



## Report on Review of 9-year Compulsory Education

( October 1997 )

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<b>Theme</b>	Compulsory education – Curriculum and instruction – Student selection and allocation – Student support services – Teacher education
<b>Level of Education</b>	Primary – Secondary
<b>Background</b>	<p>The Sub-committee on Review of School Education of the Board of Education was set up in 1995 to review the implementation of the 9-year compulsory education in Hong Kong. The Sub-committee had expended a two-year effort to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing practices, problems, and future directions of school education. The specific foci of the study were, firstly, assessment and allocation systems and, secondly, the aims, objectives, targets, and enforcement of the 9-year compulsory education. The Sub-committee then published a report in March 1997 for public consultation. The deliberations revealed public support for and endorsement on improving basic education quality. Then, in the light of the new directions for educational policies of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region prescribed by the Chief Executive as spelled out in his inaugural speech and subsequent policy speeches, the Sub-committee re-examined its stance/proposals on relevant issues and produced a revised version of the report and submitted it to the Government for consideration.</p>
<b>Aim</b>	<p>This Report aims to present, on the one hand, findings of an evaluation of the implementation of the 9-year compulsory education, of which was conducted in light of the specific aims of school education delineated by the Government in 1993 and, on the other hand, recommendations for problem-solving, quality improvement, and future development.</p>
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## \* Summary of Policy Recommendations\*

[In the following extraction from *Chapter 10* of the Report, the Sub-committee outlines what they see as the preferred directions for the future development of public school education in Hong Kong. *Editors.*]

### Major areas for enhancement

- 10.6 In expectation of greater resources input in the education sector, the Sub-committee attempts to portray the major areas for better school education in Hong Kong in future.
- enhancing quality and professional development of school heads, senior teachers and teachers
  - streamlining school structure
  - improving school facilities
  - promoting school-based educational research
  - increasing resources on education
  - creation of teaching assistant positions
  - related improvements in the education system
  - special measures to assist schools with problems

### Enhancing quality and professional development of school heads, senior teachers and teachers

- 10.7 The school principal plays a key role in school management, in shaping the school ethos, in boosting teacher morale and in determining the overall performance of a school. Leadership of the school principal is of crucial importance. A good principal should have clear educational goals and vision, strong leadership, high moral standards, excellent interpersonal skills and a full commitment to his/her unique mission in leading a school.
- 10.8 It is important that the leader of a school should have adequate training in all aspects of education including educational management, curriculum development, staff development and school administration before taking up the post of a principal. The Sub-committee expects that by the year 2007, when the target of 35% graduate posts in primary schools is realised, all primary school heads should have at least a Bachelor of Education degree or an equivalent degree with relevant professional training.
- 10.9 Teachers and senior teachers likewise are equally important in building up school ethos and in determining the success of a school. They are the key persons to affect pupils' learning. They should have full commitment to education, maintain high moral standards and share the mission of the school. They should carry out their teaching duties with enthusiasm and seek opportunities to further professional development.
- 10.10 To promote high quality education, an all-graduate and all-trained teaching force is necessary. The introduction of graduate teachers in primary schools is certainly a move in the right direction. Prior to full implementation of the all-graduate profession, it is expected that experienced graduate teachers in primary schools could be appointed as heads, deputy heads or senior teachers taking up the duties of subject panel chairpersons or other functional posts.
- 10.11 Apart from initial teacher education, in-service education of teachers for continuous professional growth is very important. In addition to the whole range of in-service teacher education

opportunities provided by tertiary institutions and other bodies, school-based in-service education is a preferred mode whereby advice and expertise geared to meet the needs of pupils are offered by experts (ED inspectors, lecturers from tertiary institutions or other well qualified persons) visiting the school....

- 10.12 Another means to promote quality education in school is to provide different paths of careers advancement for teachers. The Sub-committee is of the view that with the creation of the rank of "Master Teacher", teachers with outstanding performance in teaching will be promoted to a rank with emphasis on teaching and professional duties other than management or administration. In this way, the potential of the academic-oriented teachers in teaching, curriculum design or educational research can be developed to the full.

### **Streamlining school structure**

- 10.13 Whole-day schooling is most desirable in promoting effective learning and enhancing the quality of school education. The Sub-committee urges the Government to give higher priority to education in allocating urban school sites to achieve whole-day schooling.
- 10.14 An ideal mode of education is to have a continuous and undisrupted progress from the primary to secondary stage. In other words, a pupil is allowed to complete his primary and secondary education in the same school with steady peer groups, familiar environment and identical school values. Longer years of school life in the same school also contribute to inculcating positive school ethos and maintaining the school's tradition and culture. Moreover, the need for public examination or test for all P6 leavers for allocation purposes could then be eliminated. Consideration might be given to build primary and secondary schools in the same compound when planning new schools.

### **Improving school facilities**

#### Sufficient classrooms and other indoor space in school

- 10.15 There has been an increasing demand for space for both teaching and other uses in school. New teaching posts, adoption of new teaching strategies, emphasis on different disciplines like moral, civic and sex education, counselling and guidance all require more space. An ideal school should provide a spacious indoor and outdoor environment for teachers and pupils. There should be sufficient number of classrooms to facilitate split class teaching and to allow draw-out treatments for pupils with special educational needs. The practice of floating classes at S1 to S5 would end if provision of sufficient classrooms could be achieved.
- 10.16 In view of the development of recent teaching strategies and curriculum like TOC, floor space in classrooms larger than the existing limit should be provided for teachers and pupils in future to enhance effective teaching and learning.
- 10.17 It is noted that the establishment of a staff common room student activity centre and an interview room in schools was recommended earlier by the Education Commission (ECR5 paras. 2.24-2.44, June 1992). The Sub-committee suggests to add to the list a school canteen which is most desirable for whole day primary schools. It is hoped that this will become standard provisional in all our schools in future.
- 10.18 Activity space is generally inadequate in our schools especially primary schools. It is very important that all our schools should have sufficient indoor and outdoor activity space. Every school should have its own playground for the use of pupils, rather than one to be shared with the neighbourhood.

