

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Education

**Evaluation Report on the Pilot Support Scheme on English
Education at Pre-primary Level in Hong Kong**

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the evaluation outcome of the Pilot Support Scheme on English Education at Pre-primary Level (“the Pilot Scheme”) carried out between September 2005 and January 2007 and the way forward.

Background

2. The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) acknowledged in its Final Report of Language Education Review (2003) that early exposure to English has positive impact on young children’s learning of the language at a later developmental stage provided that the teachers are proficient in English and competent in introducing the language to young children in an authentic English environment through appropriate, enjoyable and stimulating means.

3. With a view to assessing the needs of kindergarten teachers in English Language teaching to help draw up effective support measures in strengthening the English language education at pre-primary level, SCOLAR launched a research-based pilot support scheme on English education at pre-primary level in September 2005.

4. At the Panel meeting of 11 June 2007, the Administration briefed Members on the support provided under the Pilot Scheme, and reported that the Pilot Scheme was successful. In view of the success, Members were also advised that, subject to the endorsement of SCOLAR, \$85 million would be allocated to provide kindergartens with a wider dissemination of structured support service along the line of the Pilot Scheme, in order to enhance teachers’ capacity in providing quality English exposure to young children. The \$85 million has now been allocated and the “extended scheme” is in place.

5. We have undertaken to provide the evaluation report of the Pilot Scheme for Members’ information. The evaluation report is at **Annex**.

To facilitate members' reading, a summary of the evaluation report is set out below.

Summary of Evaluation Report of the Pilot Scheme

The Pilot Scheme

6. The objectives of the Pilot Scheme were –
 - (a) to investigate the problems and difficulties that pre-primary teachers are encountering in providing quality exposure to English language for students;
 - (b) to suggest and design support measures for pre-primary teachers in providing quality exposure to English language for students;
 - (c) to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of support measures for pre-primary teachers in providing quality exposure to English language for students; and
 - (d) to crystallize support measures for pre-primary teachers in providing quality exposure to English language for students.

7. The Pilot Scheme took place between September 2005 and January 2007 and the expenditure was HK\$2 million. Under the Pilot Scheme, a “consultant team” of three persons was formed to pilot support measures for English language education in selected kindergartens of different backgrounds. Large school sponsoring bodies and school councils of pre-primary level were invited to nominate schools to join the Scheme. In selecting schools for participation, we sought to achieve a mix of schools with different backgrounds and level of resources. Having considered factors including school size, teacher qualification, students/family socio-economic background, etc., seven kindergartens (involving 42 teachers) were selected to participate in the Pilot Scheme.

8. Based on both a territory-wide landscape survey of kindergartens as well as an examination of the pre-primary schools (and their teachers) which joined the Pilot Scheme, the following aspects of teachers were identified to be in need of strengthening –
 - (a) knowledge and skills in English language teaching;
 - (b) effectiveness in identifying and using appropriate

learning/teaching materials to meet pupils' needs and interest;
and

- (c) English language proficiency.

9. In the light of the above, the Pilot Scheme's support measures focused to improve the above, as well as curriculum/lesson planning and implementation. Support measures involved professional development workshops and school-based on-site support.

The methodology

10. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme was conducted through an analysis of whether there are improvements in the following areas –

- (a) teachers' knowledge and skills in English language teaching and;
- (b) teachers' effectiveness in identifying and using appropriate learning/teaching materials;
- (c) teachers' English language proficiency; and
- (d) students' interest and motivation.

11. The following evaluation tools were used –

- (a) teachers survey before and after the Pilot Scheme;
- (b) evaluation on professional development workshops;
- (c) consultant team's observation;
- (d) interim evaluation;
- (e) focus group meetings; and
- (f) school evaluation at the end of the Pilot Scheme.

The findings

Improvement in teachers' knowledge and skills in English language teaching

12. As shown from the teachers' survey, consultant team's observation, schools evaluation and focus group meetings, there were very positive improvements in teachers' knowledge and skills in English language teaching as a result of the support services provided in the Pilot Scheme. Teachers demonstrated better understanding of how to plan and organize English language activities and were able to expose students to English through a wider variety of teaching strategies. More than 50 teaching/unit plans related to 20 teaching themes were developed and implemented by teachers and there were more teachers doing storytelling, reading aloud and shared reading with their pupils.

Improvement in teachers' English language proficiency

13. The Pilot Scheme has enhanced teachers' confidence in using English in class. Teachers grasped a better understanding of English pronunciation and classroom English, and had more opportunities in using English in the classroom. These were reflected in teachers' survey, the consultant team's observation, school evaluation and focus group meetings.

