



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**West Riffa Secondary Girls School  
Riffa - Southern Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 12 - 14 March 2012**

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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 twelve 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>		West Riffa Secondary Girls School											
<b>School's type</b>		Government											
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1975											
<b>Age range of students</b>		16 – 18 years											
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>			
		-				-				10 - 12			
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	-	<b>Girls</b>	1431				<b>Total</b>	1431			
<b>Students' social background</b>		Students come from middle to upper-middle class families											
<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>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	16	13
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Second Level</u>: 5 classes for chemistry and biology, one class for physics and mathematics, one class for French, 4 classes for the literary stream and 5 classes for commercial sciences.</li> <li>• <u>Third Level</u>: 4 classes for chemistry and biology, one class for physics and mathematics, 3 classes for the literary stream and 5 classes for commercial sciences.</li> </ul>											
<b>Town /Village</b>		West Riffa											
<b>Governorate</b>		Southern Governorate											
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		30 administrative and 22 technical											
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		131											
<b>Curriculum</b>		Ministry of Education (MoE)											
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		Arabic											
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		One year											
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>		MoE's examinations											
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		-											

Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification	Outstanding	Gifted & Talented	Physical Disabilities	Learning Difficulties
	247	10	1	21
<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A principal was appointed during the school year 2010-11</li> <li>• Two new assistant principals were appointed this school year 2011-12</li> <li>• The number of students increased during the second term of the previous school year as the school received students from Al-Badee' Intermediate Girls School</li> <li>• New teachers were appointed and others transferred from other schools this year; accounting for at least half the number of teachers of Arabic, English and commercial subjects</li> <li>• Eight new social workers were appointed this school year.</li> </ul>			

## Table of review judgments awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	3: Satisfactory			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	-	3	3
Students' personal development	-	-	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	-	3	3
The quality of the curriculum implementation	-	-	3	3
The quality of support and guidance for students	-	-	2	2
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	-	-	2	2

### 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: 3 Satisfactory

West Riffa Secondary Girls School has maintained its overall satisfactory effectiveness as judged in the previous review in March 2009. Good aspects include students' personal development, support and guidance programmes provided to students and effective leadership and management demonstrated in the commitment to and support of school improvement by the new leadership team. Students' academic achievement is satisfactory rather than good because of inconsistent teaching and learning, and curriculum implementation, which is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are characterised by a mix of strategies and assessment methods that broadly meet students' educational needs in most lessons, but fail to provide opportunities that challenge their abilities so that their learning matches their different levels and abilities. Nevertheless, students and parents are pleased with the school.

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

#### Grade: 2 Good

The school has good capacity to improve. The senior management works with the staff and students in a good team spirit. The school community is determined to make changes and improvements by carefully basing planning for development on the results of self-evaluation. The senior management is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, which have been translated into significant improvement since the last review. This is evident in students' behaviour and personal development. A motivating learning environment has contributed to students' enthusiasm, enjoyment and participation. Moreover, strategic planning is based on the results of self-evaluation of all areas of school work and the new strategic plan currently being developed sets improving students' achievement as a top priority.

## Students' achievement

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

#### Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students attain high pass rates in the MoE's examinations in most core subjects, with the exception of common mathematics, first level physics, English 101 and English 218. Results are in line with proficiency rates in most scientific stream subjects, whereas proficiency rates in English and Arabic subjects, particularly in the literary stream, are low. Students attained better results than the overall average for Bahrain in science and accounting in 2011-12, whereas their results in mathematics and Arabic are below average. Overall the school achieved a low rank among secondary schools in Bahrain in the first term of the current school year.

Most lessons and students' work indicate that students achieve expected levels with the best achievement attributed to second level students. Lower achievement is due to inconsistency in meeting students' academic needs. The fact that written exercises in English are presented in the same manner to different groups of students, constrains achievement, with the exception of written work in the scientific stream and mathematics, which is diversified and better.

Students gain varying levels of knowledge, understanding and skills in lessons in mathematics, Arabic, English, science and computer lessons. In English, writing skills are developed less well than expected. Students do not acquire the English language skills in commercial subjects required for the labour market, because these subjects are taught in Arabic.

