



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Um Kulthoom Intermediate Girls School
Isa Town - Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 17-19 May 2010

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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, pupils and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Information about the school

Gender of students: Girls

Number of students: 895

Age range: 13-15 years

Characteristics of the school

Um Kulthoom Intermediate Girls School is a Central Governorate school in Isa Town, and was founded in 1966. The age range in the school is from 13 to 15 years and there are 895 students. Most students come from middle-income families. Students are distributed across 29 classes: nine classes for the intermediate first grade and 10 for each of the second and third grades. The school categorises 283 of its students as talented and creative, 29 as outstanding and 44 as having special educational needs; five students are physically disabled. The headmistress is in her fourth year at the school. There are 112 staff, of whom 86 are teachers. The school is 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: 2 (Good)

The overall effectiveness of Um Kulthoom Intermediate Girls School is good. The school has outstanding aspects, in the personal development of students, guidance and support, leadership and management and its capacity to improve and develop. Students are exceptionally satisfied with the school and their parents are very satisfied with it.

The students' academic achievement is good. A high proportion of students achieve high pass rates in most subjects, especially in Mathematics, despite rates being low last year. Average grades in most core subjects have risen for two consecutive years following the school's focus on improving students' academic achievement in this period. Students make progress in line with their abilities in good lessons. Outstanding and talented students make good progress and benefit from advanced and modern teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, which also contribute to students' acquisition of sound basic skills in most subjects. Students' English skills are not of the same standard, however; the teaching strategies in some lessons vary in quality.

Students' personal development is outstanding. All students attend school regularly and punctually. Students' personalities are developed well and they are given plenty of chances to work independently and take responsibility, through the Students' Council and a good range of educational programmes. The school develops students' self-confidence and reinforces their ability to take leadership roles; a significant proportion of students sit on several school committees, such as the media and order committees. The school promotes students' sense of citizenship by arranging appropriate school programmes and events and participating in the "Bahrain First" carnival. All students show great respect for each other and their teachers, which clearly helps to develop good behaviour and build rewarding relationships with their teachers. All students abide by the school's systems and rules very well, which helps all students to feel secure and safe.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is good. Teachers know their study materials and reflected this in effective planning of most lessons and by using a variety of effective teaching strategies that contributed to raising students' academic achievement. Students participate in most lessons effectively; they are given suitable opportunities to express their ideas and exchange opinions by working in groups. Teachers are keen to provide activities that consider the different academic levels of students and which

considerably challenge their abilities, although this happens to a lesser extent in some English language activities. Teachers' effective class management and ability to meet the educational needs of different student groups had a clear effect on making the educational process flow smoothly. In most lessons, teachers use a range of assessment methods to make sure students have achieved the lesson goals and their own learning aims. The homework given to students in most subjects takes into account their individual differences; this was done to a lesser degree in English, however.

The quality of curriculum enrichment and delivery is good. The school develops students' understanding of their rights and duties through guidance lectures and by giving appropriate advice. It also includes such activities during the morning assembly, which encourages most students to take responsibility and leadership roles in the school committees. Most students participate in the school's special projects such as the Injaz Project and the Best Student Project, which, besides developing their personalities, contribute to students' excellent conduct, values and adherence to school rules. The school, through classroom and extra-curricular activities, ensures that students gain sound basic skills in Arabic and Mathematics but they do not acquire the same standard of English skills. The school environment is used well to enrich the curriculum; a variety of meaningful educational displays help create a rich educational environment that stimulates learning.

The quality of guidance and support for students is outstanding. The school inducts new students well by means of educational meetings at the school. The intermediate third grade students are also prepared for the transitional stage with useful vocational guidance programmes that include a number of lectures and workshops. The school identifies students' personal needs and meets them particularly well by providing financial and other support, such as free meals. It also identifies students' educational needs accurately through diagnostic tests and surveys in core subjects. The school provides a particularly high standard of guidance and support to help solve students' problems and instil good behavioural values: individual and group guidance lessons are given; home visits are arranged when needed; talks about relevant topics such as adolescence are held; and competitions, such as one for the cleanest classroom, are also held. All these activities have had an impact on students' behaviour and changing their attitudes towards learning. The school regularly assesses health and safety risks; the health and safety committee works effectively with staff from all departments to monitor health and safety issues and deliver guidance programmes as part of morning assembly.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding. The school has a vision and mission that focus on achievement and students' personal development. These were developed cooperatively by staff and have been translated into highly effective practices and procedures across the school. The school is fully aware of its strengths and areas for development; its self-evaluation results have been used to form a strategic plan that focuses on forming effective partnerships between teachers and students to maintain the school's

development and improvement. The plan's implementation is followed up using clear and measurable performance indicators. The senior management inspires and spreads enthusiasm and motivation for improvement across all staff. They encourage staff to work as trainers to share their expertise and successful teaching and learning strategies with each other and teachers from other schools. The school makes good use of its educational resources to serve the educational process, such as the science laboratory, workshops, learning resources centre and e-classroom. It also responds to the suggestions of students and their parents through the Students' Council.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 1 (Outstanding)

The school's capacity to improve is outstanding. The school's leadership has brought about major changes in the culture and behaviour of its staff so as to focus on achievement, development and creativity in all their work. It carries out continuous and accurate self-evaluation and uses the results to develop improvement plans that have benefited the school's overall performance. The latest improvements can be seen in: the school's creation of a positive and motivating atmosphere in which school staff are keen to accept development and improvement; the school's contribution to training its own and other schools' teachers at the school's training centre; remedying low achievement levels in mathematics and raising them above the average of other schools implementing the performance improvement project; and channelling students' energies into positive activities, such as athletic competitions, which has contributed to altering their behaviour and raising their academic achievement. The school has a sound strategic plan, based on an analysis of the school's situation, from which many operational plans have emerged; these plans effectively support the school's general development and improvement priorities, especially in the fields of academic achievement and behaviour. The school is particularly effective at facing challenges, turning them into opportunities to develop and incorporating them in the school's culture and leadership.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Leadership and management
- Self-evaluation and strategic planning
- Inspiration and motivation of staff and the delegation of authority
- The localization of staff training
- Use of educational resources and facilities
- Students' levels in lessons and examinations
- Students' self-confidence and ability to work independently and take responsibility
- Assessment and using its findings
- Students' conduct
- Safety and security
- Guidance and support programmes
- Induction and transition programmes.

Areas for development

- Basic skills in English
- Higher thinking skills
- The consideration of individual differences in 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, to include:
 - Improving students' basic skills in English
 - More consideration of individual differences in homework
 - Greater development of higher thinking skills
 - Challenging students' abilities to a greater degree.

Overall judgements

| Aspect | Grade: Description |
|--|--------------------|
| The school's overall effectiveness | 2: Good |
| The school's capacity to improve | 1: Outstanding |
| Students' academic achievement | 2: Good |
| Students' progress in their personal development | 1: Outstanding |
| The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning | 2: Good |
| The quality of the curriculum delivery | 2: Good |
| The quality of guidance and support for students | 1: Outstanding |
| The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management | 1: Outstanding |