Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

Annual Report
2010

Working in partnership to **reflect** the highest quality standards

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

**HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE
KHALIFA BIN SALMAN AL KHALIFA**

THE PRIME MINISTER

**HIS MAJESTY KING
HAMAD BIN ISA AL KHALIFA**

THE KING
OF THE KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

**HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCE
SALMAN BIN HAMAD AL KHALIFA**

THE CROWN PRINCE AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT BOARD

ANNUAL REPORT 2010

MANDATE

MANDATE

As part of the wider Education Reform project, which is an initiative of the Crown Prince, a decision was taken to ensure that there is quality of education at all levels within the Kingdom of Bahrain. The Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training was established by Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008 and amendments were published in Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. In terms of Article (4) of the Decree, its mandate is to 'review the quality of the performance of education and training institutions in light of the guiding indicators developed by the Authority'. The Authority is also required to publish Review Reports as well as to report annually on the status of education within the Kingdom; this includes findings as well as improvements that have occurred as a result of the work of the Authority.

VISION

To be partners in developing a world-class education system in Bahrain.

MISSION

AS AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY, WE ASSURE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN BAHRAIN BY:

- Reviewing public and private schools, vocational training and higher education institutions, both for accountability and improvement purposes
- Developing and implementing a national examination system for schools
- Publishing reports of findings
- Advancing Bahrain's reputation as a leader in quality assurance in education regionally and internationally.

VALUES

THE VALUES THAT WE EMBRACE IN OUR WORK ARE:

- Professionalism
- Fairness
- Transparency
- Consistency
- Integrity
- Credibility
- Commitment to international good practice.

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Shaikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa

THE STATEMENT OF HIS EXCELLENCY SHAIKH KHALID BIN ABDULLAH AL KHALIFA, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUTHORITY FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING (QAAET)

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This historical occasion of a year passing since the publication of the first QAAET report is so important that it needs to be commemorated. It requires us to review and reflect on our work within the framework of national responsibility and transparency to which the Kingdom of Bahrain sincerely adheres. This implies that we present both the goals that we have thus far achieved and the goals that we are striving to fulfil in the coming year. We always find hope and inspiration for the future in the wonderful accomplishments we have already realised and in the important milestones of success and improvement, which we have set for ourselves.

In the year 2009 the first seeds of success were sown with the launch of the QAAET. In 2010 the first results were reaped. This would not have been possible without the hard work and diligence of all the QAAET staff. With the help of God, the support of our encouraging government, and the cooperation of all our partner institutions, our hard work and dedication will undoubtedly enable us to take further steps forward on this long path in order to embrace international education and training standards. The commitment to best international practices in this field is one of the most important values of the QAAET.

Last year, we witnessed various positive developments; one being that many of our expectations were met and even exceeded. The status of Bahrain's education and training sectors is becoming clearer for the QAAET, since it has already concluded the review processes of almost 90% of the Kingdom's public schools, in addition to the implementation of the National Examinations up to Grade 9. Approximately 66% of training providers regulated by the Ministry of Labour and 33% licensed by the Ministry of Education have been reviewed. Furthermore, a considerable number of reports regarding Bahrain's universities and colleges have been published. Such efforts have provided the QAAET with vital data, which are of the highest accuracy and professionalism. The data allow us to see Bahrain's education and training situation with an unprecedented degree of clarity for the first time in the history of our country. This constitutes a momentous development, which will open up new avenues of consideration for policy and decision-makers, who will have a better understanding of the current education and training situation. Consequently, this will help them to plan more precisely for the people of Bahrain's prosperous future.

The highlight of the year 2010 is the perceptible increase in awareness concerning the culture of quality assurance in the Kingdom's schools. This came at the same time as the launch of the School Development Project, which helped assure the cooperation of all relevant parties regarding commitment to quality requirements and their application in such a manner that ensures consistent adherence to them.

Quality assurance offices are being established in private universities and colleges, which indicates their awareness of the importance of the developmental process and their commitment to quality improvement. In fact, we are pleased to note the responsiveness of these institutions and their honest desire to cooperate and make investments to strengthen their quality assurance arrangements. This, together with the excellent national response, has made us very proud of our achievements and confident about the well-being of our society as a whole.

Nevertheless, the year 2011 will present us with new responsibilities in which we will continue to advance the efforts we have started. We will extend the review processes to private schools while also setting a general framework for reviews that will begin in March 2011. Grade 12 students will be taking the pilot national examinations for the first time in April 2011, and Grades 3, 6, and 9 will be sitting for the examinations in May 2011.

At the same time, cooperation will continue as planned with the universities, colleges, schools and other partners, in order to promote this invaluable national endeavour. Lastly, we will be preparing for an international conference focusing on issues of quality assurance and its mechanisms as well as the future impact on the workplace.

I would like to end this statement by extending the sincerest thanks and appreciation, on my behalf and on the behalf of the whole QAAET staff, to our great leader, His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa, may God protect him, and to His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, and to His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, and Chairman of the Economic Development Board, for their invaluable support for the QAAET and their belief in the role it plays in the growth and prosperity of the Kingdom.

I would also like to express my thanks and appreciation to His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Education and Training Reform Committee, for his vigorous oversight and great care, which facilitated a lot of our work towards fulfilling our mission. Thanks are also due to the members of the Board of Directors for their continuous efforts in supporting and developing the QAAET.

I would not consider ending my statement without conveying another deserved expression of thanks to the Authority's Chief Executive, Dr. Jawaher Al Mudhahki, and her impressive team, for all the efforts they have exerted to realise today's achievements.

Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S STATEMENT

Dr. Jawaher Al Mudhahki

THE STATEMENT OF DR. JAWAHER SHAHEEN AL MUDHAHKI, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUTHORITY FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING (QAAET)

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The year 2010 has proven to be a very eventful and productive second year for us at the Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training. In the statement, I would like to present a general overview of our most significant achievements, and leave the details to the report. Since its establishment, the QAAET has continuously progressed towards achieving the objectives set for it by its Board of Directors. These objectives aim at improving education and training in Bahrain and creating a national workforce which has the knowledge and skills to compete in both the Bahraini and global marketplace.

The National Examinations, which were held for the second time for students in Grades 3 and 6 in every public school in Bahrain, have provided us with richer experiences, deeper knowledge and a clearer picture of the performance levels of students in those grades. Additionally, the National Examinations were held for Grade 9 students for the first time this year. These have provided good information regarding the performance levels of more than 32,000 students from 169 public schools from the Kingdom's various governorates. This process will be completed when the National Examinations are held for Grade 12 students *(Tawjihi)*.

For the 2009-2010 academic year, the QAAET published 155 new reports including the performance review results of 112 public schools, 32 vocational training institutions and twelve higher education institutions. This has constituted a significant qualitative and quantitative step in our work for 2010, since a substantial portion of these reports are considered an improvement upon the achievements of the previous year. This provides us with the ability to recognise the hallmarks of development and progress within the education and training institutions.

It is significant to note that - as a result of our work - the general atmosphere has been increasingly positive, with a noticeable optimism and invigoration in all of our partner education and training institutions. This was evident when the majority of them decided to observe the requirements of quality assurance, albeit in various degrees. In terms of application and execution, all of them demonstrated a high sense of responsibility.

The National Examinations have revealed many positive indicators of improvement in the students' levels between 2009 and 2010. At the same time, the universities and colleges have taken major steps to establish quality assurance units. The extensive communication between all sides has clearly indicated that these values and principles are deeply rooted in the educational process. A number of qualitative improvements have been accomplished in various schools around the Kingdom, where the culture of quality assurance has become one of the pillars of everyday work. These schools are working hard to sustain their achievements, while also tackling their shortcomings, which encourages us to look forward to further accomplishments in this vital national project. Our successes ensure that the future of the education institutions of Bahrain will positively contribute to the realisation of our good governance aspirations, so that we may confidently fulfil the 2030 Vision of having a highly educated and qualified work force. The QAAET has taken the responsibility of providing all of its education institution partners with extensive opportunities and support to help them understand the role of quality assurance in their core functions, encouraging them to adopt its culture by reorienting their roles and responsibilities. The QAAET has worked closely with the education institutions to familiarise them with highly developed models from around the world. Many experts have been invited to present their successful experiences and examples to explain how the culture of quality assurance has affected their work and contributed to the success of their institutions at all levels.

We take pride in ourselves for the progress we have realised in our work and in our successful education collaborations. However, our main source of pride is having prepared highly experienced and responsible teams of professionals in Bahrain. Our talented cadre is now fully capable of tackling the various aspects of the review process and the National Examinations. This was made possible through the valuable skills they acquired by closely working with renowned international institutions with years of experience in the field of quality assurance. Thus, it is no wonder that within a few years, Bahrain has become a hub of knowledge and experience in the field of quality assurance in education and training.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend the most sincere thanks and gratitude, on my behalf and on the behalf of all those who have assisted in realising this progress, in particular to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of Bahrain, for all of the support he has given us. We also express our deep gratitude and thanks to His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Prime Minister, for his most valued and beneficial directions to all of the institutions, for them to become our dedicated partners in this national endeavour. I also sincerely express my thanks and gratitude to His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Chairman of the Economic Development Board, for his great ambition to see the people of Bahrain become as knowledgeable and skilled as their counterparts in developed countries.

Our thanks are also extended to His Highness Shaikh Mohammad bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Education and Training Reform Committee, who has always been a source of valued opinions based on a wide range of impressive experiences that have helped the Authority in its progress. We also extend our thanks to His Excellency Shaikh Khalid Bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Authority's Board of Directors, who sets the general framework of our activities with the other respected directors. In addition, I would also like to express my sincerest thanks and gratitude to all the members of the Board of Directors for their continuous support to the Authority during the past two years.

Finally, I am deeply thankful and grateful to all of my colleagues in the Authority, for their dedication, devotion and hard work, since such attitudes are indispensable for achieving the vision of our leadership and realising the goals that we set for ourselves.

Jawaher Shaheen Al Mudhahki

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

H.E. SHAIKH KHALID BIN ABDULLAH AL KHALIFA
Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the Board of Directors of
The Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training

H.E. MR. AHMED ABDUL LATIF AL-BAHAR
Vice Chairman

H.E. DR. DHAFER AHMED AL OMRAN
Director, Bilateral Relations Directorate,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. DR. HASHIM HASSAN AL BASH
Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. DR. MOHAMMED ALI HASSAN
General Director,
Central Municipal Council

H.E. DR. BAHIA JAWAD AL JISHI
Member, Shura Council

H.E. DR. AYSHA SALEM MUBARAK
Member, Shura Council

H.E. MR. KAMAL AHMED MOHAMMED
Chief Operating Officer,
Economic Development Board

H.E. DR. SHAKIR ABDUL HUSSAIN KHAMDAN
Head of Environmental Monitoring, Public Commission for
the Protection of Marine Resources, Environment and Wildlife

EXECUTIVE TEAMS

EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT

(from left to right)
Professor Dolina Dowling, Kevin Corrigan,
Dr. Jawaher Al Mudhahki - *Chief Executive,*
Khalid Al Mannai, Sylke Scheiner, Nibal Al Dweiri

SCHOOLS REVIEW UNIT

(from left to right)
Hala Al Jawder, Ahmed Al Badri, Asma Al Mehza
Adel Hasan, **Nibal Al Dweiri -** *Acting Executive
Director,* Dr. Hasan Al Hammadi, Raja Al Mahmood,
Abdulhakeem Al Shaer, Dr. Fawzi Al Balooshi,
Fayza Al Mannai

NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS UNIT

(from left to right)
Stephen Stocker, **Sylke Scheiner** - *Executive
Director,* Abdulridha Al Aradi, Wafa Al Yaqoobi

VOCATIONAL REVIEW UNIT

(from left to right)
Esmat Jaffar, Kareema Abbas, Maitham Al Oraibi
Kevin Corrigan - *Executive Director,*
Jamal Dahneem, Ebrahim Al A'ali

HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW UNIT

(from left to right)
Dr. Basma Al Baharna, Dr. Tariq Al Sindi,
Professor Dolina Dowling - *Executive Director,*
Dr. Wafa Al Mansoori

IN ITS SECOND FULL YEAR OF OPERATIONS, THE QUALITY ASSURANCE AUTHORITY FOR EDUCATION & TRAINING (QAAET) CONTINUED WITH ITS PROGRAMME OF REVIEWS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS, VOCATIONAL PROVIDERS AND HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS. THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS CONTINUED WITH GRADES 3 AND 6 AND WERE EXTENDED TO GRADE 9. THIS ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-2010 REPORTS ON THE FINDINGS AND RESULTS OF THE FOUR UNITS WITHIN THE QAAET, NAMELY: THE THREE REVIEW UNITS; SCHOOLS, VOCATIONAL, AND HIGHER EDUCATION, AND THE NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS UNIT.

The Schools Review Unit (SRU) has now completed the reviews of almost all public schools. This report is therefore able to consider the performance of the 112 schools reviewed during the year 2009-2010, and also report on the overall findings of all of the 184 schools reviewed to date. Since a higher proportion of the more challenging secondary schools were reviewed over 2009-2010, the effect on overall school performance is to depress the overall results.

In terms of overall effectiveness, 79% of public schools in the Kingdom are at least satisfactory, with almost 33% being 'good' or 'excellent'. In 2009-2010, however, 25% of schools reviewed were 'inadequate', and the majority of these were boys' schools, particularly at secondary level.

When considering both the review outcomes of 2009-2010 and the overall outcomes over the two years from 2008-2010, in 9% of schools the quality of leadership and management is 'outstanding', and in well over half the schools the quality is at least 'good'. However, in 16% of schools overall and in almost 20% of schools reviewed in 2009-2010, leadership and management is 'inadequate'. A common issue here is schools' inability to undertake critical self-evaluation to provide a good basis for effective long-term strategic planning. Schools are often impeded in this as a consequence of high staff turnover and a lack of stability in the tenure of school Principals. The frequent changes in the Principal and the senior leadership team do little to support sustained and continuous improvement.

It should be noted that there is a clear correlation between overall school effectiveness and the quality of the leadership and management. However, in several schools the leadership and management grades were higher than the overall effectiveness grades. This reflects the review teams' confidence in good school leadership having the capacity to bring about improvements in these schools. Over the two years from 2008 to 2010, the review teams reported the effectiveness of teaching and learning was only 'good' or better in about one third of schools, with the teaching and learning being 'inadequate' in more than one in five schools. In 2009-2010, there were a higher proportion of schools where the teaching was 'inadequate': one school in every four. The increase in the proportion of teaching and learning judged as 'inadequate' from the first to the second

year of school reviews is most likely a reflection of the higher proportion of intermediate and secondary schools.

During the National Examination Unit's (NEU) second year of operation, national examinations for Grades 3 and 6 were conducted in all public primary and primary intermediate schools in May 2010 for the second time. In addition, national examinations for Grade 9 were held in all public primary intermediate, intermediate and intermediate secondary schools for the first time. A total of approximately 32,000 students took the examinations, which were in Arabic and Mathematics for Grade 3, and in Arabic, Mathematics, Science and English for Grades 6 and 9. In all subjects, the examinations covered the whole curriculum. All examinations were marked in Bahrain by teachers working in Bahraini public schools, and results were published to schools and students in October 2010.

The results of the examinations varied across subjects and across grades. Overall, students found the examinations challenging and their raw marks were low as a proportion of the total available marks. This was particularly pronounced in all Grade 9 subjects. In Grade 3, students did better in Mathematics than in Arabic in 2010, with 60.4% achieving at least the national baseline of a 4.0 performance score. In Grades 6 and 9, students performed best in Science, with 57.3% (Grade 6) and 51.5% (Grade 9) achieving at least the national baseline. In Grade 6, English saw the biggest improvement from 2009 to 2010; in 2010, 12.9% more students achieved the national baseline than in 2009. Mathematics is the worst performing subject in Grade 6 in 2010, with only 46.9% of students achieving at least the national baseline. In Grade 9, students performed worst in English, with only 40.2% achieving at least the national baseline.

In Grades 3 and 6, there is a slight improvement in student performance in most subjects from 2009 to 2010, i.e. in Grade 3 for Arabic, Grade 6 for Mathematics, Science and English. In Grade 3, there is a marked improvement in Mathematics, which is significantly higher than other subjects. In contrast, in Grade 6, there is a slight decrease in the overall performance in Arabic.

Girls outperformed boys in the examinations by a large margin in all grades and in every subject. However, girls' performance did not improve in Grade 3 and 6 in Arabic from 2009 to 2010, whereas girls' performance in all other grades and subjects and boys' performance improved in all grades and subjects (compared to last year).

The pattern of student performance evident in both the NEU examinations and school reviews was similar to the findings published in the 2009 Annual Report. In primary schools, in both Arabic and in English, students' skills in listening and reading are stronger than their writing skills; school reviews link this weakness to the finding that students do not get enough practice in extended writing. When considering age-related performance with regards to Mathematics,

school reviews found that achievement was better in the lower primary years than it was for the older primary students. This is confirmed by the national examinations in which students' examination results in Mathematics at Grade 3 are better than they are at Grade 6. In Arabic, however, there is a closer match between the expected level of the performance observed by SRU reviewers and the students' results both at Grade 3 and Grade 6.

Analysis of the examination results by student performance in particular topic areas of the examinations confirms the SRU's frequent finding that, especially in Mathematics and Science, students' analysis and problem-solving skills are relatively underdeveloped compared to their ability to recall knowledge and facts. In Grade 6, however, students' capacity to apply Science and use this capacity to solve problems is at least satisfactory; though this examination performance is not always borne out in the findings from school reviews. In 2010, the SRU found that students' achievement in several intermediate schools is 'inadequate', and this weak performance is confirmed by the students' overall poor performance in the national tests at Grade 9. These results should be treated with caution, since the Grade 9 examinations were being taken for the first time by students in 2010.

In the Vocational Review Unit's (VRU) second year of operation, a further 21 providers licensed or regulated by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) were reviewed as well as twelve providers licensed by the Ministry of Education (MoE). Although the number of reviewed areas of learning increased from ten to thirteen, the most prevalent remained in management, health and safety and business related programmes. Of the MoL providers reviewed, three were judged 'good', twelve 'satisfactory' and six inadequate (either 'below satisfactory' or 'very weak') for 'overall effectiveness'. 16 were judged to have 'satisfactory' or better 'capacity to improve'. Unsurprisingly, a similar profile for the grades awarded for 'leadership and management' emerged. Of the twelve MoE providers reviewed, one was judged 'good', five 'satisfactory' and six inadequate for their 'overall effectiveness'.

Most providers are now able to provide some information on learner progress and achievement, particularly those institutions that offer externally accredited courses, which are externally assessed and moderated. In most cases, providers are able to provide examples of good achievement in these courses, particularly if they lead to a relevant qualification that is industry-specific and meets the needs of employers. However, assessing progress and the achievement of learners on internally assessed and certificated courses, normally with attendance as the sole criteria for success, remains an issue and an area for development for the majority of providers offering these courses. Generally, reviewers found that teachers or trainers are appropriately qualified and experienced and deliver lessons which are adequately planned, although often not sufficiently detailed or containing a variety of

resources and teaching methods to meet the full range of learner needs. The majority of providers give some form of appropriate support for learners, although this is often on an ad hoc, individualised basis rather than through a systematic programme of support.

The full report includes a number of key recommendations for providers. These include providers identifying their strengths and areas of development through a more robust, accurate and critical self-evaluation process, crucial if improvements in the quality of vocational education and training in the Kingdom of Bahrain are to be secured. Initial assessment of learners and the consequent monitoring of their progress remain key areas of development for the majority of providers, particularly small or medium sized MoL providers and those licensed by the MoE. Providers generally do not have sufficiently rigorous monitoring procedures for assessing the quality of teaching and its impact on learning or as a means of supporting less effective teachers and trainers. The most effective providers work closely with employers to ensure they are meeting their needs and as a consequence offer a range of bespoke or customised courses as well as industry-relevant programmes and qualifications. However, significant improvements in the skills and knowledge of Bahrain's workforce can only be achieved through a greater proportion of courses being externally accredited and assessed. This will enable providers to make international comparisons and use appropriate benchmarking of learner performance to plan, deliver and secure more effectively the necessary improvements in learner achievement.

The Higher Education Review Unit (HERU) conducted five institutional reviews during 2009-2010. All twelve private higher education institutions operating in the Kingdom have been reviewed and their Review Reports have been published.

As the first cycle of institutional reviews is developmental, unlike the Programme Review, Reports do not make a summative judgement on the quality of the higher education providers. Rather, the Reports make detailed comments on the findings of the Expert Panels constituted by the HERU upon which the institutions are expected to act. Of the six published institutional Review Reports in 2009-2010, one institution received no Commendations; i.e. there was no demonstrated and significant good practice. Four either received one or two Commendations. One institution received nine Commendations.

A considerable number of the Recommendations made by the Panels are fundamental in nature. These are areas that are in need of significant improvement. The Recommendations are distributed throughout all nine Themes and 25 Indicators against which they were measured. Five of the six institutions have serious issues concerning governance and management as well as the quality of education provision.

When the Recommendations are aggregated across all twelve private higher education institutions, the areas in need of improvement are fairly consistent. These include: governance and management; strategic planning; the lack of linking planning, budgeting and resource allocation to ensure that programmes are sufficiently resourced; and finally to ensure that academic standards are being met: benchmarking, external examination, programme reviews, research to underpin teaching and learning, and academic professional development opportunities.

With respect to programme reviews, the first programme to be reviewed nationally to ascertain whether or not minimum standards are being met was in the field of Bachelor of Business Administration. The reviews of this programme have been completed; twelve in all. Six were carried out in the 2008-2009 academic year and six in 2009-2010. Of the six programme reviews carried out in the 2009-2010 academic year, two received 'confidence' judgements, two 'limited confidence', and two 'no confidence'. When all twelve programme reviews are considered together, there was an even distribution in the judgements reached by the Expert Panels with four receiving 'confidence'; four 'limited confidence'; and four 'no confidence'.

SCHOOLS REVIEW UNIT

INTRODUCTION

The Schools Review Unit (SRU) has completed the reviews of all but 18 of the public schools in the Kingdom. This report provides the opportunity not only to provide information on the performance of the schools that were reviewed during 2009-2010, but also to give an overview of the school standards and quality in the public schools over the first two full years of school reviews. Having completed the review of almost all public schools, there is now more evidence to confirm the emerging issues identified in the first annual report of the QAAET.

During the school year 2009-2010, the SRU carried out reviews in 112 schools in line with the practice established in the first year of school reviews. Teams, typically, of between five and eight reviewers spent three days in school observing lessons, analysing student performance, meeting with key school leaders, parents and students and scrutinising students' written work. The review framework evaluates school effectiveness in terms of learning outcomes:

- students' academic achievements and their progress in personal development
- the quality of the school's provision in terms of teaching and learning
- curriculum delivery and enrichment
- the quality of support and guidance
- the quality of the school leadership and management.

Schools are awarded an overall grade for overall effectiveness and a further grade on their capacity to improve. Review grades are awarded on a four point scale:

Outstanding 1
Good 2
Satisfactory 3
Inadequate ....…………... 4

Schools, which have been judged to be 'outstanding', are encouraged to share their best practice amongst other schools. Those, which receive an overall grade of 'inadequate', are subject to a monitoring procedure by the SRU; i.e. where their progress towards meeting the Recommendations in the Review Report is assessed by a monitoring team within six months to a year after the review. Over the course of the last year the SRU has been conducting monitoring visits in 23 schools that had been judged as 'inadequate'. 3 schools were considered to have made sufficient improvement to be included once more in the regular cycle of school reviews. The remaining 20 are all subject to regular monitoring visits. The main focus for improvement for the schools that have been judged as 'inadequate' is on the quality of teaching and on the quality of their self-evaluation and development planning.

OVERALL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

Out of the 112 schools reviewed in 2009-2010, almost one third were 'good' or 'outstanding' and a quarter were 'inadequate' (see Figure 1). In general, girls' schools are performing much better than boys' schools (Figures 2 and 3). In 2009-2010, almost six out of ten of the girls' schools were 'good' or 'outstanding' and only two schools were found to be 'inadequate'. In the same period, more than 40% of boys' schools were 'inadequate' and less than 10% were 'good'. Over the two years of school reviews, 13% of boys schools were 'good' or better, whilst 36% were 'inadequate'. By contrast more than half of the girls' schools were 'good' or better with almost 6% judged as 'inadequate'.

All the review evidence points towards the overall picture in primary schools being more positive than in the intermediate and secondary schools (see Figures 4, 5, 6). For example, when considering the cumulative findings of reviews in the period 2008-2010, the only 'outstanding' schools have been found at primary level. Almost half of the secondary schools were judged as being 'inadequate', the majority of these inadequate schools being boys' schools.

