



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Zanobia Intermediate Girls School  
Muharraq - Muharraq Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date of Review: 26 - 28 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 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>		Zanobia Intermediate Girls School															
<b>School's type</b>		Government															
<b>Year of establishment</b>		1969															
<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>	859				<b>Total</b>	859							
<b>Students' social background</b>		Most students belong to middle income 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>	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	9	8	-	-	-				
<b>Town /Village</b>		Muharraq															
<b>Governorate</b>		Muharraq															
<b>Number of administrative staff</b>		23															
<b>Number of teaching staff</b>		84															
<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 and QAAET 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>			
		206				338				-				18			

<b>Major recent changes in the school</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promoting the assistant principal to principal in the current academic year 2011-12</li><li>• New appointments in the current academic year:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- two assistant principals</li><li>- five new senior teachers in the departments: Arabic, Islamic education, science, social studies and physical education. A coordinator was assigned in the mathematics department to do the work of the senior teacher in the department</li><li>- eighteen teachers and 13 technicians</li><li>- a senior social advisor and three social advising specialists</li><li>- a specialist in teaching students with learning difficulties.</li></ul></li></ul>
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## Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	2: Good			
The school's capacity to improve	1: Outstanding			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	2	-	2
Students' personal development	-	1	-	1
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	2	-	2
The quality of the curriculum implementation	-	1	-	1
The quality of support and guidance for students	-	1	-	1
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	-	1	-	1

### 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**

The overall performance of the school has improved from satisfactory in the previous review in March 2009 to good in this one. Students' academic achievement and teaching and learning are good. Students attain high levels in MoE and national examinations and achieve levels above age-related expectations in most lessons, due to effective teaching and excellent use of the school's environment and educational resources. Students' personal development is outstanding, as are curriculum implementation and enrichment, support and guidance and leadership and management. Senior management is committed to implementing its strategic planning and students behave well with, self-confidence and responsibility. The needs of different groups of students are met well. The Mothers and Students' Councils are active and open communication with parents leads to a high degree of satisfaction.

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

#### **Grade: 1 Outstanding**

The judgement about the school's capacity to improve changed from good in the previous review to outstanding in this one., This is due to the senior management's developmental thinking and its adoption of shared decision-making and 'open-door' policies that have motivated teachers to work as a team and be creative. Strategic planning is based on reliable school self-evaluation and the recommendations from the previous review, with accurate priorities to enhance strengths and rectify areas in need of development. The school has introduced new improvements that can be seen clearly in the application of effective teaching and learning and most teachers' commitment to meeting the educational needs of students of different abilities.

## Students' achievement

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

#### Grade: 2 Good

Students in Grade 9 attained results well above average in Arabic in the national examination of 2010 and 2011, and slightly above in mathematics, science and English. These high results reflect the actual levels students achieve in most lessons, especially in Arabic and science.

The proficiency rates in the core subjects are in line with the high pass rates students achieve in the MoE examinations, ranging between 80% and 98% with the highest being in Arabic. The high pass and proficiency rates reflect the actual levels students achieve in most lessons, especially Arabic and science in Grades 7 and 8, and in their written work. This attributed to the effectiveness of teaching that provides good opportunities for learning. However, rates of progress and achievement in English are not as fast.

Most students acquire good skills of information technology, reading and writing, in Arabic, and mathematical skills such as in algebra. They can apply investigative skills in science. Yet their acquisition of the basic skills in English varies too much. Writing skills are not acquired as well as reading skills but students in Grade 7 receive good support in accordance with their educational needs.

Students' results over three consecutive years are consistent in the core subjects. They make good progress in most lessons and written work, especially in Arabic, science and mathematics. This is a result of varied curricular activities and homework that consider the different levels of ability of students. Their progress in English, however, varies too much because teaching and curricular activities do not match their different abilities effectively enough.

Talented, outstanding and low-achieving students make good progress in line with their abilities as a result of challenging teaching which, provides effective support in both remedial and enrichment programmes. Low-achieving students have intensive lessons in the core subjects, while talented and outstanding students tackle problem solving and talent development programmes that contribute to the good progress they make. Students with learning difficulties achieve expected progress, which is attributed to the effectiveness of programmes that suit them and enable the majority to master basic skills and keep up with their colleagues.



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

### **Grade: 1 Outstanding**

The majority of students participate with great confidence and enthusiasm in school life, which is apparent in lessons, extra-curricular activities and various events they chose based upon their interests. Such events include leading the morning assembly and the many events and activities during the break. Many of these reflect the students' good level of awareness and pride in Bahraini culture and heritage and are seen in their participation in national and heritage events such as 'the Holy Quran readers' campaign'. Students enjoy expressing their views through the many opportunities they receive in lessons and activities such as through the Students' Council. They demonstrate a spirit of leadership in chairing school committees and running programmes, such as the order committee and the career guidance committee. They show great initiative in planning for future projects, such as 'Zanobia Café'.

Students take responsibility for preserving school property. They work together in activities and lessons, with a good team spirit with high cooperation and mutual respect between themselves and their teachers. They feel safe and secure mainly due to the effectiveness of the school's procedures and programmes in instilling high values, which contribute to their discipline and punctual attendance to school and lessons.

## **The quality of provision**

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

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

Most teachers use effective teaching and learning strategies. They demonstrate their subject knowledge through their ability to present a number of examples that widen students' perceptions and to answer students' questions and queries. They implement lesson plans smoothly so that students are enabled to achieve their learning goals.

Teachers help students acquire knowledge, concepts and skills, especially Arabic, mathematics and science skills, through their active employment of effective teaching strategies. These include cooperative learning, problem solving and role-play, which give students good opportunities to get into discussions in most lessons, except in English. Various educational resources are used such as data shows, smartboards, models and three-dimensional shapes, especially in Arabic and science lessons, which contribute to students achieving the goals of those lessons.

