



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Manama Secondary Girls School
Manama - Capital Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date of Review: 5 - 7 March 2012

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The Schools Review Unit

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

The SRU is responsible for:

- evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in all schools and kindergartens
- establishing success measures
- spreading best practice
- making recommendations for school/kindergarten improvements.

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

Review grades are awarded a four-point scale:

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

Introduction

This review was conducted over three days, by a team of seven 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		Manama Secondary Girls School															
School's type		Government															
Year of establishment		1951															
Age range of students		16 – 18 years															
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High							
		-				-				8							
Number of students		Boys	-	Girls	186				Total	186							
Students' social background		Ranging from middle- to low-level income															
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
	Classes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	2				
Town /Village		Manama															
Governorate		Capital															
Number of administrative staff		11															
Number of teaching staff		36															
Curriculum		Ministry of Education (MoE)															
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic															
Principal's tenure		3 years															
External assessment and examinations		MoE's examinations															
Accreditation (if applicable)		-															
Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification		Outstanding				Gifted & Talented				Physical Disabilities				Learning Difficulties			
		48				30				-				1			

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior teachers of all core and commercial subjects moved or resigned and were replaced by coordinators this school year 2011 -12• An e-class and training and development centre were established for this school year 2011-12• Performance improvement programmes under the outstanding Bahraini school project have been implemented during this school year 2011-12.
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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 performance is in line with its performance as judged in the previous review in December 2008. It receives a satisfactory rather than good judgment in all areas, due to inconsistent teaching and learning, curriculum implementation strategies and the support provided to different groups of students. These inconsistencies prevent it from being good. Students achieve broadly expected levels but are low in mathematics and physics. Most students demonstrate awareness and responsibility in their behaviour and observe rules and regulations. Opportunities to develop their self-confidence in lessons and activities to do this are too limited and minimize their participation and impact on their personal development. School management makes obvious efforts to provide professional development and support programmes and both students and parents are pleased with the school's performance.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school maintains the satisfactory capacity to improve as judged in the previous review. School management has developed an annual and operational plan to improve the school's overall performance based on the recommendations provided in the previous review. Programmes provided by the MoE's improvement team, to support the outstanding Bahraini school project at the beginning of the current school year 2011-12, have helped self-evaluation mechanisms and have trained teachers in effective teaching strategies. However, there are few clear indicators of the use of these strategies in practice, hence the lack of improvement in students' academic achievement and personal development. Capacity to improve further is aggravated by the lack of senior teachers of core subjects, the transfer of a large number of teachers this current school year and the old school building.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students attain high pass rates in MoE examinations in most subjects. Pass rates for the first term of the school year 2011-12 ranged between 80% and 100%, with the highest being in Arabic, biology, chemistry and commercial subjects in all grades and the lowest in mathematics and physics in Grade 10. Proficiency rates vary, with the highest being in most subjects in Grade 11, and the lowest in Grade 10 English and physics, and Grade 11 mathematics. High pass rates and varying proficiency rates reflect the satisfactory levels of achievement in lessons; they are not good due to inconsistent teaching and learning.

Students vary in their acquisition of different skills. Grade 11 scientific stream students acquire better skills in Arabic writing and speaking, English reading, writing and speaking and scientific skills, such as observation, analysis and conclusion than other basic skills. Grade 10 students' acquisition of mathematical skills is poor. On the other hand, students acquire good communication and IT skills.

Tracking students' results over three consecutive years shows that the majority of students make the progress expected in most core subjects over time. High pass rates MoE examination in Arabic subjects are generally consistently maintained, whereas pass rates fluctuate in English and fall back in mathematics and physics in Grade 10. In addition, pass rates deteriorate in mathematics upon students' transition to Grade 12, which shows in the variations in students' performance levels in lessons and written work. In transition to Grade 12 some fluctuation occurs even in Arabic results. The school's rank among government schools is changing frequently and ranges between eighth and eighteenth positions.