### **Promoting school-based educational research**

- 10.19 In order to better understand the root of problems and issues in our schools and in the education system, to find out solutions to these problems and to engage in on-going innovation and improvements, more resources should be provided to support tertiary institutions and schools in conducting research projects on educational policies, problems, issues and needs in school. Co-ordination or co-operation between schools and tertiary institutions should be promoted in carrying out more school-based research studies on different aspects.
- 10.20 In Hong Kong the percentage of education spending over the total government expenditure has been around 17% to 18% constantly and is the biggest portion amongst social welfare, medical and health services, public housing and police force.

### **Increasing resources on education**

- 10.21 ...the public expenditure on education is only some 2.8% of gross domestic product (GDP) of Hong Kong, which is far below the average figure 5.8% for OECD countries (1993). It also compares less favourably with many Asian countries.
- 10.22 The comparatively low figure of 2.8% for Hong Kong makes it difficult to have substantial improvements on school education, particularly primary education. An increase of the resources for education is needed....
- 10.23 The Sub-committee has taken note that the general trend in developed countries for providing education opportunities to pupils with special educational needs is integration or inclusion in normal schools. The Sub-committee is of the view that this trend is a move in the right direction. However, teachers in normal schools will then have to spend more efforts in helping these children. Additional resources are clearly required for those schools admitting pupils with such special educational needs. The Sub-committee also supports the recommendations of BoE Sub-committee on Special Education and recommends that additional resources should be increased to improve special education services such as provision of occupational therapists and physiotherapists which are critical and of great urgency to the safety and health of children with special educational needs.
- 10.24 Additional resources are also clearly required for those schools admitting pupils with special educational needs including gifted children. The Sub-committee endorses the recommendations on gifted education in the Report of BoE Sub-committee on Special Education and recommends that there should be wide publicity on the need for gifted education and more resources should be devoted to gifted education to allow the gifted to fully develop their potentials.

### **Creation of teaching assistant positions**

- 10.25 It is recognised that teachers' workload is generally heavy. In particular front-line teachers have to shoulder much responsibility in handling pupils' problem cases. Teachers' dissatisfaction is often heard on their heavy work load, extra time being required to handle problems arising from pupils' discipline, apathy towards school work and other types of misbehaviour.
- 10.26 It is against this background that teaching assistants which featured in many overseas schools are proposed to make available to schools in Hong Kong....
- 10.27 It is expected that with the provision of this kind of personnel in schools, teachers can be spared from some non-teaching duties and more attention can be spent on lesson planning and curriculum tailoring. The creation of these teaching assistance positions would be covered by the proposed comprehensive staff review at para. 6.18

10.28 The improvement of schools and enhancement of education are incomplete without the necessary improvements of other related bodies in the system. ED, sponsoring bodies and teacher education providers (tertiary institutions) are parts of the system. It is recognised that ED has attempted to undertake reforms in its own structure (ECR para. 8.8, November 1996). Public views will be sought during consultation for this Report as to what reforms or improvements are appropriate for ED, sponsoring bodies and teacher education providers.

### **Special measures to assist schools with problems**

10.29 Poor performance of a school could be associated with a number of problems such as poor leadership of school heads, low motivation of teachers and inefficient school management committee, etc. To provide more support in assisting under performing schools, a proactive step should be taken by the authority to initiate positive intervention by sending experts in different fields like curriculum design or school administration into the school....

### **The sub-committee's vision**

10.30 With the implementation of the recommendations in this Report, the Sub-committee anticipates that certain areas would require particular attention of the monitoring sub-committee (para. 10.5) or further review. These areas include the ratio of graduate and non-graduate teachers, class size, staff establishment and promotion prospects.

10.31 The Sub-committee believes that the above measures/strategies will create a better future school education in Hong Kong. With these improvements, the Sub-committee anticipates that more persons of high calibre can be absorbed into the teaching profession.... The Sub-committee also realises that though not all the measures can be materialised in the near future, most of the improvements or new directions suggested in this chapter should be viable if the Government has the determination. The Sub-committee therefore commends that planning for all these should now commence and the Government is urged to put in more resources for resources for these measures and strategies to materialise in order to foster the development of a high quality school education for our future generation.

[The following extraction from *Chapter 11* summarises the Sub-committee's major policy recommendations under the corresponding chapter heading as follows:

- Chapter 3 "Need and duration of compulsory education";
- Chapter 4 "Aims of 9-year compulsory education";
- Chapter 5 "Reducing impact of individual differences";
- Chapter 6 "Promoting effective learning in school";
- Chapter 7 "Helping pupils with learning/behavioural problems";
- Chapter 8 "Review on the secondary school places allocation system";
- Chapter 9 "Review on other allocation systems";
- Chapter 10 "Directions for future development".

The paragraph numbering system is the same as the original. The number precedes each paragraph is that of *Chapter 11*; the paragraph number at the end is that of the original chapter referred to. *Editors.*]

## 11.2 Chapter 3 "Review on the need and duration of compulsory education"

### Need and duration of compulsory education

Hong Kong should continue to offer free and compulsory education to all children of the relevant age for nine years and the term 'compulsory education' should be revised as 'universal basic education which is more appropriate in sense and in meaning. (para. 3.13)

## 11.3 Chapter 4 "Aims for 9-year compulsory education"

### (A) Improvement on implementation of educational aims

1. Aim 1 - Access to basic education  
Section 74(3)(c)(i) of the Education Ordinance (Cap.279) should be amended to read as follows:  
"who has completed Secondary 3 of secondary education and whose parent can produce evidence to that effect to the satisfaction of the Director, or who has attained the age of 15 years, whichever is earlier." (para. 4.14)
2. Aim 5 - Parental choice  
Schools should be held more accountable to the public, and should hence provide information on their characteristics, goals and approaches to teaching and learning. A standardised format of presenting and compiling such information may be co-ordinated by ED. (para. 4.15)
3. Aim 6 - General aim - individual viewpoint  
All schools (whether joining the SMI scheme or not) should be allowed to have more flexibility in the use of resources for handling individual differences of students provided that an accountability mechanism has been built in. (para. 4.16)
4. Aim 7 - General aim - community viewpoint  
The linkage between families, schools and different sectors of the community must be strengthened. There should be close co-operation between all parties which could be knitted together by a common goal with the school as a base....
5. Aim 10 - Learning skills - acquiring knowledge