Teaching activities contribute to developing students' higher level thinking skills, such as justification for different solutions, criticism, objection, translating verbal problems in mathematics and asking questions. In science, high achieving students are helped to channel their thinking and in Arabic they accurately apply grammatical rules in oral and written expression. Many lessons start with riddles and questions that contribute in challenging students' abilities, motivating and encouraging them well. These activities, however, were not of a similar level of challenge in most of the English lessons.

Most lessons are characterised by effective, organised and productive class management with sufficient support. During group and cooperative work, curricular activities contribute to raising students' enthusiasm and motivate them to participate actively and appropriately in line with their abilities.

Assessment methods that meet most students' needs are varied in most lessons and use both verbal and written techniques. Teachers share and discuss with students their learning goals to make sure they understand concepts and master the competencies. They support homework assignments and projects planned in most lessons. Those projects that focus attention on building scientific knowledge and research meet most students' needs and test their abilities well, except in a few lessons the challenge is too low and marking that guides improvement effectively is not good enough.

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

#### **Grade: 1 Outstanding**

The school environment is used well to enrich the curriculum. Facilities are attractively arranged and display corners and guidance signs, such as 'Yes to Discipline, No to Drop-out' promote good behaviour, aesthetic values and Bahraini heritage. The school celebrates students' work by displaying it all around the school, which encourages students to learn.

Educational experiences that support the curriculum and enhance learning are provided through remedial, enrichment and awareness-raising programmes that are organised on a weekly basis. These include intensive lessons and events, such as 'Our Talented Girls are a Treasure' and 'Implant, Develop and Prosper in the Future' festivals. Additionally, the school encourages students to run many school committees, which give them the opportunity to choose according to their interests and so enhance their learning.

Curriculum implementation enhances students' understanding of their rights and duties through a number of events that aim at making students responsible and deepen their sense

of citizenship. Such events include the recycling of floppy discs and garbage, presenting fashion shows, conducting field visits to Al-Muharraq heritage landmarks under 'Bahrain in the Eyes of the Talent' slogan and distributing many artistic murals.

The results of curriculum evaluation are used in planning and organising new and different curriculum programmes, for example in science and mathematics. These help develop students' good achievement.

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

#### **Grade: 1 Outstanding**

The effectiveness of induction and guidance programmes such as inviting the primary schools to visit the school, holding meetings with parents and informing them about the school's evaluation system, has helped new students settle quickly into school life. The school inducts Grade 9 students to the next educational stage through the field visits it organises for them to the secondary schools.

Students' personal needs are met by offering material aid and health care. The school uses the results of diagnostic tests in meeting students' needs very effectively. It prepares remedial and enrichment programmes and supports the talented and outstanding students through involving them in the school committees such as 'the talented committee' and competitions where they perform well, such as the 'Scientific Thinking' competition.

Students receive special care when facing problems through individual and group guidance sessions and organizing meetings and lectures. They also receive advice from their teachers, which contribute to them behaving in well-disciplined ways.

Parents are very pleased with the effective communication from the school. They are completely aware of their daughters' personal and academic progress, as channels include educational meetings, monthly reports and text messages. The school assesses risks, trains its affiliates on evacuation procedures and provides health awareness-raising programmes in order to ensure a healthy and secure environment for all.

## **Leadership, management and governance**

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

### **Grade: 1 Outstanding**

The school's shared vision focuses on providing distinguished education, which is reflected in most of the school's practices. The school management manages to keep up with developments through its strategic plan that is based on clear performance indicators and an analytical evaluation of all aspects of the school performance. It focuses on initiatives of the highest priority, mainly the recommendations in the first review report. The school has succeeded in making significant changes that are reflected clearly in most teachers' performance in lessons and have raised students' achievement and their progress in personal development.

The school evaluates all aspects of its work to ensure its high quality. The professional needs of teachers are evaluated through performance management systems and meet them through effective training programmes, such as cooperative learning, class management using creative methods, e-learning strategies and holding discussion sessions. These aim at introducing teachers with the experiences of other departments. The school also develops the performance of new teachers effectively.

The senior leadership inspires and encourages staff and students in an outstanding manner. It adopts an 'open-door' policy, gets into discussion and, encourages them to be creative and to work together. It provides the middle leadership with the authority and responsibility to monitor their departments with the coordinators who play a major role in the school's main committees and report to the Board of Directors.

Financial resources and educational facilities are used well to enrich the teaching and learning process. The school benefits from the Mothers' Council through their members contributions to the school's work. The Students' Council also makes significant contributions. In addition, the school communicates effectively with the local community, for example through the Al-Muharraq Police Department and with the governorate municipality.

The school investigates the opinions of students and their parents regarding what these present and tries to answer their suggestions appropriately. It has organised a course for students entitled 'How to Deal with Examinations' and involved them in school events such as the Heritage Expo, thus gaining students' and parents' high levels of satisfaction.

## **The school's main strengths**

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- Strategic planning that is based on accurate self-evaluation, and its impact on the overall performance of the school
- Effective training programmes that meet most teachers' professional needs through implementing
- The high levels students attain in the MoE and national examinations and their achievement in lessons
- Students' outstanding conduct, their awareness of the importance of preserving school property, their understanding of Bahrain heritage and their adherence to the customs, traditions and Islamic values
- The participation of most students in the school activities and programmes and their ability to take responsibility.

## Recommendations

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

- raise students' skills in English, especially writing skills
- share the best practices of the school departments, especially the Arabic and science departments, where distinguished teaching and learning is evident in:
  - challenging students' abilities in class activities and homework
  - regular and accurate marking, and provision of feedback to students' on their work.