Broadly, students achieve levels that match their abilities in most core subjects. They do not do better than this because of inconsistent support provided to different student groups. Outstanding students receive more attention and care during lessons and programmes than low-achieving students, which contribute to these students not achieving expected progress in their academic achievement.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students attend school regularly, with a limited number of late arrivals, which are appropriately dealt with by the school. They take part in extra-curricular activities and school committees, such as the morning broadcast, the morning assembly, students' council and other committees, which help meet their needs and interests. These opportunities polish their talents and contribute to their personal development. Yet, their participation in lessons varies, due to inconsistent opportunities provided for them.

Most students demonstrate awareness and responsibility in their behaviour both in and out of class and keep school property clean and tidy. They demonstrate mutual respect for each other's feelings and for their teachers. This is a result of the school's attention to the development and enhancement of Islamic values. Many students express concern regarding school's facilities, particularly toilets, largely due to the age of the school building. This diminishes their otherwise good sense of security and comfort.

Most students have good self-confidence that is evident in their cooperation in completing tasks during group work, in-class discussions as in Arabic lessons and interviews conducted for them to express their opinion of teaching at school. Some students play leading roles and contribute to school's achievement of advanced positions, such as achieving first place in the 'Gibec and Scientific Research' competition called 'Change Your Life'.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers have good knowledge of their study materials. This is evident in the explanations they provide and in the, logical presentation of ideas and simplification of vocabulary. This helps to increase the rates of students' acquisition of skills, concepts and knowledge in an appropriate manner. Teachers involve students in their learning objectives and introductory activities in lessons motivate and encourage them. Students' active participation in most lessons is evident. However, inconsistent qualities in teaching across lessons mean that teaching overall falls short of being good.

Most teachers manage lessons in an organised and productive manner. Good lessons with good planning allocate time in line with the lessons' objectives. This translates into most

students' obvious progress in many science and Arabic lessons, compared to their lesser progress in English and commercial subjects. Most teachers employ a variety of teaching and learning strategies, such as discussion, brainstorming and cooperative learning, but not consistently. Learning resources, such as slide presentations, practical experiments and learning-activity cards are also utilized in some lessons, which help attract students and motivate them to learn. But the old school building and its small area reduce their effectiveness.

Good opportunities are provided to challenge students' abilities and develop higher level thinking skills in lessons, particularly in good lessons. This is done by catering for students' differences in the activities and exercises provided for them. Activities focus on accurate observation, explanation, analysis and conclusion, which impact positively on their progress. However this occurs in varying degrees, despite being in many lesson plans.

Students are assigned homework and other tasks, some of which cater for their different ability levels and are referenced in lesson plans. Yet, inconsistent follow-up in terms of regular marking and feedback minimise the benefit from them in enhancing academic achievement.

Teachers use a variety of assessment methods in lessons, particularly in good lessons, such as oral and written assessment activities in order to ensure students' understanding and comprehension of what they learn. Yet, these methods are used inconsistently across lessons, which leads to the educational needs of different groups of students not being catered for well enough. Low-achieving students do not receive adequate support compared to other categories, particularly in satisfactory and inadequate lessons, which limits their progress in these lessons.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school offers a range extra-curricular activities to enhance students' curriculum experiences. These include such programmes as the Globe, the School Stock Exchange, and participation in external competitions such as the 'Traditional Dress Competition' in which students are successful in gaining advanced places. School committees, such as the 'Friends of the Learning Resources Centre' committee and internal sports and cultural activities such as the 'Sports Leisure Festival' and 'Journalistic Investigation' are further examples. On the other hand, field trips are few.

Implementation methods help prepare students for their next stage of education or employment in an appropriate manner, through creativity centres and participation in various competitions. There is more integration of curricula experiences and life applications in Arabic, science and commercial subjects, than in other subjects, such as science and mathematics.