14. Although professional advice and feedback on class observation given by the consultant team helped improve teachers' proficiency to a certain extent, it was not uncommon that teachers erred in their spoken English in terms of pronunciation and grammar.

Improvement in Teachers' effectiveness in identifying and using appropriate learning/teaching material

15. The consultant team observed noticeable changes in the use of teaching materials by teachers. Teachers developed a better knowledge of selection criteria for quality teaching and reading materials for young learners and became more proficient in selecting and adapting a variety of interesting and appropriate learning/ teaching materials. These are also reflected in the teacher surveys and school evaluation.

Improvement in students' interest and motivation

16. While it was considered that no formal evaluation or substantial

measurement should be conducted to examine whether there was improvement in students' performance given that the objective of pre-primary education should be on quality experiences to support learning readiness, observation of students and feedback from parents collected by participating schools revealed that students had developed more interest and had become more motivated and attentive in English learning through fun-filled English language activities and pleasurable learning experiences.

The Conclusion

17. The support measures were very effective in enhancing teachers' capacity in providing quality English language education to the very young children at pre-primary level, particularly in the areas of English language teaching pedagogy; effectiveness in identifying and using quality and suitable learning and teaching materials; and confidence in English teaching.

18. As noted in paragraph 14 above, it was not uncommon that teachers erred in their spoken English in terms of pronunciation and grammar. In view of this, under the "extended scheme" as mentioned in paragraph 4 above, the SCOLAR will provide English courses to teachers of the participating kindergartens. The English courses will focus on areas like pronunciation, phonics knowledge and classroom language. They will form part of the professional development programme in the form of workshops.

Education Bureau
July 2008

Evaluation Report on the Pilot Support Scheme on English Education at Pre-primary Level in Hong Kong

This report sets out the outcome of the evaluation of the Pilot Support Scheme on English Education at Pre-primary Level in Hong Kong (the Pilot Scheme).

Background

2. The Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) acknowledged in its Final Report of Language Education Review (2003) that early exposure to English has positive impact on young children's learning of the language at a later developmental stage provided that the teachers are proficient in English and competent in introducing the language to young children in an authentic English environment through appropriate, enjoyable and stimulating means.

3. With a view to assessing the needs of kindergarten teachers in English Language teaching to help draw up effective support measures in strengthening English language education at pre-primary level, SCOLAR decided in 2005 to launch a research-based pilot support scheme on English education at pre-primary level. The objectives were –

- (a) to investigate the problems and difficulties that pre-primary teachers are encountering in providing quality exposure to English language for students;
- (b) to suggest and design support measures for pre-primary teachers in providing quality exposure to English language for students;
- (c) to pilot and evaluate the effectiveness of support measures for pre-primary teachers in providing quality exposure to English language for students; and
- (d) to crystallize support measures for pre-primary teachers in

providing quality exposure to English language for students.

The Pilot Scheme

4. The Pilot Scheme took place between September 2005 and January 2007. Expenditure was HK\$2 million, mainly for cost of recruiting the consultant team, reference materials and resources. Under the Pilot Scheme, a consultant team, comprising of two English language experts and a Senior Research Officer of the SCOLAR Support Unit, was formed to pilot support measures for English language education in selected kindergartens of different backgrounds.

5. Large school sponsoring bodies and school councils of pre-primary level were invited to nominate schools to join the Scheme. In selecting schools for participation, we sought to achieve a good mix of schools with different backgrounds and level of resources. Having considered factors including school size, teacher qualification, students/family socio-economic background, etc., seven kindergartens (involving 42 teachers) were selected to participate in the Pilot Scheme.

Identifying needs of pre-primary school teachers

6. To identify the specific needs of pre-primary schools and teachers in providing quality English language education to young children, the consultant team conducted a needs-analysis on the following areas of school heads and teachers of participating schools in the Pilot Scheme through interviews, questionnaire and performance test on specific teaching strategies –

- (a) the background of the seven pilot schools;
- (b) qualification and English language proficiency of the teachers;
- (c) teachers' beliefs in the objectives of English language teaching and teaching approaches used;
- (d) English subject knowledge of the teachers;

