



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

# **Schools Review Unit Review Report**

**Al Hoorā Secondary Girls School  
Al Hoorā - Capital Governorate  
Kingdom of Bahrain**

**Date Reviewed: 22 - 24 March 2010**

## **Table of Contents**

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<b>The Schools Review Unit .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Characteristics of the school .....	2
<b>Overall effectiveness .....</b>	<b>3</b>
The school's capacity to improve .....	6
<b>The school's main strengths and areas for development .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>What the school needs to do to improve .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Overall judgements .....</b>	<b>9</b>

## The Schools Review Unit

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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 founded 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 practices among schools
- 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:

<b>Grade description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
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**

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### **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 work, analysed the school's performance data and other documents, and talked with staff, students and parents. This report summarises their findings and recommendations.

### **Information about the school**

Gender of students: Girls

Number of students: 250

Age range: 16 - 18 years

### **Characteristics of the school**

Al Hoorah Secondary Girls School is one of the Capital Governorate's schools and was established in 1960. Its students are aged between 16 and 18 years old. Most students come from middle-income families. There are 250 students, of whom 50 are categorised by the school as outstanding, 30 as talented, one as having special educational needs and three as physically disabled. Students are distributed across 10 classes: 6 for grade 10 and four for grade 11. There are also four unified classes and two in the Technical and Vocational Education Development programme (Apprenticeship programme). The administrative and teaching staff total 68, of whom 19 teachers were appointed this academic year. There are two senior teachers, in the Arabic Language department and the Commercial department. No other departments have senior teachers. The Principal is in her fourth year at the school. The school is part of King Hamad's Schools of the Future project.

## Overall effectiveness

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

#### Grade: 3 (Satisfactory)

The overall effectiveness of Al Hoor Secondary Girls School is satisfactory. The school has some good aspects in the personal development of students, presenting and enriching the curriculum, support and guidance for students and the effectiveness of leadership and management. Students and their parents are very satisfied with the school.

The students' academic achievement is satisfactory. Students achieve high pass rates for most subjects. These high standards are reflected in some lessons. Students achieve high standards of proficiency in Science, but lower levels in Arabic, Mathematics, and English. Students make adequate progress in lessons where teachers use effective strategies and techniques and consider students' individual differences when organising class activities and setting homework. The school conducts diagnostic tests and analyses the results at different assessment stages. Students are categorised and allocated to specialised programmes according to their examination results and abilities; this has contributed to the progress of lower achievers and to an increase in the number of outstanding students compared to the number in this category when they joined the school.

Students' personal development is good. Most students attend school regularly and there are few absences. The school's administration implements clear monitoring mechanisms and procedures to minimise absences. Students participate in school life through extra-curricular activities, such as a walking festival at the Dawhat Arad marine project. Various school committees have been set up to meet students' needs and interests and students enthusiastically and effectively contribute and participate in classroom activities. Students are often given the opportunity to work together. The school offers students the chance to act as a 'Young Teacher' and operates an independent study programme. Students take leading roles on a school advisory committee, which enhances their self-confidence and ability to work cooperatively. Students' analytical thinking skills are not sufficiently developed in some lessons. Most students have good relationships with their teachers and their classmates, based on respect and affection. The atmosphere in the school is one of security and stability.

The effectiveness of the teaching and learning processes is satisfactory. Teachers know the study materials well, which is reflected particularly in good and outstanding lessons. Some teachers used effective teaching and learning strategies, such as encouraging cooperative learning, which ensured the active participation and enthusiasm of students and enabled them to acquire basic skills and concepts as well as knowledge. The school operates a differentiated teaching programme to match activities and homework to students' abilities; this programme has not worked consistently well and students' performance and progress varies according to their abilities. The development of students' higher thinking skills is also inconsistent; this is done effectively in good and outstanding lessons but some teachers do not provide enough opportunities for students to develop these skills. Students are assigned homework as set out in lesson plans. Some homework considers individual differences and most teachers regularly grade the work; some homework lacks feedback, however. Some teachers used a variety of verbal and written, group or individual, assessment techniques to ensure that the objectives of the lessons have been achieved and give immediate feedback. In other lessons, only verbal questioning was used and students' achievement was inconsistent in such lessons.