Some monitoring of curriculum implementation schedules occurs. Review and assessment are not sufficient to meet students' changing educational needs and provide opportunities to enrich their experiences and attract them to learn more.

The environment is enriched with curriculum materials. Care is taken of green areas and wall displays celebrate students' work. Students' understanding of rights and responsibilities and their sense of belonging are developed through guidance programmes, celebrations of National Day and participation in making scarves for the 'Bahrain First' festival, which contribute to their overall personal development and behaviour.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school holds an induction programme for new students, during which parents are invited to learn about the different facilities available and which help students settle easily. It also prepares students well for the next stage of education as it helps Grade 11 students get ready for university in cooperation, for example, with the University of Bahrain and Bahrain Polytechnic.

The school meets personal needs of most students well and provides winter aid and free meals for needy students. It does not support different groups of students well in lessons. Enhancement lessons for low-achieving students do not achieve the desired outcomes compared to programmes offered to talented and outstanding students within creativity classes. This results in wide variation in students' levels of enthusiasm and motivation.

Students are offered guidance in solving their problems. This helps improve most students' behaviour. The school communicates regularly with parents to keep them updated on their daughters' achievement through a variety of means.

The school ensures that staff and students work in a healthy and safe environment, by checking school buildings for cleanliness, providing primary health care and monitoring the school's canteen. However, the old school building and sparse maintenance of its facilities

are only adequate. Training on the evacuation plan is limited and parking vehicles near students' toilets is hazardous to staff and students.

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school has a vision and mission which focus on achievement and were developed with the participation of the staff, students and parents. The school has an annual plan and operational plan to improve school's performance created using the recommendations provided in the previous review. The implementation of its programmes are subject to monitoring. Despite this and having a self-evaluation committee that evaluates events and surveys the school's situation in accordance with the outstanding Bahraini school project, results are not used to create a strategic plan for the school's direction.

The school management inspires and motivates staff and students in an atmosphere of respect and appreciation. It is keen on promoting transparency and collaboration, as well as emphasising delegation of authority; Teachers' professional competency is raised through workshops at the school's training centre. The school also participates in external workshops, such as the workshops on 'The Characteristics of a Good Class in Accordance with QAAET Standards' and 'Class Management'. Yet, the lack of stability of staffing has minimised the positive impact of these workshops on teaching and learning.

Financial resources and school facilities, such as the laboratory and Learning Resources Centre are appropriately utilised, but they are small areas that limit their effectiveness.

The school polls the views of parents and students and assesses their satisfaction with the leadership's performance. It responds to their suggestions such as replacing air conditioners and changing homework and the 'Eid Welcoming' festival arrangements. It ensures that certain parents are honoured for their regular attendance at different events, which is reflected in their satisfaction with the school.

The school communicates with bodies in local community, such as the Teachers Centre in Manama, Al-Mashreq Bank and Higher Education Council by organizing lectures for students. Yet, this communication does not contribute adequately to enriching students' experiences. The role of advisory groups, such as the Technical Committee and Board of

Directors, in supporting school's management is evident in the discussion of issues relating to improvement and development. The school also benefits from the services of the external performance improvement team whose impact is not sufficiently evident because this is still new.

The school's main strengths

- High pass rates in MoE examinations which reflect the actual levels of most students' understanding and knowledge in good lessons, especially in science
- Students' overall behaviour, awareness and responsibility both in and out of class
- Induction programmes for new students and communication with parents
- Support for students with problems.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- develop teaching and learning strategies so that they include:
 - providing students with basic skills in mathematics and physics
 - utilizing effective assessment to meet educational needs
 - challenging abilities and developing higher level thinking skills more
 - building self-confidence and taking more responsibility by students
- support different groups of students, particularly those with low achievement
- utilize self-evaluation results to develop the annual plan and strategic plan in accordance with clear performance indicators
- ensure the safety and security of its staff and students in school buildings
- fill the shortages of senior teachers of Arabic, English, mathematics and science.