- (e) English language activities conducted in class;
 - (f) professional development opportunities available for teachers;
 - (g) learning and teaching materials employed; and
 - (h) challenges expected.
7. Diagnosis of participating schools shows that –
- (a) about 65% of the schools had intake of pupils mainly from low-income families. About one-third of the schools had intake of pupils from middle class families;
 - (b) more than 90% of teachers employed in the schools are local teachers. Three of the seven participating schools employed native-speaking English teachers (NETs);
 - (c) the majority (74%) of teachers employed by the participating schools had not received any kind of formal teacher training on English language teaching;
 - (d) the majority of the local teachers employed by the participating schools achieved Grade E in the English subject (either Syllabus A or B) at the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination;
 - (e) the majority of schools relied on local teachers to conduct English language activities, such as singing songs and nursery rhymes; and games, for children and only 3 out of 42 teachers were native-speaking English teachers (NETs);
 - (f) only 11% of the local teachers who were responsible for conducting English language activities in schools perceived themselves to be able to pronounce English accurately. 72% perceived themselves as often unsure about English pronunciation and grammar. The majority of the teachers considered it useful (81%) and were interested (62%) in

developing their English language skills;

- (g) only about one-third (36%) of the teachers had school-based professional development opportunities on English language teaching, for example, training on shared reading; and less than half the teachers (43%) of the teachers had professional development opportunities on English language teaching other than school-based ones, such as attending training courses on teaching of phonics or shared reading organized by teacher training institutes; and
- (h) the majority of the teachers adopted course books published by publishers as the major learning and teaching materials (77%).

8. The findings suggest that the following aspects of teachers need to be strengthened –

- (a) knowledge and skills in English language teaching;
- (b) English language proficiency; and
- (c) effectiveness in identifying and using appropriate learning/teaching materials to meet their pupils' needs and interest.

9. Although only seven kindergartens were examined and the result analysis inevitably precluded any substantial generalizations, the findings provided very useful information to better understand the challenges faced by and the needs of the project schools and teachers in English language teaching at pre-primary level. To supplement the findings, the SCOLAR also carried out a territory wide survey of kindergartens and teachers in April 2006, in order to understand the landscape of English teaching in pre-primary schools and demand for support in this respect. Questionnaires were sent to 354 randomly selected kindergartens and nursery schools, covering about one-third of kindergartens and nursery schools (excluding international schools) from each of 18 districts.

10. According to the territory-wide survey, nearly all responding schools (99%) conducted English language activities. Yet the majority of local English teachers indicated that they were not confident in speaking English (74%) and in conducting English language activities (73%). More than half (54%) of teachers also expressed difficulties in identifying suitable teaching materials due to a lack of the relevant knowledge. Nearly 90% of responding schools indicated that they need professional development and school-based support on English language teaching.

Support measures under the Pilot Scheme

11. In the light of the findings in paragraphs 6-10 above, support measures under the Pilot Scheme focused to improve the following key areas through professional development workshops and intensive on-site support –

- (a) Enhancing the knowledge and skills in English language teaching: Eleven professional development workshops on English language learning and teaching strategies were conducted in the period of February to December 2006. Workshop topics included: reading aloud and shared reading; songs, rhymes and games; storytelling; teaching of phonics; drama for pre-primary children; oral language activities; and show-and-tell and real-life experience activities.
- (b) Assisting teachers to identify and use quality teaching materials: Wide range of teaching materials (including big books, small books, songs, rhymes, audio-visual materials, resource books and copy-right-free reproducible materials in the internet) were introduced to teachers at the workshops and during school visits. Teachers were encouraged to borrow teaching materials for trial-out in their schools.
- (c) Improving the English proficiency: Some of the workshops sought to enhance teachers' understanding of phonics and help them become acquainted with the commonly used classroom English. Consultants also dealt with the teachers' problems

and enquiries related to English pronunciation and grammar during the curriculum and lesson planning meetings and follow-up conferencing after class observations.

- (d) Improving curriculum/ lesson planning and implementation: The consultant team conducted regular school visits and had planning meetings with teachers to provide professional advice in planning and developing teaching/ unit plans to try out the teaching strategies learnt in workshops. The consultants also conducted class observations to diagnose the learning and teaching in classroom. Follow-up conferencing provide an opportunity for the consultants to consolidate teachers' knowledge and skills in English language teaching and to provide feedbacks to teachers on how their teaching strategies could be further improved.

Evaluation of the Pilot Scheme

Evaluation methodology

12. The SCOLAR Support Unit carried out an evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme's support measures in enhancing the teachers' capacity to provide quality exposure to English language for pupils in pre-primary schools. Evaluation was conducted in the following areas –

- (a) teachers' knowledge and skills in English language teaching;
- (b) teachers' English language proficiency;
- (c) teachers' knowledge in identifying and using learning and teaching materials to meet pupils' needs and interest; and
- (d) students' interest and motivation.

13. The following evaluation tools were used –

- (a) Teacher surveys: Teacher surveys were conducted before and

after the Pilot Scheme to document the changes in teachers' beliefs in objectives of English language teaching and teaching approaches (see **Appendix A**).