#### *Use of School Library and Information Technology*

- (a) The Government should speed up the provision of school library to primary schools, and consider providing supporting staff and additional grants for purchasing library books and other learning resources. A teacher librarian at the rank of Certificated Master/Mistress (CM) should be provided to primary schools accommodated with a school library.... (para. 4.19(a))
- (b) The use of information technology for effective teaching and learning should be made a policy. Software and information technology applications should be introduced in both primary and secondary schools to help pupils learn how to use information technology as an effective learning tool. The Government should also consider to provide schools with, on top of computer hardware, suitable technical support, properly trained staff and recurrent costs for employing experts to design suitable software to promote information technology in school. An information technology technician should be provided to each school in Hong Kong and this would be covered by the proposed comprehensive staff review at para. 6.18. (para. 4.19(b))
- (c) Teacher education institutions should incorporate the use of information technology in all teacher education programmes to facilitate teaching and school administration.... (para. 4.19(c))
- (d) Schools should strengthen pupils' exposure to different media like newspapers, magazines and community resources/ facilities (such as public libraries, the Science Museum and Field Study Centres) so as to cultivate in pupils the habit of reading and self-learning. (para. 4.19(d))

6. Aim 11 - Practical and technical skills,  
The Curriculum Development Institute (CDI) should review the adequacy of daily life skills topics in the syllabus for General Studies in primary schools. To equip pupils with the necessary skills and develop their positive attitude in this aspect, the element of hands-on experience should be strengthened. (para. 4.20)
7. Aim 12 - Social, political and civic awareness  
To better promote civic education in school:
  - (a) a definite amount of time and resources should be allocated to the teaching of civic education in school; and (para. 4.22)
  - (b) teachers should assist pupils to acquaint themselves with the concept of "once country, two systems" and the Basic Law; to recognise the rights and obligations of a citizen, to exercise such rights and to fulfil such obligations, to understand the rule of democracy, and the rights and freedom of individuals, and the proper balance among them. Pupils should be provided with more opportunities to get involved in group project work and community services. More open discussion on current issues should be encouraged among pupils to help them understand their roles and identities in the society, to enhance their understanding of the social, economic and political situation in Hong Kong, the nation and the outside world, and to help them acquire skills in collecting, analysing, synthesising and evaluating information. (para. 4.22(b))
8. Aim 13 - Personal and ethical quality  
To develop personal and ethical quality in pupils, the following points are suggested:
  - (a) to ensure that due emphasis will be given by schools to the development of personal and ethical values in pupils, the quality assurance inspection proposed in ECR7 should include such quality indicators; (para. 4.23(a))
  - (b) to build pupils' positive view of self and positive values for life, schools should adopt a whole-school approach with emphasis on these values across the formal and informal curricula....; and (para. 4.23(b))
  - (c) to promote the role of family education, schools should maintain close co-operation with other social bodies, e.g. community centres, to raise parents' awareness and involvement in the personal development of their children. Schools should also strengthen their ties with parents in nurturing the personal and intellectual development of pupils through the organisation of parent-teacher associations, parents' days and other school functions. (para. 4.23(c))
9. Aim 14 - Physical development
  - (a) To provide sufficient activity space:
    - (i) schools should be given priority in the use of activity space nearby...;(para 4.25(a))
    - (ii) the Government should review the present policy to ensure there is sufficient space for activities, especially in the design of new school buildings;(para. 4.25(b))
    - (iii) the co-operation between schools and private or public sports associations should be strengthened to ensure effective use of available sports and activity facilities in the community; and (para. 4.25(c))
    - (iv) to enable a better use of school facilities, schools may consider opening their school playground on Saturdays and Sundays for pupils' use. (para. 4.25(d))
  - (b) To promote pupils' health awareness and develop their physical well-being:
    - (i) a norm of general physical attainment for each stage in the 9-year compulsory education may be set up by ED; (para. 4.26(a))
    - (ii) schools should be encouraged to provide pupils with focus programmes of health education such as promoting a balanced diet, prevention of diseases, and health activities like morning exercise and eye exercise; (para. 4.26(b))

- (iii) support from parents towards pupils' participation in physical activities should be encouraged; and (para. 4.26(c))
- (iv) ED should consider providing additional resources for schools to employ specialists and tutors for recreational and aesthetic activities and establishing regional children development centres to promote these activities.... (para. 4.26(d))

10. Aim 15 - Aesthetic and cultural development

To promote aesthetic and cultural development:

- (a) aesthetic and cultural elements should be strengthened in initial teacher education; (para. 4.27(a))
- (b) commitment of other sectors in the education of the young through supporting pupils' participation in various aesthetic and cultural activities should be encouraged; (para. 4.27(b))
- (c) co-ordination between schools and other community sectors in developing and organising aesthetic and cultural activities should be enhanced; (para. 4.27(c))
- (d) schools should incorporate cultural and aesthetic activities not only as interest groups in extra-curricular activities but also in the curriculum...; (para. 4.27(d))
- (e) manpower should be provided in CDI to strengthen the support in curriculum development for extra-curricular activities...; and (para. 4.27(e))
- (f) ED should set up clear requirements on teachers' qualifications on cultural subjects and tertiary institutions offering teacher education should plan an appropriate curriculum to train qualified teachers for these subjects. (para. 4.27(f))