Most boys' primary schools were 'satisfactory', having reviewed 20 out of 34 schools; whilst most girls' primary schools were 'good' having reviewed 20 out of 31 schools. In the good schools, the strongest features were good leadership and management, which promoted positive attitudes and behaviour as well as high standards. In the weakest schools, poorly focused leadership coupled with students' poor behaviour were the major factors leading to low standards of achievement.
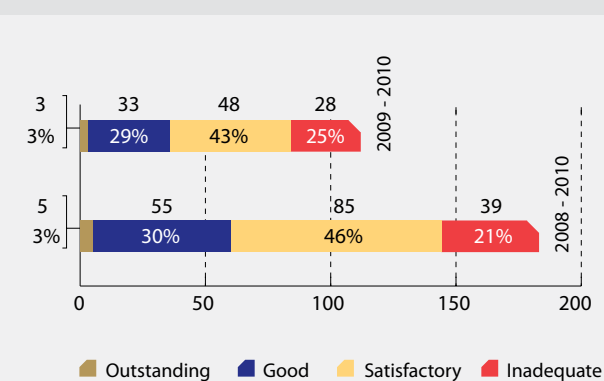
FIGURE 1:
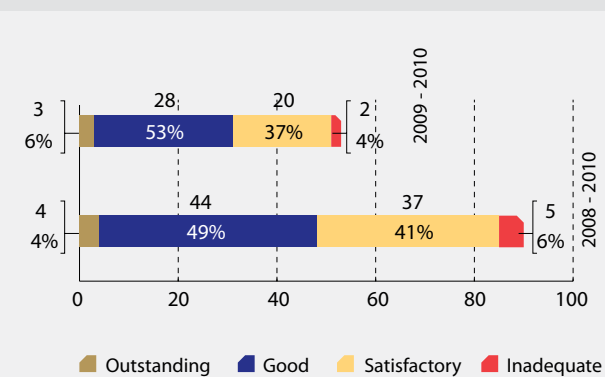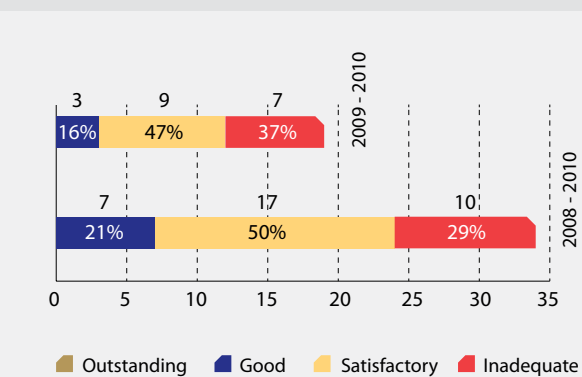OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

FIGURE 2:
GIRLS' SCHOOLS

FIGURE 3:
BOYS' SCHOOLS

FIGURE 4:
PRIMARY SCHOOLS (INCLUDING PRIMARY INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS)

FIGURE 5:
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS

FIGURE 6:
SECONDARY SCHOOLS (INCLUDING INTERMEDIATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS)
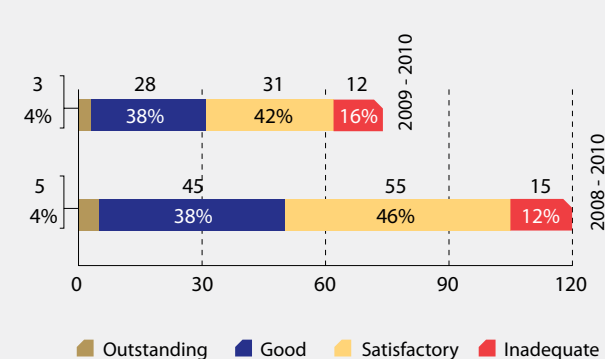
CAPACITY TO IMPROVE

The judgement concerning a school's capacity to improve is important. It is based on the signs of future improvement, such as strategic planning, systems for monitoring the quality of provision and achievements of performance targets, and clear leadership. More than 51% of schools have a good or better capacity to improve but close to 19% do not have the capacity to improve without significant support from the ministry (see Figure 7). In those schools with a weak capacity to improve, there is an underdeveloped sense of common purpose and the key short comings in teaching, learning and student behaviour are not being systematically addressed.

FIGURE 7:
THE SCHOOL'S CAPACITY TO IMPROVE
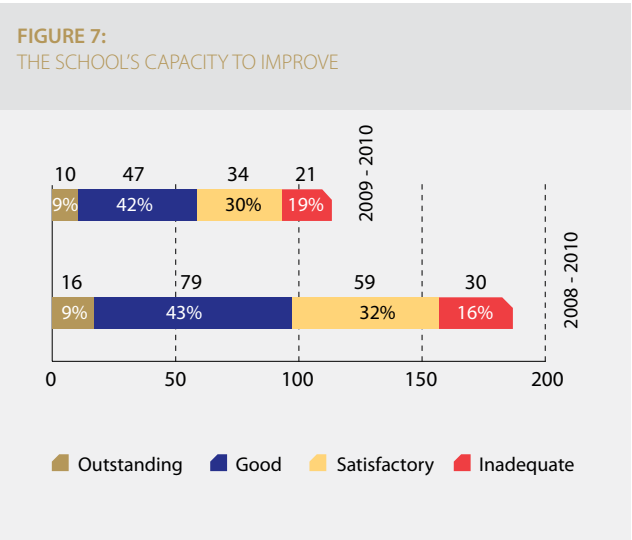
One of the most important and significant areas of variance is in the schools' belief in their capacity to improve. Although almost all reviewed schools felt that this capacity was 'satisfactory' or better, the SRU reviewers found that more than one school in six had an 'inadequate' capacity to improve.

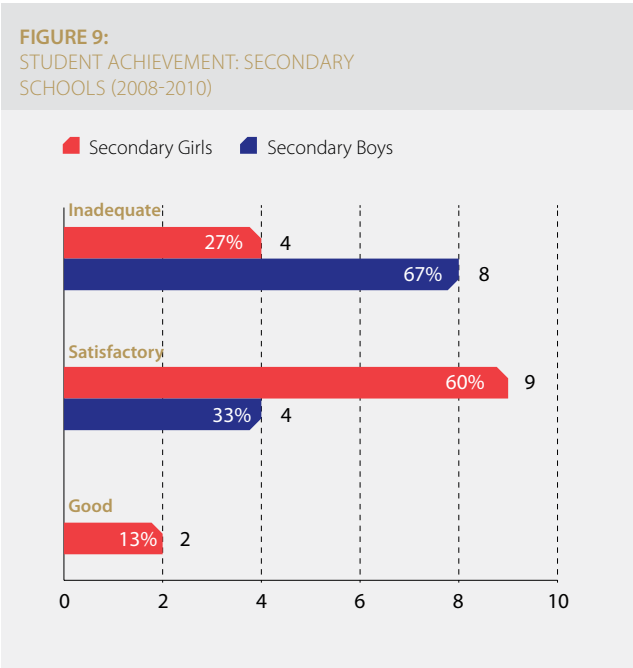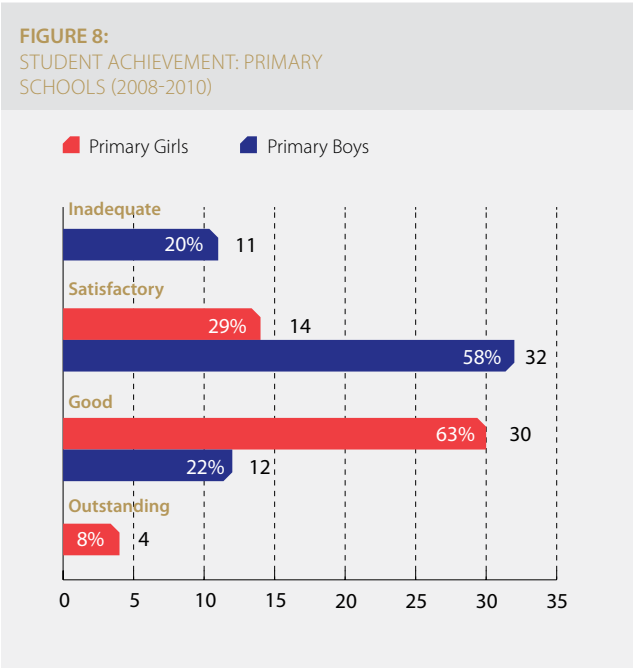This situation is likely to improve over time as schools learn to calibrate their expectations in line with the standards of the review teams from the SRU.

STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN THEIR ACADEMIC WORK

When evaluating the standards achieved by students, review teams take into consideration a wide range of evidence. This includes the students' performance in Ministry of Education and schools tests and the achievement and the progress they make in the lessons observed by the review teams; there is not always a close relationship between the results achieved in the tests and the standards seen in the classroom. In many cases, review teams see standards evident in the classroom that are not as high as would be indicated by the test results. In all of the SRU Review Reports there is a close correlation between a school's overall effectiveness and the students' achievement.

The cumulative findings over the past two years reveal that at primary level (see Figure 8) 71% of girls' schools are reaching levels of achievement which are 'good' or 'outstanding' whilst for boys in 58% of schools, achievement is 'satisfactory', and in 20% it is 'inadequate'. Students' achievement at secondary level confirms this gender difference as can be seen in Figure 9. In 73% of girls' secondary schools, achievement is 'satisfactory' or 'good' and in 27% it is 'inadequate'. In 67% of boys' schools, achievement is 'inadequate' and in 33% it is 'satisfactory'.

FIGURE 8:
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: PRIMARY
SCHOOLS (2008-2010)

FIGURE 9:
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: SECONDARY
SCHOOLS (2008-2010)

STUDENTS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

This aspect of the review is concerned not only with students' attendance, punctuality and their attitude to school, but also their attitude to learning.

Reviewers evaluate students' ability to work together, think analytically and act with self-confidence and independence. The review team also assesses whether students feel safe and secure at school.

Of the schools reviewed in 2009-2010, 16% were judged as being 'inadequate', with almost half being 'good' or 'outstanding'. Amongst the successful schools the most

common strengths are students' attendance and punctuality, their capacity to work together effectively and their feeling safe and secure at school. The most common weakness in the schools reviewed during 2009-2010 is the inability of students to think analytically, with more than one third of schools being judged 'inadequate' in this respect and only about 13% of schools promoting this feature to a 'good' or 'outstanding' degree.

In the weakest schools, students' poor attendance and the attendant poor motivation towards schooling are the most significant areas to be addressed. The situation is particularly critical in those intermediate and secondary schools that were judged to be overall 'inadequate'. In these schools, a high rate of absenteeism, coupled in some cases with a lack of parental support, means that schools have to struggle to create the basic conditions under which learning can take place. In many schools that fail to provide an adequate quality of education, students' safety and security are at risk through physical intimidation and verbal threats. Under these conditions, students' self-confidence is undermined and they are unable to take any responsibility for their own learning. Students show a careless attitude towards the school environment; for instance, they casually drop litter and deface school property.

By contrast in 'good' and 'outstanding' schools, students' attendance is good and students' self-confidence makes a major contribution to their capacity to operate with some degree of independence from their teachers. Relationships are based upon mutual respect and this, in turn, enables students to work effectively and productively both on their own and in groups. Students in these schools are eager to assume positions of responsibility and make positive contributions towards the life of the school as an inclusive learning community.

EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

In this aspect of the review process, the SRU reviewers assess: teachers' capacity to engage, motivate and inspire learners; how they match their lessons to meet the learning needs of students of differing abilities; teachers' subject knowledge; pedagogy that is appropriate for different types of learning and varying student abilities; teachers' ability to plan effectively and to use a range of resources for learning; evidence of consolidation of learning for some students whilst extending the opportunities for others. Lastly, the reviewers assess the extent to which teachers' work is underpinned by an effective use of assessment in order to provide student feedback on their strengths and areas for development.

Of all the aspects of the school's provision upon which review teams focus, teaching and learning are the areas that raise the most concern. In 2009-2010, teaching and learning was judged to be 'inadequate' in 28 schools (25%) and only three were rated 'outstanding' (see Figure 10). Overall, when

considering all the schools reviewed in the two years since 2008, in only a tiny proportion – 2% - was the teaching 'outstanding' whereas a significant proportion of schools were rated 'inadequate' (21%) for their teaching.

FIGURE 10:
EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING
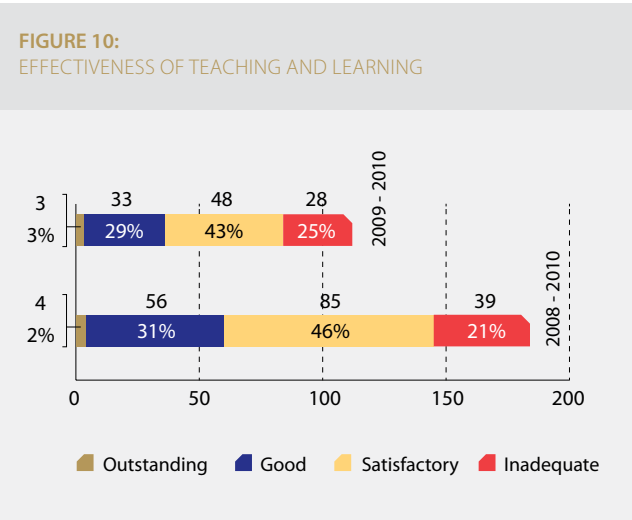
The most significant shortcoming as reported in the previous annual report remains in teachers not matching their lessons to the needs of all the students. In too many lessons teachers plan with a single set of expectations about how the lesson will be conducted; they plan with the average learner in mind and they do not provide sufficient challenge for the higher attaining students, and support for those who need more assistance with their learning. Students are too often required to sit passively listening to teachers and, where they are doing activities, these are frequently based upon short and restricted exercises from a textbook. Independent learning skills are not promoted and students are seldom required to solve problems that require them to apply their knowledge and so demonstrate their understanding. Exercises are often mechanical, repetitive and unstimulating. In 'inadequate' schools, teachers do not use assessment to provide constructive feedback to students on their strengths and their areas for development.

Reviewers concentrate their lesson observations upon the four core subject areas of Arabic, English, Mathematics and Science for older students, whereas for younger students they look at whole class, general teaching. Typically, teaching is at its best in the first three years of primary school. The quality and suitability of teaching declines as students get older and they move into secondary schools. The quality of teaching and learning is at its poorest in the last three years of education at secondary level where lessons are 'inadequate' in almost one third of schools. Of all the subjects, the teaching of English raises the most concern, since in 41% of lessons teaching was judged to be 'inadequate' and only 17% were rated 'good'. The main problem is teachers' poor command of standard spoken English and, consequently, their inability to model the language authentically for the students who are learning English as their second language. Equally in their written work, students are not expected

to write in an extended fashion in order to improve their vocabulary and capacity to develop fluency and style. The quality of teaching and learning in the other core subject areas remains an area for concern, with more than 20% of lessons judged as 'inadequate' in Arabic, Mathematics, and Science.

CURRICULUM DELIVERY AND ENRICHMENT

In this aspect of the school review, reviewers evaluate the ways in which schools implement the Ministry of Education curriculum. Primarily, review teams look at how the curriculum is enriched and how, for example, links are made between different subjects and how relevance is reinforced by extra-curricular activities, such as educational trips. Curriculum implementation is also a means by which the school promotes amongst young people their rights and responsibilities as citizens. The curriculum delivery is judged by how effectively it promotes basic skills, such as numeracy, literacy, and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

Amongst the schools that were reviewed during 2009-2010, the curriculum implementation was found to be 'good' or 'outstanding' in 47% of schools (see Figure 11). In these schools, an imaginative approach is used to make the curriculum more interesting and relevant to the students. In these successful schools, the curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular activities that enable students to build on what they have learned in lessons. By improving the relevance of the curriculum and aligning it with the world outside school, students in the best schools develop an improved understanding of their rights and responsibilities. In this way good curriculum implementation prepares students for their next stage of education and the world of work.

FIGURE 11:
CURRICULUM DELIVERY AND ENRICHMENT
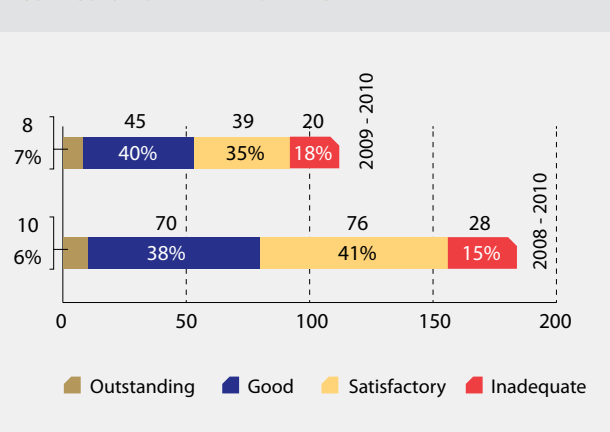
In those schools where curriculum enrichment is well-developed, the greatest strengths are in having a school environment that stimulates learning, having a good range of extra-curricular activities and good links between

subjects. For example, ICT is used to promote learning in Mathematics, Science and Languages; also in 'good' schools strong links exist, for example, between Mathematics, Science and Technology, which enable basic skills to be applied and extended.

Taking into account all the schools visited during the review period from 2008-2010 as a whole, the inadequate schools shared common weaknesses in their curriculum implementation. 15% of schools failed to enrich the curriculum. They did not make links between subjects and students' basic skills were under-developed. In this scenario, basic skills are not embedded and developed, and often skills decline through a lack of meaningful application.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

This aspect is concerned with the quality of support and guidance that a school provides. It includes consideration of how well students are inducted into the school and how well their personal needs are assessed; consideration is also given to the quality of guidance they receive about academic and developmental matters, and how well parents are informed about the progress of their children.

Schools have at least one dedicated member of staff designated as the social worker whose main responsibility is to provide a link with the families and to support and guide students in their life at school. Of all the aspects of a school's work which reviewers evaluate, this is amongst the strongest.

Overall, as shown in Figure 12, in 2009-2010, almost 44% of schools were graded as 'good' or 'outstanding' in this aspect whilst almost 20% were 'inadequate'. The most common weakness is in schools' capacity to assess and provide support, which is sensitively and appropriately shared with the students; additionally these weaker schools do not provide good career and educational guidance.

FIGURE 12:
STUDENT SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE
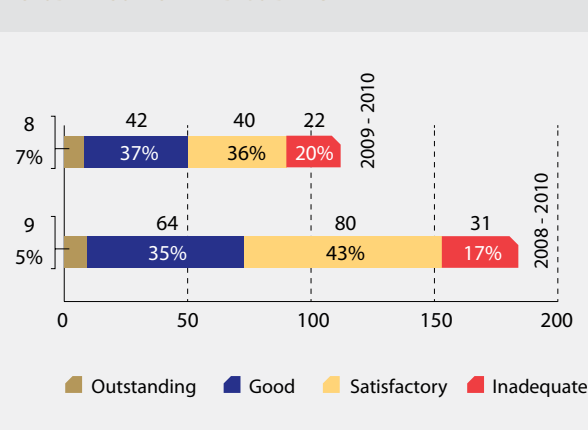
A notable strength amongst nearly all the schools reviewed during 2009-2010 is in their capacity to provide effective induction programmes to introduce new students to school life. More than two thirds of schools were rated 'good' or 'outstanding' and the reviewers judged that in only two schools were the arrangements 'inadequate'. In 14 schools during 2009-2010, the arrangements were 'outstanding'.

A common finding across all the schools reviewed over the past two years is that the strength of the support and the general awareness of students' needs were not evident in the classrooms. The student records relating to their personal and social needs are not well-integrated with their academic progress records; teachers are often insufficiently aware of students' wider social and developmental issues and how these may impact on their classroom behaviour.

EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

This aspect concentrates on how effective school leaders are in inspiring and motivating their staff and the extent to which they have a clear vision of success and long-term school improvement through detailed development planning.

In a small number of cases, the leadership and management grade is higher than that for overall school effectiveness. This is usually due to the review team evaluating the quality of a new Principal and leadership team who had only been at the school for a short time where their presence, plans and policies had yet to have an impact on the life of the school. During 2009-2010 in 57% of schools, the leadership was judged as 'good' or 'outstanding', with 23% 'satisfactory' and 20% 'inadequate'. Taking into account all schools reviewed since the beginning of the live school reviews in 2008, the SRU found that in more than one school in every six, leadership and management are 'inadequate'. The biggest difficulty which schools face in maintaining quality and continuous improvement is in the regularity with which Principals are moved from school to school.

FIGURE 13:
EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT
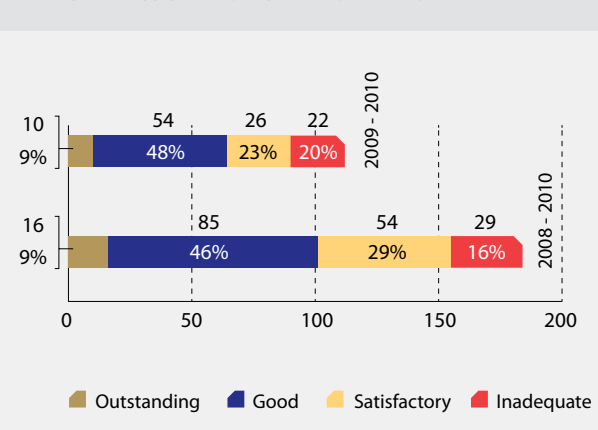
It is an accepted principle, amongst the international community of school improvement specialists that it takes between three and five years for a new leadership team to bring about significant improvement and transformation in schools which are struggling. In a great many of the schools reviewed, the teams found Principals who had only been at the school for a relatively short period of time. Good school leadership, however, does not just rely upon the skills of the Principal alone; to be effective the leadership needs to be a team effort, and, in those schools where the Principals were relatively new, the SRU evaluated the strength of the team as a whole in coming to a judgement about a school's capacity to improve.

Good school leadership teams' main strength is in their capacity to inspire, motivate and support staff effectively. In less than two thirds of schools this feature was 'good' or 'outstanding'. Other important strengths evident in successful schools and leadership teams are the clarity of their vision and purpose and their responsiveness to the views of stakeholders; about 60% of successful teams were 'good' or 'outstanding'. Effective self-evaluation that is rigorously used to assure quality should be the basis of all meaningful strategic planning, to ensure that it is firmly focused on improvement. The most interesting finding is that in about 55% of schools, both self-evaluation and the improvement planning are 'good' or 'outstanding', whereas in almost 20% of schools self-evaluation and improvement planning are 'inadequate'. This latter group would include many of those Principals who have been at the school for only a short period of time and where the self-evaluation and improvement planning strategies are at an early stage of development.

AFTER THE REVIEW

After the review, schools are asked to complete an action plan to address the areas for improvement identified in the review report. Schools have six weeks after the publication of the review report to formulate an action plan and submit it to the Ministry of Education for scrutiny; the Ministry, in turn, forwards the action plan to the SRU for comment. Comments on the action plan are returned to the Ministry in the form of written feedback. When the action plan has been approved, it is returned to the school for implementation. In the case of schools where there is an overall grade of 'inadequate' the SRU undertakes monitoring visits within six months to a year to assess schools' progress towards addressing those areas which were identified as being in need of improvement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

School improvement is a process that should involve all key stakeholders. Whilst the quality of leadership of the Principal is probably the most single important factor underlying school improvement, the Principal cannot succeed without a strong team. It is the strength of the Principal and the

extended leadership team that serves to embed sustained school improvement. Additionally this report has identified several other specific areas for improvement as follows:

- Schools should adopt a more realistic approach to self-evaluation based upon firm evidence and honest reflection. For example, where a self-evaluation form (SEF) grades the provision as 'good', the evidence to support that assertion should be clearly stated.

- The assessment of students' achievement needs to be more accurate. Repeatedly, school reviews find that the standards witnessed in the classrooms do not correspond to the standards in the reported Ministry of Education and school assessments. The school-based element of the overall assessment grade should be substantiated with accurate and timely evidence of student performance to go alongside the Ministry of Education and school test results.

- The quality of teaching and learning should be improved in order to provide appropriate levels of challenge for students of all abilities in lessons. Additionally, teachers need to make better use of assessments to inform students of their strengths and areas for improvement.

- In the best schools, the curriculum is implemented in an imaginative way, with a wide range of extra-curricular activities to make the curriculum interesting and relevant with opportunities for the students to make links between subjects. However, in too many schools the curriculum is delivered in an unchallenging way directly from textbooks. There needs to be a greater sharing of best practice amongst schools with regard to curriculum implementation and enrichment.