- (b) **Evaluation of professional development workshop**: Evaluation were conducted after every workshop to collect feedbacks and comments on the effectiveness of the workshops in providing knowledge and skills and hands-on experience in English language teaching strategies from participating teachers and school heads. An overall evaluation was done after all workshops have taken place (see **Appendix B**).
- (c) **Consultant team's observation**: Observation on changes in respect to teachers' attitude and confidence; and English language activities of participating schools was conducted by the consultant team throughout the pilot study;
- (d) **Interim evaluation**: Interim evaluation was carried out by the consultant team on the following aspects of the teachers of every participating school in June 2006: professional development, English language teaching in/outside classrooms, attitude and confidence; and classroom English.
- (e) **Focus group meetings**: Two focus group meetings were conducted with participating school heads and teachers in July 2006 to collect their feedback and comments on the support services provided under the scheme, as well as their views and recommendations for the launching of a large-scale scheme for other schools (see **Appendix C**).
- (f) **School evaluation**: Schools and their teachers were required to separately conduct an evaluation by the end of the Pilot Scheme on the following areas: improvement in English language teaching and learning if any; effectiveness of support services provided by the consultant team; successful and rewarding experiences as well as challenges and difficulties during the Pilot Scheme; and parents' feedback.

Evaluation findings

Knowledge and skills of teachers in English language teaching

14. There were very positive improvements in teachers' knowledge and skills in English language teaching as a result of the support services under the Pilot Scheme. The majority of the teachers have demonstrated a better understanding of how to plan and organize English language activities; and they were able to expose children to English through a wider variety of teaching strategies. Feedback from schools and teachers were very positive too. Teachers considered the professional development workshops very effective and suggested that more teachers should be benefited –

- (a) The consultant team observed that teachers were very keen on adopting and trying out the newly learnt teaching strategies. Majority of the teachers demonstrated an understanding of what should be considered in planning for English language learning activities, and how to organize the learning content and activities in a series of lessons to provide contextualized, connected and coherent learning experiences to the students. During the 18 months of the Scheme, more than 50 teaching/unit plans related to 20 teaching themes such as food, myself, animals, environmental protection, were developed and implemented by teachers.
- (b) The schools' evaluation also supported the above findings. Many schools reported that, after receiving the support services, teachers were more able to expose children to English through a variety of teaching strategies such as reading aloud, shared reading, real-life experiences, story-telling and drama in classrooms. Teachers were also able to plan and organize English language activities based on a theme and integrated music, art and craft, drama and body movement into English language activities. Teachers' confidence in conducting English language activities was also enhanced.
- (c) The teacher surveys also indicated considerable changes in the

English language activities conducted for pupils after receiving the support services. Noticeably, the post-surveys indicated that there were more teachers doing storytelling (64% in the pre-survey and 85% in the post-survey), reading aloud (64% in the pre-survey and 95% in the post-survey) and shared reading (27% in the pre-survey and 75% in the post-survey) with their pupils. There were fewer teachers indicating in the post-survey that they lacked knowledge in English subject (24% in the pre-survey and 5% in the post-survey) and English language teaching pedagogy (67% in the pre-survey and 45% in the post-survey).

- (d) Evaluation of the professional development workshops indicated that teachers were satisfied with the effectiveness of the workshops. They considered that the workshops had widened their horizon for innovative pedagogical skills in exposing young children to English language (5.2 in a 6-point scale), assisted their professional development as a teacher (4.9 in a 6-point scale), were relevant to their professional needs (5.0 in a 6-point scale) and provided them with useful and valuable learning experiences (5.2 in a 6-point scale). The project teachers also strongly agreed that the training workshops should be introduced to more teachers at pre-primary level (5.6 in a 6-point scale);
- (e) Principals and teachers expressed at the focus group meetings that the support measures were very useful. They highlighted that the school-based on-site support which involved co-planning, lesson observations and feedback sessions was particularly valuable.

15. All in all, the professional development workshops provided many opportunities for the project teachers to gain knowledge in English language teaching; and the on-site support assisted teachers to put the strategies learnt into practice and further consolidate their knowledge and confidence in English language teaching.

