



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Hassan Bin Thabet Primary Boys School
Muharraq - Muharraq Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 26 - 28 September 2011

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The Schools Review Unit

The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the Quality Assurance Authority for Education and Training (QAAET), an independent national authority, attached to the Cabinet and set up under Royal Decree No. 32 of 2008, amended by the Royal Decree No. 6 of 2009. It is established to raise standards in education and training.

The SRU is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in all schools and kindergartens
- Establishing success measures
- Spreading best practice
- Making recommendations for school/kindergarten improvements.

Review involves monitoring standards and evaluating the quality of provision against a clear set of indicators. The reviews are independent, objective and transparent. They provide important information for schools and kindergartens about their strengths and areas for improvement to assist in focusing efforts and resources as part of the cycle of school improvement in order to raise standards.

Review grades are awarded a four-point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
Outstanding (1)	Outcomes or provision are at least good in all areas and outstanding in the majority.
Good (2)	Outcomes or provision are at least satisfactory in all areas and good in the majority.
Satisfactory (3)	A basic level of adequacy. There are no major weaknesses, or the majority of areas are satisfactory. Some areas may be good.
Inadequate (4)	There are major weaknesses or the majority of areas are inadequate.

Introduction

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of nine reviewers. During the review, reviewers observed lessons and other activities, examined students' written and other work, analysed data concerning the school's performance and other documents, and talked with staff, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

Characteristics of the school

School's name		Hassan Bin Thabet Primary Boys School															
School's type		Government School															
Year of establishment		1978															
Age range of students		6 – 12 Years															
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High							
		24				-				-							
Number of students		Boys	830	Girls	-				Total	-							
Students' social background		Majority of students belong to a lower-middle income families, and vast majority of them enjoy social stability.															
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
	Classes	5	5	5	5	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Town /Village		Muharraq Town															
Governorate		Muharraq															
Number of administrative staff		6															
Number of teaching staff		48															
Curriculum		Ministry of Education															
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic															
Principal's tenure		10 Years															
External assessment and examination		QAAET National Examinations															
Accreditation (if applicable)		-															
Number of students in the following categories		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties			
		359				-				-				27			

Major recent changes in the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 novice teachers, mostly teaching basic subjects, have joined the school this year• Two assistant principals have recently been appointed, 2011-2012
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Table of review judgments awarded

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

Key:

- 1: Outstanding
- 2: Good
- 3: Satisfactory
- 4: Inadequate

Review judgements

Overall effectiveness

- How effective is the school in meeting the needs of students and their parents?**

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's overall effectiveness has changed from good in the last review in November 2008 to satisfactory in this review. The change is reflected in the school's current challenges which mainly relate to the variation in teachers' performance levels due to the high turn-over of teaching staff. In addition, the school has made inadequate progress in the recommendations of the first review visit with regard to improving school self-evaluation and the development of clear mechanisms to follow-up on the issues identified. There has been insufficient implementation of actions and measurement of any impact on the school's overall effectiveness and particularly on the students' levels of achievement. Although the school's provision is satisfactory in all aspects, it gains good satisfaction ratings from parents and students.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The difficulty is in raising students' achievement levels when efforts are impeded by the instability caused by large numbers of teachers being replaced by new ones, in addition to shortages in the middle management staff. Moreover, the school does not have enough classrooms and buildings for the number of students on roll. The school's buildings need a comprehensive overhaul and more regular maintenance. However, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve and develop because it is fully aware of its main strengths and areas for development. Current senior staff are convinced about the need for change and development through working together as a team, creating a strategic plan based on the school's actual situation, setting clear objectives and taking action to achieve improvements in students' achievement.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students attain the expected standards and overall achievement levels are satisfactory. Proficiency rates are high in some core subjects, for example in science and mathematics at both cycles. These rates are adequately reflected in the students' standards in most lessons, which despite variations in the quality of teaching and learning, give students sufficient opportunities to learn effectively. Overall, first cycle students' proficiency rates in using basic and information technology skills in most lessons in the core subjects are satisfactory. They are good at science in the second cycle and at reading in Grade 3.