- Schools should adopt a strategy for improvement and development planning that involves the whole staff. The realisation of improvement plans should be a shared responsibility and include duties and responsibilities for named individuals together with evidential success criteria and realistic timelines.

NATIONAL EXAMINATIONS UNIT

INTRODUCTION

The Kingdom of Bahrain's first set of National Examinations was taken in May 2009 by Grade 3 and 6 students. In 2010, Grade 9 students were also included. In May 2010, all students in public schools in Grades 3, 6 and 9 sat for the National Examinations. A total of approximately 32,000 students sat for the examinations. Grade 3 students took the Arabic and Mathematics examinations, whereas Grade 6 and 9 students took the Arabic, Mathematics, English and Science examinations.

The examination papers were marked in June and, for the majority of students, marks were captured at the level of paper totals. However, for each grade and examination subject, marks were captured at the item level for a common sample of 10% of the students. This report outlines the results of the analyses of the May 2010 National Examinations. Some of the conclusions in this report are based on the analyses of the performance of that sample of students on the core questions in the examinations.

PERFORMANCE OF THE EXAMINATIONS

The most common internationally established measure of the reliability of an examination is Cronbach's Alpha (α). It is a measure of the internal consistency of the examination, i.e. how well the scores of the individual items correlate with the overall score, on average. As a commonly held international standard, the value of α should not be lower than 0.7; values above 0.8 indicate strong internal reliability.

The value of α is related both to the number of items on the examination and to the standard deviation of the marks – it will tend to be lower on examinations with only a few items and with a narrow concentration of marks than on examinations with many items and a wide spread of marks.

The values of α for the 2009 and 2010 core examinations are given in Table 1 below, together with the means and standard deviations of the marks achieved by all students (expressed as percentages of the maximum marks available). Also included are the maximum marks and the number of questions on each examination.

The data show that the reliabilities of all ten examinations are good, and examination results can be treated with confidence. For Grade 3, the mean mark for Mathematics increased but the mean mark for Arabic examinations decreased. For Grade 6, whereas the mean mark for Mathematics and English increased in 2010, those of Arabic and Science decreased. On average, the standard deviations remain stable. The means for Grade 9 are low, with none at, or around, the mean mark of 50%. Low

TABLE 1:
2009 & 2010 MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Grade	Subject	Number of questions	Maximum marks	Mean mark 2009	Mean mark 2010	Standard deviation 2009	Standard deviation 2010	Cronbach's alpha 2009	Cronbach's alpha 2010
3	Arabic	27	45	43%	38%	22%	22%	0.91	0.91
	Mathematics	53	60	40%	51%	19%	22%	0.93	0.94
6	Arabic	30	78	46%	42%	20%	19%	0.93	0.92
	Mathematics	70	90	20%	21%	14%	15%	0.93	0.93
	English	11	65	33%	34%	16%	16%	0.84	0.83
	Science	77	90	47%	41%	17%	12%	0.90	0.88
9	Arabic	27	76	-	39%	-	19%	-	0.90
	Mathematics	51	90	-	17%	-	13%	-	0.90
	English	10	85	-	25%	-	19%	-	0.83
	Science	119	135	-	33%	-	14%	-	0.93

performance is most pronounced in Mathematics for Grades 6 and 9 where the mean marks are just 21% and 17% of the total respectively. This is lower than can be attributed simply to an unfamiliar style of examining, and might indicate a more deep-seated mismatch between the demand of the examinations and the abilities of the students being examined. In principle, this could be due to:

- the demands inherent in the National Curriculum not being realistic for the education system to achieve
- the National Curriculum not being taught or not being taught well
- students not being motivated to give their best, as national examinations do not count towards the students' grades or in deciding their promotion to the next grade.

PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS

Performance of students is measured and reported by two scores: a normalised percentage score and a performance score.

The normalised percentage score is a norm-referenced score, which compares students', classes' and schools' performance within the year group; it is a relative measure. The national average is set at 70% every year. The cumulative normalised percentage scores for 2009 and 2010 are shown in Tables 2 and 3; light gold highlights the national average. The data in the two tables are not comparable as they show relative standing within the year but are presented to show the differences in the distribution of marks in 2009 and 2010.

TABLE 2:
GRADE 3 AND 6 2009 CUMULATIVE NORMALISED PERCENTAGE SCORES

	Grade 3		Grade 6			
	Arabic	Mathematics	Arabic	Mathematics	English	Science
0 or above	2.3	1.5	1.3	15.9	0.4	1.4
50% or above	97.7	98.5	98.7	84.1	99.6	98.6
60% or above	84.0	82.8	81.7	84.1	90.0	83.4
70% or above	51.0	49.9	55.5	45.8	39.8	51.8
80% or above	18.7	18.4	18.5	17.6	16.4	18.5
90% or above	2.4	2.2	1.0	4.5	6.0	1.3

TABLE 3:
GRADE 3, 6 AND 9 2010 CUMULATIVE NORMALISED PERCENTAGE SCORES

	Grade 3		Grade 6				Grade 9			
	Arabic	Mathematics	Arabic	Mathematics	English	Science	Arabic	Mathematics	English	Science
0 or above	4.6	2.1	2.1	13.7	2.2	2.8	5.8	18.0	9.9	5.7
50% or above	95.4	97.9	97.9	86.3	97.8	97.2	94.2	82.0	90.1	94.3
60% or above	81.9	82.8	81.9	86.3	88.6	85.6	83.7	82.0	90.1	86.9
70% or above	50.1	53.6	52.6	44.0	45.4	53.6	52.2	44.7	40.2	49.6
80% or above	20.3	21.0	20.1	16.6	16.9	17.2	20.0	14.6	17.5	16.9
90% or above	3.0	0.3	1.1	4.6	5.0	1.5	2.1	4.9	6.0	3.4

THE PERFORMANCE SCORE

The Performance Score is an absolute measure that is based on an absolute ability scale derived from a Rasch model within item response theory. It is an absolute measure of student's ability against the skills and topics in the test specifications. The national average performance score was defined as 4.0 in the first year of assessment (2009 for Grades 3 and 6 and 2010 for Grade 9) as the baseline against which to measure future years' performance. Test equating enables the comparison of the performance of the subsequent years against the baseline years' performance.

TEST EQUATING

For security purposes, QAAET constructs a different test every year while ensuring that content and statistical specifications are similar to tests used in previous years. Despite such efforts to ensure similarity, assessments from year to year may differ somewhat in their difficulty. To account for this, QAAET uses a process called equating, which adjusts for differences in difficulty among the tests from year to year (Kolen & Brennan, 2004).[1] Equating ensures that students in one year are not given an unfair advantage over students in another year and that reported changes in achievement levels are due to differences in student performance, and not to differences in test difficulty. Equating is used to adjust for differences in difficulty among tests that are similar in content and statistical specifications *(ibid)*. The following sections describe the equating design, and calibration procedures used to equate the Grade 3 and 6 2010 assessments to the 2009 assessments and consequently derive students' performance scores.

EQUATING DESIGN

The common-item non-equivalent group design is used to equate QAAET tests over different years. Common items are sets of items that are identical in two tests and are used to create a common scale for all the items in the tests. QAAET uses matrix sampling that enables items to be embedded in the live assessments. Embedded items do not contribute to the students' marks and are not released to the public. They are calibrated and their parameters are known. Some of the embedded items become part of the live assessment in the subsequent year. In 2010, some of the items that were embedded in the 2009 assessments became part of the live assessment. It is these items that are common in the two adjacent years that create the link that is important in equating tests.

The following are the procedures that were implemented in equating the 2010 tests to the 2009 tests:

1. Live test item parameters in 2009 were calibrated.

2. The items embedded in 2009 were then calibrated together with the live items. In this calibration, the 2009 live items were fixed at their parameters obtained in step 1.

3. Some of the items that were embedded in the 2009 assessments became part of the live items in the 2010 assessments. (New items were embedded in the 2010 live assessments.)

4. In 2010, the live items were calibrated. During the calibration, those live items that were previously embedded in the 2009 assessments were anchored at their known parameters; those that were obtained in step 2. This put the 2010 assessments onto the 2009 assessments scale.

[1] Kolen, M.J. & Brennan, R L. (2004) *Test equating, scaling, and linking. Methods and practice (2nd ed.)* New York: Springer-Verlag.

The performance score results that are reported here for the 2010 assessments are from the equating process and therefore comparable to the 2009 results.

The mean performance scores are presented in Table 4 while the cumulative percentages of performance scores are presented in Tables 5, 6 and 7 below. Again, light gold highlights the national baseline. The mean performance scores indicate that for Grades 3 and 6 overall, students performed better in 2010 than in 2009. There is a general improvement in all examinations except for Grade 6 Arabic. The Grade 9 mean performance scores shown here are the baseline scores.

TABLE 4:
GRADE 3, 6 AND 9 2009 AND 2010 MEAN PERFORMANCE SCORES

Grade	Subject	2009	2010
3	Arabic	4.00	4.05
	Mathematics	4.00	4.35
6	Arabic	4.00	3.90
	Mathematics	4.00	4.05
	English	4.00	4.05
	Science	4.00	4.05
9	Arabic	-	4.00
	Mathematics	-	4.00
	English	-	4.00
	Science	-	4.00

TABLE 5:
2009 AND 2010 GRADE 3 CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES OF PERFORMANCE SCORES

Performance Score	Arabic		Mathematics	
	2009	2010	2009	2010
0.0	100	100	100	100
1.0	92.3	95.4	93.3	94.5
2.0	84.5	85.3	85.1	90.2
3.0	69.4	69.4	72.9	79.2
4.0	49.1	50.1	48.7	60.4
5.0	29.2	30.7	24.8	39.4
6.0	13.5	13.4	9.9	21.0
7.0	4.6	4.0	2.2	7.5
8.0	1.0	1.1	0.5	2.5

TABLE 6:
2009 AND 2010 GRADE 6 CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES OF PERFORMANCE SCORES

Performance Score	Arabic		Mathematics		English		Science	
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
0.0	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
1.0	90.9	94.3	85.8	88.6	97.3	97.8	95.8	97.6
2.0	83.0	85.2	76.9	81.6	94.5	95.8	92.4	94.9
3.0	70.6	72.0	64.5	66.2	76.8	82.3	78.7	83.9
4.0	52.4	50.5	43.4	46.9	36.7	49.6	49.8	57.3
5.0	28.2	26.2	21.3	23.3	15.1	20.4	19.8	22.0
6.0	8.7	8.0	7.7	8.9	5.5	7.7	2.8	3.6
7.0	1.7	1.1	2.0	3.1	1.8	2.7	0.2	0.3
8.0	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.0

TABLE 7:
2010 GRADE 9 CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGES OF PERFORMANCE SCORES

Performance Score	Arabic	Mathematics	English	Science
	2010	2010	2010	2010
0.0	100	100	100	100
1.0	93.0	85.7	93.1	94.2
2.0	87.0	79.3	84.5	92.1
3.0	72.6	69.3	66.5	80.5
4.0	49.9	44.7	40.2	51.5
5.0	27.2	22.6	22.7	20.1
6.0	9.8	7.7	9.7	4.6
7.0	2.1	2.3	3.4	0.3
8.0	0.4	0.5	0.9	0.0

The results indicate that for Grade 3 and 6 there is a slight improvement in performance in all Grade 3 and 6 examinations except for Grade 3 Mathematics, which shows a marked increase, and Grade 6 Arabic that shows a slight decrease. The general increase, though small, can be taken to be an indicator of the beginnings of a Bahraini examination culture. Teachers and students are becoming accustomed to the National Examination culture and as a spin-off, those teachers participating in test development and marking are beginning to implement some of the knowledge they have acquired through these processes in their classrooms.

However, the results for Grade 6 Arabic should be considered with other information to help in making evidence-based decisions for students, schools, districts and the Kingdom as a whole. Similarly, the results for Grade 3 Mathematics should be considered in the relevant context to see whether any information useful for other subjects might be extrapolated. The mean performance scores for Grade 9 are the baseline scores (4.0).

The Grade 3 and 6 2009 and 2010 cumulative performance scores are shown in Tables 5 and 6. These score distributions are comparable. They indicate the percentage of students at each performance score across the two years. Those for Grade 9 are shown in Table 7.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE PERFORMANCE SCORES IN RELATION TO TOPICS AND SKILLS

The data are for subjects examined at Grades 3, 6 and 9, and refer specifically to the Topics within subjects (for example, *Listening, Reading,* and *Writing* in the case of languages), and to the Skills within Topics (for example, *Understanding explicit meaning, Structure and grammar, Main points of argument,* in the case of English).
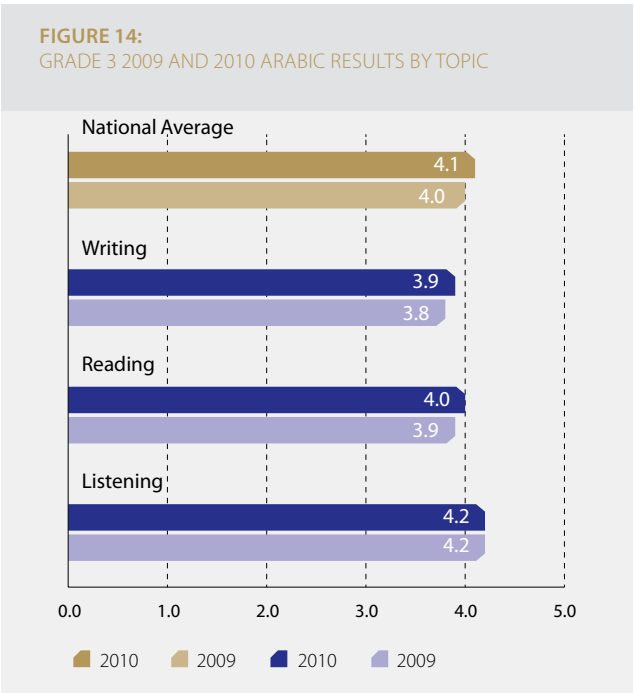
The performance score, reported on a scale of 0.0 to 8.0, is given for each Topic and Skill in each of the subject figures below.[2] Note: The whole subject performance score is **not** an average of the Topics or Skills performance scores. The whole subject performance score is calculated from whole cohort data, including absentees, while the Topic and Skills performance scores are calculated from a 10% random sample of students in the cohort.

The general comments below are also based solely on data taken from a 10% random sample of all students in the cohort. The discussions represent an exploratory scrutiny of the data, and may be used as the basis for further investigation.

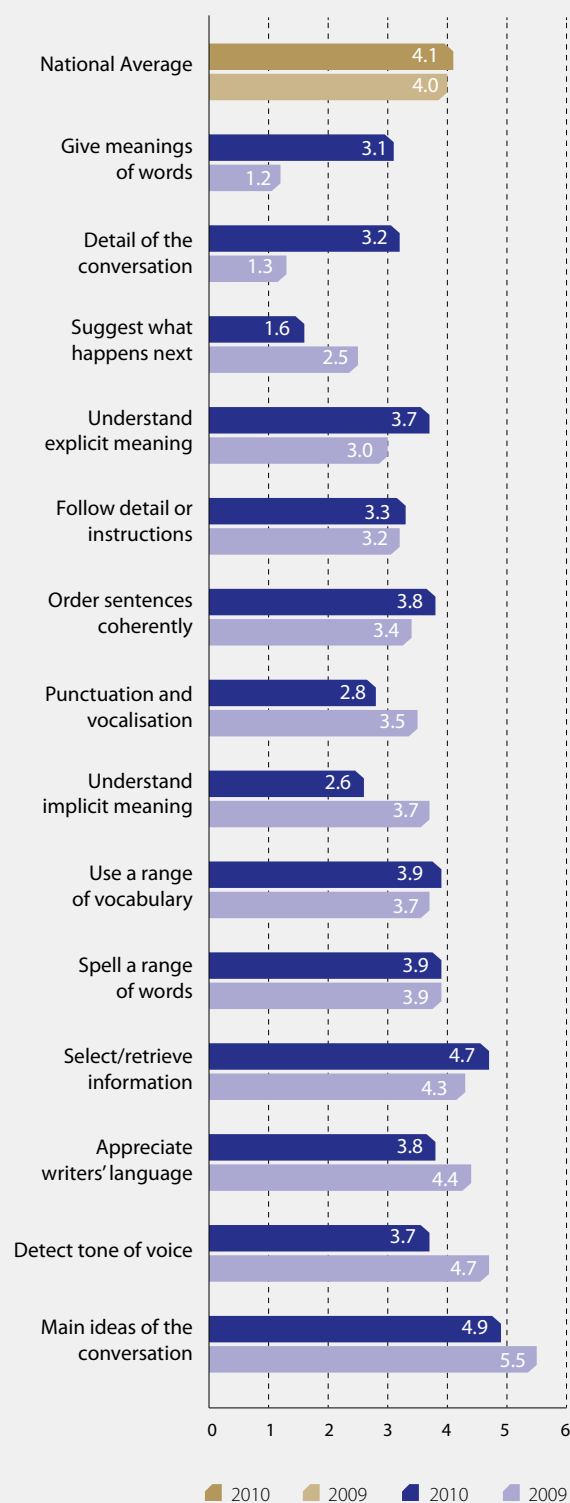## Performance by the national cohort at Grade 3

Arabic

- Performance across Topics *(Listening, Reading,* and *Writing)* is broadly similar to each other and across the two years.

- Writing seems to pose the greatest challenge, with students performing least well in this area across the two years.

- Some skills are based on very few marks, for example, *Detail of the conversation* in the listening paper (based on one mark) and that is why student performance fluctuates from year to year.

- Skill areas where students appear to be strongest include: *Main ideas in a conversation, Select/retrieve information, Use a range of vocabulary* and *Spell a range of words.* However, *Suggest what happens next* and *Understand implicit meaning* appear to provide students with the most difficulty in the 2010 assessment.

FIGURE 14:
GRADE 3 2009 AND 2010 ARABIC RESULTS BY TOPIC

National Average — 2010: 4.1, 2009: 4.0
Writing — 2010: 3.9, 2009: 3.8
Reading — 2010: 4.0, 2009: 3.9
Listening — 2010: 4.2, 2009: 4.2

Legend: 2010, 2009, 2010, 2009

FIGURE 15:
GRADE 3 2009 AND 2010 ARABIC
RESULTS BY SKILL

Skill	2010	2009
National Average	4.1	4.0
Give meanings of words	3.1	1.2
Detail of the conversation	3.2	1.3
Suggest what happens next	1.6	2.5
Understand explicit meaning	3.7	3.0
Follow detail or instructions	3.3	3.2
Order sentences coherently	3.8	3.4
Punctuation and vocalisation	2.8	3.5
Understand implicit meaning	2.6	3.7
Use a range of vocabulary	3.9	3.7
Spell a range of words	3.9	3.9
Select/retrieve information	4.7	4.3
Appreciate writers' language	3.8	4.4
Detect tone of voice	3.7	4.7
Main ideas of the conversation	4.9	5.5

2010 2009 2010 2009

Mathematics

- Performance across the Topics *(Geometry and measurement, Number and algebra, Statistics and probability)* is very similar to each other but shows an increase in 2010 over 2009.

- Again, performance in the Skill areas: *Mathematical knowledge,* and *Applying Mathematics,* are very similar to each other but show an increase in 2010 over 2009.

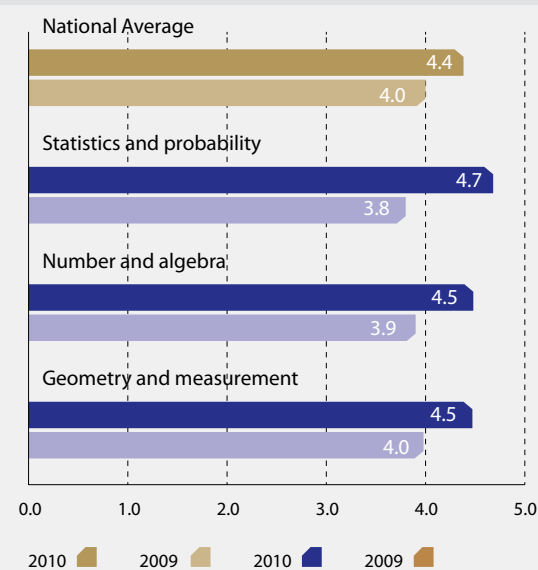**FIGURE 16:**
GRADE 3 2009 AND 2010 MATHEMATICS
RESULTS BY TOPIC

Topic	2010	2009
National Average	4.4	4.0
Statistics and probability	4.7	3.8
Number and algebra	4.5	3.9
Geometry and measurement	4.5	4.0

2010 2009 2010 2009

FIGURE 17:
GRADE 3 2009 AND 2010 MATHEMATICS
RESULTS BY SKILL

Skill	2010	2009
National Average	4.4	4.0
Using and applying mathematics	4.4	3.9
Mathematical knowledge	4.5	4.0

2010 2009 2010 2009
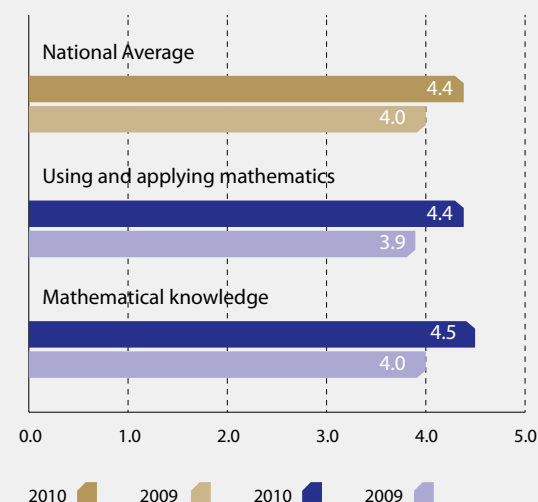
Performance by the national cohort at Grade 6

Arabic

- Across Topic areas *(Reading, Writing,* and *Listening)* there are notable differences, with students performing particularly well on *Listening* compared to *Reading* and *Writing.* However, there was a decrease in performance in *Listening* in 2010 compared to 2009.

- As in Grade 3, *Writing* appears to present more of a challenge in both years.

