



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

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

A'ali Primary Boys School
A'ali – Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review 20 – 22 February 2012

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| The Schools Review Unit | 1 |
| Introduction | 2 |
| Characteristics of the school | 2 |
| Table of review judgements awarded..... | 4 |
| Review judgements | 5 |
| Overall effectiveness..... | 5 |
| Students' achievement..... | 6 |
| The quality of provision..... | 7 |
| Leadership, management and governance | 10 |
| The school's main strengths..... | 11 |
| Recommendations..... | 12 |

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 | | A'ali Primary Boys School | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| School's type | | Government | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Year of establishment | | 1985 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Age range of students | | 6 - 10 years | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Grades (e.g. 1 to 12) | | Primary | | | Middle | | | | | High | | | | |
| | | 1- 4 | | | - | | | | | - | | | | |
| Number of students | | Boys | 541 | | Girls | | - | | Total | | | 541 | | |
| Students' social background | | Most students come from limited income families | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Classes per grade | Grade | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | |
| | Classes | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Town /Village | | A'ali | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Governorate | | Central | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of administrative staff | | 12 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of teaching staff | | 37 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Curriculum | | Ministry of Education | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Main language(s) of instruction | | Arabic | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Principal's tenure | | 2 months | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| External assessment and examinations | | Quality Assurance Authority for Education & Training national examinations | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Accreditation (if applicable) | | - | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Number of students in the following categories according to the school's classification | | Outstanding | | | Gifted & Talented | | | Physical Disabilities | | | Learning Difficulties | | | |
| | | 174 | | | 94 | | | 6 | | | 45 | | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Major recent changes in the school | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change of the principal and assistant principal in the current academic year 2011-12 • 20 new teachers joined the school in the current academic year. |
|---|---|

Table of review judgements 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 satisfactory performance in all areas is similar to that reported in the previous review in October 2008. The varied impact of professional development for teachers has resulted in too wide a variation in the quality of the practices implemented. Performance is not good because there is also instability in the staffing and a shortage of senior teachers for core subjects. However, the school's efforts are evident in the new strategic plan which is based on the recommendations of the previous review. Priorities are correct and progress is being made. The school is developing and implementing programmes through extra-curricular activities that meet the interests of the different age groups and are having a positive impact on students' behaviour. Students and their parents are satisfied with the school.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

As in the previous report, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory. It is not good because of the instability of the senior leadership, shortage of a few members of the middle leadership and the high proportion of new teachers. The new strategic action plans are based on an accurate analysis of the school situation using the recommendations of the previous review. The school self-evaluates well. This has helped the school identify the strengths and areas for development. Moreover, the school believes in and is aware of the importance of change and bringing about improvements which result in positive contributions from staff and students. Programmes and training workshops to raise teachers' professional skills and to improve students' behaviour are being implemented but, the impact of these programmes is inconsistent throughout the school.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students in Grade 3 attained levels that are below the national average in the national examinations in Arabic and mathematics throughout 2009 and 2010. However, in 2011 they scored very close to the national average in Arabic and were slightly above the average in mathematics. These results are in line with the students' academic achievement which is judged as satisfactory.

Students attain high pass rates in the school examinations of 2010-11, which range between 95% and 100% in core subjects. The proficiency rates are commensurate with the pass rates in most of Grades 1 and 2 core subjects. However, they vary in Grades 3 and 4, especially in English and science. Students' levels in good lessons reflect the high pass rates in Grades 1 and 2 due to the effective teaching methods that are used. However, students' achievement is only satisfactory in satisfactory lessons, which account for more than half overall. Most satisfactory lessons are in Grade 4 due to variations in the teaching methods used. In Cycle 1, the majority of students' acquisition of skills in information technology, reading and writing in English and Arabic, numeracy and science are adequate. Students' acquisition of reading and writing skills in Arabic is varied in Grades 3 and 4, while those in English, mathematics and science are generally not as well developed.

