



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Um Al Hassam Primary School for Boys
Manama - Capital 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 six Reviewers. During the Review, Reviewers observed lessons and other activities, examined students' written 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: Boys

Number of students: 297

Age range: 6-11 years

Characteristics of the school

Um Al Hassam Primary School for Boys is one of the Capital Governorate schools, established in 1958. It caters for students aged between 6 and 11. Its 297 students are distributed over 10 classes; two classes per grade from first grade to fifth. Most students come from low-income families. The school categorises 50 students as talented and 43 students as having learning difficulties. There is no assistant principal, no senior teachers for the basic subjects of the second cycle, and no nurse. The Principal is in her sixth year at the school. There are seven staff in the administration department and 27 teachers, of whom nine are new. Most of the teachers specialise in basic subjects. The school is one of King's Hamad's Schools of the Future project.

Overall effectiveness

☐ How effective is the school in meeting the needs of students and their parents?

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

Um Al Hassam Primary School's overall effectiveness is inadequate. However, the school provision and enhancement of the curriculum is satisfactory. Students and their parents are generally satisfied with the school.

The academic achievement of the students is inadequate. Students do not achieve the expected progress, in spite of achieving high results in school examinations. Neither are these high results representative of the students' performance in the classroom. The teaching techniques used and the nature of activities and work provided, which do not consider students' individual differences, failed to bring the best out of most students during lessons. Diagnostic testing is conducted and students with learning difficulties are given appropriate remedial programmes while the outstanding and talented students participate in various activities.

Students' personal development is inadequate. Most students attend regularly, and some participate in extra-curricular activities, especially in the morning broadcast programmes and sport events. Their participation in the classroom is limited, however, as the teaching methods used do not give them sufficient opportunities to develop their self-confidence, take responsibility or work effectively together. Few students show proper regard for the school's rules and regulations; and there were examples of misconduct and unacceptable behaviour such as fighting and offending other students.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning process is inadequate. The techniques of teaching are direct and focus on imparting facts. Although most teachers have lesson plans to use for guidance they tend to concentrate on presenting the content of textbooks more than developing basic skills. Many students have poor reading and writing skills. Most teachers demonstrate inadequate classroom management, which hampers students' learning and creates disorder in some lessons. Although most lessons start on time, some teachers display poor time management of lessons and the class ends without its aims having been achieved. Teachers do not consider sufficiently students' individual differences or use activities and evaluation methods that support differing educational needs and help develop advanced thinking skills; students' mental abilities are not sufficiently broadened.

The curriculum enrichment is satisfactory. The school develops its students' understanding of their rights and duties, and reinforces a sense of belonging and citizenship. It also enriches the curriculum through the school facilities and educational files, as well as encouraging student participation in several extra-curricular activities. The school environment is also enriched through a number of guidance and educational displays in and outside classrooms, in addition to celebrating students' achievements. Within the curriculum, however, no link is established between the subjects, except in a few lessons of the first cycle.

The effectiveness of support and guidance is inadequate. The school inducts students at entry level, but there are no special programmes for students to acquire the basic skills and be inducted for the transitional educational stages. The school diagnoses and meets students' personal needs appropriately, whereas their educational needs are not diagnosed or met effectively within lessons. The school has made efforts to properly assess safety and health issues. The support given by the social guidance and administrative staff is not sufficient to help students develop the personal skills that could reduce behavioural problems.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate. Relations between the administrative and academic staff are well established and effective; this is reflected in the school's collaborative vision. The implementation of this vision is very limited, however, and has not created practices that contribute to raising students' standards. The school uses "SWOT" analysis to evaluate its progress but has not created a strategic plan based on the findings. Although the school has plans for the running of departments, performance indicators on these plans are unclear and unmeasurable; they do not contribute to improving students' academic achievement and their personal development. The school's plans for managing students' conduct have not yielded noticeable improvement in behaviour inside or outside the classroom. The school runs many programmes and activities, and evaluates them, but does not follow up thoroughly any post-evaluation recommendations, or measure the impact of programmes and activities on teachers and students.

□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The school's capacity for improvement and development is inadequate. It has not been able to implement its vision in reality and has brought about few improvements in the school's general performance in previous years. It has no clear action plan and poor monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. Its plans do not include measurable performance indicators aimed at increasing the level of academic achievement of students and supporting their personal development. The school's educational programmes and school plans, and its self-evaluation findings, have not had a significant effect on the school's general performance, especially on the teaching and learning process, which is inadequate. The school also faces problems related to students' inappropriate conduct, and the presence of a group of novice teachers, most of whom are core subject teachers. Additionally, the school is currently without an assistant principal, senior teachers for the second cycle and a nurse.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- Monitoring of students' attendance
- Collaboration in setting the vision and mission
- Meeting students' personal needs
- Well-established relationship between administrators and teachers
- Use of facilities and supporting class environments

Areas for development

- Strategic planning
- Academic achievement
- Personal development of students
- Performance indicators
- Follow- up programmes of evaluation and assessment
- Students' conduct and behaviour
- Teaching and learning strategies
- Considering individual differences
- Basic skills in all core subjects, especially English
- Higher thinking skills
- Variation in evaluation techniques

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Employ self-evaluation findings to draw up a strategic plan that includes programmes aimed at raising the level of academic achievement and personal development of students
- Ensure follow up and evaluation of strategic goals with clear, measureable performance indicators, and keep track of their impact on the school's general performance
- Regulate effectively the students' conduct
- Develop teaching and learning strategies, taking into consideration the following:
 - Development of students' basic skills in all core subjects
 - Planning to consider individual differences throughout lessons, activities, and homework
 - Development of higher thinking skills
- Employ various assessment techniques in lessons, and use them to enhance students' strengths and develop their areas of weakness
- Address the school's shortage in human resources, represented by:
 - Assistant principal
 - Senior teachers for the subjects of the second cycle
 - A nurse.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	4:Inadequate
The school's capacity to improve	4:Inadequate
Students' academic achievement	4:Inadequate
Students' progress in their personal development	4:Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4:Inadequate
The quality of the curriculum delivery	3:Satisfactory
The quality of guidance and support for students	4:Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	4:Inadequate