- There are notable differences in performance across the broad range of skills in 2010 compared with 2009. The most notable areas include: *Summarise, Identify the general idea,* and *Identify the main points.*

- The strongest skills demonstrated include: *Identify sequence, Identify the main points,* and *Presentation and handwriting.*

- The weaker areas identified are: *Writer's purpose and viewpoint, Comment on writers' words* and *Punctuation and vocalisation.*

- Some skills are based on very few marks, which can cause significant fluctuation in year-on-year performance.
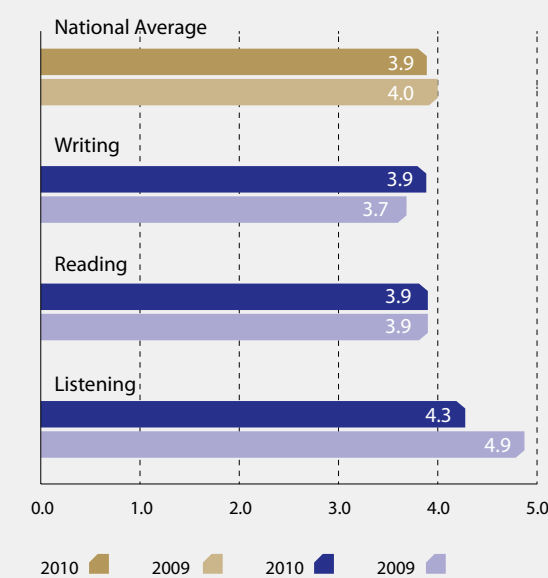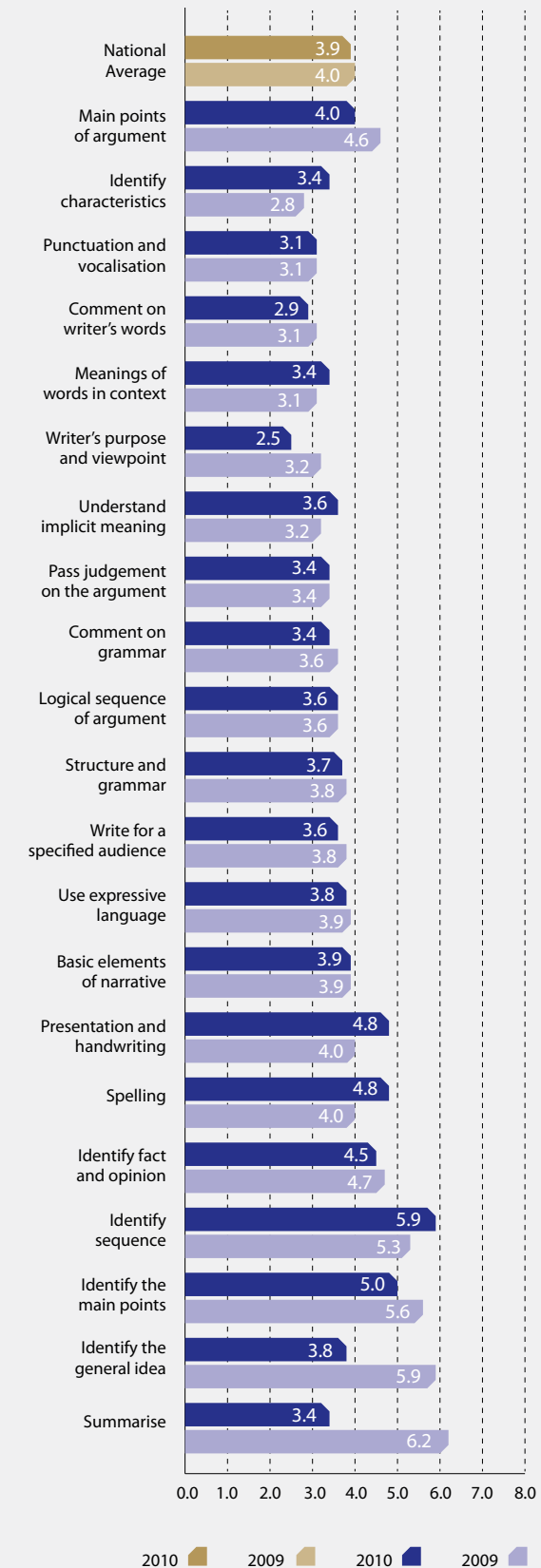
FIGURE 18:
GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010 ARABIC
RESULTS BY TOPIC

Topic	2010	2009
National Average	3.9	4.0
Writing	3.9	3.7
Reading	3.9	3.9
Listening	4.3	4.9

2010 2009 2010 2009

FIGURE 19:
GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010 ARABIC
RESULTS BY SKILL

Skill	2010	2009
National Average	3.9	4.0
Main points of argument	4.0	4.6
Identify characteristics	3.4	2.8
Punctuation and vocalisation	3.1	3.1
Comment on writer's words	2.9	3.1
Meanings of words in context	3.4	3.1
Writer's purpose and viewpoint	2.5	3.2
Understand implicit meaning	3.6	3.2
Pass judgement on the argument	3.4	3.4
Comment on grammar	3.4	3.6
Logical sequence of argument	3.6	3.6
Structure and grammar	3.7	3.8
Write for a specified audience	3.6	3.8
Use expressive language	3.8	3.9
Basic elements of narrative	3.9	3.9
Presentation and handwriting	4.8	4.0
Spelling	4.8	4.0
Identify fact and opinion	4.5	4.7
Identify sequence	5.9	5.3
Identify the main points	5.0	5.6
Identify the general idea	3.8	5.9
Summarise	3.4	6.2

2010 2009 2010 2009

Mathematics

- There is a wide range of performance across Topics *(Measurement, Number, Statistics,* and *Geometry)* with *Geometry* showing a decrease in 2010 and *Statistics* showing a marked increase in 2010.

- Student performance in 2010 is strongest in *Statistics* and notably weaker in *Measurement.*

- Student performance is very broadly similar across skills that address *Using and applying mathematics* and *Mathematical knowledge.*

FIGURE 20:
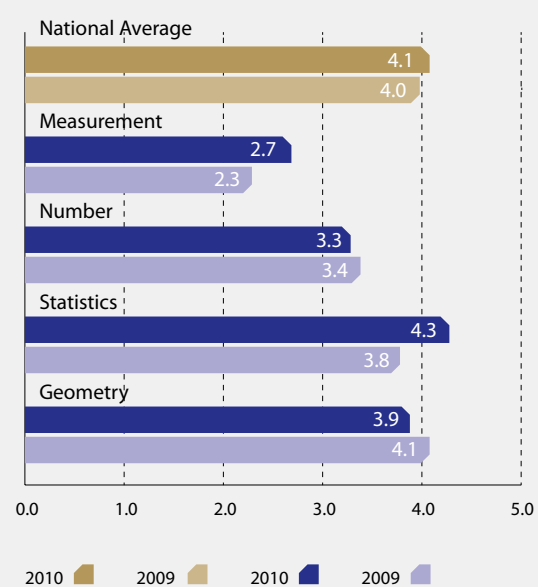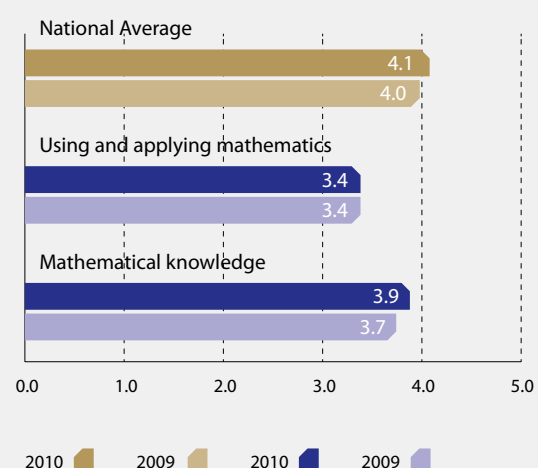GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010 MATHEMATICS RESULTS BY TOPIC

FIGURE 21:
GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010 MATHEMATICS RESULTS BY SKILL

English

- In both years students are significantly weak in *Writing,* though performing equally well in *Listening* and *Reading.*

- Students are strongest in the skill areas of *Identifying detail (dialogue), Understanding short dialogues, Understanding detail and gist, Skimming and scanning, Understanding signs or notices,* and *Use of language in context.*

- In both years, students are particularly weak in *Brief guided writing* and *Story writing from pictures.*

Figure 22:
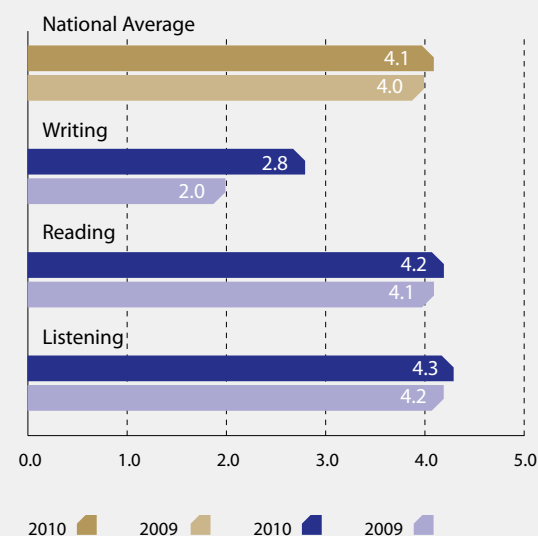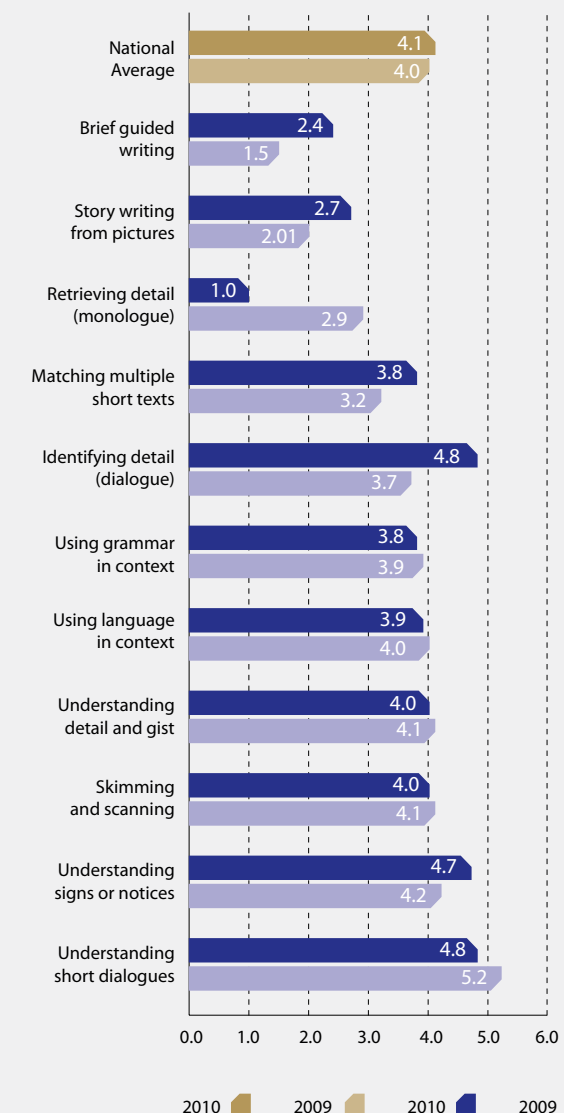GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010 ENGLISH RESULTS BY TOPIC

FIGURE 23:
GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010 ENGLISH RESULTS BY SKILL

Science

- Students perform equally well in *Earth and space science, Life science and environment,* and *Natural science.* There was an increase in 2010 performance over 2009 in almost all areas.

- Performance in the skill areas of *Enquiry skills and analysis, Applications and implications, Recall and understanding,* is very similar across both years. There was an increase in 2010 performance over 2009 in almost all areas.

FIGURE 24:
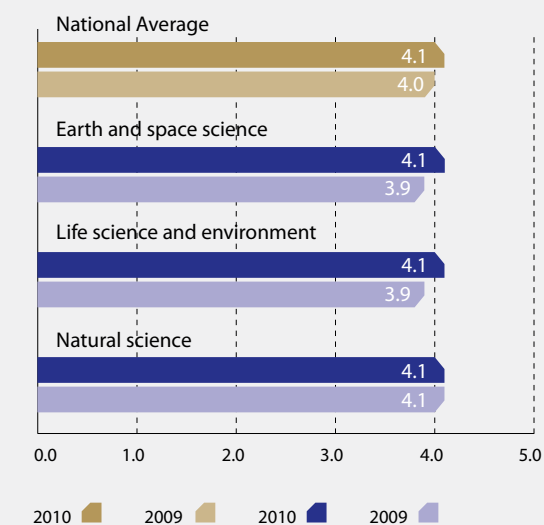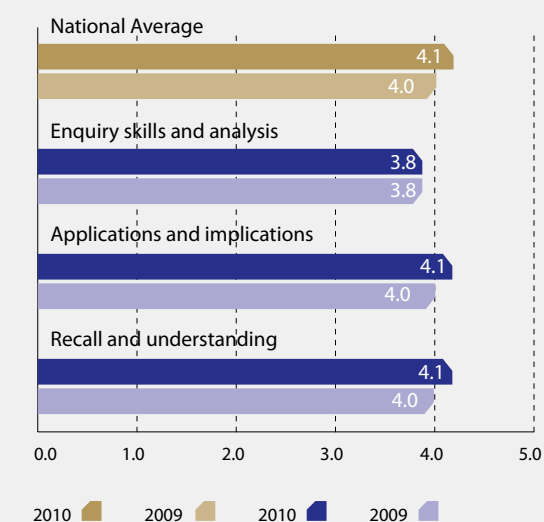GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010 SCIENCE RESULTS BY TOPIC

FIGURE 25:
GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010 SCIENCE RESULTS BY SKILL

Performance by the national cohort at Grade 9

Arabic

- Across Topic areas *(Reading, Writing* and *Listening)* Grade 9 students performed better in *Listening* compared to *Reading* and *Writing.*

- There are notable differences in performance across the broad range of Skills.

- The strongest Skills demonstrated include: *Identify the main points, Understand exact content, Give opinion objectively,* and *Express relevant ideas.*
- The weaker areas identified are: *Identify detail, Comment on grammar, Summarise main points,* and *Create a simple plan.*

FIGURE 26:
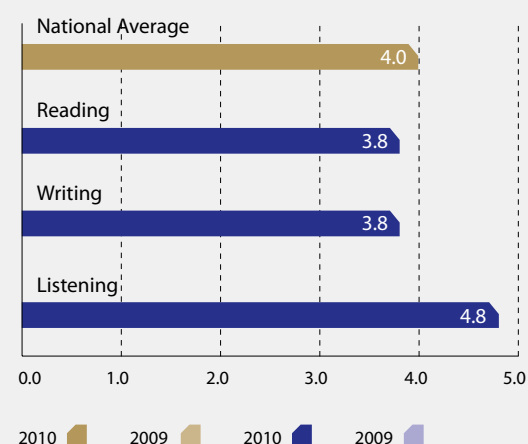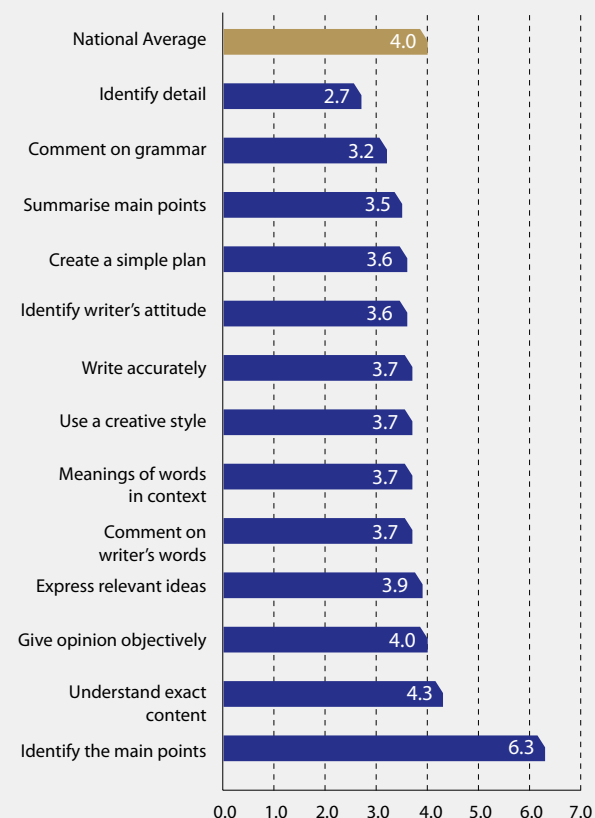GRADE 9 2010 ARABIC
RESULTS BY TOPIC

FIGURE 27:
GRADE 9 2010 ARABIC
RESULTS BY SKILL

Mathematics

- There is a wide range of performance across Topics *(Number and operations, Algebra, Geometry* and *Data analysis and statistics)* with students performing strongest in *Data analysis and statistics* and notably weaker in *Algebra.*
- Student performance differs across Skills, which address *Using and applying Mathematics* and *Mathematical knowledge* with students performing better in *Mathematical knowledge.*

FIGURE 28:
GRADE 9 2010 MATHEMATICS
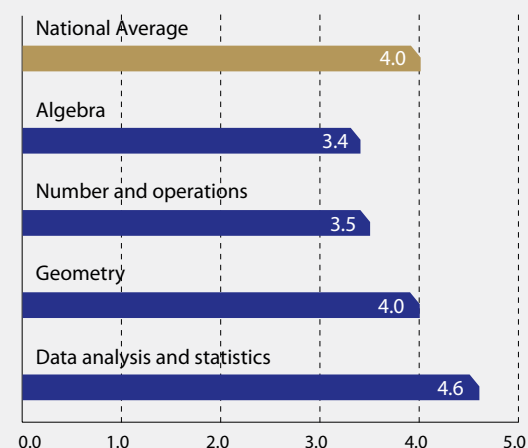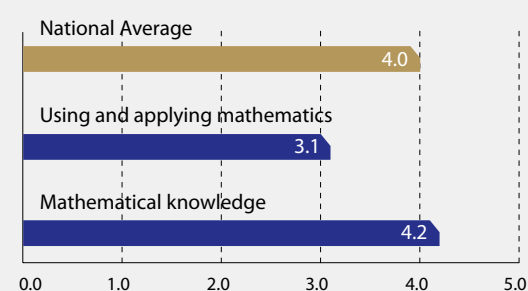RESULTS BY TOPIC

FIGURE 29:
GRADE 9 2010 MATHEMATICS
RESULTS BY SKILL

English

- Repeating the pattern of performance at Grade 6, students are significantly weak in *Writing,* though perform equally well in *Listening* and *Reading.*
- Students are strongest in the skill areas of *Listening for detail, General comprehension,* and *Use lexis/grammar in context.* They are weaker in *Listening/writing information* and *Write continuous prose.*

FIGURE 30:
GRADE 9 2010 ENGLISH
RESULTS BY TOPIC
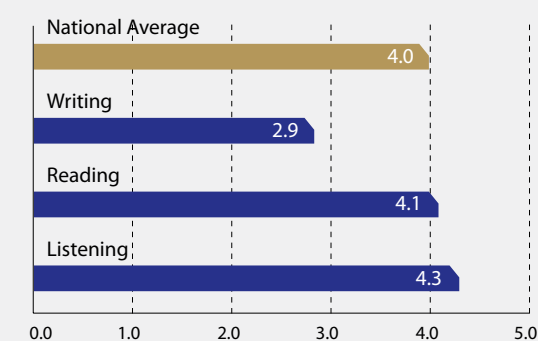
FIGURE 31:
GRADE 9 2010 ENGLISH
RESULTS BY SKILL
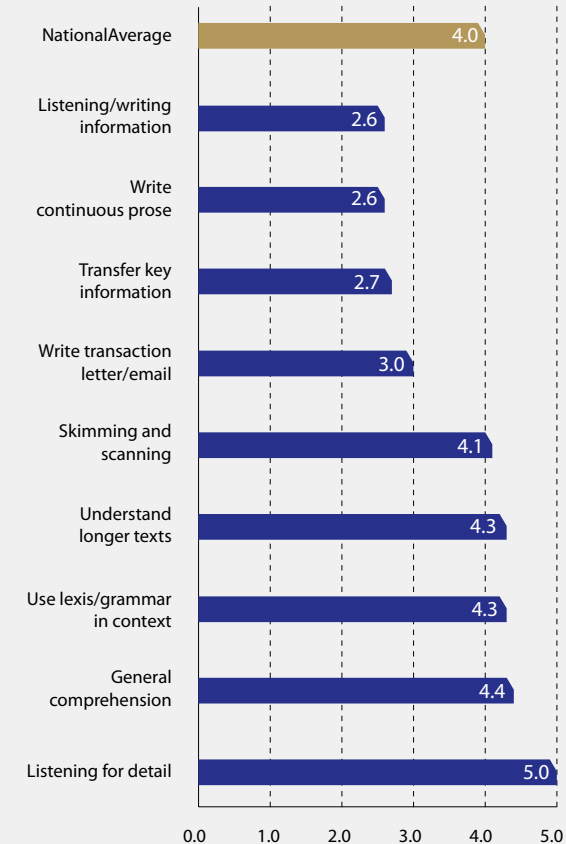
Science

- Students performed equally well in *Earth, space and astronomy, Biology and Environmental science* and *Natural Science.*
- Performance in the skill areas of *Enquiry skills and analysis, Applications and implications, Recall and understanding,* is very similar.

FIGURE 32:
GRADE 9 2010 SCIENCE
RESULTS BY TOPIC
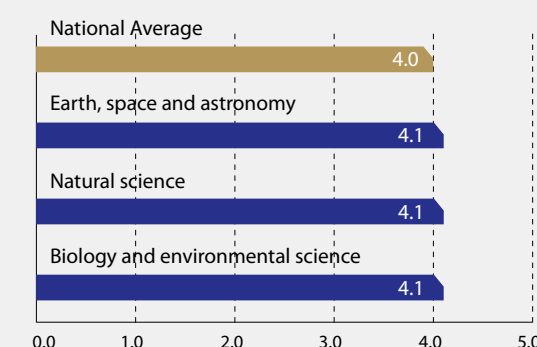
FIGURE 33:
GRADE 9 2010 SCIENCE
RESULTS BY SKILL
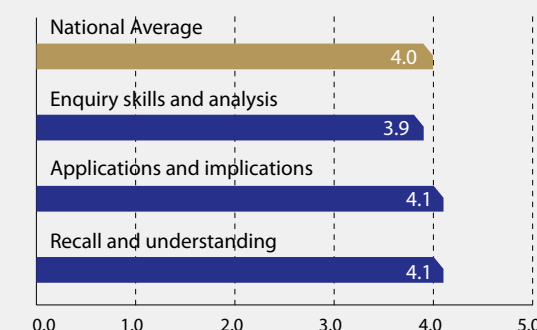
PERFORMANCE BY GENDER

Girls outperformed boys in the National Examinations by a large margin at all grades and in every subject. The differences in performance for 2009 and 2010 can be seen in the data presented in table 8 and in Figures 34 to 37 below. Both the table and figures show that the mean performance for girls is higher than the mean performance for boys. A close observation of Figure 34 indicates that overall the gender gap decreased in 2010. This could be due to a number of reasons, such as male students starting to take the test seriously or the teachers in the male students' schools taking the tests seriously and preparing their students.