(B) Promoting an all-round education

1. To promote an all-round education, efforts should be endeavoured to translate the educational aims into measurable indicators and to conduct a study to monitor their implementation.... (para. 4.29)
2. A research be conducted to explore the possibility of introducing elements of balanced education in assessing schools' performance, e.g. developing an index to assess whether schools are offering an all-round education and to measure their effort in promoting pupil development in various aspects other than academic attainment. (para. 4.29)
- 3 Curriculum Development and Implementation

*Full Development of Pupils' Potentials*

- (a) The design of the curriculum should be geared to meet the needs and potentials of individual pupils aiming at their full development in various aspects, including knowledge, thinking, skills and attitudes. The school curriculum should also develop the multiple intelligences of pupils in a balanced way. (para. 4.31)
- (b) Specific components for developing life skills, attitudes and competitiveness for work as a global citizen should be included in the school curriculum. (para. 4.32)

#### *Language Proficiency*

- (c) To cope with the unique status and needs of the HKSAR, Hong Kong should aim at its pupils being able to master proficiently two languages and three dialects, namely written Chinese and English and spoken Putonghua, Cantonese and English. (para. 4.33)

#### *Information Technology*

- (d) To prepare our pupils for the modern world and to equip them with knowledge of applying modern technology in their study and future careers, there should be a strong emphasis on the use and development of information technology in our curriculum. (para. 4.34)

#### *Curriculum Integration*

- (e) An integrated approach in curriculum initiatives and revision of subject syllabuses should continue to be adopted where appropriate. (para. 4.36)

#### *Streaming of Pupils into Arts and Science Classes*

- (f) Pupils should be provided with the opportunity of studying both some arts and some sciences in their senior secondary studies. (para. 4.37)

#### *Extra-curricular Activities*

- (g) The resources, facilities and manpower for extra-curricular activities should be reviewed and strengthened. (para. 4.38)

## **11.4 Chapter 5 "Reducing impact of individual differences"**

### (A) Quality assurance mechanism

1. A quality assurance mechanism, comprising the following, should be established:
  - (a) learning levels to represent academic attainment instead of year levels:

In future, pupils' learning in the core subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics will be conceived as learning levels according to their actual academic attainments, as distinct from year levels which might not indicate precisely the pupils' attainments. The eight levels of achievement, i.e. Bands of Performance (BoP), defined by the Target Oriented Curriculum (TOC) may be used to specify the different learning levels of pupils within the same year level; (para. 5.4(a))
  - (b) minimum attainment prescribed at P6 and S3:

The minimum attainment prescribed for pupils completing P6 should be 90% of pupils reaching at least BoP3, leaving only 7% at BoP2 and the remaining 3% to be taken care of by special education services. (para. 5.4(b))

The minimum attainment prescribed for pupils completing S3 should be 90% pupils reaching at least BoP4, leaving only 10% at BoP3 or below; and (para. 5.4 (b))
  - (c) submission of annual report of pupils' attainment profiles by schools and monitoring by E. All schools should be invited, in the long run, to submit an annual report to ED providing information on the achievement profiles of all their P6 or S3 pupils. These school reports and data, duly adjusted for differences in assessment standards in different schools, will demonstrate quality assurance of the education system. Schools not yet reaching the required standards should be helped by ED to move towards these standards. Special efforts should be made to assist pupils who cannot attain the minimum prescribed standards. (para. 5.4(c))
2. The quality assurance mechanism above should not be implemented until TOC is fully implemented from P1 - S3 and all parties concerned are confident about the usage of BoP. (para. 5.6)

3. For the interim period:
  - (a) all schools should be encouraged to submit to ED their pupils' HKAT raw scores to draw up territory-wide profiles of pupils' attainments; (para. 5.8)
  - (b) HKAT items should be more objective-based and tie in with the P6 and S3 TOC learning targets as far as possible; and (para. 5.8)
  - (c) to ensure an all round education, schools should be encouraged to review and report to parents their pupils' development in a wider range of aspects including Art, Music, Physical Education, etc. (para. 5.8)

#### (B) Subject-setting method

1. Subject-setting should start in P4 and cover only the three core subjects. (A recommended arrangement is that from P4 onwards, pupils are grouped into classes according to their attainment in the Chinese subject. Pupils will join sets appropriate to their learning level in the subjects of English and Mathematics, the lessons of which will held concurrently for classes in the same year level.) (para. 5.13(a))
2. Subject-setting method elements should be included in initial teacher education, and in-service courses should be provided to help serving teachers develop relevant competence. (para. 5.13(b))
3. Schools are encouraged to consider using Mastery Learning in conjunction with the subject-setting method. (para. 5.13(c)) (5.13(c)- (q))
4. Schools should consider adopting the subject-setting method on an individual basis and apply it to the appropriate level(s), class(es) and core subject(s). Based on the try-out results of the pilot schools participating in the research study on various approaches to coping with individual differences (para. 7.16), ED should consider the appropriate mode(s) and additional resources for schools, if required, for wide implementation of the method. (para. 5.13(d))

#### (C) Remedial teaching

1. In primary schools:
  - (a) pupils should be tested for their learning ability at an early stage and remedial teaching should start as early as possible when learning difficulty is detected. P3 and P4 pupils are probably the group of pupils with the strongest need for remedial teaching; (para. 5.19(a))
  - (b) the element of remedial teaching in initial teacher education and the existing 5-week Retraining Course for Primary School Teachers should also be strengthened; (para. 5.19(b))
  - (c) the guidelines on remedial teaching issued in 1982 should be revised to stress the importance of organising remedial teaching to as many pupils and cover as many class levels as needed. The use of remedial classes for drilling the Academic Aptitude Test (AAT) must be strongly discouraged; (para. 5.19(c))
  - (d) to ensure that remedial teaching is offered to the bottom cohort of pupils weakest in the core subjects (rather than the borderline pupils), regular inspections should be conducted by ED to monitor the effectiveness of remedial teaching and the selection of pupils joining the remedial teaching groups in school....; and (para. 5.19(d))
  - (e) in addition to internal assessment results and teachers' recommendations, schools should make better use of the Hong Kong Attainment Tests (HKAT) to identify pupils for remedial teaching. To facilitate this, training on the proper use of HKAT should be included in initial teacher education. (para. 5.19(e))
2. In secondary schools:

