



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Al-Wadi Primary Boys School
Hamad Town - Northern Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 29 November - 1 December 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 eight 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		Al-Wadi Primary Boys School											
School's type		Government											
Year of establishment		1994											
Age range of students		6 – 10 years											
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High			
		1 – 4				-				-			
Number of Students		Boys	566	Girls	-				Total	566			
Students' social background		Limited-Middle class											
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Classes	6	6	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Town /Village		Hamad Town											
Governorate		Northern											
Number of administrative staff		22											
Number of teaching staff		51											
Curriculum		Ministry of Education											
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic											
Principal's tenure		One year											
External assessment and examination		National Examinations, QAAET											
Accreditation (if applicable)		-											
Number of students in the following categories according to the School's classification		Outstanding			Gifted & Talented			Physical Disabilities			Learning Difficulties		
		71			-			-			53		

Major recent changes in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has a new principal and assistant principal from the beginning of the current school year• Classes have been increased from 13 to 22 at the start of the current school year 2011-12• First cycle students of Shahrakan Primary Boys School were transferred to Al-Wadi School in the current school year• 22 new teachers were transferred to the school in the current school year• The senior teacher for class-teaching was replaced in the current school year.
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Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate			
The school's capacity to improve	3: Satisfactory			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	4	-	-	4
Students' personal development	3	-	-	3
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4	-	-	4
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: 4 Inadequate

The school's overall effectiveness has changed from satisfactory in the previous review in February 2008 to inadequate in this current review. This is because both students' achievement and teaching and learning are inadequate. The remaining aspects are judged satisfactory. Senior staff now know the school's weaknesses and students' behaviour and the school environment have improved; this is reflected in students' and parents' satisfaction levels. However, the decline in the school's performance may be attributed to a number of factors including a drastic increase in the number of students, their low achievement levels in a majority of lessons as a result of ineffective teaching and weak class and time management by the majority of teachers, particularly new teachers, which had a negative impact on the students' academic progress.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The school's capacity to improve has changed since the last review from good to satisfactory. This is due to the number of new challenges the school faces, such as the double increase in the number of students, changes in facilities in classrooms and the appointment of a high number of new teachers and newly recruited staff of core subjects. These factors have negatively impacted on the quality of teaching and learning. However, the leadership possesses sufficient knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement, which are reflected in the development of the strategic plan with specific goals and clear performance indicators based on the accurate results of self-evaluation of the schools' situation. The impact of such improvements is reflected in the students' behavior and their participation in making the school's environment inspiring.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Although students achieved high pass rates in the school's internal examinations in most core subjects the majority of students' achieve better levels in the limited number of good lessons as a result of effective teaching, but this is not the case in the remaining majority of lessons. Most students' written work is poor because their learning needs are not sufficiently met. Proficiency rates and the pass rates are inconsistent in the core subjects of the first cycle, particularly in Arabic. There is better consistency in the core subjects of the second cycle, especially in mathematics in Grade 4. While the majority of students sufficiently master practical skills in science and technologies due to the effectiveness of teaching strategies, their proficiency in mathematical skills varies, and first cycle students' proficiency rates are better than the second cycle students. As for reading and writing skills in Arabic and English, a significantly high proportion of first graders' and second cycle students' achievement is less than expected, as teachers concentrate on cognitive aspects at the expense of students' acquisition of skills.

First cycle students have the expected level of progress over a three year period in most of the core subjects, except the decline in mathematics; while the second cycle students level of progress remain the same in most of the core subjects. The majority of students progress well in the limited good lessons in science in grades 3 and 4 due to the various activities provided, while students' progress is insufficient in most lessons and written work, particularly in many inadequate lessons due to the lack of differentiation of activities submitted and failure to meet students' different learning needs.

Students of special needs, in the integration class, achieve the expected progress that is consistent with their abilities in the special education programme. Moreover, the school effectively supports students with learning difficulties and they make appropriate progress. A few outstanding students achieve the level of progress that is consistent with their abilities in lessons and written work, low achievers make insufficient progress due to the lack of remedial programs.

Grade 3 students' attainment in the national examinations is below average in Arabic and mathematics from 2009 to 2011.

How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students are committed to attend school and classes regularly and punctually, due mainly to the clear procedures for following-up absentees and late comers. The majority of students participate enthusiastically in school life through various extra-curricular activities, for example Painting Club and the World Diabetic Day; competitions such as 'Al Wadi Falcons'; and taking on leadership roles such as 'Cleanliness Officers' and 'Al Wadi Cadets'. However, such enthusiasm is not similar during learning. In more than half of the lessons there are insufficient opportunities for students to work together and take on leadership roles, which in variably reflects poorly on the rate at which students' self-confidence is developed and in their assuming responsibilities.

The majority of students enjoy good relationships with their teachers and classmates, work together during extra-curricular activities, sports and games. They behave responsibly, maintain the school's property and respect their teachers and classmates, which is reflected in the majority of students feeling safe and secure. Nevertheless, there is some unsatisfactory behaviour due to poor class management, particularly in lessons where the teaching is not well pitched. Some fights by a small minority of students in the break time were reported, but, the school has reduced such incidents by implementing some events during the break times, such as sports and games, and enhancing the positive behaviour by rewarding model students. This has contributed to improving students' physical activities and discipline overall and, in addition, to their sense of security.