The quality of presenting and enriching the curriculum is good. Most students are aware of their rights and duties. Students helped to develop a list of rights and duties, which has had a positive effect on their behaviour and their concern for the school environment. Students behave with respect for each other and their teachers. The school offers a variety of extra-curricular activities for different categories of students. Some of the programmes for outstanding and talented students, such as the School Stock Exchange, challenge students' abilities and enhance their various skills, particularly in designing computer programmes and preparing electronic lessons. Students acquire good basic skills in Arabic, Mathematics and IT. They do not acquire such good English language skills, except for the Apprenticeship students; English is used in most of their lessons. The school uses its environment effectively to enrich the curriculum; great attention is paid to the school environment and facilities, which are full of various aids to study and displays of students' work. Many workshops and programmes are organised that help provide students with life skills.

The effectiveness of support and guidance for students is good. All students are appropriately settled into their classes, tracks and remedial or enrichment programmes in their first week of joining the school. The school also organises guidance programmes for grade 9 students before they join the secondary stage; this helps them choose which track to follow and allocates them to their preferred programmes, which often helps them to settle quickly. Students are also inducted for their transition stage of education through activities that enable them to acquire the basic and personal skills they need for the next stage. The school makes good use of students' results in the intermediate stage, as well as diagnostic tests, to assess their educational

needs and allocate them to enrichment, creativity or remedial programmes according to their abilities and interests. Many participants in such programmes, particularly lower-achieving students, make good progress. The school uses various mechanisms to communicate with parents, which most parents appreciate.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The school has a vision that focuses on achievement, which was drafted with contributions from staff. This vision has had a significant impact on the practices and activities of the school. A strategic plan has been set and developed, based on comprehensive analysis of the school's position. The plan is being realised in effective procedures aimed at improving the performance of students and teachers. Its impact on students' personal development is clear. The school monitors and evaluates all aspects of its work, and the effectiveness of the strategic plan, by asking staff to complete survey and evaluation forms for all its programmes, activities and services. The school's leaders assess teachers' performance in lessons to identify training needs and measure the impact of professional development workshops and programmes. Overall, professional development activities have had a good impact, although some programmes, particularly those dealing with differentiated teaching, have only had an effect in excellent and good lessons; this is because of the shortage of senior teachers. The school inspires its staff by fostering a spirit of teamwork and a sense of belonging to the school. The school effectively uses the educational environment, as well as its human and educational resources, to help provide extra-curricular activities that have a direct impact on students' acquisition of professional and life skills.

## **□ Does the school have the capacity to improve?**

### **Grade: 2 (Good)**

The school has a good capacity to improve and develop. It is led and managed well by a team that works together effectively and deals openly with all staff. The management team also motivates staff to improve educational performance and achieve quality and proficiency at work. The school carries out comprehensive and accurate strategic planning and self-evaluation that have been effective in helping to raise students' acquisition levels. Some of the school's improvements include setting up an electronic library, updating the automated registration system for teachers, creating a team to lead on differentiation in teaching and encouraging staff development that has helped improve students' achievement and increase the number of outstanding students. The school still faces the challenge of raising the standard of teaching and learning processes.

## **The school's main strengths and areas for development**

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### **Main Strengths**

- Strategic planning
- Students' standards in ministry of education examinations
- Inspiration and motivation of school staff
- Basic skills in Arabic, Mathematics and IT
- Students' contribution to school life
- Students' relationships with each other and their teachers
- Employment of school environment
- Support and guidance programmes
- Induction programmes.

### **Areas for development**

- Developing analytical thinking skills.
- Basic skills in English
- Considering individual differences in class activities and homework
- Benefiting from assessment techniques in lessons.

## **What the school needs to do to improve**

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### **In order to improve further, the school should:**

- Improve teaching and learning processes, to include:
  - Benefiting from outstanding practices
  - Considering individual differences of students in class activities and homework
  - Developing analytical thinking skills
  - Challenging students' abilities
  - Focusing on students' acquisition of basic skills in English.
- Employ effective assessment for learning purposes
- Fill the vacancies for senior teachers in most main subjects, including Science, Mathematics, English and Computer Studies.

## Overall judgements

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Aspect	Grade: Description
<b>The school's overall effectiveness</b>	<b>3: Satisfactory</b>
The school's capacity to improve	2: Good
Students' academic achievement	3: Satisfactory
Students' progress in their personal development	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	3: Satisfactory
The quality of the curriculum delivery	2: Good
The quality of guidance and support for students	2: Good
The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management	2: Good