- (a) more remedial teaching groups should be organised to benefit more pupils in need of remedial support; (para. 5.20(a))
  - (b) the guidelines on remedial teaching, issued in 1982, should be updated to stress the importance of organising remedial teaching to as many pupils and cover as many class levels as needed; and (para. 5.20(b))
  - (c) with remedial teaching groups organised for S1 to S3 pupils, each school should assign a senior teacher to co-ordinate the planning and monitoring of remedial teaching. This co-ordinator should receive some short- term training (3 hours per week for 10 weeks) on remedial teaching.... (para. 5.20(c))
3. For both primary and secondary levels:
- (a) school-based remedial support should be offered to those New Arrival Children with difficulties in subject learning to help them adjust and cope; and (para. 5.21)
  - (b) a research should be conducted to study the current practice of remedial teaching in primary and secondary schools in order to make recommendations on the most effective mode of remedial teaching. (para. 5.21)

#### (D) Activity Approach (AA)

1. Schools implementing TOC should be strongly encouraged to adopt AA. The development of AA and TOC should go hand-in-hand in planning and implementation level. (para. 5.26)
2. AA should be promoted to ensure full implementation in schools. (para. 5.27)
3. To assist teachers in adoption, the element of AA in the existing 5-week Retraining Course for Primary School Teachers should be strengthened. (para. 5.27)

### **11.5 Chapter 6 "Promoting effective learning in school"**

#### (A) Ensuring teacher quality

1. Strengthening teacher education
  - (a) The Government should move towards an all-graduate and all-trained teaching profession as soon as possible. It should be mandatory that all new primary and secondary school teachers should possess a degree and initial professional teacher education. The Sub-committee also endorses the HKIED's proposal to develop 4-year Bachelor of Education programmes as the optimum level of professional preparation for primary school teachers. (para. 6.5(a))
  - (b) Before full achievement of an all-graduate and all-trained teaching profession, the period for pre-service initial teacher education should be lengthened. As an interim measure, the Sub-committee endorses the HKIED's proposal to develop 3-year Diploma in Education programmes to replace the existing 2-year Certificate in Education courses. (para. 6.5(b))
  - (c) Tertiary institutions offering teacher education should provide relevant part/full-time conversion courses for serving non-graduate teachers to upgrade their academic and professional qualifications to graduate status. (para. 6.5(c))
  - (d) All pre-service teacher education programmes should provide student teachers with adequate preparation in developing their language proficiency in reaching the language benchmark requirements and in-service programmes should also be offered to in-service teachers to support them in their language enhancement. (para. 6.5(d))
  - (e) To upkeep and further enhance teacher quality, there should be government policies to require serving principals and teachers to undergo in-service teacher education at regular and specified intervals.... (para. 6.5(e))

- (f) Consideration should also be given to devising a policy and a system of teacher-registration / registration at regular intervals based on evidence of completing appropriate in-service teacher education and reaching established benchmarks and teaching standards. The Sub-committee expects that the setting up of a General Teaching Council will contribute to these functions in this regard. (para. 6.5(f))
2. External expert support to schools and teachers and setting up of expert consultancy support teams
    - (a) Inspectors from ED's CDI and Advisory Inspectorate, and lecturers from teacher education institutions should be sent into schools to offer consultancy and expert advice. (para. 6.7)
    - (b) The provision of expert support curriculum support teams provided by the CDI in supporting schools with academically low achievers may be broadened to the setting up and provision of special expert consultancy support teams by ED to serve all schools on a regular basis in future.... (para. 6.8)
    - (c) Schools should be provided with sufficient financial resources to try out innovative ideas of improving teaching curriculum development and other school practices to encourage enhancement of quality.(para. 6.9)
  3. Inducing changes in school and culture/ethos  
Teachers should be encouraged to work collaboratively in planning and development of work within school. (para. 6.11)
  4. Enhancing leadership in school
    - (a) All principals should be provided with suitable management training covering all aspects of school education to help them develop the necessary management knowledge, skills and attitudes. The existing ED-run Primary and Secondary School Administration Courses for new primary and secondary school heads should be strengthened accordingly. (para. 6.14(a))
    - (b) Middle managers should be provided with management training to enhance leadership in school. On top of those provided by ED, self-financed management teacher training courses should also be considered. Management trainers with expertise and competency on management training outside the education profession could be invited to conduct these courses. (para. 6.14(b))
    - (c) The Government should consider introducing appropriate rank(s) for deputy heads in primary schools in order to give due recognition to the post holders. (para. 6.14(c))
  5. Reducing workload of teachers and enhancing support for them
    - (a) More teachers should be provided to schools to meet the increasing diversity and volume of work for teachers... The need to allow time for teachers to interact and work with colleagues and visiting external experts on professional activities as explained in para. 6.20(d) The exact number of additional teaches to be offered will be subject to the results of the comprehensive review of staffing provision in school as described in para. 6.18. (para. 6.15)
    - (b) For every 20 teachers in primary and secondary schools, a Clerical Officer II (COII) should be provided to assist them to carry out teaching-related clerical duties. (para. 6.16(a))
    - (c) For primary schools with 24 classes or more (whole-day or a.m. and p.m. sessions), one additional Clerical Assistant (CA) should be provided. (para. 6.16(b))
    - (d) To enhance support and allow more flexibility for schools, in the long run, the example of secondary schools in the provision of clerical and janitor support in the form of an administration grant should be introduced in primary schools. (para. 6.16(b))
  6. Comprehensive staff review  
A comprehensive review on the following be conducted in both primary and secondary schools as soon as possible: (para. 6.18)