Students show good understanding of Bahrain's heritage and culture, including the values of Islam. The school enhances such values in students by giving lectures, posting colourful displays, and taking part in competitions such as 'The most beautiful traditional costume' and 'The young Muslim' competition.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 4 Inadequate

Although the majority of teachers have good subject knowledge, this is only reflected in their teaching in the limited number of good lessons. This is most common where teachers use teaching strategies that focus on challenge and deduction. In science and social studies, discussions and brain-storming challenges students and this has had a clear impact on most

students' progress in such lessons. However, ineffective teaching methods and strategies are used in most lessons, where students' learning needs are not met and the lessons lack interest and excitement. This results in a limited acquisition of knowledge, understanding and basic skills. Despite the use of learning the sources such as flash cards, learning aids and computers, most of them failed to attract students' interest. In addition, the majority of lessons lack class management and discipline, which leads to a poor use of time. Teachers often fail to control their student's behaviour adequately and to provide a useful learning environment. The majority of teachers depend on conveying facts and direct questions that do not challenge students' abilities or increase their motivation towards learning. Hence, lessons are generally boring and lack interest for the age range of students. Most lessons provide insufficient opportunities for students to work together and to learn from each other. They are overly teacher-centred which reduces students' motivation towards learning.

Most teachers give students activities and homework that complement the activities in the textbook. Individual differences amongst the students are not taken into consideration. Although students' written work is marked, teachers do not provide them with feedback that leads them to improve. Marking focuses mainly on repetitive copying, that does not lead to progress, particularly in Arabic and English languages. Collective oral assessment is used in most lessons, but this focuses on knowledge recall rather than assessment of basic skills. Overall this means that support given to students is insufficient in meeting their various learning needs, particularly in the development of basic skills.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Links between subjects are made in the majority of lessons through linking textbooks to life. Appropriate curriculum implementation is carried out by few teachers in ways that match development requirements consistently, especially with new curricula. For example, this has been done well for the science and mathematics curricula, but such application tends to be limited to new curricula only.

A number of activities, programmes and competitions develop students' sense of citizenship. The curriculum enhances the experiences of the majority of students through engaging them in activities such as the 'Library Week', 'You're my Friend and I am your Friend', and similar projects. Moreover, students are given some opportunities to take part in committees and present pamphlets related to their rights and duties, which increases their awareness, especially regarding maintaining school properties. Although the curriculum provides good experiences for students in the special integrated class and those with

learning difficulties experiences provided for high achievers and low achievers are insufficient because the majority of the curriculum activities are not planned to take students' different levels of interests and abilities into consideration, nor the next stage of education.

The school enriches the students' knowledge and concepts through the use of learning aids and displays, especially in the first cycle, where educational corners are sometimes well organised, such as in Grade 3 with its 'Self-Learning Bank'.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Induction through the 'My School is Beautiful' programme helps most students settle quickly, together with those who are transferred from Shahrakan Primary Boys' School.

The school diagnoses the students' personal needs and meets them sufficiently by providing 'in-kind' aids such as stationery and school uniform. It provides effective support when students have any problems by activating the 'Young Guide' programme, and delivery of lectures on school violence and hyperactivity; which contribute in limiting behavioural problems. However, the results of diagnosis tests are used inconsistently. The needs of students in the special integrated class and those with learning difficulties are well met, but less so for high and low achievers, due mainly to limited enrichment programmes and varying support given in most lessons.

Students are well-prepared for their next phase of education through organising class visits and delivering lectures. The school regularly contacts parents through text messages and reports and by conducting meetings, which reflects in parents' levels of satisfaction.

The Security and Safety Committee, and Health Services Committee exert satisfactory efforts to assess hazards and make the school safe and secure. Fire extinguishers and food handling routines in the canteen are checked regularly. Awareness lectures, safety leaflets and evacuation drills are given. However, the use of an old wooden cabin for teaching music is unsuitable.

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 new senior staff and leadership team possess sufficient knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are seeking to improve the school effectively. The school has a vision that focuses on offering excellent learning, but this is inconsistently reflected in its practices and activities and the student's achievement in classes. The school has a strategic plan which focuses on improvements in accordance with the correct priorities. The plan has clear performance indicators based on self-evaluation and thorough analysis of the school's situation. Action plans are now in accordance with the recommendations of the last review. Despite the positive impact of strategic planning on the improvement of students' behaviour, school environment, and involvement of staff in the improvement process, its impact on improving the educational practices is not up to standard and is inconsistent between departments. Students' levels of achievement are limited by the different performance of teachers.

Senior leaders have worked on spreading the culture of change and development. They have motivated staff to face challenges, reinforced their morale by honouring distinguished teachers and enabled delegations, such as the appointment of some coordinators of science, mathematics and English due to the previous lack of middle leadership. Despite this impact teaching quality and students' outcomes are low.

The school is starting to use facilities such as the science laboratory and learning resource centre appropriately but learning resources in the majority of lessons are not used effectively. Staff and new teachers' professional competency is raised by organising a number of training programmes, but the impact of these is insufficient.

The school seeks the view of parents and students with regards to the school's activities. However, the students' and parents' councils are not sufficiently active. The school also communicates with some local community organisations to enhance partnerships such as its cooperation with the General Traffic Directorate and benefits from the external School Improvement Team in training its staff on the improvement projects. It still needs to intensify such communications to improve its performance in general.

The school's main strengths

- School's leadership awareness of the school's strengths and areas for improvement through the accurate and continuous self-evaluation of all school's aspects
- Support and guidance given to the students of special needs and those in the special integrated class
- The school's efforts to improve students' improper behaviour through programmes and activities.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- improve, as a priority, students' basic skills in Arabic and English, particularly reading and writing in both cycles, and their numerical skills in mathematics
- raise the academic standards achieved by students by systematically improving the quality of teaching and learning through better use of :
 - assessment to identify and meet students' various learning needs in lessons and homework
 - opportunities for students to work together.
- use of time and class management approaches
- optimum use of the school's learning resources and facilities, such as the learning resource centre, to enhance and enrich the curriculum for learning.