



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

Schools Review Unit Review Report

**Safra Primary-Intermediate Boys School
Safra - South Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain**

Date Reviewed: 22-24 December, 2009

Table of Contents

The Schools Review Unit.....	1
Introduction	2
Characteristics of the school.....	2
Overall effectiveness	3
The school’s capacity to improve.....	4
The school’s main strengths and areas for development.....	6
What the school needs to do to improve	7
Overall judgements.....	8

The Schools Review Unit

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

The SRU is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reporting on the quality of provision in schools
- Establishing success measures
- Spreading best practice
- Making recommendations for school improvement

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

Review grades are awarded on a four point scale:

Grade description	Interpretation
Outstanding (1)	This describes provision or outcomes that is/are at least good in all or nearly all respects and is/are exemplary or exceptional in many.
Good (2)	This is the norm which is expected and describes provision or outcomes that is/are better than the basic level. Practice will be at least sound and there may be some particularly successful approaches or outcomes.
Satisfactory (3)	This describes a basic level of adequacy, there are no major areas of weakness which substantially affect what students, or significant groups of students, achieve. Some features may be good.
Inadequate (4)	This describes situations where there are major weaknesses which affect the outcomes for students.

Introduction

Scope of the Review

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

Information about the school

Gender of students: Boys

Number of students: 691

Age range: 6-15 years

Characteristics of the school

Safra Primary-Intermediate Boys School is one of the South Governorate schools. It was founded in 1999. The age range in the school is from 6 to 15 years, and there are 691 students. The school has 26 classes in three cycles: three classes for each grade except the first grade which has two classes only. The school classifies six of its students as outstanding, seven as talented, 35 as having learning difficulties and four as physically disabled. There are 78 teachers and 22 administrative and support staff. The school lacks senior teachers as class teachers and for English, and has no gifted and talented specialist. The school Principal is in his second year in the post. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project.

Overall effectiveness

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

Grade 4 (Inadequate)

The overall effectiveness of Safra Primary-Intermediate Boys School is inadequate. Parents and students are broadly satisfied with the school.

The students' academic achievement is inadequate. First cycle students achieve high pass rates but rates vary for second and third cycle students. In lessons, where most teaching is not matched to learning needs, most students achieve levels below those expected of them. Some students with learning difficulties make good progress, with the support of the learning difficulties specialist. The programmes for outstanding students do not suit their needs and these students make little progress. The effectiveness of the activities and programmes for low achievers is patchy and these students make varied degrees of progress.

Students' personal development is inadequate. Most students attend school regularly. Some of them participate in extra-curricular activities such as the morning broadcast and sports contests. The vast majority of students play a limited part in lessons, where they show little interest and motivation for learning. The teaching methods are unappealing to students, who are given limited opportunities to work together and learn from each other. Higher thinking skills are not developed well. Students' overall behaviour in lessons was satisfactory but there was much unacceptable behaviour outside classrooms. Some students do not feel safe because supervisors and some teachers use inappropriate methods to discipline them.

The effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is inadequate. The inadequate lessons, most of which were in English language, made up one-third of the observed lessons. There were very few good lessons. Teaching and learning methods are not generally matched to students' learning needs and, in most lessons, the teacher was at the centre of the teaching and learning process. Most teaching methods focused on transferring the content of the curriculum, without engaging students. Assessment methods rely on verbal questioning that requires students only to recall information; assessment is not used to plan learning.

The curriculum enrichment and delivery programmes are inadequate. The school develops students' sense of citizenship through celebrating national events such as the national day. It does not do enough, however, to broaden students' understanding of their rights and

duties; one example of this is that students do not always look after the school's facilities. The school provides a few extra-curricular activities, such as activity sessions and contests, that enhance the experience of a limited group of students and further their various interests. This does not, however, suitably enrich the experience of all students, especially the talented. The development of students' basic reading skills in Arabic is satisfactory, but their basic skills in writing, both in Arabic and English, are inadequately developed. Links between subjects are inadequate in most of the first cycle lessons.

The support and guidance programmes are inadequate. Students' personal needs are met satisfactorily, but their learning needs are inadequately met. The support provided in half of the lessons was inadequate. The induction for new students and those moving to the second and third cycles is not sufficient. The school has made some effort to limit conduct problems, such as large-scale fighting at school departure time, and has been partly successful in this. It has not been as successful, however, in reducing other unacceptable conduct. The school does not keep parents sufficiently informed about their sons' progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management is inadequate. The school has a vision that focuses on achievement, but its impact in lessons has been limited. The school's four-year strategic plan, which began this year, lacks clear performance indicators and accurate methods of monitoring the progress of different groups of students. The plan is based on self-evaluation that covers several aspects of the school's work but it is not used effectively to improve performance. The school provides some professional development programmes, such as training in the Photoshop application, but does not target areas that need improvement, such as methods of teaching and learning. The school seeks and responds to parents' views through the parents' council and educational meetings.

Does the school have the capacity to improve?

Grade: 4 (Inadequate)

The school's capacity to improve is inadequate. Its main recent improvements were to hold Safra's Cultural Forum, which was aimed at expanding awareness of social and national issues, and to organise a talk for parents, aimed at reducing the fighting among different groups of students. The effectiveness of this talk was reduced by poor attendance.

The school does not use the findings of self-evaluation properly. Although elements of the strategic plan were based on self-evaluation, the plan has had limited success, especially in developing teaching and learning processes and raising students' awareness.

The school faces many serious challenges that are beyond its capacity to overcome without external help. Its main challenges are to deal with the limited awareness and ambition of students, and to improve the unappealing methods of teaching and learning. The school's capacity to improve is further limited by the fact that it has had three Principals in the last three years.

The school's main strengths and areas for development

Main Strengths

- School examination results of first cycle students
- Students' attendance
- Sports activities

Areas for development

- Awareness of the different groups of students
- Considering individual differences
- Higher thinking skills
- Methods of teaching and learning
- Students working and learning together
- Basic skills
- Use of self-evaluation
- Monitoring the strategic plan
- Progress of different student groups
- Links between subjects in cycle one
- Student behaviour management

What the school needs to do to improve

In order to improve further, the school should:

- Draw on external help to ensure improvement in school performance
- Raise students' awareness and address conduct problems
- Develop student behaviour management strategies
- Develop varied and effective methods of teaching and learning, ensuring they:
 - Match the learning needs of students
 - Develop higher thinking skills
 - Provide more opportunities for students to work together and learn from each other
 - Develop basic skills, especially in English
 - Make links between subjects in the first cycle.
- Use assessment results to plan learning
- Establish ways of using the findings of self-evaluation to improve performance, especially in relation to teaching and learning processes
- Include clear and measurable performance indicators in the strategic plan in order to monitor the progress of different groups of students and improve performance
- Work to retain senior managers and fill the shortages in human resources.

Overall judgements

Aspect	Grade: Description
The school's overall effectiveness	4: Inadequate
The school's capacity to improve	4: Inadequate
Students' academic achievement	4: Inadequate
Students' progress in their personal development	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	4: Inadequate
The quality of the curriculum delivery	4: Inadequate
The quality of guidance and support for students	4: Inadequate
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	4: Inadequate