- adequacy of staff, including both teaching and non-teaching personnel;
  - staff structure, including the number, rank, composition and duties of senior teachers;
  - pay scales of all ranks, particularly the gap between (i) graduate and non-graduate teachers in primary/secondary schools and (ii) graduate teachers in primary and secondary schools;
  - pay scales of all ranks, particularly the gap between (i) graduate and non-graduate teachers in primary/secondary schools and (ii) graduate teachers in primary and secondary schools;
  - consider introducing a special rank of "Master Teacher" in primary and secondary schools to recognise professional excellence, offering an additional promotion channel and a career path for teachers with outstanding performance in professional duties other than management or administration;
  - positions of technicians to render technical support on the use of information technology in school; and
  - positions of teaching assistants and teacher librarians.
7. Enhancing the incentive for teachers and attractiveness of the teaching profession
- (a) consideration should be given to offer further extrinsic motivation to teachers, e.g. in the form of gratuity, merit award or adjustments in teaching duties; (para. 6.20)
  - (b) to raise the professional status of teachers, the Government should also consider the following measures in order to attract more persons of high calibre to join as well as to retain the experienced teachers in the teaching profession:
    - (i) to provide the same benefits as civil servants including housing, medical and education allowance to teachers in aided schools; (para. 6.20(a))
    - (ii) to offer the same pay scale to graduate teachers in primary and secondary schools; (para. 6.20(b))
    - (iii) to improve the existing Mortgage Interest Subsidy Scheme (MISS); (para. 6.20(c))
    - (iv) to improve the existing Mortgage Interest Subsidy Scheme (MISS); and (para. 6.20(c))
    - (v) the school facilities should be improved to make the working environment more attractive. (see para. 6.24) (para. 6.20(e))
  - (c) the proposed General Teaching Council should take lead and play a significant role in enhancing the professional status of teachers; (para. 6.20)
  - (d) the Government should also introduce the special rank of master teacher as described in para. 6.18 to provide incentives for teachers showing excellent teaching performance as a possible promotion opportunity other than the existing administrative promotion channel. (para. 6.21)
8. Enhancing facilities and resources
- (a) The school physical environment should be up-graded ... The classroom provision should also be increased to avoid floating classes and make subject-setting more feasible. (para. 6.24(a))
  - (b) Suitable information technology facilities should be provided to schools and that teachers should be encouraged to make wider use of information technology in their teaching.... Notebook computers should also be provided to schools to support teachers in their work .... (para. 6.24(b))
  - (c) Better use of other relevant community resources such as museums or workplace education, should be promoted. (para. 6.25)
9. Strengthening the role of assessment in teaching and learning
- (a) The element of assessment should be strengthened in initial teacher education programmes. (para. 6.26(a))

- (b) Suitable in-service courses on the latest development of assessment types and techniques should be offered to serving teachers to support them in this important area. (para. 6.26(b))

(B) Whole-day schooling

A reasonable time-table should be devised to achieve whole-day primary schooling as soon as possible. (para. 6.33)

(C) Common-core curriculum

1. The primary curriculum (particularly that of P1 and P4) should be reviewed, with the normal cognitive and intellectual ability of children taken into consideration. (para. 6.37(a))
2. A higher percentage of teaching time on humanities subjects should be offered in prevocational schools. Schools should also make sure that cultural and humanities elements are included in both formal and informal curricula. (para. 6.37 (b))
3. A balanced curriculum on all perspectives, especially in practical, cultural, moral and civic aspects should be provided in the junior secondary stage. The present requirement of  $40 \pm 2\%$  technical and practical contents for prevocational schools is too rigid and should be adjusted. (para. 6.37(c))
4. Schools should be given more support to help them achieve better management of teaching resources and to ensure more effective use of resources available. (para. 6.37(d))
5. Cross-curricular activities such as civic, environmental, sex and moral education should be included in secondary schools' time-tables. (para. 6.37(e))

(D) Floating classes in secondary schools

Actions should be stepped up to achieve the stated target of phasing out floating classes in S1 - S5 by the year 2000. (para. 6.41)

(E) Class size

The measure of progressive reduction of class size by one level each year is supported. (para. 6.44)

(F) Medium of instruction

The following existing policies concerning medium of instruction (MOI) for 9-year compulsory education in the immediate future are fully supported:

- (a) primary schools should continue to use mother tongue as MOI; (para. 6.46(a))
- (b) for the best benefit of their pupils, secondary schools should adopt ED's guidance on MOI, issued in the 1997/98 school year, for implementation in the 1998/99 school year. (para. 6.46(b))

(G) Related curriculum improvements

1. Motivation  
The Curriculum Development Council be invited to review and enhance the subject curricula at various levels along the principles that:
  - the contents of all subject curricula should be made relevant, interesting and related to the daily life; and
  - interactive and heuristic methods should be adopted as far as possible. (para. 6.48)
2. Learning How to Learn

Besides providing basic knowledge and skills, the curriculum should aim at developing in pupils the necessary attitudes and skills for learning how to learn.... Project work and extensive reading, for example, which are conducive to such attitude and skills development, should be emphasised in the learning process from primary education onwards. (para. 6.49)

3. Information Technology

- (a) The use of information technology for effective teaching and learning should be made a policy. (para. 6.50)
- (b) The use of information technology in the teaching of all relevant subjects should be strengthened, and supplemented with relevant hardware, software, technical and financial support. Pupils should be taught relevant information technology skills for enhancing their learning skills. (para. 6.50)

4. Continuous Assessment

Formative assessment should also be stressed in the design of the curriculum so as to provide pupils ongoing feedback about learning effectiveness in order to promote effective learning. The TOC provides a good example for how this can be put into practice. (para. 6.51)

5. Different approaches to learning

Individual learning and co-operative learning instead of competitive learning should be promoted in implementation of the curriculum. (para. 6.54)

6. Expert consultancy support teams to schools for effective curriculum implementation

The Government should consider providing more expert support to schools in developing and implementing a balanced curriculum at school level, e.g. to explore the setting up of special expert consultancy support teams as mentioned in para. 6.8. (para. 6.55)