FIGURE 34:
PERFORMANCE SCORE DIFFERENCES IN
GENDER 2009 TO 2010

Boys/girls performance score difference 2009

Boys/girls performance score difference 2010

FIGURE 35:
PERFORMANCE BY GENDER,
GRADE 3 2009 AND 2010

TABLE 8:
GENDER DIFFERENCES IN MEAN
PERFORMANCE SCORES, 2009 & 2010

Grade	Subject	Mean performance scores				Difference between boys and girls	
		for girls		for boys			
		2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
3	Arabic	4.56	4.45	3.33	3.57	1.23	0.88
	Mathematics	4.33	4.74	3.50	4.25	0.83	0.49
6	Arabic	4.79	4.68	3.02	3.16	1.77	1.52
	Mathematics	4.31	4.37	2.87	3.09	1.44	1.28
	English	4.13	4.44	3.56	3.67	0.57	0.77
	Science	4.30	4.41	3.56	3.81	0.74	0.60
9	Arabic	-	4.61	-	3.41	-	1.20
	Mathematics	-	4.33	-	3.51	-	0.82
	English	-	4.17	-	3.83	-	0.34
	Science	-	4.32	-	3.83	-	0.49

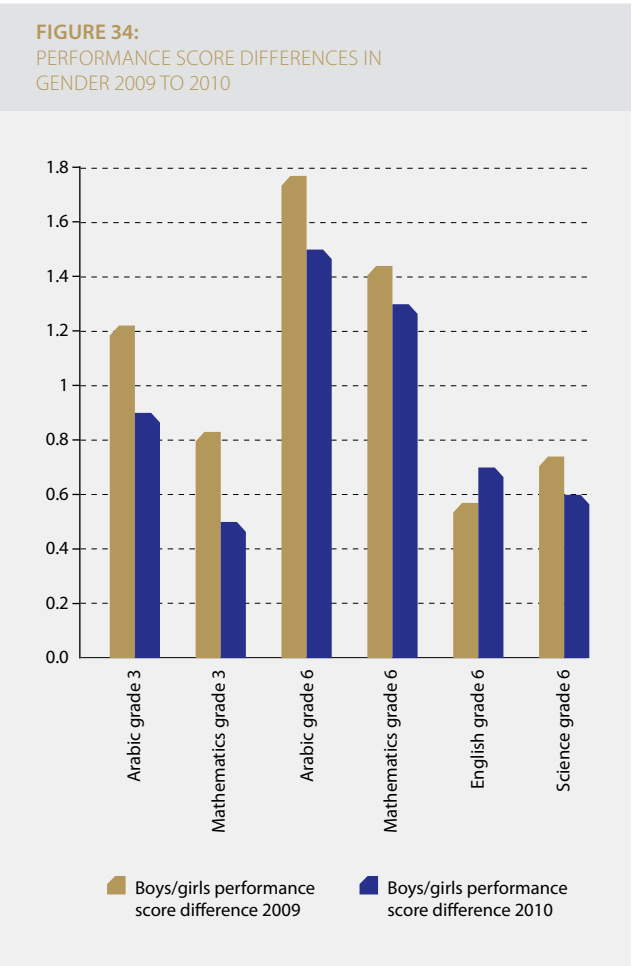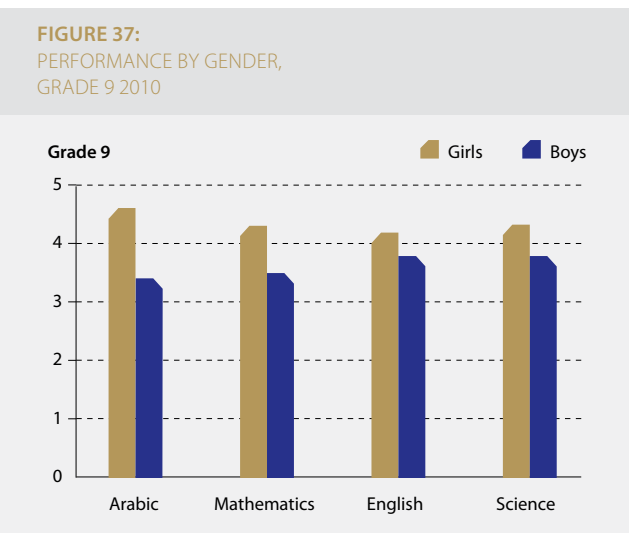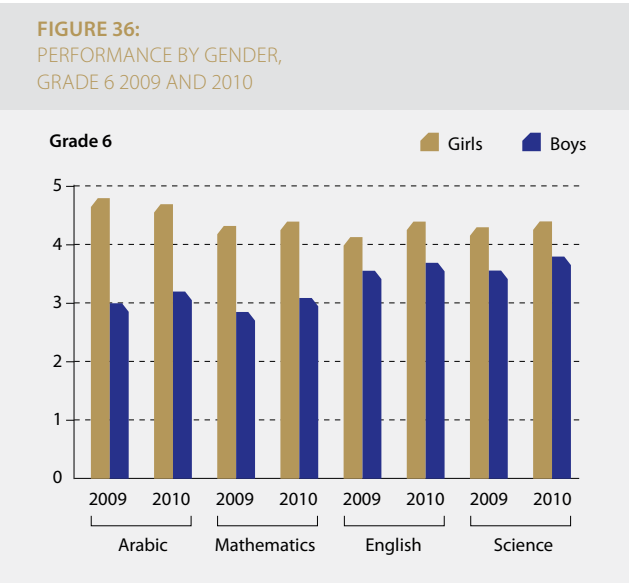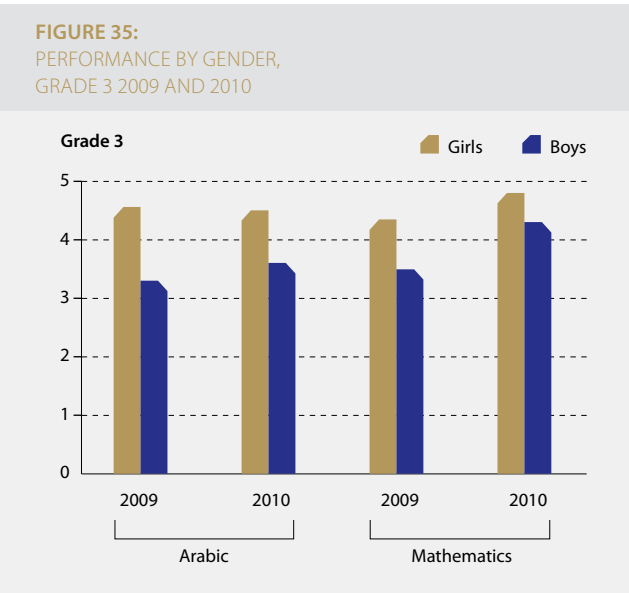**FIGURE 36:**
PERFORMANCE BY GENDER,
GRADE 6 2009 AND 2010

FIGURE 37:
PERFORMANCE BY GENDER,
GRADE 9 2010

The 2010 performance of boys and girls on individual items has been examined from graphs of facility for girls against facility for boys. These show that the better performance of girls cannot be attributed to particular groups of questions. Girls outperformed boys on all questions in Grade 3 Arabic and Mathematics. Similarly, in Grade 6, girls outperformed boys in Arabic, Mathematics, Science and English. In Grade 9, girls outperformed boys on all questions in Arabic and Mathematics. However in Science and English, boys and girls outperformed each other on some questions and also both boys and girls found some questions to be equally difficult. In general, girls have performed better across all subjects. The differences are not, in other words, caused by a subset of questions in each examination that favour girls over boys.

The reasons for these substantial differences in performance cannot be determined from examination data alone. There is a need for further investigation and research in this area. However, possible reasons could include differences in: resources (including class sizes, space, and materials such as books); pedagogy; classroom discipline; the qualifications or competence of teachers; culture between male and female attitudes to learning; or motivation during the administration of the examination.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Compared to 2009, the 2010 National Examinations showed a slight improvement in performance by Grade 3 and 6 students with the exception of Grade 6 Arabic. The performance by Grade 9 students provides a benchmark from which future trends in performance can be compared. Nevertheless, a small number of issues can already be identified:

- The examinations show good levels of reliability at both Grades and in all subjects.
- Students found the examinations challenging and their raw marks are low as a proportion of the total available marks. This is particularly pronounced in Grade 6 and 9 Mathematics and Grade 9 English, where it seems at this stage that the National Curriculum is either mismatched to the abilities of the students or is different from what is taught in schools. This is worthy of discussion and investigation.
- There is a difference between the performance of boys and girls, with girls outperforming boys by a very large margin. However, for Grade 3 and 6, the gap between boys and girls in 2010 is smaller than the gap between boys and girls in 2009. And while boys increased their

performance in all Grade 3 and 6 subjects from 2009 to 2010, girls increased their performance in almost all subjects, but not in Arabic in either Grade 3 or 6. For Grade 9, girls outperformed boys in all subjects with the largest difference in Arabic.

- The general comments on the performance scores in relation to Topics and Skills represent an exploratory scrutiny of the data, and may be used as the basis for further investigation.

INTRODUCTION

The Vocational Review Unit (VRU) conducted phases three and four of its first cycle of reviews between September 2009 and June 2010, reviewing a total of 33 training providers. Of these, 21 were licensed or regulated by the Ministry of Labour (MoL) and twelve by the Ministry of Education (MoE). The VRU had previously completed reviews of 20 providers, all of whom were licensed by the MoL, beginning in September 2008. The results of these first reviews were reported in the first annual report. By the end of the 2009-2010 academic year, the VRU has completed reviews of a total of 53 providers, 41 licensed or regulated by the MoL and twelve by the MoE. In addition to the above, the VRU conducted reviews of four technical schools jointly with the Schools Review Unit (SRU). The outcomes of these schools are that three were judged to be 'below satisfactory' for overall effectiveness and one 'satisfactory'. The results of the reviews of the training providers conducted in 2009-2010, and a summary of the total number of reviews conducted so far in this first cycle, are detailed below.

Reviews are based on the VRU's Review Framework and are carried out on providers' premises by teams of carefully selected and trained reviewers. In making judgements about the quality of an institution's provision, reviewers examine a wide range of review evidence. This includes an analysis of the provider's self-evaluation documents and other relevant management information, data on learners' achievement, observations of training sessions and interviews with staff, learners, employers and parents who use the training provider.

The review team judges the effectiveness of particular aspects of an organisation's provision in the following five areas: learners' achievement, the effectiveness of teaching and training, the range of programmes offered, the quality of support and guidance for learners, and the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the organisation. The review team also makes two summary judgements; one on the provider's overall effectiveness and the other on its capacity to improve.

The outcomes of the five main questions and the two summary judgements are graded according to the following five point scale:

Outstanding 1
Good 2
Satisfactory 3
Below Satisfactory 4
Very Weak 5

The size of providers licensed by the two ministries varies from those with just a handful of learners each year to those with several thousand enrolled annually. The vast majority of learners attending courses and training programmes offered by MoL providers are from the private sector, having been sponsored by their employers. Providers licensed by the MoE offer mainly tutorial or revision classes to learners in full-time education or language classes, usually in English.

Figures 38a and 38b give a breakdown of the proportion of small, medium and large providers based on the approximate annual enrolment of learners:

Large provider   : usually more than 1000 enrolments
Medium provider   : usually between 500 & 1000
                                enrolments
Small provider   : usually less than 500 enrolments.

As Figures 38a and 38b show both MoL and MoE providers vary in size with the majority of vocational training providers deemed to be 'small' having less than 500 annual enrolments.

FIGURE 38A:
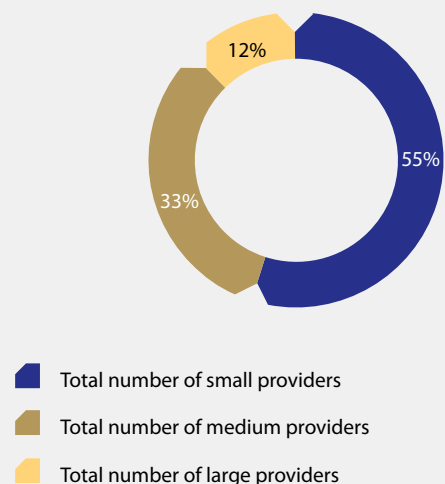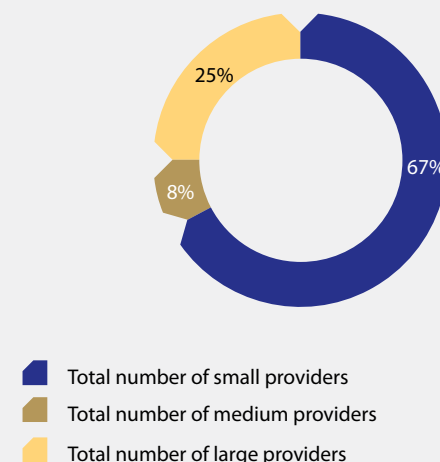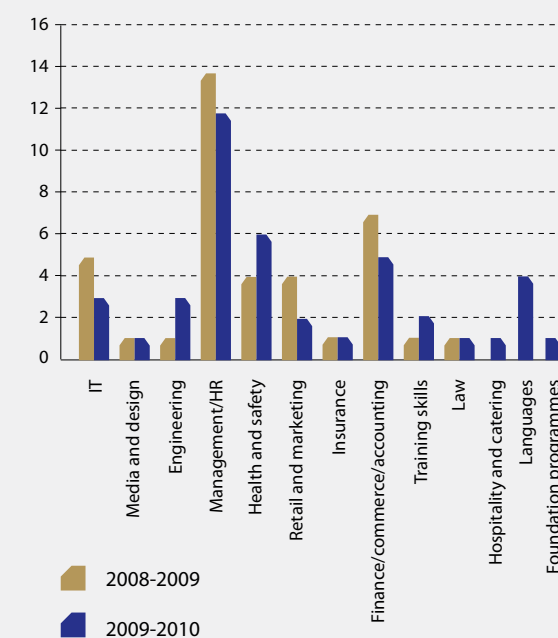SIZE OF PROVIDERS LICENSED OR
REGULATED BY THE MoL

12%

55%

33%

■ Total number of small providers

■ Total number of medium providers

■ Total number of large providers

FIGURE 38B:
SIZE OF PROVIDERS LICENSED
BY THE MoE

25%

8%

67%

■ Total number of small providers

■ Total number of medium providers

■ Total number of large providers

Providers licensed or regulated by the MoL cover a range of vocational areas as shown in Figure 39, the most popular being management, health and safety and finance and related areas. The 20 providers reviewed in 2008-2009 covered ten areas of learning. Those reviewed in 2009-2010 showed a wider range of vocational areas with the 21 MoL providers reviewed covering 13 areas of learning.

FIGURE 39:
NUMBER OF VOCATIONAL AREAS
OFFERED BY MoL PROVIDERS

16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0

IT
Media and design
Engineering
Management/HR
Health and safety
Retail and marketing
Insurance
Finance/commerce/accounting
Training skills
Law
Hospitality and catering
Languages
Foundation programmes

■ 2008-2009

■ 2009-2010

MoL providers offer a range of accredited and non-accredited provision. Of the 41 reviewed thus far, three-quarters offer some externally accredited courses. Hence learners' achievements on these courses are subject to some form of independent, externally assured assessment. These courses are invariably accredited with bodies based outside of Bahrain. As with the findings from the 2008-2009 reviews, the vast majority of courses offered by these providers are of short duration, lasting five days or less. Due to the nature of the provision, courses offered by institutions licensed by the MoE tend to be non-accredited, attendance-based programmes with minimal formal assessment procedures in place to measure the impact of the provision on learners' achievement or progress. In both types of providers, there remains a predominance of these non-accredited, internally certificated courses, where learners' attendance record continues to be the main measure of achievement.

PROVIDERS' OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

The most important review judgement is that of providers' overall effectiveness, which summarises the quality of each institution's provision. The review team use the judgements made for the five main questions as the basis for this overall judgement. They focus on how these specific outcomes impact on each other, in particular how leadership and management of the institution plans, organises and evaluates the quality of its teaching and training, its programmes, and the care and support it offers learners in order to promote their achievement.

Approximately two thirds of MoL providers reviewed between 2008-2010 have been judged to have 'satisfactory' or better overall effectiveness; the remainder were judged to be inadequate (either 'below satisfactory' or 'very weak') as can be seen from Figure 41. So far, no provider has been awarded 'outstanding' for overall effectiveness. Two, one licensed by the MoL and one by the MoE, have been judged 'very weak'. However, the picture shown in Figure 40 indicates that 2009-2010 saw an improvement in this summary judgement compared to the previous year for these providers with just over a quarter deemed inadequate, compared to just under a half in the first year, and a slight but positive increase in the number judged to be 'good' from two to three. One of the reasons for this improvement could be an increasing awareness among providers of the quality assurance process and review procedures.

Of the twelve providers licensed by the MoE reviewed in 2009-2010, one was judged to have 'good' overall effectiveness and five 'satisfactory' with the remaining six deemed inadequate (Figure 42). Providers judged to be 'good' overall tend to have: a management team which knows the institution's strengths and weaknesses well; some procedures in place for evaluating the quality

of teaching; programmes which meet the needs of employers; and an effective range of learner support mechanisms in place. They are also likely to offer a mixture of externally and internally accredited courses as well as having some systems in place for recording and measuring learner achievement.

FIGURE 40:
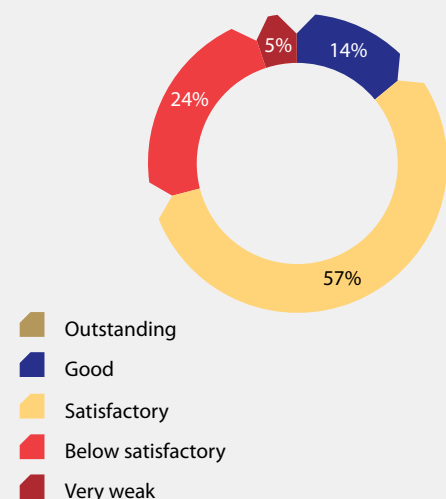ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS - MoL - 2009 -2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak

FIGURE 41:
CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS - MoL 2008-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
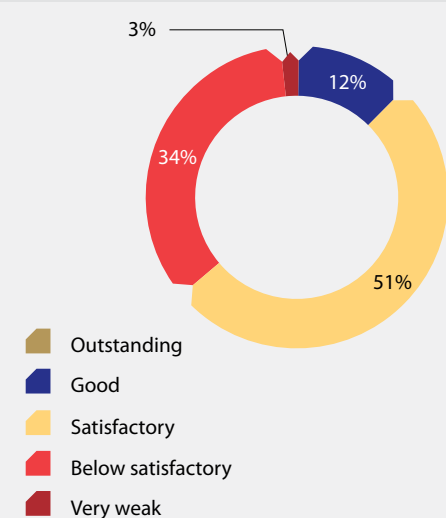
FIGURE 42:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS - MoE 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
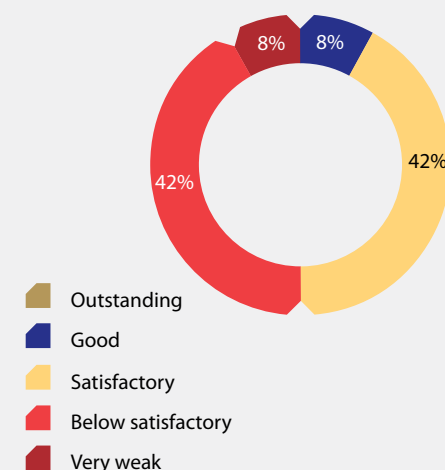
PROVIDERS' CAPACITY TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THEIR TRAINING

This is the second overall judgement made at the end of a review. It focuses on the impact of a provider's strategic planning and the history of improvements in its quality of provision. There is a particular emphasis in making this judgement on how effective the institution has been in raising learners' achievement and improving course retention rates and whether they have the resources and appropriate planning in place to continue to do so.

In the 2009-2010 reviews, nearly half (nine) MoL providers were judged to have 'good' capacity to improve with just four judged 'inadequate' for this main question (Figure 43). Overall in this cycle, approximately three quarters of these providers have at least satisfactory capacity to improve (Figure 44) compared with 50% (six out of twelve) of the first group of MoE licensed providers judged to be at least satisfactory for this outcome (Figure 45).

Those providers who had good capacity to improve invariably knew their strengths and weaknesses well and had undertaken appropriate self-analysis to determine where best to focus their efforts and resources. Strategic planning documents are clear, appropriately focused on learner achievement and have relevant milestones, accountabilities and resource allocations identified in them. Where capacity to improve was judged to be less than satisfactory, a common theme was that providers simply did not have comprehensive or robust measures in place to analyse learner achievement or course outcomes to make appropriate improvements based on this analysis.

FIGURE 43:
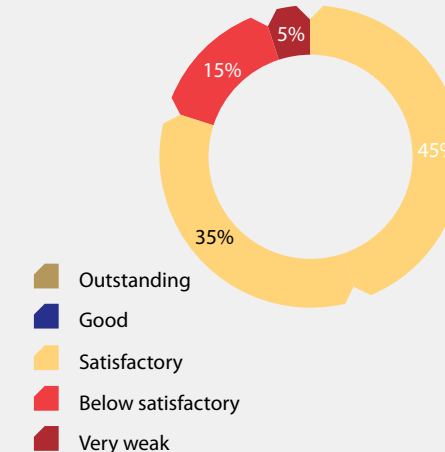ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR CAPACITY TO IMPROVE - MoL 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak

FIGURE 44:
CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR CAPACITY TO IMPROVE - MoL 2008-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
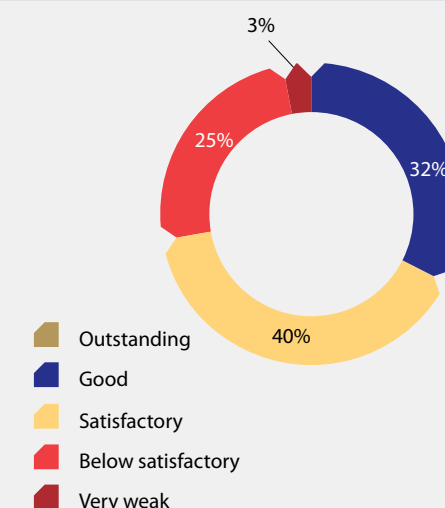
FIGURE 45:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR CAPACITY TO IMPROVE – MoE 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
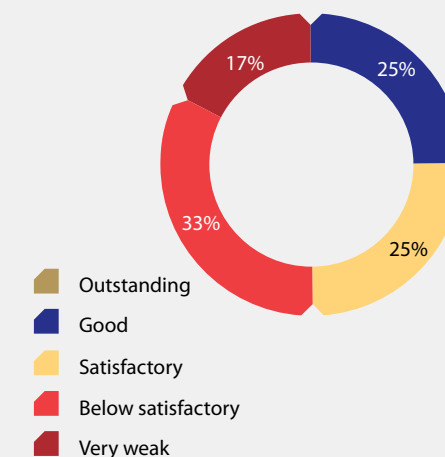
LEARNERS' ACHIEVEMENTS: MAIN QUESTION 1

This main question focuses on the extent to which learners develop appropriate, vocationally relevant skills and whether they achieve the qualifications for which they are aiming. The judgement also includes an assessment of learners' personal skills and attitudes to the programmes on which they are enrolled, for example whether they enjoy and take pride in their work, are self-motivated, can reflect critically on their studies, and are able to work collaboratively with colleagues. A key indicator of these personal skills' outcomes is whether learners attend regularly and punctually. Unfortunately instances of poor attendance and punctuality continue to be found in almost all reviews undertaken. Additionally for this main question, providers are judged on how well they assess the standards achieved by learners on all their courses and whether learners have made sufficient progress given their starting points. In order to do this, providers are expected to have undertaken some form of initial assessment of learners, a practice undertaken only by the most effective institutions, invariably those judged to be 'good' for this main question and 'good' overall.

As can be noted from Figures 46, 47 and 48 below, a significant number of providers were not graded for this main question, with review teams having insufficient recorded evidence to make a judgement. However, this occurred just twice in 2009-2010 reviews for MoL providers. Unfortunately, assessment of the achievement and progress of learners on internally designed and accredited courses, particularly those of short duration, continues to be a weak feature of most providers, even the more effective ones. The awarding of a certificate based solely on attendance continues to be the main, often only, success criteria used for these courses.

Of the 20 MoL judgements made on learners' achievement for 2009-2010, 16 were judged to be 'satisfactory' or better (Figure 46). Nonetheless, the outcomes for this main question remains, not unsurprisingly with the outcomes for teaching and training, the weakest in terms of being awarded the higher grades. Just eight providers in total so far reviewed have been graded 'good', seven MoL (18% in Figure 47) and one MoE (Figure 48), and none 'outstanding'. However, the reality of learner progress and achievement on non-accredited courses may be more positive. Without providers themselves routinely collecting, synthesising and analysing relevant learner data they are unlikely to be able to demonstrate good or better learner achievement on these courses. Where courses are externally accredited and assessed, providers are able to evaluate the performance of learners with national or international figures and set appropriate benchmarks for the institution. Learners on these industry-relevant, externally accredited courses achieve well and in some instances, for example in Banking, Finance and Personnel Management, commendable pass rates of over 80% were achieved in some institutions, which is comparable or better than some international rates. Overall, learners on

these courses are developing useful vocational skills that they can implement in the workplace. There continues to be evidence that learners benefit from courses through promotion at work. Measuring the impact of tutorial and revision courses run by MoE providers for young learners in full-time education continues to be difficult, as identifying the precise 'value-added' contribution attributable to the provider, rather than the learner's own study or their school, is rarely undertaken by these institutions.

FIGURE 46:
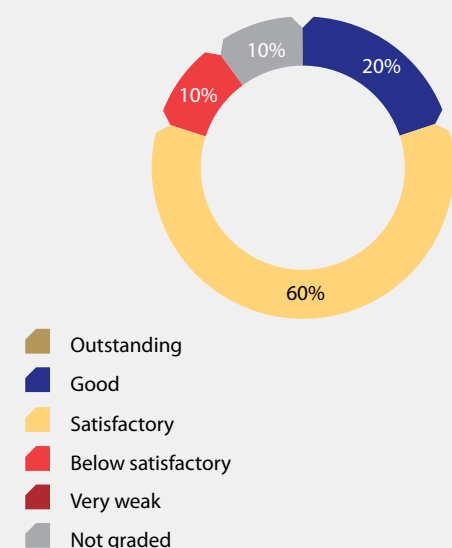ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR
ACHIEVEMENT - MoL 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
- Not graded

FIGURE 47:
CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED
FOR ACHIEVEMENT - MoL 2008-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
- Not graded
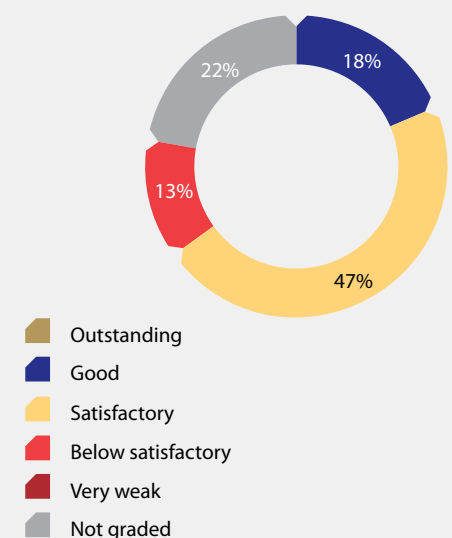
FIGURE 48:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR
ACHIEVEMENT – MoE 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
- Not graded
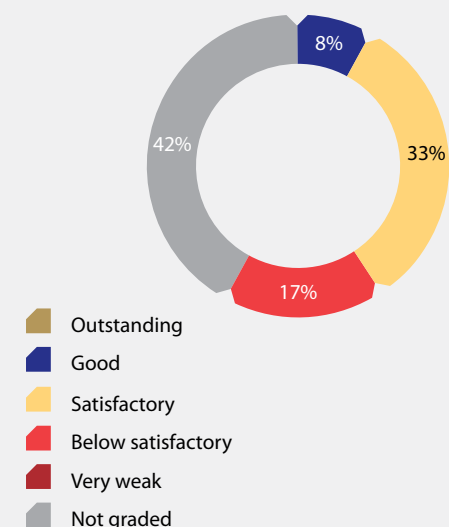
EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHING AND TRAINING: MAIN QUESTION 2

This main question focuses on how well lessons and training sessions are prepared and delivered and whether learners are developing skills and receiving instruction that is vocationally relevant and a reflection of current industry standards. In coming to a judgement on this question, reviewers observe lessons or training sessions, hold discussions with learners and examine samples of learners' work. For MoL providers in 2009-2010, 80% were judged to have at least 'satisfactory' outcomes for this question (Figure 49), a similar picture for all MoL providers reviewed so far (Figure 50). The spread of grades for MoE providers was much narrower, two-thirds being judged no better than 'satisfactory' (Figure 51).

Reviewers pay particular attention to the quality of lesson planning and whether teachers or trainers have clear lesson objectives that are communicated to, and understood by, learners. Furthermore, attention is given to the way that they plan a range of activities, resources and delivery strategies to cater effectively for learners of different abilities. Unfortunately, in the majority of lessons observed by reviewers, teachers and trainers continue to show little awareness of the importance of this differentiated planning and delivery of lessons and rarely assess learners' prior knowledge and understanding or build into their lessons assessment opportunities to measure the progress of learners. Teachers and trainers do not always provide meaningful and effective feedback to learners or adjust their teaching accordingly. Reviewers also make an assessment about the relevance and currency of teachers' and trainers' experience and whether they have an effective command of their vocational specialisms. However, it is pleasing to

report that in most cases, teachers and trainers were found to be appropriately qualified to deliver the stated courses.

The most effective teachers or trainers are those who set and explain clear lesson objectives, use a range of delivery methods including group work, role plays, practical exercises and activities, and use open and directed questioning to assess effectively learners' understanding and progress. Assessment outcomes are then used well to inform lesson planning and to cater for individual learners' needs, including providing effective support for less able learners whilst stretching and challenging the more able. Unfortunately some teachers and trainers deliver lessons which are poorly planned, do not engage learners' interest and provide few opportunities for learners to participate in, and contribute to, their own learning.

FIGURE 49:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR
TEACHING AND TRAINING - MoL 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
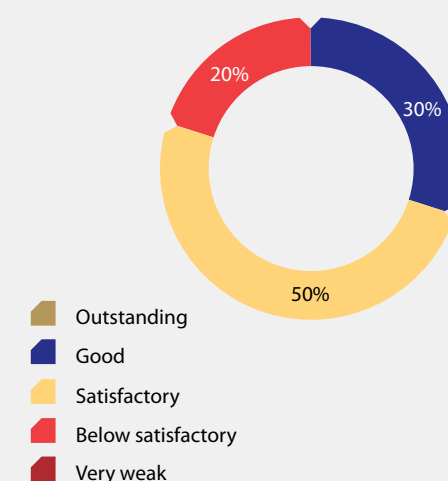
FIGURE 50:
CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR
TEACHING AND TRAINING - MoL 2008-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
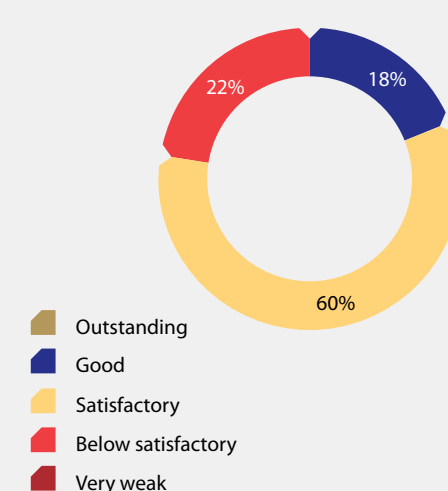
FIGURE 51:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR
TEACHING AND TRAINING – MoE 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
- Not graded
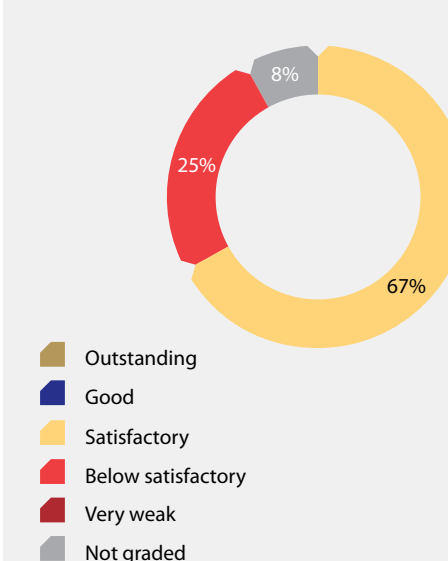
THE EXTENT TO WHICH PROGRAMMES MEET THE NEEDS OF LEARNERS AND EMPLOYERS: MAIN QUESTION 3

The main criteria for judging the review outcome for this main question include how well programmes offered by providers match both employers' and learners' needs. Providers are expected to have undertaken an analysis of labour market needs, including where specific skills gaps exist in the Bahraini workforce, and that this information has then been used to inform provision. As can be seen from Figures 52, 53 and 54, the majority of providers licensed by both the MoL and MoE provide at least a 'satisfactory' range of programmes. The most effective MoL providers undertake appropriate market research to design and deliver bespoke employer-specific programmes, which tackle particular skills gaps or enhance employee productivity. One MoL provider was assessed as providing an 'outstanding' range of both externally and internally accredited courses in 2009-2010 (Figure 52). These were assessed as being vocationally relevant to learners and internationally recognised as appropriate industry-specific programmes which enhanced employees' continuing professional development.

Reviewers also consider the extent to which providers offer opportunities for learners to engage in enrichment activities and work experience outside their main programme of study. Providers judged to be 'good' for this main question usually provide an extensive range of additional resources and experiences for learners including support workshops, access to research materials and the internet, visits from guest speakers, and workplace visits. Providers judged 'below satisfactory' or 'very weak' invariably rely solely on a course manual, which is sometimes poorly designed and produced, offer courses which are not well matched to employers' and learners' needs (usually because no market

research has been undertaken) and do not provide relevant progression routes for learners. Nonetheless, as can be seen from the figures below, providers scored relatively well overall on this particular judgement across the five main review questions.

FIGURE 52:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR QUALITY OF PROGRAMMES – MoL 2009-2010

35%
50%
10%
5%

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak

FIGURE 53:
CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR QUALITY OF PROGRAMMES – MoL 2008-2010

3%
27%
55%
15%

- Outstanding
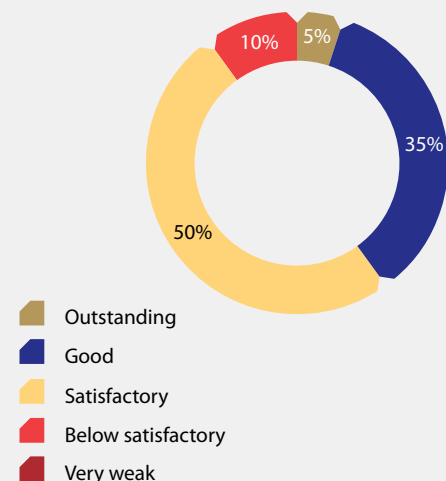- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
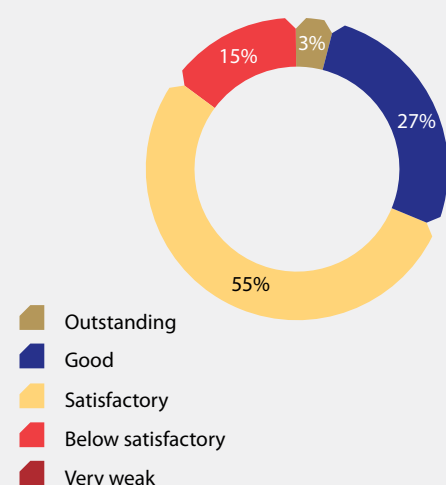
FIGURE 54:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR QUALITY OF PROGRAMMES - MoE 2009 - 2010

8% 8%
84%

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
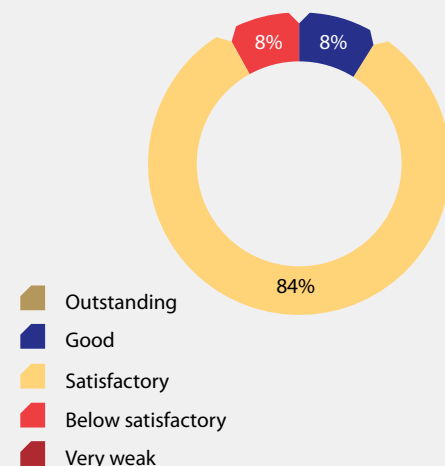
LEARNERS' SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE: MAIN QUESTION 4

The fourth main question focuses on the effectiveness of support and guidance offered to learners to help them make progress with their learning and achieve well. Reviewers make judgements about the quality of advice and guidance provided for learners on the programmes offered by institutions and, where relevant, on opportunities for career progression and further professional development. Where support and guidance is of a good quality, providers are aware of individual learners' needs and provide relevant, individualised advice that promotes learners' confidence and ultimately their success on the programmes offered.

As noted from Figures 55 and 56 below, the vast majority of MoL providers continue to offer at least satisfactory support and guidance for learners. Support and guidance offered by the twelve MoE providers is more variable (Figure 57), with four of the twelve reviewed judged to be 'inadequate' for this main question. In these instances, learners are usually offered little additional support outside the main tutorial sessions with minimal guidance provided on programme choices or future opportunities for study and personal development. However, review teams noted that all providers invariably had some approachable and committed members of staff who were prepared to provide some form of individualised support and encouragement to learners when requested. The very best practice was observed in the larger MoL institutions where learning environments were usually pleasant, fit for purpose, and equipped with appropriate resources such as computer laboratories, well-stocked resource centres, and facilities for workplace simulations.

One significant aspect of this main question that review teams consider is whether institutions provide a safe and

healthy environment to ensure the well-being of learners. This remains a significant issue for the majority of providers, hence the relatively few institutions, just ten out of a total of 52 judgements, that have been graded 'good' since the beginning of the review process in 2008. Issues raised by the review teams have included a lack of formal risk assessment procedures, evacuation plans not being in place or practiced and evaluated, a lack of awareness of health and safety issues among staff and learners, and equipment inappropriately stored and infrequently checked.

FIGURE 55:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR LEARNERS' SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE - MoL 2009-2010

10%
25%
65%

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
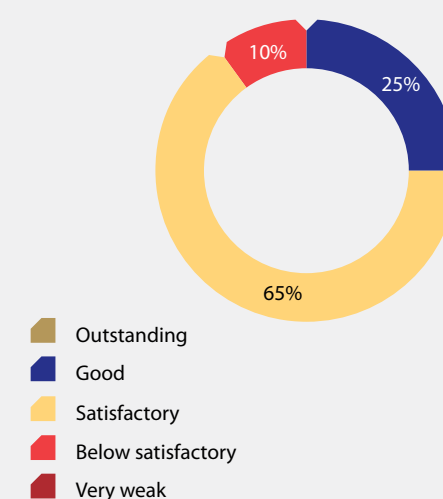
FIGURE 56:
CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR LEARNERS' SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE - MoL 2008-2010

10%
20%
70%

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
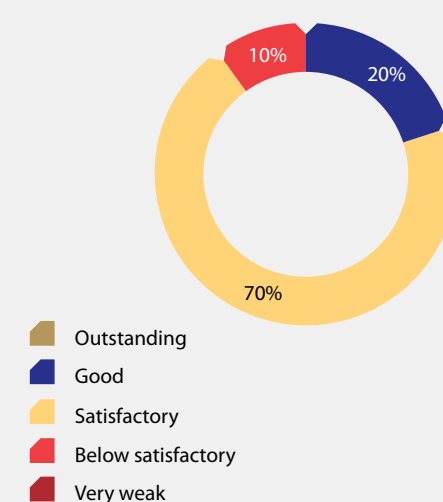
FIGURE 57:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR LEARNERS' SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE - MoE 2009-2010

8% 17%
25%
50%

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
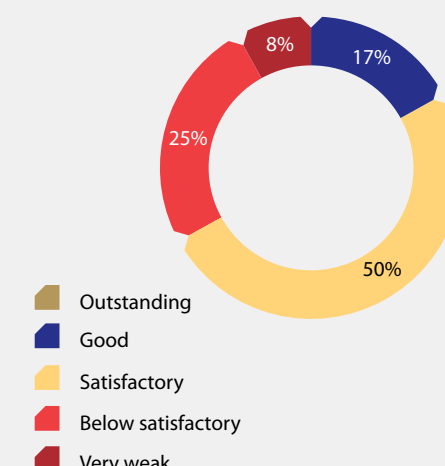
EFFECTIVENESS OF LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN RAISING ACHIEVEMENT AND SUPPORTING ALL LEARNERS: MAIN QUESTION 5

The quality of leadership and management in planning, organising, delivering and reviewing teaching, programmes and learner support, the key inputs which impact on learner achievement, provides the focus for this main question. In particular, review teams consider the clarity and relevance of a provider's vision and mission statements and whether these show a clear commitment to improvements in its provision and that it is appropriately focused on learner achievement. Providers are expected to record, monitor and analyse learner achievement in a systematic and rigorous way on all their courses. Whilst the most effective providers generally do this for externally accredited courses, where assessment systems and learner outcomes are well-documented, there is little evidence of providers doing this for internally accredited, unmoderated courses.

About two thirds of MoL providers reviewed in 2009-2010 were judged to be at least 'satisfactory' for leadership and management (Figure 58), unsurprisingly, a similar profile for capacity to improve. However, only one third (four out of twelve) of the MoE providers reviewed were judged 'satisfactory' or better for this outcome (Figure 60). It cannot be stressed enough that the key to improvements in providers' overall effectiveness, in particular the major contribution that the 'achievement' judgement makes to this outcome, lies in improvements in the quality and impact of leadership and management. This was clearly evident in the improvements seen in the four providers who were subject to a repeat review during this second year (see below).

FIGURE 58:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR LEADERSHIP
AND MANAGEMENT – MoL 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
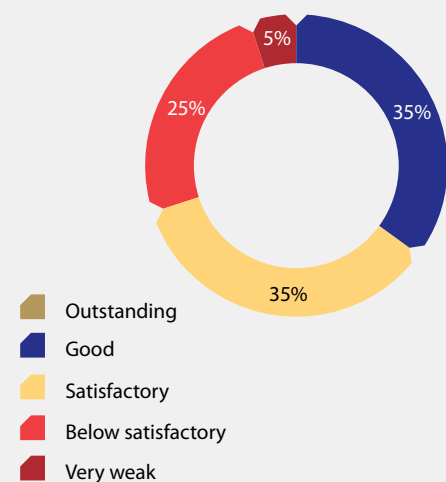
FIGURE 60:
ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR LEADERSHIP
AND MANAGEMENT – MoE 2009-2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
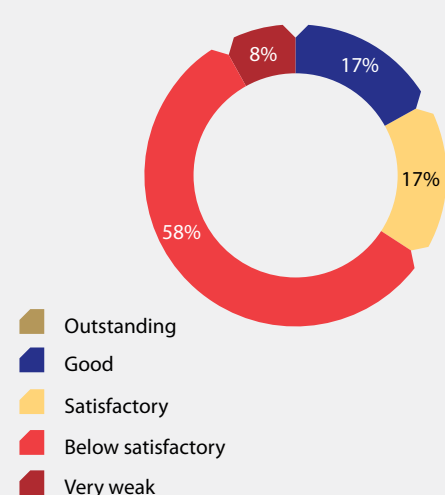
FIGURE 59:
CUMULATIVE ANALYSIS OF GRADES AWARDED FOR
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT - MoL 2008 -2010

- Outstanding
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Below satisfactory
- Very weak
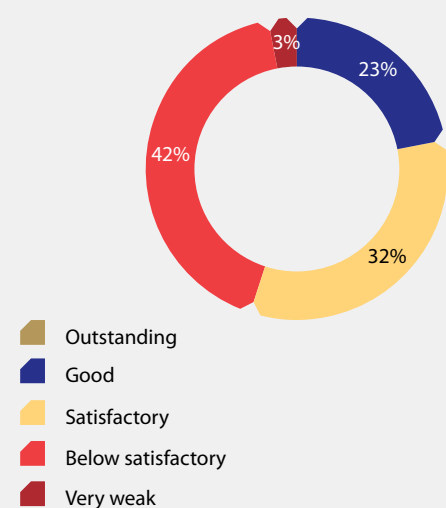
The foundation for improvements in this judgement is in improving the rigour, relevance and accuracy of the institution's self-evaluation of its provision. As part of the review process, providers are required to assess the quality of their provision, using the same framework and criteria as the review team, and submit this in the form of a self-evaluation form (SEF) listing strengths, areas for improvement and their estimated grades for each main question, for overall effectiveness and capacity to improve. Unfortunately, all providers have shown to be far too generous with their awarding of grades, virtually all being at least one grade higher than the review outcomes for each judgement. In a few cases grades have been awarded which are three judgements higher than the final review grade.

However, Review Reports have documented examples of good practice in the area of leadership and management. Notwithstanding the comment above regarding self-assessment, the most effective providers have training plans for staff based on a robust analysis of needs, monitoring of teacher or trainer performance is well planned and supportive and strategic planning is collaborative, thorough and based on an assessment of the institution's strengths and weaknesses. These institutions gather, evaluate and act on the views of learners and, where relevant, the views of employers, parents and the local community.

AFTER THE REVIEW

All providers must complete an action plan based on the areas for development and the Recommendations published in the Review Report. The VRU monitors the action plans and provides relevant feedback on content, structure and coverage. This has proved to be an extremely effective means of following up the review findings and assisting providers in their continuing efforts to improve their

provision. Those providers who are judged to be 'below satisfactory' or 'very weak' overall are subject to at least two monitoring visits by the VRU to assess how effectively they are implementing the agreed action plan. In addition, these providers are subject to a repeat review, normally between twelve and eighteen months after the original review, of which four were completed in this second year of the cycle. It is pleasing to note that all of these four providers were deemed to have improved sufficiently to have their overall effectiveness judged as 'satisfactory' with none of the five main questions judged 'inadequate'. Three of the four providers were awarded 'good' for capacity to improve, with a clear focus on implementing the recommendations detailed in their action plan. The reasons for these improvements include:

- changes or improvements in the quality of leadership and management at the institutions, particularly in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and their assessment of learner progress

- providers having a clear, systematic and relevant focus on the areas for development detailed in their Review Report and highlighted in the agreed action plan

- a better understanding of the review process and the criteria on which providers are assessed.

The remaining providers judged to be 'inadequate' overall will be reviewed during 2010-2011 and reported upon in the next annual report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the review process continues and more providers are reviewed, the evidence base continues to expand and a clearer picture is emerging of the strengths and areas for development in vocational education and training in the Kingdom of Bahrain. Whilst familiarity with the review process and the requirements of the review framework is a key component of a successful review, it must be emphasised that there is nothing in the framework that does not represent or reflect best practice from either a business or education and training perspective. For example, highly effective organisations will have a continuing focus on improving provision and practices based on an accurate and systematic evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. The providers judged to be 'good' overall all have some form of evaluation process that aspires to this and are to be congratulated. However, there continues to be a mismatch among all providers between their evaluation of the seven questions which form the basis of the review process and that of review teams, with providers being far too generous in their judgements when completing their SEF.

The following is a list of areas for development and associated recommendations based on the evidence of the reviews conducted in 2009-2010 and, where relevant, which remain areas for improvement also identified in last year's report.

- As noted in the last report, all providers have something to celebrate and the majority are able to identify what appear to be relative strengths in their provision, for example in having suitably experienced and qualified teachers and trainers. However, all providers tend to over-estimate their judgements about the quality of their provision and learner outcomes. Identifying the areas of development through a critical self-evaluation process is crucial if improvements in the quality of vocational education and training are to be secured. Providers should note that it is a requirement that a completed SEF is now required annually.

- Initial assessment of learners, the consequent monitoring of their progress and the measurement and analysis of learner achievement remain key areas of development for the majority of providers, particularly small or medium sized MoL providers and those licensed by the MoE. This is, of course, a more difficult process for those learners on short courses or non-accredited, internally assessed programmes. Nonetheless, this remains an important management function if institutions are to evaluate the impact of all their provision on learners' achievement and the successful completion of intended course outcomes.

- Monitoring the quality of learning in the classroom or workshop is the most important criterion when judging the impact of teaching or training. Providers generally do not have systems that are robust, systematic or sufficiently focused enough on this aspect, or in several cases, providers simply have no monitoring systems in place at all. This is particularly important because the majority of providers utilise the services of part-time trainers or teachers who often work on an hourly basis and are not adequately involved in the provider's self-evaluation and planning for quality improvement. In addition, planning for the different needs of learners, where these have been identified through an appropriate initial assessment process, also remains a key area for improving the quality of learning.

- Most, but not all, providers conduct some form of market analysis to ensure the courses, qualifications and programmes they are offering meet the needs of the labour market, in particular identifying where skills' gaps exist. This also is integral to improving the quality and skills of the Bahraini workforce. The most effective providers work closely with employers to ensure they are meeting their needs and offer a range of bespoke or customised courses as well as industry-relevant programmes and qualifications. This example of good practice should be the norm among all providers.

- Some providers do not pay sufficient attention to health and safety issues, particularly in having regular, systematic and appropriately reviewed emergency evacuation drills as well as having comprehensive,

institution-wide risk assessment procedures. Providers often fail to inform learners of the appropriate safety measures, for example as part of a formal induction programme.

- For MoE licensed providers, who offer mainly tutorial, revision or language classes, most of the above analysis also applies. However, there are particular issues that apply to these providers. These include: having a more systematic and robust process for measuring the specific impact their classes have on learner progress and achievement; using a wider range of resources and delivery methods in classes; and making greater use of IT to support learners.

- Internally accredited and assessed courses will always have a role to play in the development of Bahrain's workforce, particularly in developing management and personal or 'soft' skills and in the use of IT. However, significant improvements in the skills and knowledge of the Kingdom's workforce can only be achieved through a greater proportion of courses being externally accredited and assessed where international comparisons and appropriate benchmarking of learner performance can be utilised.

HIGHER EDUCATION REVIEW UNIT

INTRODUCTION

In the 2009-2010 academic year, the Higher Education Review Unit (HERU), continued with its first cycle of institutional reviews; completed the reviews of the programmes in the field of Bachelor of Business Administration and started with the reviews of the Bachelor of Law programmes, which are being offered by higher education institutions in Bahrain; and continued with its programme of building institutional capacity across the higher education sector.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS

In addition to the seven institutional reviews that took place in the 2008-2009 academic year, another five were conducted during 2009-2010. This means that all twelve private higher education institutions operating in the Kingdom have been reviewed. Of the five that were conducted in 2009-2010, five reports have been approved and published, and during this period one report from the previous academic year was approved and published. Hence to date, twelve institutional Review Reports have been published. The first cycle will end during the 2011 academic year with the reviews of the publicly funded institutions.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS 2009-2010

Of the six published institutional Review Reports in 2009-2010, one institution (AMA International University) received no Commendations. (A Commendation means that there is demonstrated and significant good practice). Five institutions received a Commendation for the commitment and accessibility of academic staff members (Ahlia University, Applied Science University, University College of Bahrain, Kingdom University and Gulf University). One received a second Commendation for providing an effective academic advisory service for students (Kingdom University). Another (University College of Bahrain) received a second Commendation for its responsiveness to its community through providing bursaries and so providing access to higher education as well as providing scholarships for meritorious students. Ahlia University received nine commendations that include areas such as strategic planning, teaching and assessment and high level Information Technology Services.

An Affirmation is given in the Review Report where the institution has identified an area in need of attention and can provide the Panel of international and regional experts with evidence that this area has already begun to be addressed. One institution received seven. These were given in areas that included: benchmarking; consultation with employers and alumni on programmes meeting labour market needs; the development of Intended Learning Outcomes; the development of a staff performance management system; and the expansion of its information system. In another

institution, four Affirmations were received, which included improvements being made in implementing an effective management information system; the appointment of more highly qualified staff and increasing the number of support staff; the implementation of professional development programmes; and the development of an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plan, policies and procedures. Another institution received two Affirmations. These centred on increasing the number of academics holding doctoral degrees and its efforts in forming collaborations with international universities. Yet another institution received three Affirmations, which were to do with plans being developed and in the early stages of implementation of the redesign of an English language test and a management information system. The third was concerned with the support provided for researchers to participate in conferences. One institution did not receive any Affirmations. This means that neither during carrying out its normal operations nor during its self-evaluation process, was it able to reflect critically on its governance and management practices nor its academic provision and identify gaps or areas of weaknesses in need of improvement.

A Recommendation is given where important areas are identified as in need of improvement. When it comes to reporting on the Recommendations received, the first point that needs to be noted is that the number of Recommendations given in a Review Report cannot be seen as a straightforward matter of quantification with regards to the quality of the institution. Some Recommendations are more serious in nature than others. Nevertheless, the Recommendations made in the five of the six institutions under consideration are in the 34 to 47 range, which is in the upper percentile of the range and more importantly, a considerable number are fundamental in nature. They are distributed throughout all nine Themes and 25 Indicators against which they were measured. Thus all five institutions have serious issues concerning governance and management as well as the quality of provision. A considerable amount of development work needs to take place in order to bring about substantial improvement in the quality of these institutions. More specifically of the six institutions as shown in Table 9 below, one institution did not receive any Commendations or Affirmations but received 47 Recommendations. Another two institutions each received one Commendation with one receiving three Affirmations and 36 Recommendations whilst the other received four Affirmations and 40 Recommendations. Two institutions received two Commendations, with one receiving seven Affirmations and 34 Recommendations whilst the other received two and 41 respectively. One institution received nine Commendations, twelve Affirmations, and 24 Recommendations.

As in last year's Annual Report on the findings of institutional reviews, issues that were typically found to be in need of improvement can be clustered into five broad areas: (i) mission, planning and governance; (ii) quality management

TABLE 9:
NUMBER OF COMMENDATIONS, AFFIRMATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE 2009-2010 INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORTS

Institution	Commendations	Affirmations	Recommendations
Gulf University	1	4	40
Applied Science University	2	7	34
AMA International University	0	0	47
University College of Bahrain	2	2	41
Kingdom University	1	3	36
Ahlia University	9	12	24
Total	15	28	222

FIGURE 61:
NUMBER OF COMMENDATIONS, AFFIRMATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THEMES 2008-2010

- Number of Recommendations
- Number of Affirmations
- Number of Commendations

and academic standards; (iii) teaching and learning; (iv) research; and (v) community engagement. (Figure 61 shows the nine themes from which the clusters emerge.) Given that all twelve institutions reviewed are private providers and that there are broadly similar areas found in need for improvement, it is appropriate to discuss the twelve reports as a block for the two academic years; namely, 2008-2010.

CUMULATIVE FINDINGS OF THE TWO YEARS OF CONDUCTING INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS 2008-2010

If the Recommendations are aggregated across all twelve institutions in terms of the clusters identified above, and as represented in Figure 61 below on nine themes, it can be seen that institutions face a number of challenges in establishing their mission, planning and governance structures and activities to be in line with international good practice. A total of 82 Recommendations were made in this regard with only seven Commendations in this broad area. In many cases there is a disjuncture between the institution's vision and mission and its ethos and education provision. Governance and management structures are generally not clearly delineated; indeed some institutions do not have functioning Boards of Trustees. This flies in the face of good corporate governance. Executive management decision-making tends to exclude Deans, who despite being responsible for the quality of programme delivery, are not empowered to make budget and resource allocation decisions with respect to the programmes for which they are responsible. This constitutes an academic risk. Strategic planning is another area that was found to be in need of urgent attention. Whilst most institutions had drafted such plans, they were typically incomplete and did not provide information on key performance indicators; allocation of financial, physical and human resources; nor did they allocate responsibility for the achievement of the goals set. A lack of understanding of the use of appropriate
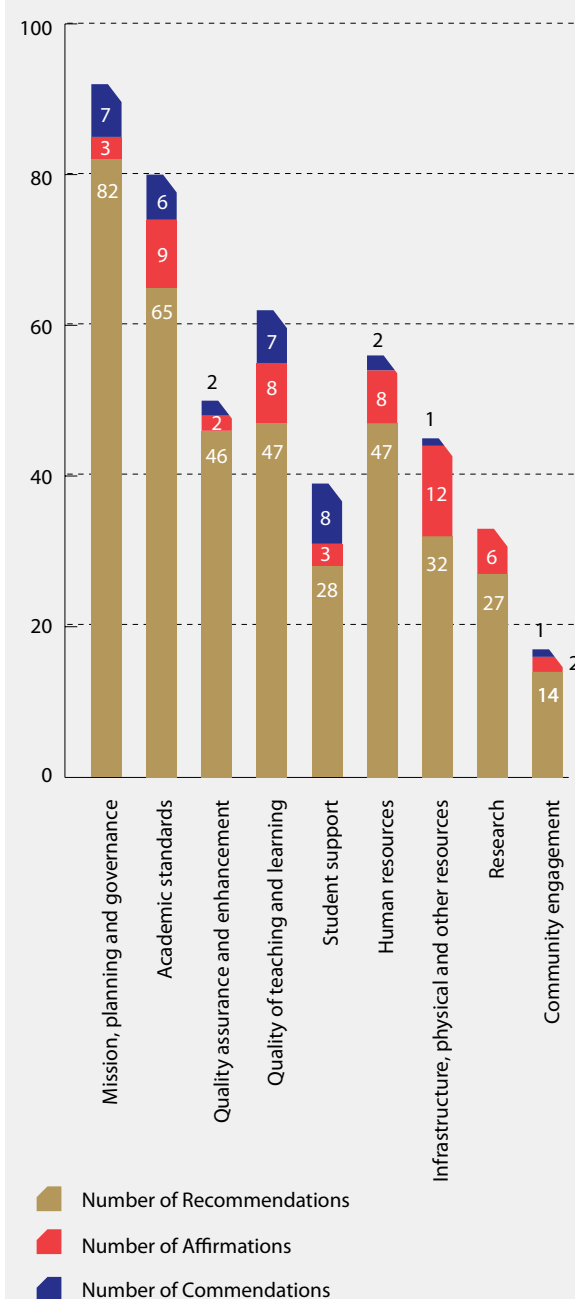
external benchmarking is another issue that needs to be addressed. Without engaging in such an exercise an institution cannot easily determine the quality of its activities in the three core functions or of its performance as a whole. This would have a strong negative impact on the academic quality of the institution.

With respect to (ii) quality management and academic standards, a total of 111 Recommendations were made and only eight Commendations. Institutions are aware of the need to have in place appropriate quality assurance

arrangements. Whilst most have established Quality Assurance Committees, these are in the early stages of their work and some have yet to establish terms of reference. While some initiatives are being undertaken to raise academic standards, there are still many areas in need of attention. These include: developing appropriate admission criteria, providing support for students who are at risk of failure; and introducing benchmarking and an external examination system. This means that a quality culture is still far from being established within the institutions.

Regarding (iii) the quality of teaching and learning, which incorporates: pedagogy, assessment, student support and human resources which are necessary to provide good quality teaching and an appropriate quality learning environment for students, 122 Recommendations were made and 17 Commendations with one institution receiving no Commendation at all. As has been noted earlier, the Commendations received are typically due to having a committed and well-qualified faculty. Major issues identified as lacking are: the development and implementation of a Teaching and Learning Strategy that includes policies and procedures that are consistently implemented and monitored across departments and colleges; the development of innovative teaching strategies and forms of assessment that ensure students acquire critical thinking and analytical skills; the development of infrastructure, in particular in the library and in Information and Communication Technology. All of these need to be in place to provide a platform for students to have a quality learning experience.

With regard to staffing and staff development, academics' workload is generally too high and sometimes was found to be outside the maximum Higher Education Council regulatory requirements. As good quality teaching is underpinned by scholarship and discipline-specific research, high workloads constitute a major academic risk to the institution. Furthermore, institutions typically lack a Human Resources Strategy that includes recruitment and retention and staff development programmes.

When the findings on (iv) and (v) research and community engagement respectively are examined, no institution received a Commendation for research and only one received a Commendation for community engagement which, as noted above, was for the awarding of scholarships to students who would otherwise not have access to higher education. These two core functions are underdeveloped. 27 Recommendations were given for research and 14 for community engagement. While research is acknowledged by all institutions as a core function that needs to be developed, few have institutional research plans and policies that will ensure that academics have the time to undertake research and are sufficiently supported in terms of resources; and none have identified niche areas appropriate to their particular context, which would assist the institutions in beginning to develop a sustainable research culture.

'Community engagement' is a term that can be broadly defined and most institutions have yet to define for themselves its meaning in the light of their vision and mission statements. Institutions have also not developed a framework for community engagement and provided adequate human and financial resources for this function. Any activities that take place tend to be *ad hoc*.

In nine of the twelve reviewed institutions, there was a serious lack of campus infrastructure and facilities, which has a deleterious effect on the quality of their educational provision. However, one institution has recently moved into a purpose built campus with good infrastructure and thereby has laid the ground to provide students with a quality teaching and learning experience. Most of the other institutions have indicated their plans to build new campuses but these are in the early stages of development and at various stages.

To conclude: while no formal summative judgements have been made in this first cycle of institutional reviews since the focus was on development and establishing a baseline of quality across all institutions against the nine themes, some tentative conclusions can be reached.

When the results shown in Figure 61 are disaggregated for each institution, they can be placed into one of three broad categories; the first being that an adequate level of achievement in terms of governance, management and teaching and learning has been reached thus far. Three institutions fit into this category; Ahlia University, Royal College of Surgeons - Medical University of Bahrain, Arab Open University-Bahrain.

Three institutions can be placed in the second category; Royal University of Women, Birla Institute of Technology, and Applied Science University. This means that they are on the right pathway; they have some good structures in place to support the quality of their provision but need more time to establish and embed their quality assurance arrangements across most of their functions.

A significant number of institutions (six) fall into the third and last category. These are: Gulf University, AMA International University, Kingdom University, Delmon University, New York Institute of Technology and University College of Bahrain. These have major fundamental shortcomings in all nine themes and when these are taken together, the institutions are very poor in terms of the quality of education provision. In order to become viable providers of quality higher education, each would need to make enormous efforts to effect a turn-around strategy as well as develop and implement interventions that would ensure the quality of their education provision.

INSTITUTIONAL IMPROVEMENT PLANS

Institutional Reviews are about accountability and are developmental in nature. The former is satisfied through the review process and the publication of Reports so that government, parents, students and other stakeholders know about the status of the quality of institutional arrangements for ensuring good higher education provision. With respect to the developmental aspect, the preparation of a critical self-evaluation portfolio forms part of an institution's self-development. In addition, in accordance with the *Institutional Review Handbook* three months after publication of the Review Reports, institutions are required to submit to the HERU an Improvement Plan which states how the institution will use the findings of the Review Report to improve and enhance the quality of its activities, both at institutional level and in the core functions of teaching and learning, research, and community engagement.

To date, the HERU has received Improvement Plans from eight institutions. These reports have been analysed within the HERU and constructive follow-up meetings have taken place with the President and senior members of each of the institutions. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure that the plans are viable and to clarify any queries that the institution may have on particular aspects of the Report with respect to their plans.

ONE YEAR FOLLOW-UP REPORT

One year after publication of its Review Report, an institution will submit to the HERU a progress report, which outlines how it has met the goals of its Improvement Plan. This includes showing how the institution has maintained or enhanced any Commendations that it received as well as the actions undertaken and progress made towards addressing the received Affirmations and Recommendations. The institution's report will be analysed by the HERU after which a site visit will be undertaken by senior members of the HERU to verify the claims made by the institution. A report will then be written and after going through the various QAAET quality procedures, it will be presented to the Board for approval *(Institutional Handbook 1.4)*. By the end of September 2010, the HERU has received two progress reports from institutions.

PROGRAMME REVIEWS

The first programme to be reviewed nationally to ascertain whether or not minimum standards are being met was in the field of Bachelor of Business Administration. Expert Panels were constituted to review the programmes. Twelve reviews of this programme were completed. Six were carried out in the 2008-2009 academic year and six in 2009-2010.

It is worth noting that all four Indicators have to be satisfied for the programme to receive a 'confidence' judgement.[3] If two or three Indicators are satisfied, the judgement would be 'limited confidence'. If none or one are satisfied, a 'no confidence' judgement is made.

The Indicators are:
- **Indicator 1 - *Curriculum.*** The programme complies with existing regulations in terms of the curriculum, the teaching and assessment of students' achievement; the curriculum demonstrates fitness for purpose.
- **Indicator 2 - *Efficiency of the programme.*** The programme is efficient in terms of the use of available resources, the admitted students and the ratio of admitted students to successful graduates.
- **Indicator 3 - *Academic standards of the graduates.*** The graduates of the programme meet acceptable standards in comparison with equivalent programmes in Bahrain and worldwide.
- **Indicator 4 - *Effectiveness of quality management and assurance.*** The arrangements in place for managing the programme including quality assurance, give confidence in the programme.[3]

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS OF PROGRAMME REVIEWS IN THE FIELD OF BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION 2009-2010

Of the six programme reviews carried out in the 2009-2010 academic year; as can be seen in Figure 62 below, two received 'confidence' judgements; two 'limited confidence'; and two 'no confidence'.

Of the two programmes which received 'limited confidence', one satisfied three of the four Indicators with Indicator 3 being unsatisfactory. The other satisfied two; with Indicators 1 and 4 being unsatisfactory. In the two programmes that received a 'no confidence' judgement, each only satisfied Indicator 2.

FIGURE 62:
2009-2010: FINDINGS OF SIX PROGRAMME REVIEWS IN THE FIELD OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AT BACHELOR LEVEL

- Confidence
- Limited confidence
- No confidence
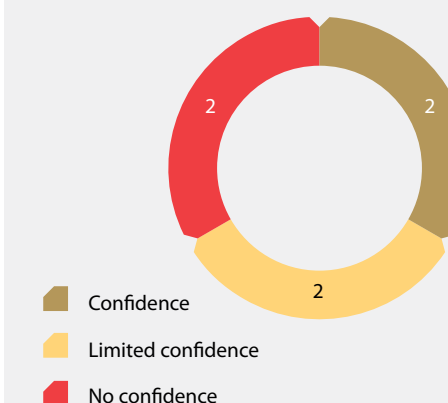
[3] See HERU's Programme Review Handbook Section 1.8 which sets out in greater detail the requirements of each indicator.

FIGURE 63:
NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES (2009/2010) THAT
SATISFIED EACH INDICATOR

- Indicator 1: Curriculum
- Indicator 2: Efficiency of the programme
- Indicator 3: Academic standards of the graduates
- Indicator 4: Effectiveness of quality management and assurance
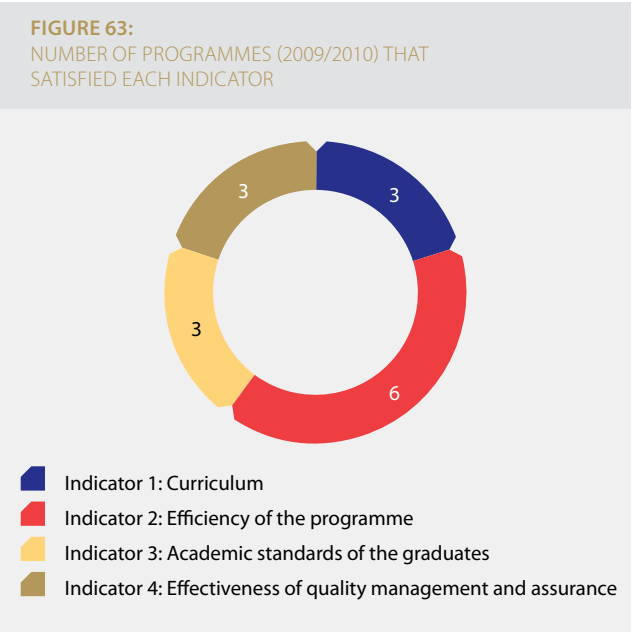
CUMULATIVE FINDINGS OF THE TWELVE PROGRAMMES REVIEWED IN THE FIELD OF BACHELOR OF BUSINESS

Of the twelve programmes reviewed, a publicly funded university offers one and the other eleven are offered by private providers. Private higher education institutions in Bahrain are not a homogenous group as shown in Figure 64 below. Some are not-for-profit; others are for-profit; some are transnational providers - campuses with parent universities in other countries; and some are an admixture of these. There are other academic arrangements for programme offerings and certification; e.g. one institution offers the programme in Bahrain but the award is given by a university outside of the country.

FIGURE 64:
12 INSTITUTIONS OFFERING PROGRAMME IN FIELD OF
BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

When all twelve programme reviews are considered together as shown in Figure 65 there was an even distribution in the judgements reached by the Expert Panels with four receiving 'confidence', four 'limited confidence', and four 'no confidence'. When the programmes and Indicators are disaggregated, four satisfied all four Indicators, hence the 'confidence' judgement. Of the four programmes that received 'limited confidence'; two satisfied three Indicators with both not satisfying Indicator 3 (i.e. Academic Standards of the Graduates), and two satisfied two Indicators with one not satisfying Indicators 1 and 4; and the other not satisfying 3 and 4. Of the four that received a 'no confidence' judgement, all but one satisfied Indicator 2.

FIGURE 65:
OUTCOMES OF REVIEWS OF BACHELOR IN
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION FIELD

- Confidence
- Limited confidence
- No confidence
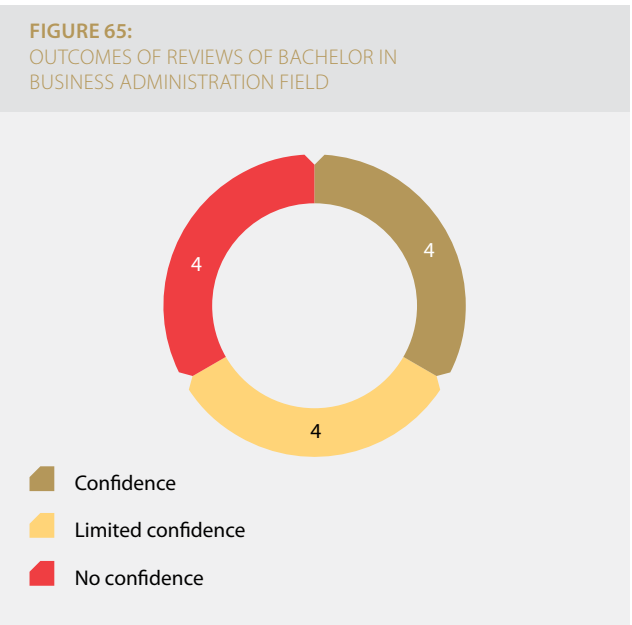
As can be seen in Figure 66, seven programmes satisfied Indicator 1, eleven satisfied Indicator 2, and six satisfied Indicators 3 and 4. In other words, five programmes did not satisfy Indicator 1 on the Curriculum; one did not satisfy Indicator 2 on Efficiency of the Programme; six did not satisfy Indicator 3 on Academic Standards of the Graduates; and six did not satisfy Indicator 4 on Effectiveness of Quality Management and Assurance. The main areas in need of improvement are: the development of Intended Learning Outcomes; assessment methods that are varied and appropriate; pedagogy that develops critical thinking and skills relevant to the 21st century workplace; benchmarking and external examining to assure that academic standards are being achieved; and the development and implementation of quality assurance mechanisms in the programmes.
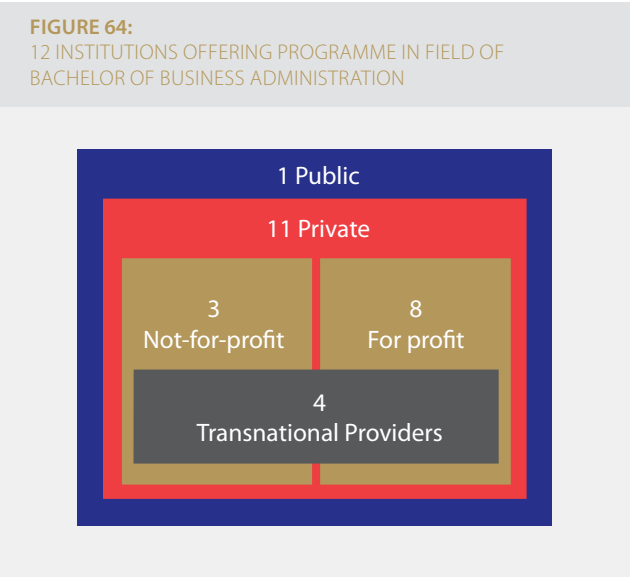
FIGURE 66:
NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES THAT SATISFIED
EACH INDICATOR (12 PROGRAMMES)
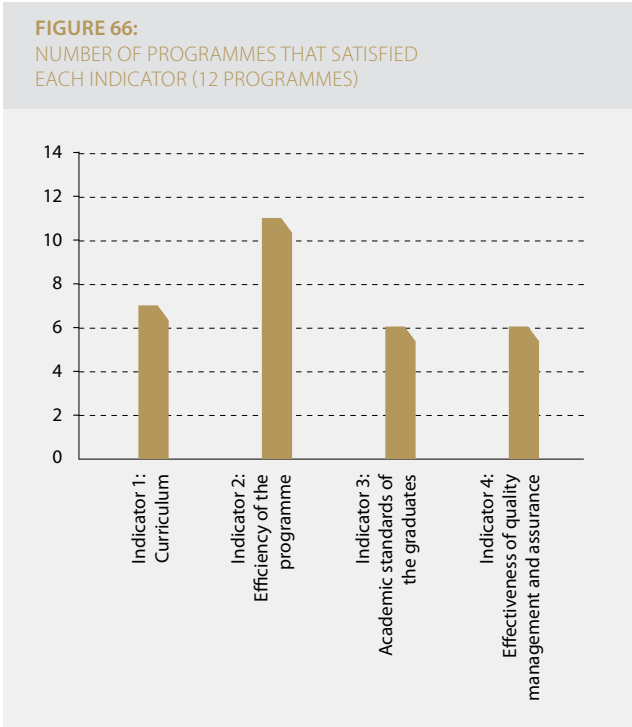
PROGRAMME REVIEWS IMPROVEMENT PLANS AND FOLLOW-UP

Like institutional reviews, an Improvement Plan needs to be developed for the programme under review, which addresses the Recommendations made in the Review Report. This Plan should be submitted to the HERU three months after publication of the Review Report. To date, six Improvement Plans have been submitted and analysed by the HERU. Follow-up visits to the institution to discuss the plans with the programme teams are undertaken by senior HERU staff. These plans are now in various stages of implementation by the faculty of the programme in each institution. Follow-up visits will be conducted one year after publication of the Review Report by the HERU to evaluate the institution's progress in implementing these plans.

CONCLUSION

In this concluding section of the Annual Report, the QAAET reports on its capacity building initiatives; makes some preliminary observations about how the findings of the different review units and the national examinations compare with similar findings in the international arena; provides an overview of the QAAET's activities during the 2010-2011 academic year. Lastly, it makes some concluding remarks.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The QAAET mandate is to conduct reviews and follow up on the consequent development and improvement initiatives of the concerned institutions. In addition, it seeks to promote the awareness of quality and the empowerment of a quality culture in education and training institutions along with the stakeholders in a number of ways. In the academic year 2009-2010, the Authority undertook a number of capacity building initiatives across all the QAAET's four units in particular, and the education and training sector in general. The following sections report upon the most important external capacity building initiatives.

Since the establishment of the QAAET the **Schools Review Unit** has established itself as a major player in the promotion and development of quality education in public schools both through conducting reviews and through capacity building activities. The latter has been done in a number of ways. First, by training Ministry of Education teachers seconded to the unit for a period of one to three years during which they are trained to become review specialists and conduct reviews. Secondly, the SRU trains the schools' principals on how to complete the self-evaluation form.

This is one of the most important pre-evaluation steps. It gives schools the opportunity to question their readiness for quality review and receive formative feedback from the SRU in the form of a pre-review briefing. They will also be able to compare their performance indicators with those specified in the unit's review framework. Thirdly, the SRU holds consultation meetings with the schools' principals to seek formative feedback on completed reviews bridging the gap between the SRU and the schools, ensuring adherence to the code of conduct and to make necessary improvements if appropriate. Finally, workshops and meetings are held with principals whose schools have been judged 'inadequate' to explain this judgement and help them prepare for the monitoring visits.

During the 2009-2010 academic year the **National Examinations Unit** carried out a number of capacity building initiatives. A joint workshop with Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) under the title 'Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment' was held for NEU and Ministry of Education staff. Several workshops were held for primary,

primary intermediate and intermediate secondary schools to familiarise schools with the way the national examination results are published and can be utilised in the classroom on the one hand, and to disseminate the new intermediate test specifications and specimen question papers to intermediate schools in preparation for the first Grade 9 examinations on the other hand. The NEU also undertook a lengthy public consultation exercise with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor, higher education institutions and employers to establish stakeholder opinion and requirements for the Grade 12 pilot examinations. In addition, the NEU is undertaking a first qualitative impact study of the national examinations, initially in collaboration with CIE, and successfully presented a joint research paper on the first phase of this impact study at the 2010 International Association for Educational Assessment (IAEA) Conference to critical acclaim.