When students' results are tracked for the last consecutive seven terms there is consistent progress in most core and commercial subjects, but deterioration in the literary stream in English subjects. Most students achieve satisfactory progress in most lessons due to generally appropriate teaching and learning processes, but inconsistent performance by teachers in supporting students means that achievement overall is no better than satisfactory. On the other hand, students made good progress in more than one third of lessons, such as in second level mathematics and chemistry lessons, due to the use of effective teaching and learning strategies, which challenge students' abilities and put them at the centre of the learning process. These lessons had effective class management and used assessment of students' work to guide their new learning. The progress made in these lessons contrasts with that in some first level English and mathematics lessons, due to ineffective teaching and assessment, poor class and time management and inadequate support provided to low-achieving students.



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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

Students attend regularly and punctually and most participate in school life with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They work collectively through various extra-curricular activities, including the morning broadcast, students' advisory committee, science clubs and various creativity centres. 'Bahrain's Achievement' and, 'the Model United Nations' programmes and community service projects help enhance students' self-confidence and their ability to take responsibility, and to express themselves proficiently. Students assume leadership roles and work on their own and in teams well. They participate in the students' council and lead certain school events, such as 'Breakfast Club' and 'Drawing my School with My Brush'. Low-achieving students do not demonstrate similar levels of confidence in lessons due to insufficient opportunities.

Most students act with awareness and demonstrate mutual respect for their colleagues and teachers. They are committed to the school's rules, and play an active part in preserving school property well. The school has several programmes that are aimed at promoting good behaviour and addressing misbehaviour, such as the 'Outstanding Class' competition, which contribute to most students' sense of safety and security.

Students demonstrate good understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture, including Islamic values. They celebrate events such as the 'Our Arabic and Islamic Heritage and Identity' fair, National Day and Eid Al-Adha, as well as traditions such as the 'Haya Baya' ceremony and collecting mus'hafs.

## **The quality of provision**

### **□ How effective are teaching and learning?**

#### **Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Most teachers have good knowledge of their study material which they utilise in different ways when presenting lessons and preparing introductory activities. Students are often introduced to lesson objectives so that they know what is expected of them. Most teachers manage lessons in an orderly manner, but their effectiveness is only satisfactory in most cases because too little is done to challenge the different abilities of students.

Good lessons in core subjects were mainly in the second level and were characterised by meaningful learning due to the use of a variety of effective teaching strategies, such as

brainstorming, discussion, cooperative learning and drawing conclusions. In these lessons students are equipped with good knowledge, skills and concepts, particularly in mathematics, some Arabic language subjects and second level chemistry. The use of certain teaching aids, such as the Smart Board contributes to students' motivation, participation and progress in those lessons. Yet, the same does not apply to the remaining lessons because the effectiveness of teaching methods varies too much. Inconsistent teaching occurs in group work due to the large number of students in certain groups, and because of unidentified learning roles, inadequate time management and low support and motivation. Such teaching impacts adversely on students' confidence and participation in these lessons. Inadequate lessons were concentrated in the first level, mainly in English and to a lesser degree in mathematics, where the teacher, rather than the student, is at the centre of the process. Moreover, the effectiveness of these lessons is affected by poor class management; lack of challenge and inadequate support, particularly to students with low achievement.

Students' abilities are challenged in good lessons; which helps develop their higher level thinking skills, as was evident in some core subjects in the scientific stream. Teachers monitor and mark students' written work but, feedback on some written work is not sufficient to explain what students need to do in order to progress further. They employ verbal and written assessment methods. Observations are inconsistent and not sufficient and accurate enough in identifying students' educational needs. Assessment results are not used to inform lesson planning.

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

**Grade: 3 Satisfactory**

Most students acquire the skills required for the next stage of their education adequately. Variations in the quality of curriculum implementation limit achievement. Some subjects and topics are linked to real life situations. The curriculum is reviewed and enriched by analysis and follows the operational plans for the creativity centres. The diverse needs of most students are met in a satisfactory manner.

Students' understanding of rights and duties and their sense of belonging are developed well, through participation in national events such as 'Ana Watani, Watani Ana' and the cultural week 'My Appearance Reflects Who I Am'. Programmes and activities which enrich the experiences and interests of students include those in the learning resources centre and 'Electronic Week'. The curriculum also provides good experiences to talented and outstanding students through the creativity centres and 'My Talent is the Light of My

Creativity' project. Yet, the curriculum does not provide low achieving students and those with learning difficulties similarly appropriate experiences.

The school environment and specialist laboratories appropriately enhance learning and behaviour. Students' work is celebrated in classrooms. Attention is given to creating a motivating, aesthetic environment. The school's garden is well looked after and artistic and guiding wall displays promote good values.

## □ How well are students guided and supported?

### **Grade: 2 Good**

Efforts to induct new students are effective. Support for the majority is good with organised meetings, lectures and guidance visits. Representatives of universities visit the school and an annual careers fair help prepare students well for the next stage of their education.

Students' progress is monitored and those with low achievement are assigned to enhancement lessons in English, mathematics and physics, and guided through means of individual and group sessions by the academic advising. However, the support provided to some of these students in lessons is insufficient and so limits their participation. Appropriate care is provided to outstanding and talented students by means of various enrichment activities, such as the 'Injaz', 'Globe' and 'Tafkeer' programmes in mathematics.

The school publishes the 'My First Steps to Success' newsletter and honours students with low achievement through the 'Challenge Yourself' programme. There are committees dedicated to students with learning difficulties during examinations and the school implements appropriate projects. Talented students participate in various competitions such as the Sheikha Latifa Bint Mohammed Al Maktoum Award for Child Creativity. Behavioural problems are addressed through the therapy programme; which helps minimise problems significantly.

Parents are kept updated through educational and individual meeting held by the social and academic guidance offices, the Open Day and SMS messages. Proper maintenance, evacuation and, risk assessment procedures are in place and health care is provided by the school nurse.

## Leadership, management and governance

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

### Grade: 2 Good

The school has a clear vision and mission that focus on improving achievement and have been developed with the participation of staff, students and parents. It also has a three-year strategic plan that covers all areas of the school's work and was developed after assessing and analysing the school's situation carefully. The plan focuses on correct priorities and has contributed to significant improvement in the areas of personal development and support and guidance. Assessment results are utilised and monitored by the technical committee, but the impact of programmes in some aspects is not adequately monitored.

Professional competency improvement programmes developed by the school in cooperation with the external improvement team have helped improve the quality of teaching. Examples include the New Teacher Qualification programme, assessment and exchange visits between departments, discussions about improving learning and workshops on developing teaching strategies. Improvement is evident but the full impact of these has yet to be seen.

The methodology adopted by the school's leadership includes delegation, transparency and an open door policy. This has helped improve the school's performance by increasing the motivation of most of the school staff and students. Certificates of recognition and the outstanding teachers' board displayed on the walls of the management building inspire and motivate members of the school community.

The school utilises its educational resources and materials well. It is working to be a stimulating learning environment, for example by employing the learning resource centre, e-classes, computer, and science laboratories. The environment and facilities serve the educational processes well.

The Parents' and Students' Councils views are heard. Parents' views on repeated late arrivals and students' views on the school's performance are not adequately communicated as indicated by most interviewed parents. The school links well with the local community, as in activities such as the students' camp, coastguards and reform society. Yet, such communication does not help transfer students' experiences between subjects well enough.

The advisory group, represented by the Board of Directors and Technical Committee, cooperates with the external support team on monitoring the schools' performance,

particularly with respect to teaching and learning, while providing constant support for improvement and development to fulfil the school's mission.

## The school's main strengths

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- Most students' behaviour, sense of harmony and respect for one another and their contribution to preserving school property
- Students' participation in curricular and extra-curricular activities
- Providing an appropriate school environment that contributes to most students' support and sense of security and safety
- The leadership's adoption of the principle of transparency and an open door policy, as well as planning for growth and development
- Turning the school environment into one characterised by respect, continuous encouragement and motivation amongst the administrative and teaching staff and student body.

## Recommendations

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

- improve academic achievement in the first and third levels and develop skills in core subjects, particularly English and mathematics
- develop teaching and learning strategies so that they include:
  - better assessment in order to achieve learning objectives
  - meeting educational needs in lessons and homework and providing appropriate support, particularly to low-achieving students in classes
  - challenging students' differing abilities.
- communicate more with parents
- intensify efforts to implement operational plans and monitor their impact on students' achievement and teaching and learning.