## 11.6 Chapter 7 "Helping pupils with learning/ behavioural problems"

### (A) Measures to assist pupils with weak academic performance in primary schools

- 1. To identify more precisely the pupils who need special assistance in their learning, pupils' HKAT and SSPA scores can be used together with the Intensive Remedial Support (IRS) assessment. (para. 7.6)
- 2. Resource classes  
The following recommendations of the BoE Sub-committee on Special Education to make Resource Classes (RC) more effective are supported:
  - (a) to upgrade a CM post to AM post in primary schools with two or more RC to co-ordinate support services for children with learning difficulties...; (para. 7.10(a))
  - (b) to study the most effective mode of RC operation; and (para. 7.10(b))
  - (c) to encourage schools to operate RC as needed, and school principals to be responsible for disseminating respective pupils' relevant information to RC teachers. (para. 7.10(c))
- 3. Provision of SGO/SGT
  - (a) The Government should provide one SGO/SGT for each primary school with significant size of pupil population as soon as possible. (para. 7.11(a))
  - (b) The social work elements in training for SGO/SGT should be strengthened to cope with pupils' problems. (para. 7.11(b))
- 4. Teacher training

The HKIED should review the existing 5-week Retraining Course for Primary School Teachers, and strengthen the relevant contents on classroom management skills and curriculum adaptation to assist those pupils with learning/behavioural problems. (para. 7.13)

5. Home-school co-operation  
The Home-school Co-operation Scheme should be strengthened and extended. To enhance the Scheme in respect of the education of parents, assistance from government departments, such as the Social Welfare Department and Home Affairs Department, should also be sought. (para. 7.14)
6. School-based Curriculum Tailoring Scheme  
The SBCTS should be extended to primary schools. (para. 7.15)
7. Pilot study on effective approaches and methods to cater for individual differences
  - (a) ED should conduct a pilot study involving 10 primary schools to try out different approaches and methods coping with individual differences over a three-year period. The pilot schools should be provided with a package of additional resources : additional teachers, additional clerical support and expert support from CDI or tertiary institutions similar to those currently provided in the SBCTS in secondary schools. (para. 7.16)
  - (b) If proven to be effective, the scheme should be extended, with a suitable package of resources and external expert support, to other eligible primary schools by phases. (para. 7.17)

#### (B) Measures to assist pupils with weak academic performance in secondary schools

1. Review on the provision of additional teacher  
Before fixing up a new formula for additional provision, the Government should review the existing provision of additional teachers with a view to strengthening the assistance to schools admitting territory-wide bottom 25% pupils. (para. 7.23)
2. School social worker  
One school social worker should be allocated to each secondary school admitting at least one class of territory-wide bottom 25% pupils first, and then one social worker for each of the other secondary schools as soon as possible. (para. 7.24)
3. School-based Remedial Support Programme  
Schools in the SBRSP should be encouraged to share experiences in curriculum tailoring with those in the SBCTS. (para. 7.25)
4. Educational psychologists  
It is hoped that the new appointment conditions for educational psychologists proposed in the Report of BoE Sub-committee on Review of Special Education can be implemented soon. (para. 7.26)
5. Clerical support  
The Government should improve the existing clerical staff provision to cover those schools admitting at least one class of S1 territory-wide bottom 25% pupils and examine the adequacy of the existing clerical support in both primary and secondary schools (to be covered in the proposed staff review at para. 6.18 ). (para. 7.27)
6. Teacher training  
To strengthen teachers' training in handling academically weak pupils with associated behaviour or emotional problems, short-term in-service refresher courses should be organised for teachers from secondary schools admitting at least one class of territory-wide bottom 25% pupils. (para. 7.29)

#### (C) Evaluation and co-ordination on the use of additional resources

A mechanism should be set up in school to co-ordinate and evaluate the use of the additional resources. ED should also ensure the effective use of these resources. To avoid overlapping of initiatives in individual schools, ED should delineate clearly the roles of different programmes or schemes such as SBCTS and SBRSP. (para. 7.30)

#### (D) Repeaters

Normally, pupils should be allowed to repeat only once in the whole primary course. Under exceptional circumstances, a pupil may be allowed to repeat more than once if professional judgement and assessment recommend that this is beneficial to the pupil. No pupil should be allowed to repeat more than twice in his/her primary education. (para. 7.34)

#### (E) Drop-outs

1. To minimise the untraceable cases of non-attendance and thus avoid the waste of manpower on unfruitful follow-up, schools should:
  - (a) keep pupil information up-to-date, and regularly remind parents to inform the school of any changes in personal particulars; and (para. 7.40(a)(i))
  - (b) nominate a teacher to take charge of the handling or reporting of dropout cases within the school, and act as the liaison person with relevant ED sections. (para. 7.40(a)(ii))
2. To remedy the lack of a co-ordinating body within ED at present, the existing Advisory Committee on the Placement of Pupils in ED should strengthen its role in co-ordinating the efforts of different sections in the handling of suspected drop-out cases. (para. 7.40(b))
3. To understand the needs of both potential and genuine dropouts, ED should conduct surveys or research studies in this area. (para. 7.40(c))
4. The Board of Education should review the effectiveness of the existing practical schools and skills opportunity schools. (para. 7.43)
5. When other possible forms of support are used and proven to be ineffective, and subject to screening by an improved Central Co-ordinating Referral Mechanism, disruptive pupils in ordinary schools should be transferred to schools for social development to attend a short-term programme for a specific behavioural modification purpose. During their stay in the school for social development, the pupils should still be regarded as pupils of their original schools. (para. 7.44(a) & (b))
6. An ad-hoc committee, comprising heads of schools for social development, school social workers, educational psychologists and teachers from the ordinary schools concerned, should be formed on a need basis to co-ordinate referrals and programmes. (para. 7.44(c))
7. To enhance the support to schools in student discipline work, the services of the Student Discipline Section should be extended to primary schools. (para. 7.46)
8. ED should consider to provide additional resources for staff of schools for social development to carry out necessary follow-up work on pupils' return to normal schools. (para. 7.47)