Students' current success rates are broadly consistent with the academic standards of the students over the previous two years. Moreover, on comparing mid-term and final examination results of the second cycle students, low achievers made reasonable progress in mastering key competencies such as reading skills. Due to the assessment techniques, learning activities and the satisfactory support and guidance they are offered, most students can often achieve good progress. Although some teachers made efforts to take students' different standards into consideration in some lessons, progress in writing skills has been limited and reflects some of the previous year students' portfolios that also had satisfactory progress.

The achievements of students gauged against their different abilities, for example groups that are outstanding, gifted or low achievers are as expected. The school carries out diagnostic tests and analyses the students' results according to competencies. As a result, teachers categorise students into three different levels of ability. Students with special educational needs make good progress due to the guidance and support they are given by the specialist, however, most students during lessons did not receive that level of support and their progress is only satisfactory.

Grade 3 students' results in national examinations, for the years 2009 to 2011, were above the national average in Arabic and mathematics.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Personal development is satisfactory overall because of the impact of a mix in the quality of provision. Procedures taken by the school to correct frequent absence and tardiness mean that students are now punctual to lessons and to morning assembly. Most students participate enthusiastically in school life through various extra-curricular activities, for example performances for assembly and football competitions and traditional folklore games in break-times. These activities contribute effectively to promoting the students' personal development. Moreover, students' participation in the school committees helps their self-confidence and their ability to take on responsibility, for example in the discipline and the cleanliness committees where they are active.

Most students have a good rapport with their teachers and peers, hence they work well together during lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Most show awareness and care for school property, as well as a responsible behaviour towards each other and staff. Although misbehaviour is rare during lessons, occasionally it does slip due to poor classroom management. Students feel safe and secure.

The students are patriotic and apply Islamic morals and values due to the opportunities offered to develop these characteristics, such as National Day and 'Bahrain First'. Activities which promote good citizenship are held on a regular weekly basis.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teaching has both strengths and weaknesses. Most of the school's teachers have good subject knowledge that is well used during lessons. Many of them apply different teaching strategies, such as discussions with questions and answers, and use interesting educational resources such as interactive boards, work-cards, photos and audio visual aids that create an exciting learning atmosphere. All these efforts motivate students to acquire knowledge, concepts and skills, such as adding and subtracting in mathematics and good reading in Arabic language.

The majority of teachers manage lessons well enough. They share the objectives of the lessons with the students and sequence how to present the activities offering guidance and

support, all of which have a positive impact on the students' enthusiasm towards learning. On the other hand, there is a significant minority of lessons that are inadequately prepared, where classroom management and support and guidance for students are insufficient or ineffective. Some teachers do not manage the time properly, which reduces students' participation, affects achievement and fails to meet the objectives of the lesson.

Although students are offered opportunities to learn from each other, this technique does not meet all the educational needs of the students. Teaching is not sufficiently well adjusted and strategies developed to suit students' individual needs and differences in ability. Despite taking the previous review report recommendations into consideration, developing higher order skills, such as solving problems and critical thinking is only happening in a few lessons. Some teachers do attempt to take individual differences among the students into consideration, but most of them are unsuccessful in achieving that effectively whether during class activities or when assigning written work and homework.

The majority of teachers use a variety of assessment techniques, such as observation, oral questions, tests and feedback, but they do not make enough use of these assessments to meet the different levels of educational needs of the students. This is because homework assignments are only partially followed up and marking and with written feedback is irregular.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

As with teaching, the curriculum has strengths and weaknesses. On balance it is satisfactory. It offers a wide-range of activities, such as computer and design and craft lessons, work in the resource centre and during extra-curricular times. The staff often set up plans for curriculum delivery, which help students to organise their time. There are also some effective programmes for students who have learning difficulties.