The NEU also trained around 650 principal examiners, team leaders and markers for the 2010 examinations; training was undertaken for standardisation of markers, marking, supervision of marking and report writing of qualitative reports on student performance for schools. Furthermore, around 100 new item writers were trained, jointly with CIE, to write valid, fit-for-purpose, unbiased and reliable questions for all subjects and grades of the national examinations. Both markers and item-writers will take back into their classrooms the principles of what they have learned and observed during these training sessions and during the marking and writing activities. They will use these assessment principles in the classroom, and thus capacity building is spread across all core subjects and into all schools.

Since the start of the programme of reviewing training providers in Bahrain, the **Vocational Review Unit** has undertaken a number of capacity building initiatives to assist providers with the review process and ultimately, with improving their provision. All providers are invited to a training workshop prior to the review period to assist them with the self-evaluation process and the completion of their self-evaluation form (SEF). The full and accurate completion of the SEF is a vital first step for providers in identifying their strengths and areas for development and, importantly for the review process, having a clear focus on the questions upon which the review team will be making judgements. Providers are also given guidance at these workshops on how to complete the Learners' Performance Data (LPD) workbook, which is used to record and analyse learners' achievements, a key criteria for judging learners' progress on the courses, qualifications offered, and/or the set learning goals and ultimately on the overall effectiveness of the provider.

In addition to this, the review team holds highly effective planning meetings prior to the on-site review to prepare the provider by going through the review process details, highlighting the questions on which the review team will be making judgements, what evidence they will be looking at to make those judgements, and to address any concerns they

may have. This is often supplemented with additional one-to-one meetings with the provider's nominee, particularly to discuss issues highlighted by the provider's SEF.

The VRU also held two seminars and workshops during the past year: one in December 2009 on designing systems and procedures for observing training sessions and monitoring their effectiveness; and one in March 2010 about the role of internal and external quality assurances processes in improving the quality of provision.

The **Higher Education Review Unit** continued with its capacity building activities across the higher education sector in 2009-2010. It held five workshops; one of which was conducted in January 2010 to prepare institutions to develop their Self-Evaluation portfolio for institutional review. Five higher education institutions, all of which are publicly funded, participated. These are: University of Bahrain, Bahrain Polytechnic, Police Academy, College of Health Sciences, and Arabian Gulf University. Three workshops were held to assist departments to prepare their self-evaluation for the programme reviews. The Bachelor of Law workshop was held in February 2010 and all five institutions offering this programme participated; the University of Bahrain and four private. The workshop for the programme in the field of Masters of Information Technology was held in April 2010; five institutions, all of which are private providers offer this programme and all attended. In October 2010 the preparation workshop for the Masters of Business Administration programme was held and twelve institutions participated; eleven private and one public. The HERU also facilitated a workshop in May 2010 on 'Intended Learning Outcomes', which as noted above is a critical area in Indicator 1 on the Curriculum. Senior managers from 14 institutions participated in this two-day workshop; three of the institutions represented are public providers and eleven are private. (One private institution did not attend). Two stakeholders participated: one from Tamkeen and the other from the team developing the Bahrain Qualifications Framework.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISONS

It is difficult to make precise comparisons between different nations and school systems, since the regimes for monitoring school effectiveness vary from country to country. However, a large-scale comparative study of six countries which scored high results in international tests (Canada, England, Finland, France, the Netherlands and Sweden) has found that common features of their success were: 1) regular school evaluations and 2) centrally determined tests for schools.

In the initial stages of new evaluation regimes it is frequently the case that a high proportion of weak schools or those failing to produce an appropriate quality of education are identified. For example, in England, in the early stages of OfSTED (Office for Standards in Education), ten per cent of schools fell into this category. Yet identification of the problems coupled with suitable and timely interventions

invariably led to improvement for many of these schools. After rigorous support nearly 60 per cent of these failing schools were rated as good or better when inspected two years later.[4] In this context, the relatively high proportion of public schools in Bahrain rated by the SRU as 'inadequate' during the first full cycle of school reviews need only be a national concern if there was no targeted intervention to support these schools. Often, with well-targeted leadership and management interventions it is the failing schools that make more progress than others.

One of the most striking findings of the schools reviews is the difference in the achievement and the overall effectiveness between girls' and boys' schools, particularly at secondary level. The significant variation between boys and girls performance is an international phenomenon, from the USA to Europe and from Australia to Asia. Most GCC countries are faced with similar challenges of girls doing better than boys at school and university. This triggered the need for education reforms worldwide and in particular in the GCC countries.

The SRU has its part to play in Bahrain's Education Reform Project by highlighting the strengths and areas for development in all the schools in the Kingdom, and by assessing the quality of the action plans which the schools produce in response to the review findings. The SRU conducts monitoring visits to schools which have been judged as 'inadequate' within six months to one year of the original review.

One of the most noticeable outcomes of the Bahrain National Examinations is the huge difference in performance between girls and boys: girls outperform boys by a large margin in every subject and at every grade. A similar picture can be found in international comparison studies like TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS, where girls achieve better results than boys. It is worth noting, however, that the nature of these international tests is quite different from the Bahrain National Examinations, in as much as they are curriculum independent and are taken at different ages as well. So a direct comparison should not be made. Bahrain has taken part in TIMSS since 2003, and is the best performing country in the Gulf region. In general terms, the gender-related performance difference in TIMSS is greatest in GCC countries.

[4] *National Audit Office, Department for Education and Skills (2006:49): Improving Poorly Performing Schools in England*

Data from past English national curriculum tests, and from UK GCSEs and A Levels show that, in broad terms, it takes students and teachers around two to three years to get used to new test formats. Following that, results improve markedly during the first few years of an examination, after which performance will usually plateau and only change slightly.

The criteria in the VRU's review framework are built on international best practice, e.g. in the UK the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED) inspects schools, colleges, training providers and other educational institutions. It is interesting then to note some of the key findings and issues identified by a mature quality assurance process when looking at the outcomes for similar institutions in the Kingdom of Bahrain. For example, the OfSTED published report 2008-2009 identified 'the importance of providers working with employers to make programmes more relevant and therefore more motivating and productive for learners'.[5] This aspect has been clearly described in the VRU report for 2009-2010 as a feature of the more effective training providers in Bahrain.

A key area for development for providers of vocational education and training in Bahrain is in the area of measuring learners' progress which is similar to what other countries experienced when they started their first review - assessing individual learners' starting points and their contextual background, and then measuring the impact of an institution's provision on their progression, is a crucial step in assessing more accurately how effective providers actually are. There is now clearly both a challenge and an opportunity for providers of vocational educational and training in Bahrain to improve.

Whilst it is still too early to make judgements about the impact of the reviews in higher education in the Kingdom of Bahrain in improving and enhancing quality, some early comparisons about Bahrain's institutional review findings can be made with those of some other countries, such as South Africa. Like Bahrain, private higher education institutions in South Africa that are reviewed (audited) are done so on the same themes and criteria as the publicly funded institutions.[6] In South Africa, eleven private institutions have been audited and ten reports published to date. Private higher education institutions in South Africa, like those in Bahrain, began operating in the absence of a regulatory framework. There are similarities both in size and complexity of these institutions with those operating in the private sector within Bahrain, although naturally there are also many differences.

[5] Ofsted (2009:121): The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2008/2009

[6] Whilst there are differences between the terms 'reviews' and 'audits' the two are used interchangeably in this report.

[7] Wahlen, S (2007: 31) Quality Audit in the Nordic Countries. Nordic Quality Assurance Network in Higher Education (NOQA): Stockholm.

Nevertheless despite the disparities in the numbers of institutions and sizes of populations, the issues arising from South African Audit Reports resonate with those found in Bahrain; in particular the need for:

- governance and management practices that are reflective of good practice in higher education

- vision and mission statements that are realistic and from which flow the development and implementation of strategic plans that contain key performance indicators and accompanying operational plans

- the development of management information systems that use institutional data for planning and management decision-making and for tracking student progression, so that interventions can be made at an early stage to support students at risk of failure

- adequate infrastructure and academic support resources

- a Teaching and Learning strategy, which includes robust and varied assessment processes

- an understanding of what 'quality' means, and the development of a Quality Framework, which leads to the implementation of an appropriate operational quality management system

- an understanding of benchmarking and the undertaking of regular formal benchmarking, which is used to inform institutional practices and activities in the core academic functions

- appropriate staff development and employment conditions, including workload, remuneration and tenure.

All of these issues have been identified by the HERU Panels, which reviewed the private institutions in Bahrain.

Lastly, two points are worth making about the meta-findings of the quality assurance agencies in the Nordic countries, which are relevant for Bahrain. First, 'that the implementation and general acceptance of systematic quality work in higher education takes a long time'.[7] Secondly, for quality reviews to have a positive impact: i.e. that they lead to meaningful improvement, 'the role of management is crucial to the acceptance and success of institutional quality assurance' (ibid). This involves developing and implementing mechanisms, including communication strategies as well as staff development activities, to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the advantages of external reviews in strengthening the quality of the institutions and thereby producing excellent graduates and high impact research.

OUTLOOK 2010-2011

In October 2010, the SRU began a pilot programme to carry out reviews on the 69 private schools and 124 kindergartens in Bahrain. The pilot will conclude at the end of 2010. After the findings have been thoroughly assessed and evaluated, a common framework will be drafted to be implemented in March 2011 to cover all public and private schools. Over a four to five year cycle, all the private schools will be reviewed

and the public schools will be re-reviewed. Over this cycle all education stakeholders in Bahrain will be kept informed of the progress that schools are making. A key component of this information sharing is the QAAET annual report, but the SRU will continue to disseminate, through seminars and workshops, the best of professional practice and share the lessons learned throughout all sectors of education, as it has been doing up to now with the public schools.

During the academic year 2010-2011 the National Examinations Unit as in its approved plan will conduct examinations in the core subjects of Arabic, Mathematics, English and Science as in the previous years for all Grade 3, 6 and 9 students in public schools. In addition to this, the NEU will also conduct pilot examinations for all Grade 12 students in public schools. These examinations will be in Arabic, English and Problem Solving (Applied Mathematics). Test specifications and specimen assessment materials will be developed for Grade 12 subjects and distributed to all secondary schools, and briefing meetings will be held for all secondary schools.

In 2010-2011, the VRU will complete the reviews of all eligible training providers in Bahrain. Those regulated by the Ministry of Labour will be completed by January 2011 and those regulated by the Ministry of Education by June 2011. This completion of cycle one will then provide evidence for a comprehensive and effective baseline for measuring and analysing improvements in vocational education and training in the Kingdom. This period will also include all the repeat reviews for those providers with a judgement of 'inadequate' in 2009-2010.

As part of the QAAET, the VRU will continue to play its part in helping to improve the vocational education and training provision in Bahrain by providing Review Reports that are fair, accurate and consistent across all providers. It will continue to work closely with its main partners, the Ministries of Labor and Education, the Economic Development Board and the Labour Fund (Tamkeen) to achieve this objective. It is through these Review Reports that strengths can be celebrated and good practice shared and, especially, that the main areas of development are identified to ensure the continuing improvements in vocational education and training in Bahrain.

In the 2010-2011 academic year, the HERU will complete the first cycle of institutional reviews in Bahrain. Once these reports have been finalised and approved, the HERU will have established a baseline on the quality of higher education provision in the Kingdom of Bahrain. An analysis of this will provide the HERU with the information to make a decision regarding the institutional review framework in the second cycle. The framework will then be revised and when approved by the QAAET Board, the second cycle will begin. At the same time, the analysis of institutions' Improvement Plans as well as the Follow-up processes will continue, as will the HERU's capacity building programme.

With respect to programme reviews, the HERU will continue with its schedule to ensure that each college or faculty within an institution has undergone a programme review which should result in the good practice demonstrated by the HERU reviews becoming embedded in all higher education programmes offered in the Kingdom. A second framework and methodology will be developed for cycle two of programme reviews and will follow the same process outlined above for the second cycle of institutional reviews.

CONCLUSION

The QAAET will continue to make its contribution to the realisation of the Economic Vision 2030 in a number of ways that are concerned with raising the quality of education and training for all learners and students in the Kingdom; providing learners and students with opportunities to fulfil their aspirations and potential; and ensuring that labour market needs are met in an increasingly diversifying economy, which in turn, leads to increased socio-economic prosperity in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

SCHOOLS REVIEW PUBLISHED REPORTS

No.	School Name	Judgement
1.	Al Tawon Secondary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
2.	Bait Al Hekma Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
3.	Gudhaybiya Primary Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
4.	Manama Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
5.	Haleema Al Saddia Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
6.	Tariq Bin Ziyad Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
7.	Al Zallaq Primary Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
8.	AlWadi Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
9.	A'ali Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
10.	Al Jassra Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
11.	Khadeeja Al Kubra Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
12.	Sab'a Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
13.	Um Al Qurra Primary Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
14.	Toobli Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
15.	Oqba Bin Nafea Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
16.	Ruqaya Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
17.	Um Ayman Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
18.	Al Farabi Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
19.	Barbar Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
20.	Hassan Bin Thabet Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
21.	Sitra Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
22.	Salmaniya Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
23.	West Riffa Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
24.	Ain Jaloot Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
25.	Al-Istiglal Secondary Commercial Girls School	**4:** Inadequate
26.	Shahrakan Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
27.	West Riffa Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
28.	Ibn Al Nafees Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
29.	Othman Bin Affan Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
30.	Sanabis Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
31.	Shaikh A.Aziz Secondary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
32.	Abdul Rahman Al Nasser Primary Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
33.	Barbar Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
34.	Boori Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
35.	Mariam Bint Omran Primary Girls School	**2:** Good

No.	School Name	Judgement
36.	Zainab Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
37.	Al Alaa Al Hadhrami Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
38.	East Riffa Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
39.	Khawla Secondary Girls School	**2:** Good
40.	Safra Primary Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
41.	Isa Town Secondary Commercial Girls School	**4:** Inadequate
42.	Yathreb Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
43.	Zanoobia Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
44.	Al Honainia Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
45.	Shaikh Moh'd Bin Isa Al Khalifa Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
46.	Al Zallaq Primary Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
47.	Huteen Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
48.	Al Busaiteen Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
49.	Al-Khalil Bin Ahmed Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
50.	Sanabis Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
51.	Shaikh Isa Bin Ali Secondary Commercial Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
52.	Isa Town Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
53.	Omayma Bint Al Noaman Commercial Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
54.	Al Safa Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
55.	Arad Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
56.	Ibn Rushid Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
57.	Al Duraz Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
58.	Ahmed Al Fatieh Primary Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
59.	Ahmed Al Omran Secondary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
60.	Al Dair Primary Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
61.	Al Khamis Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
62.	Zubaida Primary Girls school	**2:** Good
63.	Al Yarmook Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
64.	Arad Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
65.	Isa Town Secondary Girls School	**4:** Inadequate
66.	Sumaya Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
67.	Um Salama Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
68.	Aamena Bint Wahab Primary Girls School	**1:** Outstanding
69.	Al Mutanabi Primary Boys School	**1:** Outstanding
70.	East Riffa Primary Boys School	**2:** Good

No.	School Name	Judgement
71.	Hamad Town Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
72.	Saar Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
73.	Al Noor Secondary Girls School	**4:** Inadequate
74.	Hamad Town Secondary Girls School	**4:** Inadequate
75.	Jidhafs Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
76.	Sanabis Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
77.	Al Dair Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
78.	Al-Khawarizimi Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
79.	Al-Sehla Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
80.	A'Ali Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
81.	Ammar Bin Yasser Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
82.	Khalid Bin Al Waleed Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
83.	Al-Manhel Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
84.	Jidhafs Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
85.	Qalali Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
86.	Qurtoba Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
87.	Al Daih Primary Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
88.	Ibn Sina Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
89.	Karana Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
90.	Sanad Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
91.	Shaikh Mohammed Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa Primary Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
92.	Al Ahd Al Zaher Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
93.	Salahuddin Al Ayoobi Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
94.	Salmabad Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
95.	Sanad Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
96.	Sitra Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
97.	Um Alhasam Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
98.	Balqees Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
99.	East Riffa Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
100.	Hamad Town Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
101.	Ibn Tufail Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
102.	Omar Bin Abdul Aziz Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
103.	Al-Hidd Primary Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
104.	Muharraq Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
105.	Riffa Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
106.	Safra Primary Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
107.	West Riffa Primary Boys School	**2:** Good
108.	Al Bilad Al Qadeem Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate

No.	School Name	Judgement
109.	Asmaa That Al Netaqeen Primary Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
110.	Bader Al-Kubra Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
111.	Hamad Town Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
112.	Rabea Al-Adawiya Primary Girls School	**1:** Outstanding
113.	Toobli Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
114.	Al Imam Al Tabary Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
115.	Al Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb Primary Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
116.	Al Rawdha Primary Girls School	**1:** Outstanding
117.	Gharnata Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
118.	Jaber Bin Hayan Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
119.	Omer Bin Al-Kattab Primary Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
120.	Sitra Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
121.	Al Deya Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
122.	Al Orobah Primary Girls School	**1:** Outstanding
123.	Al Razi Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
124.	Fatema Bint Asad Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
125.	Isa Town Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
126.	Al Andalos Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
127.	Al Busaiteen Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
128.	Al Diraz Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
129.	Hafsa Um Al Moameneen Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
130.	Ossama Bin Zaid Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
131.	Tulaitela Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
132.	A'Ali Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
133.	East Riffa Secondary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
134.	Jidhafs Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
135.	Jidhafs Secondary Technical Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
136.	Nasiba Bint Kaab Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
137.	Al Bilad Al Qadeem Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
138.	Isa Town Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
139.	Shaikh Abdulla Bin Isa Secondary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
140.	Hamad Town Intermediate Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
141.	Shaikh Khalifa Technology Institute	**4:** Inadequate
142.	Hamad Town Secondary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
143.	Al Duraz Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate

144.	Karzakan Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
145.	Saar Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
146.	Al Budaiya Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
147.	Jaw Primary Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
148.	Al Busaiteen Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
149.	Intermediate Secondary Religious Institute	**4:** Inadequate
150.	Safeya Bint A.Muttaleb Primary Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
151.	Samaheej Primary Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
152.	Abo Feras Al Hamadanee Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
153.	Abu Al Alaa Al Maari Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
154.	Al Mustaqbal Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
155.	Al Qadsiah Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
156.	Malek Bin Anas Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
157.	Saar Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
158.	Abu Saiba Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
159.	Al Hidd Intermediate Secondary Girls School	**2:** Good
160.	Al Hoora Secondary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
161.	Al Imam Al Ghazali Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
162.	Al Jabreyah Secondary Technical Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
163.	Al Khansaa Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
164.	Arad Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
165.	Fatima Al Zahra Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
166.	Saad Bin Abi Waqqas Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
167.	Al Maameer Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
168.	Fatima Bint Al Khattab Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
169.	Nowidrat Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
170.	Al Ali Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
171.	Abdulrahman Al Dakhel Intermediate Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
172.	Al Maerifa Secondary Girls School	**2:** Good
173.	Al Muharraq Secondary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
174.	Al Naim Secondary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
175.	Awal Intermediate Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
176.	Um Kulthoom Intermediate Girls School	**2:** Good
177.	Abu Baker Al Sedeeq Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate
178.	Al Rasheed Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
179.	Sitra Primary Girls School	**2:** Good
180.	Al Jazzera Primary Boys School	**2:** Good

181.	Al Nuzha Primary Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
182.	Al Qairawan Intermediate Girls School	**3:** Satisfactory
183.	Al Roudha Primary Boys School	**3:** Satisfactory
184.	Boori Primary Boys School	**4:** Inadequate

VOCATIONAL REVIEW PUBLISHED REPORTS

No.	Name of the Provider	Judgements
1.	IT Camp International	**4:** Below Satisfactory
2.	Fastrack Training & Development Consultancy	**4:** Below Satisfactory
3.	Gulf Business Machine Education Centre	**3:** Satisfactory
4.	Al Banna Training Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
5.	Expert Group Training Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
6.	Golden Trust for Management & Commercial Training & Consultancy	**3:** Satisfactory
7.	Tylos Human Development	**4:** Below Satisfactory
8.	Aptech Computer Education	**4:** Below Satisfactory
9.	Bridge Training Solutions	**4:** Below Satisfactory
10.	New Vision Training Institute	**4:** Below Satisfactory
11.	Safety Training and Consultants Center	**3:** Satisfactory
12.	I Design Training Centre	**3:** Satisfactory
13.	Al Meer Training Center	**4:** Below Satisfactory
14.	Group Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Training	**4:** Below Satisfactory
15.	Arabian East Training Center	**3:** Satisfactory
16.	Gulf Insurance Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
17.	Institute of Finance (Capital Knowledge)	**2:** Good
18.	Ernst and Young Training Center	**3:** Satisfactory
19.	Bahrain International Retail Development Center (BIRD)	**2:** Good
20.	London Training Center	**4:** Below Satisfactory
21.	National Institute of Technology (NIT)	**3:** Satisfactory
22.	Management Development Centre	**4:** Below Satisfactory
23.	Al Amal Institute for Studies & Training	**5:** Very Weak
24.	Experts Training Institute	**4:** Below Satisfactory
25.	Horizon for Human Resources Development (Horizons HRD)	**3:** Satisfactory
26.	Victory Training and Development Institute (VTDI)	**3:** Satisfactory

27.	Al Moalem Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
28.	Al Madina Training & Human Resources Development	**4:** Inadequate (Non-compliant)
29.	New Horizon Computer Learning Centre	**4:** Below Satisfactory
30.	RRC Middle East	**3:** Satisfactory
31.	Bahrain Institute of Hospitality & Retail (BIHR)	**2:** Good
32.	Flextrain for Training & Development	**3:** Satisfactory
33.	Bahrain Institute for Technology (BIT)	**4:** Below Satisfactory
34.	English Language Skills Centre	**4:** Below Satisfactory
35.	Excellence Training Solutions	**3:** Satisfactory
36.	Kumon - Bahrain	**2:** Good
37.	Industrial Petroleum Training Services	**3:** Satisfactory
38.	A.I.T Centre	**3:** Satisfactory
39.	Success Training Centre	**3:** Satisfactory
40.	Deena Institute of Technology	**3:** Satisfactory
41.	The European Institute	**4:** Below Satisfactory
42.	Global Institute for Management Science	**3:** Satisfactory
43.	The Gulf Academy For Development of Human Resources	**4:** Below Satisfactory
44.	Bahrain Training Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
45.	Al Hayat Institute for Human Resources Development	**5:** Very Weak
46.	National Institute for Industrial Training	**2:** Good
47.	Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance	**2:** Good
48.	Leaders Institute for Training & Development	**3:** Satisfactory
49.	Gulf International Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
50.	Al Jazeera Modern Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
51.	Bait Al Taleem Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
52.	Bahrain Institute	**4:** Below Satisfactory
53.	Al Mawred Institute	**4:** Below Satisfactory

VOCATIONAL REPEAT REVIEW PUBLISHED REPORTS

No.	Name of the Provider	Judgements
1.	Aptech Computer Education	**3:** Satisfactory
2.	New Vision Training Institute	**3:** Satisfactory
3.	Tylos Human Development	**3:** Satisfactory
4.	Bridge Training Solutions	**3:** Satisfactory

HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW PUBLISHED REPORTS

	Institution	Number of Commendations [8]	Number of Affirmations [9]	Number of Recommendations [10]
1.	Arab Open University - Bahrain	6	3	15
2.	Birla Institute of Technology	4	3	17
3.	Royal University for Women	3	2	19
4.	Delmon University	0	9	32
5.	Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland - MUB	5	9	23
6.	New York Institute of Technology	0	1	42
7.	Gulf University	1	4	40
8.	Applied Science University	2	7	34
9.	AMA International University - Bahrain	0	0	47
10.	University College of Bahrain	2	2	41
11.	Kingdom University	1	3	36
12.	Ahlia University	9	12	24

[8] Areas of strength
[9] Areas in need of improvement recognised by the institution itself
[10] Areas in need of improvement recognised by the review panel

HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME REVIEW BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PUBLISHED REPORTS

	Institution	No. of Satisfied Indicators	Conclusion
1.	University of Bahrain	4	Confidence
2.	Ahlia University	4	Confidence
3.	Arab Open University - Bahrain	4	Confidence
4.	Royal University for Women	4	Confidence
5.	Gulf University	3	Limited Confidence
6.	Birla Institute of Technology	3	Limited Confidence
7.	Applied Science University	2	Limited Confidence
8.	University College of Bahrain	2	Limited Confidence
9.	Delmon University	1	No Confidence
10.	Kingdom University	1	No Confidence
11.	AMA International University - Bahrain	1	No Confidence
12.	New York Institute of Technology	1	No Confidence

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