### **11.7 Chapter 8 "Review on the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System"**

#### (A) The SSPA system

1. As an allocation mechanism, the SSPA System is functioning smoothly and there is no ground for a replacement. Retention of the current system and the existing banding system for school places allocation is recommended. (para. 8.14(a))

2. The practice of advancing Mathematics teaching by half a year indiscriminately without due consideration to pupils' ability should be discouraged. (para. 8.14(b))

(B) Interim improvement on AAT

1. The exact scope or coverage of the existing AAT should be clearly made known to schools, i.e. the syllabus contents for the second half of P6 would not be touched in the test. (para. 8.14(c))
2. The test date of the existing AAT should be arranged to a date later than early December as far as possible. (para. 8.14(d))
3. A new set of AAT practice items should be issued to schools as soon as possible. (para. 8.14(e))
4. To promote parents' understanding of the SSPA System and the nature and function of the scaling instrument (i.e. the AAT), parent education should be strengthened. (para. 8.14(f))

(C) Academic Ability Assessment (AAA)

1. AAT should be replaced by an Academic Ability Assessment (AAA), consisting of two components, namely a Language Ability Assessment (LAA) and a Mathematical Ability Assessment (MAA). AAA should be a central assessment and is expected to play the following roles:
  - an aptitude test
  - testing pupils' higher-order thinking skills
  - scaling pupils' scores in Chinese and English for MIGA purpose

Both LAA and MAA should aim at testing pupils' higher-order thinking skills such as application, analysis, synthesis, inferencing and problem-solving, as distinct from simple reasoning skills assessed by the existing VR and NR papers in AAT. The test items of LAA and MAA should be based on syllabuses of all subjects in the primary curriculum, and set in various types of formats rather than merely multiple-choice type items. Broad transferable skills such as comparison and contrast would be assessed and pupils would be provided with some basic information, e.g. vocabulary, to avoid rote memory of contents of the texts. Task-type questions may be set to assess pupils' application of subject knowledge. (para. 8.14(g))

As LAA and MAA represent new attempts in direction of assessment, research and pilot tests should be conducted to validate the new assessments and to verify their discriminatory power before full implementation. Careful comparison between the scaling functions performed by the new assessments and the existing VR and NR papers should be conducted by means of running AAA, with a significant sample size, parallel to AAT for at least two cycles. Subject to the findings of the research and pilot tests, LAA and MAA should be implemented as soon as possible, preferably with effect from the 2000/2001 school year and ED should consider, according to the research results, whether English should be included in LAA and whether attainment or higher-order thinking skills should be tested in English. To avoid the re-occurrence of the undesirable washback effect of AAT, the research/pilot study on devising the LAA and MAA tests should also pay attention to fostering a balanced education and minimising unnecessary drilling. (para. 8.14(h))

As LAA and MAA are more curriculum related than the existing VR and NR papers, there is a real need to defer the present schedule of testing from December every year to a later date to enable schools to cover more of the P6 syllabus. (para. 8.14(i))

When the proposed AAA is in place, sample items of LAA and MAA papers should be made public periodically so that teachers may know the latest types and format of the test items in the scaling test. (In principle, all test items should be open in the long run. In this way, teachers and

pupils can properly prepare for the expected learning outcomes instead of guessing the contents of the tests. This will also foster the development of higher-order thinking skills and promote a better school curriculum.) (para. 8.14(j))

(D) Internal assessment

To strengthen the validity of internal assessments, revised guidelines on setting different types of assessments, including task-type questions, projects, portfolios, etc., should be issued to schools together with sample test items. Subject experts from ED or tertiary institutions should be invited to visit schools to share experience and to offer expert advice on assessment. (para. 8.14(k))

(E) Correlation between AAA and internal assessment

The Sub-committee notes that the proposed AAA could be an interim measure as the Target-Oriented Assessment (TOA) is supposed to replace all external assessments in the long run. The TOC Section should carry out follow-up research to study the correlation between AAA and internal assessments. (para. 8.14(l))

(F) Information of S1 intake

To provide schools with more precise information on their S1 intakes' standard and facilitate streaming/remedial teaching arrangement, secondary schools should be provided with, in addition to the current information on pupils' individual banding (which reflects banding within their own nets), the exact names of the bottom 25% pupils allocated as follows :

Territory-wide bottom 13% or below	(denoted by '★')
Territory-wide bottom 14%-25%	(denoted by '★★')

(para. 8.14(m))

## **11.8 Chapter 9 "Review on other allocation systems"**

(A) Primary One Allocation (POA) system

1. Some research should be conducted on the optimum age of entry to P1 in Hong Kong. (para. 9.6)

2. The present POA Points System should remain unchanged. (para. 9.11)

(B) Junior Secondary Education Assessment (JSEA) system

1. The present JSEA System, with its existing Secondary Four Places Allocation Method, should continue. (para. 9.18(a))
2. Schools should be strongly advised to change their class structures according to their ER. A strong stand should be taken against those schools refusing to restructure their classes without a good reason. (para. 9.18(b))
3. The "Working Group to Review the SFP Allocation Method for JSEA" is requested to review the situation and consideration should be made to recognise schooling effects, if possible, in the JSEA. (para. 9.18(c))

**11.9 Chapter 10 "Directions for future development"**

(A) Monitoring of implementation of recommendations

A sub-committee should be set up under BoE to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in this Report. (para. 10.5)

(B) Increasing resources on education

1. There should be a significant increase in resources to cover the measures recommended in this Report to achieve quality education. (para. 10.22)
2. Additional resources should be increased to improve special education services such as provision of occupational therapists and physiotherapists which are critical and of great urgency to the safety and health of children with special educational needs. (para. 10.23)

(C) Gifted education

There should be wide publicity on the need for gifted education and more resources should be devoted to gifted education to allow the gifted to fully develop their potentials. (para. 10.24)

**Appendices 1 - 9** (*See original document*)