



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Zallaq Primary Intermediate Girls School
Zallaq - Southern 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 six 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		Zallaq Primary Intermediate Girls School													
School's type		Government													
Year of establishment		1960													
Age range of students		6-15 years													
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High					
		Grades: 1, 2, 3 (Cycle 1) Grades: 4, 5, 6 (Cycle 2)				Grades: 7-9 (Cycle 3)				-					
Number of students		Boys		-		Girls		350		Total		350			
Students' social background		limited and middle-income families													
Classes per grade		Grade		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		Classes		2	2	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	-	-	-
Town /Village		Zallaq													
Governorate		Southern													
Number of administrative staff		7 administrative + 20 technical													
Number of teaching staff		49													
Curriculum		Ministry of Education (MoE)													
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic													
Principal's tenure		8 months													
External assessment and examinations		MoE's examinations and QAAET's national examinations													
Accreditation (if applicable)		-													
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties			
		80				27			2 visual			33			
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appointing school principal in the current year 2011-12 • appointing 20 technical staff members in current year • started French teaching in 2010-11. 													

Table of review judgements 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	-	2
Students' personal development	1	1	-	1
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	2	2	-	2
The quality of the curriculum implementation	1	1	-	1
The quality of support and guidance for students	2	2	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	2	2	-	2

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: 2 Good

The school's overall performance changed from being judged as satisfactory in the previous review in March 2009 to good in this one. It is outstanding in personal development and curriculum enhancement and good in the other areas. Its leadership have identified strengths and aspects needing improvement with the school community, who work with a good team spirit. This is reflected in the students' good conduct and ability to take leading roles, and their independence, confidence and sense of responsibility. The school environment is improved and used to support the curriculum, which develops students' experiences and interests. It raises teachers' professional competency, which contributes to the effectiveness of teaching. Accordingly, students and their parents appreciate and are satisfied with the school's performance.

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

Grade: 2 Good

The school's capacity to improve has changed from being judged as satisfactory to good because of the progress made in implementing the school's strategic plan. This is based on an accurate and comprehensive self-assessment. Importantly, the plan focuses on addressing the recommendations of the previous review and has proved effective in practice, especially in students' personal development and curriculum enhancement. Improvements in students' academic achievement and teaching and learning are evident. Teaching uses various effective strategies where students are the centre of the learning process. The students have various class and extra-curricular activities, and are assigned leading roles in different school committees. Communication with the local community is good and, educational outputs reinforce the social environment which is conducive to working and enabling change for the better.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 2 Good

Students in Grades 3 and 9 attained above average results in the national examinations in 2011. Their rates in the preceding two years are average in most core subjects and were generally above average in Arabic and mathematics. However, the students in Grade 6 attained relatively lower results, average in mathematics and slightly below in Arabic. These results reflect students' actual levels of achievement in most core subjects in Grades 3 and 9 except in English where their performance is lower in Grades 6 and 9.

Most students in Cycles 1 and 2 achieve high pass and proficiency rates in the school examinations in most core subjects and in French. However, the rates are lower in Cycle 3, especially in science for Grade 7 students. Nevertheless, the intermediate students achieve above average rates among other girls' schools, which reflect the students' truly high levels in most lessons and written work. This is attributed to effective teaching, planned consideration of individual differences in activities and holding several educational projects such as 'I like reading'. This teaching contributes to most students' acquisition of basic skills, such as solving word problems, dealing with challenges in life situations and performing arithmetic in mathematics. Students can draw conclusions in science and, read, write and speak in Arabic. Achievement in Arabic is at a better level than in English. Students are able to understand content, communicate with others, analyse material and use grammar rules because their varied educational needs are effectively met.

Comparing students' results over the years from 2008 to 2011, students make progress in most core subjects, especially in mathematics in Cycles 1 and 3. The students make good progress in written work due to the consideration given by teachers to students' individual differences among the different student groups, especially in the outstanding mathematics lessons in Cycle 1.

Outstanding and talented students make exceptionally good academic progress in the best lessons due to the attention they receive from their teachers and the various activities in these lessons. Furthermore, the students achieve advanced places in external competitions such as first place in poetry, which is attributed to challenging their abilities and effectiveness of the enrichment programmes. Students with learning difficulties and low-achieving students make satisfactory progress in lessons and in remedial programmes.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The vast majority of students enthusiastically participate in school life. This is seen in activities such as the agriculture committee. Students use various opportunities in lessons to work together and share experiences. Most students show self-confidence and ability to take responsibility. This is due to effective teaching and learning which provide opportunities for students to take leading roles. Positive contributions in lessons and extra-curricular activities show their ability to solve problems and express their views with confidence. The students take part in the Students' Council and contests such as 'popular poetry' in which they are successful.

Good relationships among students reflect their good conduct. Students respect each other, follow rules, attend school and lessons on time and preserve school property. They contribute to the decoration and cleanliness of the school, due to programmes, such as the 'Rationalise Consumption of Water and Electricity'

Students show great interest in Bahraini culture, which is represented in their contribution to national events such as 'Bahrain is the past we take pride in and the present that takes pride in us' and the 'Kanoo' festival for talented students. Students show appreciation of popular culture through murals, cultural corners and by good behaviour. Their respect for Islamic values is partly a result of the support they receive from the 'Behavioural Values' and 'Longing for Allah' committees.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 2 Good

Teachers are familiar with their study material and present it well. This is represented in their self-confidence and good planning for lessons, which clearly reflect on their use of effective teaching and learning strategies, such as brainstorming, question and answer, cooperative learning and role-play. In addition, the students are able to benefit from various teaching resources, such as educational cards, audio-visual aids, students' personal boards and study books, which contribute to reinforcing teaching and learning in most lessons.

