



الهيئة الوطنية
للمؤهلات وضمان جودة التعليم والتدريب
National Authority for Qualifications &
Quality Assurance of Education & Training

Schools Review Unit

Review Report

Sitra Intermediate Girls School
Sitra - Central Governorate
Kingdom of Bahrain

Date of Review: 3 – 5 December 2012

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The Schools Review Unit

The Schools Review Unit (SRU) is part of the National Authority for Qualifications and Quality Assurance of Education and Training (NAQQAET) that was officially set up in 2008 as an independent body governed and supervised by the Council of Ministers. 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 six 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		Sitra Intermediate Girls School															
School's type		Government															
Year of establishment		1980															
Age range of students		13 – 15 years															
Grades (e.g. 1 to 12)		Primary				Middle				High							
		-				7-9				-							
Number of students		Boys	-	Girls	831				Total	831							
Students' social background		Most students come from middle income families.															
Classes per grade	Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12				
	Classes	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	9	9	-	-	-				
Town /Village		Sitra															
Governorate		Central															
Number of administrative staff		17 administrative and 4 technicians															
Number of teaching staff		74															
Curriculum		Ministry of Education (MoE)															
Main language(s) of instruction		Arabic															
Principal's tenure		A year and a half															
External assessment and examinations		MoE and NAQQAET's 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			
		146				80				6				33			
Major recent changes in the school		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal and two assistant principals have joined the school in the past academic year 2011-12 The school has joined the Improvement Project in 2012-13. 															

Table of review judgements awarded

Aspect	Grade: Description			
The school's overall effectiveness	2 : Good			
The school's capacity to improve	1 : Outstanding			
	Elementary / Primary	Middle / Intermediate	High / Secondary	Overall
Students' academic achievement	-	2	-	2
Students' personal development	-	2	-	2
The quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning	-	2	-	2
The quality of the curriculum implementation	-	2	-	2
The quality of support and guidance for students	-	1	-	1
The quality and effectiveness of leadership, management and governance	-	1	-	1

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: 2 Good

The school's overall performance has changed from satisfactory in the previous review in January 2010 to good in this review. Leadership and management, and support and guidance are outstanding, while other aspects are good. This is attributed to strategic planning based on priorities drawn from the recommendations of the previous review and accurate self-assessment. The school has used the experiences of other schools and educational literature to shape improvements. It has deployed its resources well to improve teaching and learning and created a stimulating learning environment. This has resulted in significant improvements in all aspects, especially in students' behaviour and the high pass and competency rates in core subjects of the national and MoE examinations, although competency rates in basic English skills dropped slightly. Parents are pleased with the school.

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school's capacity to improve changed from satisfactory to outstanding. The senior administration, with the staff's full cooperation has developed a culture of positive change towards improving performance. Accurate self-assessment and strategic planning with precise performance indicators have helped improve strengths, face challenges and make a quantum leap in advancing the school towards achieving its vision. The recent improvements, which include creating a stimulating learning environment and raised standards, have come as a direct result of the senior administration's encouragement for the staff, its commitment to improving their professional competency through intensive training programmes and their adoption of transparent and participatory decision-making. Job satisfaction rates are high and are reflected in the enriching programmes teachers offer students. This in turn results in significant improvements in students' behaviour and in their academic achievement.

Students' achievement

□ How well do students achieve in their academic work?

Grade: 2 Good

Grade 9 students generally attained levels in the National Examinations that were above the national average in all subjects from 2010 to 2012. They attained well above the national average in Arabic in 2011 and 2012, as well as in mathematics in 2012. These results are commensurate with their standards in most lessons, attributed to the impact of effective teaching methods.

Most students attained high pass rates in all core subjects of school and MoE examinations, ranging between 89% and 99% in 2011-12. The highest rates were in mathematics and the lowest were in Grade 9 English. These rates are commensurate with the competency rates and performance standards in most students' written work and in the good and outstanding lessons which represented more than two-thirds of the lessons observed during the review, especially high in science and mathematics and more than half the Arabic lessons. This is attributed to the effective teaching and learning process, which enables most students to acquire mathematical skills, define relations between numbers, and conduct scientific research in science lessons. Students acquire good skills in writing, reading, syntax and discourse analysis in Arabic. Although competency standards of basic skills in most Grade 8 and 9 English lessons have improved, the competency standards of basic skills, particularly speaking, are lower in Grade 7.

