detailed; for example, through daily diaries, half-termly grade cards and termly reports, and an open door policy. The health and safety of students

and staff are given a high priority and facilities and equipment are kept in excellent condition.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The highly motivating vision of the school, together with the enthusiastically collaborative senior leadership teams, creates and sustains a strong whole-school identity. There is a shared sense of purpose and a productive commitment to continuous improvement amongst all staff members. Supportive teamwork and effective communication ensure staff are kept well-informed and are able to celebrate achievements throughout the school. Teachers are extremely committed to the school and respond enthusiastically to new developments, such as the introduction of iPads for students, encouraged and supported by the school leadership.

Extensive self-evaluation of all aspects of the school's performance involves all staff. Although systems differ between the three divisions, teachers carefully monitor and record students' progress and personal development with a strong focus on improving their achievement. Comprehensive and ambitious strategic planning ensures realistic and prioritised goals to drive improvements in all aspects of the school's operation. These include detailed success criteria and means of evaluating progress. There is a rigorous appraisal system which is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching; this includes peer observations, informal walk-throughs, written feedback, self-evaluation and conferences. Professional development has predominantly and very successfully focussed on identified whole school needs and initiatives, for example, assessment for learning, and has yet to ensure a strong connection between the results of teacher appraisal and professional development of individual teachers.

The school offers a stimulating learning environment. Careful budgeting and planning ensure excellent facility and resource development. Highly effective and efficient use is made of the school facilities by staff and students, in addition to wider community's use after school hours. Participation in academic programmes offer an opportunity for both students and the local community to interact in various activities. Student and parent feedback is sought in many ways, including a student council, a welcoming open-door

policy, drop-in meetings and, more recently, online surveys. Extremely positive actions in response to feedback and concerns have resulted, for example in changes to Arabic provision. Exceptionally strong community links are enjoyed by students and staff, enhancing learning and teaching, with a strong focus on meaningful connections with charities, enriching learning opportunities away from school and active involvement by parents. The Board of Trustees is committed to its advisory role and makes a significant contribution, particularly to strategic and financial planning. The school's leadership is held accountable for the school's performance appropriately.

The school's main strengths

- The shared ambitious vision that provides a sense of direction and purpose to the school's community
- The strong inspiring leadership and management, fully supported by the Board of Trustees, which are focused on continuous improvement through rigorous strategic planning and accountability
- Students' confidence and their enthusiasm for the different aspects of school life including the impressive range of extra-curricular activities and events
- Highly effective teaching strategies that support high student achievement
- The atmosphere of care and respect that prevails throughout the school which is clearly reflected on students feeling safe and secure
- The highly effective support provided to students both academically and personally.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- share best practices among teachers to ensure the high standards of teaching are sustained and expanded
- develop and extend students' understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture.