



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Zainab Intermediate Girls School  
Barbar - Northern Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 27 - 29 February 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 nine 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>		Zainab Intermediate Girls School												
<b>School's type</b>		Government												
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1983												
<b>Age range of students</b>		13 – 15 years												
<b>Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)</b>		<b>Primary</b>				<b>Middle</b>				<b>High</b>				
		-				7 - 9				-				
<b>Number of students</b>		<b>Boys</b>	-	<b>Girls</b>	651				<b>Total</b>	651				
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most students come from middle-class social and economic backgrounds												
<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>	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	7	6	-	-	-	
<b>Town /Village</b>		Barbar												
<b>Governorate</b>		Northern Governorate												
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		15												
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		55												
<b>Curriculum</b>		Ministry of Education (MoE)												
<b>Main language(s) of instruction</b>		Arabic												
<b>Principal's tenure</b>		Seven years												
<b>External assessment and examinations</b>		MoE examinations and Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training national examinations												
<b>Accreditation (if applicable)</b>		-												
<b>Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification</b>		<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Gifted &amp; Talented</b>				<b>Physical Disabilities</b>				<b>Learning Difficulties</b>			
		181	50				7				42			
<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school joined the School Improvement Project in the school year 2010 – 11</li> <li>• A social worker and four new core subject teachers joined the school in this school year 2011 – 12.</li> </ul>												

## Table of review judgments awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good			
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	2	-	2
Students' personal development	-	2	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	2	-	2
The quality of the curriculum implementation	-	2	-	2
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: 2 Good**

Zainab Intermediate Girls School has maintained the good level of effectiveness reported in the previous review in March 2009. The school is good in all aspects. Students achieve high levels in MoE examinations and above average levels in national examinations. They acquire a range of basic and practical skills in excellent and good lessons, particularly evident in science, Arabic, mathematics and IT, but less so in English where their levels of performance are more varied. Their self-confidence is evident in most lessons. Enriching the curriculum with interesting activities helps expand students' knowledge and experience in line with their educational needs. Participatory decision-making, delegation of authority to staff and students and effective middle leadership through committees are strong features across the school. Students and parents are well-satisfied with the school.

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Good capacity to develop is reflected in the senior leadership's innovative thinking. Staff keep abreast of the latest developments in educational practices and adopt participatory decision-making. Authority is delegated well, activating the roles of staff and students effectively. Strategic planning has priorities based on accurate self-evaluation and the areas for improvement reported in the recommendations in the previous review. Actions are having a positive impact on raising students' academic achievement and improving their personal development. The teachers have implemented effective teaching and learning strategies, which, support students of all levels through programmes that help develop their different abilities and contribute to curriculum enrichment. These strategies lead to increasing students' enthusiasm and commitment. The school creates an appropriate learning environment that enhances students' sense of security and stability.

## Students' achievement

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

#### Grade: 2 Good

In the national examinations in 2010 and 2012, Grade 9 students attained well above average results in Arabic and above average in mathematics. Their results in English and science were slightly above average in 2010, while in 2011 they were above average in all subjects. These attainment results largely reflect students' achievement levels in most lessons, particularly in Arabic, and science.

Students achieve high pass rates in MoE examinations in Arabic, mathematics and science, ranging from 85% to 99%. These pass rates match the students' proficiency and skills displayed in lessons, particularly lessons which are well taught. Pass rates in English are lower at 70%, which reflect the students' lower levels of skill in English. Students' perform well in excellent and good lessons, which account for nearly two thirds of lessons. Written work is good in Arabic as a result of effective teaching strategies which are planned to cater for students' individual differences. Students do not achieve similar levels in satisfactory lessons due to inconsistent teaching strategies. Most students acquire IT skills and can read aloud and write with good grammar in Arabic. They use scientific skills well, particularly in Grades 8 and 9, and have good mathematical skills in Grade 7. Students' levels of proficiency in certain basic skills, particularly in satisfactory lessons, such as reading aloud and writing skills in English, particularly in Grade 7, are no better than satisfactory, due mainly to inconsistent catering for individual differences.

Outstanding students, those with learning difficulties and disabilities progress well in most lessons. This is due to teaching which challenges their abilities appropriately, the effectiveness of enrichment programmes and the nature of the educational support they receive. Moreover, low achievers progress well and certainly in line with their abilities in the well organised remedial programmes they receive. However, the impact on their learning and progress is less in most lessons due to teaching only meeting their educational needs inconsistently.

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

### **Grade: 2 Good**

Students behave well during lessons and enthusiastically participate in various curricular and extra-curricular activities, as in leading the morning assembly that enhance values, expectations and traditions in many different ways. Their contributions are evident in committees, such as the students' council and at the scientific and educational clubs. The science club is particularly good. Students take good opportunities to develop life skills, as demonstrated in their ability to solve problems, justify answers, initiate ideas and questions, and assume leading roles. This is due to the utilisation of cooperative learning strategies by most teachers, which enhance students' self-confidence and provide them with good opportunities to take responsibility.

The vast majority of students are punctual, attend regularly and participate well. As a result of their awareness of the importance of school, they love to learn and appreciate the care they receive from social guidance staff. They feel very comfortable working in groups and during group activities in lessons. They keep school and their personal property in good condition.

Students enjoy wearing traditional costumes when acting scenes and sit on mats made of palm leaves to revive ancient traditions; palm trees decorate the school's yards. There are also patriotic slogans and heritage wall paintings and miniatures, such as ancient Bahraini crafts that help enhance students' understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture.

## **The quality of provision**

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

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Most teachers employ their subject knowledge well in effective teaching and learning strategies planned to cater for students' different abilities, which helps them achieve desired lesson objectives and appropriate learning.

A variety of these effective teaching and learning strategies are used, including discussion and dialogue, cooperative learning in English and Arabic, and learning through investigation and exploration in science and mathematics. Most teachers are also able to utilise learning resources well, such as learning cards, artefacts, data shows, and educational



films, which help students to participate in the learning process, understand the concept being shared and expand their knowledge.

Most lessons include activities that challenge students' different abilities and develop higher order skills; such as assessment, analysis and synthesis, as well as good reading and writing skills, fluency in verbal expression and accuracy in applying grammar in Arabic language. English language teaching is less effective but satisfactory. Most students are able to provide explanations, justifications and conclusions in science and mathematics, however teaching is not as good as it could be in the satisfactory lessons which account for almost one third of lessons.

Most lessons are characterised by quietness and meaningful learning; due to the effective classroom management where most students achieve the lessons' objectives. Students are motivated and encouraged to effectively participate in lessons through a variety of activities that cater for their different needs. Although outstanding and average students receive adequate support, low achievers who are a minority are not having a similar quality of support.

Most teachers employ various assessment techniques, such as oral and written quizzes and formative tests, some of which are carried out electronically in order to assess students' learning and measure their proficiency in required competencies. Students are assigned homework that takes into consideration individual differences and requires various activities from them including research papers and electronic writing. These are regularly monitored and marked. They are also provided with direct verbal and written feedback, which help them achieve rates of progress that match their abilities.

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

**Grade: 2 Good**

The school offers programmes that enhance learning. Examples of these programmes include the 'Elite Programme' for outstanding students and competitions such as participating in 'Bahrain Gardens Fair', in which the school achieve winning positions. These promote students' learning in line with their abilities and meet their different interests.

The curriculum enhances students' experiences in understanding their rights and obligations by offering them several extra-curricular events and activities such as enhancing respect and responsibility during lessons, morning broadcast, celebrations and field trips.

School committees, such as the students' council, scientific clubs and the 'Justice Represents Balance of Rights and Obligations' paintings, promote these further. The curriculum also supports the learning of basic skills through various activities and exercises offered in lessons. Students are prepared for their next stage of education effectively and the curriculum links various subjects to life situations in most lessons. This enables most students to comprehensively apply their skills throughout different subjects.

The school plans curriculum implementation according to time-scales and action plan schedules. Teachers overcome obstacles so that improvements can be implemented in sequence. The school also analyses and enhances the curriculum well with enrichment and remedial programmes, such as 'Golden Steps', for students with learning difficulties.

The school environment is improved and utilised well with wall displays that celebrate students' work.

### **□ How well are students guided and supported?**

#### **Grade: 2 Good**

Newcomers and other students who join the school at different times settle well due to effective induction and guidance programmes which include lectures and guidance for them and their parents. The school prepares students effectively for the next stage of their education through cooperation with nearby schools

The school assesses and meets students' personal and health needs well by providing financial and in-kind assistance, special classrooms for students with special medical conditions, and health care through the school nurse. It enhances understanding through lectures, such as the 'How to Deal with Problems in Life' and group meetings and periodic publications, such as the 'Guiding Message'. Efforts are reflected in the students' personal development and helps them get involved in school life.

The school is making use of the diagnostic and term tests to assess students' different educational needs and then by activating the 'Elite' and 'Golden Steps to Success' programmes for outstanding students and those with learning difficulties. The school also offers effective remedial lessons for the minority of students with low achievement, but the support they receive during normal lessons is not as good.

Educational meetings, open days, convenient office-hours, written reports and electronic communications are commended by parents keeping them updated on their daughters' academic and personal progress. The school creates a healthy and safe environment.

## **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 vision and mission that focus on achievement and enhancement of teachers' professional competency. These were developed in a participatory manner and have been reflected in most educational practices. They have had a substantial impact on students' behaviour and teachers' motivation to participate, take responsibility and accept change and development.

The school has set its strategic plan in accordance with the recommendations in its previous report with an up-to-date diagnosis of the school's current situation using accurate performance indicators. The positive impact of the plan is clearly evident in all areas of school work, particularly those related to students' achievement and personal development.

The senior leadership inspires members of the administrative and educational staff by adopting the values of frankness, fairness and transparency. It works towards solving problems, delegating authority to middle leaders to monitor their respective departments. It also raises teachers' abilities by presenting their experiences and providing them with opportunities to promote good practices both in and out of school; which has had a positive impact on creating team spirit. The senior leadership follows up teachers' training needs according to their suggestions and the results of evaluation class visits. Training programmes and exchange visits are organised in order to provide practical opportunities to share experiences. The impact of these are not fully evident in the performance of some teachers since techniques are still only recently applied.

The school utilises educational facilities effectively by providing a conducive learning environment that helps improve most students' academic level and personal development. It utilises financial resources well to meet various educational needs.

The school seeks students' and parents' views on what it provides and responds to their suggestions within its available resources for example by organising open meetings. It also communicates effectively with the local community such as 'Jannosan Charity Society', the health centre and promoting teachers' educational experiences in other schools, which help to improve students' growth and development.

## The school's main strengths

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- Self-evaluation and strategic planning which has had a positive impact on the school's work, particularly students' academic and personal achievement
- Activating middle leadership roles through delegation of authority to monitor their departments, which has contributed to running school work effectively
- Students' high levels of attainment in MoE examinations, and generally above average levels in national examinations, matching their achievement and proficiency levels in most core subjects
- Curriculum implementation and enrichment with curricular and extra-curricular activities, which expand most students' knowledge and experiences in line with their educational needs
- External support programmes offered to all students.

## Recommendations

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

- make use of best practices, particularly in Arabic and science, to improve teaching and learning processes, to include:
  - developing the ability of students, of all levels, to analyse, justify and criticise to higher levels
  - providing more support in lessons to students with weak achievement.
- enable students to achieve better basic skills in English.