The pass rates in core subjects over the past three years for the first cycle students are steady. First cycle students make satisfactory progress in most lessons and in their written work, especially in Grades 1 and 2, due to the various activities that are pitched at students' different ability levels. However, Grade 4 students' progress is not at the same level, especially in English, because individual differences are not sufficiently considered.

The progress of outstanding students is satisfactory in most lessons due to the extra challenge provided by the enrichment programmes. Students in the inclusion class progress well in relation to their abilities because of the effective support they receive. However, students with learning difficulties make more varied progress as a result of the inconsistent support they receive in the individual and group teaching programmes. Also, the progress of low achievers is not enough because of limited support and use of remedial programmes.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Most students work together well and participate in extra-curricular activities and school committees such as 'The Little Cook', the Discipline Committee and the Hygiene Committee. In addition, they take leading roles, as in recording late students, participating in the morning broadcast and discussing students' issues, such as the final examinations schedule at the Students Council. This contributes to increasing their self-confidence and sense of responsibility. However, their participation and enthusiasm in class often dips because they are provided with too few opportunities to take on leading roles mainly due to the types of teaching methods used.

Students have good relationships based on mutual respect among each other and with their teachers. They behave well in classes which results in them feeling safe and secure. They attend school regularly and the school encourages them to arrive early, for example by honouring the first 30 students. It has begun implementing programmes "my break is my joy" to address the few cases of misbehaviour; however the impact of these is more evident in class than out.

Most students participate in national events such as the National Festival and the Bahrain Heritage Exhibition. Furthermore, students show commitment to Islamic values through the 'Planting and Irrigation' programme and their participation in some religious events such as the Adha Eid and the Quran recitation contest. These positively reinforce students' understanding of Bahraini culture, identity and Islamic values.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Teachers are familiar with their study material but this is inconsistently reflected in their performance. Some provide effective introductory activities and use a range of teaching strategies such as 'Six Thinking Hats', 'brainstorming', 'exploration' and 'experimentation'. Teaching aids such as the Smart-Board, games and learning cards are used and, students are given opportunities for cooperative learning in good lessons. However, in other lessons teaching is less effective since it is not planned well enough and the roles and responsibilities of students are not well defined, which results in opportunities for learning which are too varied in quality. In good lessons, students are encouraged by means of

symbolic gifts and awards when they participate, which contributes to increasing their motivation for learning and to their acquisition of basic skills, concepts and knowledge, particularly in Grades 1 and 2. This learning is better than in other satisfactory lessons where the teacher is the centre of the lesson and tends to simply instruct. This teaching method is used especially in Grade 4 English lessons, thus resulting in students' inconsistent achievement which came at a lower level

Opportunities provided to develop students' critical and analytic thinking skills and challenge their abilities vary in different lessons. Many depend solely on verbal questions that basically rely too heavily on knowledge and memory recall, deduction of lesson goals and finding word synonyms.

Class management is appropriately handled and characterised by the calm class atmosphere, controlled the majority of students' behaviour and the provision of guidelines and directions. However, time management in most lessons is poor as the provision of some lesson details and activities take too long, which delays achieving the lesson's goals.

Students are given homework in most lessons from the workbook exercises and writing activities. These are regularly followed up and marked with constructive feedback to allow students to improve their work. However, these activities do not consider students' educational needs and individual differences enough. Teachers use verbal and written assessment methods but the support for low achievers is not precisely targeted.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students' understanding of their rights and responsibilities is developed to a satisfactory level via national events such as 'A Word about My Country' and enrichment activities such as with the Community Police. Most students participate in school events and extra-curricular activities, for example the cultural week and the Hygiene Committee activities, which reflect students' understanding and contribute to meeting their interests and developing their experiences.

Students' acquisition of the basic skills needed for their next educational stage is adequate due to the varied development of these skills through subjects' delivery and reinforcement. However, links made between subjects are limited. The curriculum is reviewed by way of analysing recent improvements and raising parents' understanding of some of the content, including knowledge, concepts, and skills.