Making links between subjects are missed, especially at the first cycle. Students are not helped to see their learning as part of a logical, comprehensive curriculum, where their skills can be transferred.

A sense of citizenship and loyalty is developed through organizing special events and saluting the national anthem. These develop positive attitudes towards the kingdom. Some programmes enhance good behaviour, particularly the cleanliness and discipline committees, where students take on responsibility in keeping their school clean and foster a caring environment. Students participate in festivals like 'Bahrain First', go on visits to

historical places in the kingdom and participate in competitions, such as 'Bahrain's National Card Competition', reciting from 'the Holy Quran' and a tennis programme at the Muharrag Club. The Marine Scouts participate in voluntary works during 'Labour Day'.

A conducive environment for learning is created through the display of beautiful drawings and students' work, all of which promotes students' self-confidence.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students receive satisfactory care through support at a range of levels and quality. The first year students are helped to settle well into the school. Coordination between the school and kindergartens enables children to visit in advance and as part of the good induction, parents are encouraged to accompany children during their first week. A parent-teacher open house is held to give parents useful information. Similarly, the school offers students in Grade 3 guidance before joining Grade 4, to prepare them for their next stage of their education.

Students' personal development is assessed and support given. Those who have special educational needs receive good support, but the type offered during lessons is inconsistent due to the variability in the quality of teaching. Lectures such as 'I am a strong, safe and smart boy' are designed to raise self-esteem. The school has regular communication with parents and keeps them informed about their children's academic standards through 'the open-house day', SMS, phone calls and regular monthly reports.

The school's health and safety committee help to keep the school environment safe and secure, although some of the facilities and the buildings are in need of comprehensive overhaul and maintenance. Some cabins are used as classrooms which are not suitable.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. The school has a shared vision and mission statement based on achievement. It also has benefitted from the

recommendation in its previous review report regarding strategic planning that focuses on the needs emerging from an accurate diagnosis of the school's situation. However, the absence of performance indicators and evaluation mechanisms to secure continuity has limited the plan's effectiveness in promoting the students' achievement and personal development to higher levels.

Senior leadership is aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It delegates responsibilities well and builds good relations with the teaching and administrative staff. In addition, the school seeks to raise teachers' professional competencies by organising internal workshops and visits in order to exchange good practices. However, it lacks clear mechanisms to measure the impact of training on teachers' performance in the classroom. The school communicates with the local community, parents and students and responds to their suggestions, which results in these groups being satisfied with the school.

The school has effectively applied a SWOT analysis, which has enabled it to evaluate most of its facilities and activities. It also sent a questionnaire to a sample group of parents, but it has not made as much use of the results as it might. Nevertheless, these strategies are moving the school to a position where stakeholders' views are being taken seriously. There are well kept records of the students' attendance and punctuality. Effective advisory and guidance programmes are in action to improve these.

The leadership is building good relations with the staff through applying an 'open door policy'. The teachers point out that the leadership team motivates them, takes their points of view into consideration and delegates responsibilities effectively. However, this motivation is not consistently reflected in the educational practices during lessons. The school is well organised and deploys its facilities and resources appropriately to help students' learning.

The school's main strengths

- The school inspires and encourages all the school's staff and the senior leaders delegate responsibilities well
- High success and proficiency rates in most subjects such as science and mathematics in the first and second cycles
- Students with learning difficulties achieve good progress due to the support and guidance they receive.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop teaching and learning strategies to include the following:
 - using effective assessment methods in lessons
 - meeting students' different needs and giving the appropriate support to them, particularly outstanding and talented students
- develop reading and writing skills in Arabic and English to a higher degree to prepare students to the following phase of education
- use the results of self-evaluation to develop and promote the school's performance and include clear and measurable performance indicators in the strategic plan to follow up and assess it regularly
- enhance the new teachers' professional development programmes and check their impact in classrooms
- carry-out a comprehensive overhaul and maintenance of the school's building infrastructure to provide a better environment for students
- fill shortages in human resources, particularly the middle management staff.