Class management is effective in terms of controlling students' behaviour, getting them involved in the learning process and time management, which increases lesson productivity and the achievement of lessons' goals. Good lesson planning and consideration of students' individual differences are seen during lessons and in homework. Additionally, most students are motivated to participate in lessons through verbal appreciation, encouragement by marks and good support in most lessons. However, the support provided for low achieving students is not enough in a few lessons, for example in English, which has a negative impact on the achievement of their expected levels. The students are given enough homework that is well planned, and teachers follow up work with students by way of regular correction and feedback to raise their achievement.

Students are given good opportunities to develop basic skills, concepts and knowledge. This includes basic skills in mathematics, reading and writing in Cycles 1 and 2, poetic prose analysis, speaking in French, and basic geometry skills in mathematics in Cycle 3. However, the opportunities given to students to develop their reading and writing in English and higher level thinking skills that challenge their abilities are not at the same level in a minority of lessons.

The teachers use various assessment methods in most lessons, such as observation and individual and group assessment. Projects and research are developed through which the impact of learning is measured. Strengths are reinforced and areas needing improvement identified according to the students' abilities. This has significant impact on lesson planning, students' progress and their academic achievement.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The students' experiences and interests are developed by a curriculum suited to the needs by using the facilities well. Students with learning difficulties participate in the 'Zallaq Butterflies' and the talented in the 'Zallaq Got Talent' programmes, and the French language club.

Effective methods are used by teachers in the transition across the overlapping aspects of the curriculum. Enhanced extra-curricular activities are used to enable the majority of students to acquire the basic skills and complementary skills such as writing and delivering poems, drawing and speaking French. This broadens their experiences and contributes to preparing them for the next stage of education.

The school gives special attention to developing students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities through their participation in students' committees and projects such as 'Hand in Hand', 'The Young Nurse' and 'Recycling'. It promotes the students' sense of citizenship by participating in national events with the local community, such as the police station and elderly homes, and makes visits to the 'National Museum of Bahrain' and the 'Oil Museum'.

The environment motivates learning and promotes good values and behaviour. The facilities are effectively used and enriched with various educational aids. The school halls host the students' work, and its green fields are well looked after. All this contributes to the development of the students' loyalty to the school.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 2 Good

Induction programmes for new students and their parents facilitate a settled start to school. Grade 9 students have lectures about the unification of tracks and vocational study, which prepare them for the next stage of education.

Students' personal development is monitored and instances of misbehaviour are addressed and parents informed. Personal needs are met by way of providing backpacks, winter aid and breakfast. Diagnostic and formative tests in core subjects provide information for effective support for students with learning difficulties, in addition to remedial and enrichment projects such as the 'Weekly Harvest' for low achieving students and 'Talent Discovery' for outstanding and talented students. Financial resources are used well to organise weekly cultural events, which contribute to providing support for most students and reflects in their good progress.

Special guidance programmes to promote good behaviour, such as the cooperation week, contribute to increasing students' punctual attendance. The school Health and Safety Committee monitors the environment and school activities to ensure everyone's safety and hold evacuation drills on a regular basis. The committee prepares projects such as 'My Breakfast' and the 'Cleanliness Week', which contribute to making the school healthy and safe. Parents are updated about their daughters' progress via educational meetings, periodical reports and the open day, all of which are reported as effective by the parents.

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's shared vision is on creativity and the quality of work, which is reflected in most of its educational practices. The strategic plan and action plans focus on improvement and are based on a comprehensive self-assessment of the school situation. The plan is updated according to the findings of comprehensive self-assessment. The performance indicators in the strategic plan are not as accurate as they might be despite monitoring the extent to which goals have been achieved. Positive progress has been made in reaching strategic goals, such as improving and enriching the school environment and improving teaching and learning, which is evident in most lessons and educational practices. The school board and technical committee often discuss issues such as improving the educational practices in class and students' achievement. Despite the school's recent relationship with the improvement team, the school acknowledged the support received through training workshops and discussion sessions and the early impact.

Most facilities are used to support the learning process well; however, the learning resources centre is under-used. Senior and middle leadership give special attention to raising teachers' competency through various training programmes that are well suit to their needs and continuously motivate them to attend. Workshops are organised on issues such as ice-breaking activities, differential learning and cooperative learning, in addition to making class and exchange visits to monitor the impact of training workshops and exchanges of expertise. Educational periodicals, such as 'Common Teaching Mistakes', clarify issues are interesting and help teachers to improve their performance.

Students and parents views are heard using questionnaires and the Students' and Mothers' Councils. Parents are given the chance to take part in school events and the school responds to some of their suggestions, for example in re-scheduling examinations.

Contact with the local community enriches students' experiences, such as the International Training Centre at the College of Health Sciences. This link created training workshops for students on first-aid and CPR, in addition to visiting the police station of West Riffa to express appreciation for their efforts. Also, the school held an event on the dangers of obesity in cooperation with the Zallaq Health and Social Centres.

The school's main strengths

- Continuous, accurate and comprehensive self-assessment of the school's work
- High pass and proficiency rates in most core subjects in Cycles 1 and 2, and in French
- The students' self-confidence, awareness and responsibility, especially when taking leading roles and responsibility, in addition to the respect and cooperation among them
- Effective teaching and learning, represented in good class management, students' behaviour, and in attracting students towards learning with time investment
- Effective communication with the local community and variety of extra-curricular activities
- The school environment which supports the curriculum and develops students' experiences, interests and understanding of their rights and responsibilities, including promoting a spirit of citizenship.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- use the best practices at the school to develop teaching and learning, so as to include:
 - challenging students' abilities more and developing their higher level thinking skills to a greater extent
 - developing basic skills in English in Cycles 2 and 3
 - providing low-achieving students with more support
- develop accurate performance indicators for the strategic and action plans.