Many activities are provided to include students with learning difficulties, such as 'International Day for the Disabilities' and for outstanding and talented students, the 'Young Talents in Mathematics' project. However, those provided for low achievers do not meet their individual educational needs well enough.

Facilities such as the e-learning classroom and the learning resources centre are used inconsistently, resulting in limited participation by students in these special areas. Other facilities are used more. The curriculum is enriched with guidance boards in classes and display corners. Students' work inside classes is not celebrated enough, especially in the first cycle classes.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Students are prepared for the next educational stage through educational meetings and lectures and conducting visits to other schools. Induction of new students includes familiarising them with facilities and arranging meetings for their parents.

Financial and in-kind aid, such as the 'winter aid' are provided. The school identifies students' educational needs by performing diagnostic tests in core subjects and using the findings of these tests to provide the needed support for the inclusion class students whose special needs are well met. Outstanding and talented students receive support through enrichment and extra-curricular activities and competitions. Low achievers receive support through activities and remedial lessons, but this is not effective enough to help them make expected progress.

The guidance departments give most of the students advice through individual and group meetings and awareness programmes, which contribute to reducing the behavioural problems.

The school communicates with parents by means of weekly bulletins, educational meetings, and the project 'Communication Chair', which aims to increase parents' participation and communication between home and school. Parents receive reports of their children's academic and personal progress after the examinations.

The school regularly assesses the risks related to health and safety and takes the necessary actions. The nurse provides lectures and health services to support students' and staff's good health. There are plans to start emergency evacuation practise drills.

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 that focus on academic achievement. They were set with the participation of the administrative and teaching staff. The students and their parents are familiar with these. The school also has an action plan which includes clear goals to improve the overall performance at the school and a strategic plan based on an accurate analysis of the school situation. The plan is well based on the identified strengths and areas for development at the school and the recommendations of the previous review visit. The school monitors the implementation of its plan, but the procedures followed are not comprehensive and accurate enough to ensure sufficiently rapid progress.

The school administration inspires, motivates and encourages its affiliates and maintains the spirit of 'one family' through projects such as 'The Silver and Golden Record' and delegating some tasks in the light of the staff shortage at the school. This includes some teachers leading the professional development programmes, which positively impacts on the sense of cooperation among all school members. These programmes contribute to raising teachers' professional competency. Training needs are identified via assessment visits. The school has held training workshops on 'Self-Assessment', 'Cooperative Learning' and the 'Six Thinking Hats' so as to develop the teaching of higher order thinking skills. Peer visits also take place to spread best educational practices. However, the impact of these programmes is varied as they are not applied consistently in lessons.

The school communicates with parents through various channels such educational meetings, the open day, and the parents' council. In addition, parents have the opportunity to participate in some events and programmes, such as the workshop on school violence, honouring distinguished students during the morning assembly, the "My break is my joy" project and the national day festival. The school seeks the opinions of students and their parents via a suggestion box and responds to some of their suggestions such as dedicating the back-gate for the school buses, advancing the leaving time and providing remedial lessons for low achievers. Furthermore, the school follows up with the external improvement team to monitor the school's work and contacts some of the institutes of the local community to implement joint programmes, such as the A'ali clinic for dental care. These enrich the students' learning experiences in a satisfactory manner.

The school's main strengths

- The programmes implemented to encourage discipline and increase students' attendance
- The support provided for students in the inclusion class and their good progress in relation to their ability
- Diagnosing the school's situation and identifying strengths and areas of development.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- raise academic achievement through improving the teaching and learning processes to include:
 - assessment for effective learning and using assessment findings to meet the various needs of students
 - developing students' basic skills in core subjects
 - providing support for low achievers inside and outside of class
 - efficient time management in lessons
 - linking subjects in a manner that enables students to study a comprehensive and coherent curriculum.
- continue to implement and monitor the impact of behavior programmes
- Monitor the impact of teachers' professional development programmes on the quality of teaching and learning in lessons.