The school has maintained the quality of its outcomes over the past three years and has made significant progress in most core subjects as students move on to the upper grades. Furthermore, their progress is good in most lessons and in their written work due to effective support and varied outstanding, activities that challenge their abilities.

Outstanding and talented students' progress is good. Progress is made considering their abilities, especially well outside the classroom. This is attributed to the opportunities they have to participate in extra-curricular activities, enrichment programmes, local and international competitions, in which they perform well, such as being ranked first in the creative writing competition. Moreover, students with learning difficulties and those with disabilities made great progress in special individual and group remedial programmes. However, low achieving students' progress is not good enough in some lessons due to the varied support they receive.

□ How good is the students' personal development?

Grade: 2 Good

Most students have high self-confidence and a sense of responsibility which are demonstrated in their photographing of school events and decorating school quads and classes with their work. Their enthusiasm is reflected in their participation in most lessons, student committees and councils.

Students elect their student council members who address problems and convey suggestions to the administration, for example regarding the examination schedule. Outstanding students demonstrate self-initiative by ushering remedial lessons, competing with their counterparts from other schools and in extra-curricular activities, such as their participation in the UNICEF Photo Contest. They organise seminars and exhibitions, which have great impact on developing their personalities and strengthening harmony among them.

Most students observe regulations, attend school and lessons on time and preserve school property and cleanliness. Students demonstrate mature awareness and understanding of their roles as effective partners in improving the school. They show this in meetings and in their good behaviour and positive attitude towards each other, affiliates and visitors. This is attributed to the school's recognition of their talents and promotion of positive values. Students and parents praise the school and have a secure sense of safety.

Students show significant understanding of Islamic values and Bahraini history and culture. This is illustrated in their participation in historical events and the design of corners and national paintings inside and outside classrooms.

The quality of provision

□ How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 2 Good

Most teachers are experienced in teaching and familiar with their study material. They show enthusiasm during lessons and consider how best to shape students' learning patterns. This is reflected in their good planning for more than two-thirds of the lessons in which they applied effective teaching methods such as discussion, debate, brainstorming, peer learning and cooperative learning, which promoted effective learning and harmony among students. Teachers use the available teaching resources in most lessons well, such as flashcards,

pictures and projectors, and encourage students with motivating phrases and rewards. This creates a positive learning environment that improves students' participation and makes lessons fun. As a result students acquire basic skills, concepts and knowledge well, especially in science, mathematics and Arabic. However, their acquisition of English language skills and particularly speaking in Grade 7 is not as it should be due to their partial mastering of basic skills required to learn new skills. This is in contrast to the high competency rates in Grades 8 and 9.

In response to the previous review's recommendations, the school intensified its efforts to develop higher order thinking skills, such as analysis and inference and has encouraged students to follow the steps of scientific thinking in problem-solving. Likewise, teachers challenged the students' abilities in most lessons with introductory activities, written activities, homework and oral questions, which contributed to their progress and widened their knowledge, considering their abilities.

Most teachers manage classes effectively where instructions are clear, progression is organised and objectives are achieved. However, time management is not as tight as it might be in many lessons.

Students are assigned homework which consider their standards and support their learning well, especially in good and outstanding lessons such as science, mathematics and Arabic. Homework is marked accurately and regularly and feedback is provided to help students know and correct their mistakes. This results in good progress in students' performance over time. Furthermore, assessment methods are varied and include individual and collective assessments, both written and oral. The display of coloured cards to ensure students are achieving lessons' objectives at different levels is effective in most lessons. However, the needs of low achieving students are not met sufficiently well in satisfactory lessons due to limited support.

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

Grade: 2 Good

The school provides numerous options that contribute to students' experiences and knowledge. Students' participation in varied extra-curricular activities and committees based on their interests and abilities is good, including that by talented students in exhibitions. Initiatives are taken to turn some curriculum topics into electronic lessons and artistic paintings also improve and broaden students' learning.

The curriculum is reviewed regularly when students and parents give their opinions. Logical linking across content is considered and is supported and simplified with explanatory booklets for most subjects. The school environment motivates students to learn and helps them be creative. They cultivate and design its yards with their outstanding work. Students' reading and writing skills are improved by using the learning resources centre and computer laboratory well, although there is a shortage of rooms for practical subjects.

Most teachers employ linkage between subjects and students use artistic and creative skills alongside scientific laws and theories to create relevant educational projects, such as the paper and glass recycling projects. However, although the students showed high standards of competency of scientific, mathematical and literary skills, some of them do not acquire the English skills required for the next stage adequately.

Students' loyalty to their country and their understanding of their rights and responsibilities are good. They participate in national and historical competitions, festivals, events, plays and fieldtrips, such as the one to the Supreme Council for Women.

□ How well are students guided and supported?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

New students receive a programme before they enrol in the school which introduces them to the school's regulations and facilities. They attend educational meetings accompanied by their parents as they settle in. The school also prepares its students for secondary education through cooperating with secondary schools in distributing leaflets and offering guidance lectures.

The students' personal needs are met through the Student Fund, provision of healthcare programmes and the issuance of ID cards for students suffering from chronic diseases. The school diagnoses students' behavioural and psychological needs extremely well and directs its human resources to follow up issues in close coordination with parents. Guidance lectures and self-development projects reflect clearly in the quality of outcomes.

Parents commend the variety of communication channels that informed them of their daughters' personal and academic progress. Moreover, the school accurately assesses educational needs and accordingly designs remedial lessons and supportive projects to improve learning. Furthermore, low achieving students receive individual and collective support and outstanding and talented students have the opportunity to present seminars, moderate discussion sessions and pioneer school projects. These help all groups of students to progress very well, both personally and academically.

The environment is healthy and safe. Risks are periodically assessed and reduced. Staff are trained and evacuation and shelter drills are practised. However, the main gate still presents a safety risk

Leadership, management and governance

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The school's leadership and administration have accomplished major improvements in all aspects of the school's work. These are reflected in improved students' grades, pass and competency rates and personal development. A shared vision aims at excellence, religious commitment and patriotism. The vision guides the school's strategic plan, which was created with the affiliates and parents. The plan is based on recommendations in the previous review report and includes clear performance indicators and effective measurement mechanisms. The school continues to execute its plan with strong support from the school affiliates and parents.

The school affiliates commend the senior leadership's important role in encouraging them, adopting their projects and honouring outstanding teachers. Middle leadership increases teachers' proficiency and encourage them to keep up with educational developments through intensive training programmes and bulletins about outstanding teaching strategies. The leadership invests the expertise of outstanding teachers in the provision of workshops, mutual visits and preparation of effective programmes for new teachers. The impact of training is monitored carefully through assessments and class visits, which show significant improvements in the standards of educational practices.

The senior leadership is transparent in their participatory decision-making. They seek the opinions of the affiliates, students, and parents through questionnaires, the suggestions box and consultative councils such as the Students' and the Parents' Councils. The school responds according to its capacity, for example the school environment was decorated and examination schedule was changed in response to students' suggestions and school buses were monitored and traffic was regulated in response to parents' suggestions.

The school communicates effectively with the local community to enrich students' educational, cultural and real-life experiences. It cooperates with national companies such as

the Bahrain Petroleum Company to improve the school environment and provide booklets that serve vocational projects. In addition it coordinates programmes with the health centre to provide health and educational lectures as well as checkups for its members when needed. The school carefully checks and supports the academic and technical departments' performance through regular meetings between the administrative board and the technical committee. In addition, students, parents and the improvement team form critical partners who assess the school's overall performance. The improvement team plays an important role in the promotion and support of the school's efforts to improve.

The school's main strengths

- Students' achievement of high pass and competency rates in the school and MoE examinations
- Grade 9 students' achievement of standards above and well above average in the national examinations, especially in Arabic and mathematics
- Strategic planning derived from the findings of accurate and comprehensive assessments of the school's performance
- The school's effective inspiration and support to its affiliates and students in meeting their different needs particularly outside the classrooms and preparing them for continuous learning
- Students' enthusiastic participation, awareness of curriculum activities and good behaviour.

Recommendations

In order to improve, the school should:

- continue improving the teaching and learning processes by:
 - developing the students' English skills in general and the speaking skill in particular
 - providing low achieving students with more help in lessons
 - managing time more effectively during lessons in order to achieve the utmost productivity.
- take the necessary measures regarding the school's main gate to ensure the safety of the school's affiliates.