English language proficiency of teachers

16. The Pilot Scheme has enhanced teachers' confidence in using English in class and helped improve their proficiency to a certain extent –

- (a) The consultant team observed that as teachers grasped a better understanding of English pronunciation and classroom English from the training workshops, and had more opportunities to use English in the classrooms, they became more confident in using English to conduct English language activities and to communicate with their students in English. Nonetheless, it was not uncommon that teachers still erred in their spoken English in terms of pronunciation and grammar.
- (b) Evaluation reports completed by project schools also showed that professional advice and feedback on class observation given by the consultant team helped correct the teachers' English pronunciation and classroom English and improve their English proficiency. Principals and teachers expressed similar views in focus group meetings.
- (c) Results of the teacher surveys also supported the above findings. The pre-teacher survey indicated that the majority of the project teachers perceived themselves as not being able to speak English with accurate pronunciation (94%). Many teachers indicated that they lacked confidence in speaking English (64%) and very few of them used all English to conduct English language activities (18%). In the post-survey, significantly more teachers indicated that they used all English to conduct English language activities (65%) and fewer of them felt lacking confidence in speaking English (55%).

Use of teaching materials

17. Changes in the use of teaching materials by teachers of participating schools were observed –

- (a) the pre-teacher survey reported that the majority of the project

teachers used textbooks as the major learning/teaching materials (85%), some teachers used authentic children's story books as learning/teaching materials (61%) and self-produced learning/teaching materials (67%); and no teachers used materials from the media (0%). However, the post-teacher survey reported that there were significantly more teachers using authentic children's story books as teaching materials (95%), self-produced teaching materials (90%) and materials from the media (45%) whereas fewer teachers used textbooks and related readers as the major teaching materials (55%). The results reflected that the teachers adopted a wider variety of teaching materials to meet their pupils' needs and interests;

- (b) the consultant team observed that project teachers developed a better understanding of selection criteria for quality teaching and reading materials for young learners and become more proficient in selecting and adapting a variety of interesting and appropriate learning/teaching materials, including stories, songs, rhymes; and audio-visual materials. More than 110 book titles other than the coursebooks, including books and small books, some of which have accompanying VCDs, were selected and used by teachers under the Scheme.
- (c) Evaluation reports completed by participating schools and views collected at the focus group meetings also revealed that teachers had developed a higher level of awareness of the importance in selecting suitable learning and teaching materials for their students. Teachers were able to take into account children's needs and interest in selecting teaching/learning materials. Some were even able to develop their own story books. Teachers also reported that the training workshops and on-site support were useful means to expose themselves to a wide range of quality learning and teaching materials.

Students' interest and motivation

18. While it was considered that no formal evaluation and substantial measurement should be conducted to examine the

effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme on student achievement given that the objective of pre-primary education should be on quality experiences to support learning readiness, observation by the consultant team, evaluation reports completed by project schools and views shared by school administrators and teachers at focus group meetings revealed that students had developed more interest and become more motivated and attentive in English learning through fun-filled English language activities and pleasurable learning experiences. They were more willing to speak English and actively take part in activities. With more chances to listen to English and read English stories, students' exposure to English had improved. In addition, participating schools mentioned in their evaluation reports that parents noticed that children were motivated to sing English songs, speak more English, and bring home English books to read to/with their parents. Parents appreciated that their children can learn English happily.

Conclusion

19. The evaluation of the Pilot Scheme shows that the support measures have been very effective in enhancing teachers' capacity in providing quality English language education to the very young children at pre-primary level, particularly in the areas of English language teaching pedagogy; knowledge in identifying and using quality and suitable learning and teaching materials; and raising teachers' confidence in English teaching.

20. In the light of the success of the pilot scheme, SCOLAR has allocated about \$85 million from the Language Fund for setting up a dedicated team to provide a wider dissemination of structured support service to schools and teachers at pre-primary level to enhance teachers' capacity in providing quality English exposure to young children. It is planned that the team will support about 500 kindergartens for four years from 2007/08 to 2010/11 school year. Each participating school will receive a two year intensive on-site support or consultancy service. The dedicated team comprises native English-speaking teachers and experienced teachers qualified in the English language education at pre-primary or early primary level. It is responsible for –

- (a) providing professional development opportunities for kindergarten teachers on knowledge and skills in English Language teaching, curriculum planning and delivering the “Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum” of the Curriculum Development Council and the Education Bureau issued in April 2006; and effective means to provide quality exposure of English to young children. Topics to be covered include exposing young children to English through stories, games, songs and rhymes, real-life experiences, show-and-tell activities and drama. Other topics such as teaching of phonics will also be included;
- (b) working closely with kindergartens in identifying areas requiring support, as well as developing school-based English curriculum year plan. The team will assist kindergartens in developing teaching/unit plans, selecting and developing learning and teaching materials, applying skills and knowledge acquired from the training workshops. The team will visit kindergartens to observe classes, conduct demonstration and follow-up feedback; and
- (c) disseminate useful and quality resources and good practices in kindergartens.

21. As noted at paragraph 16 above, it was not uncommon that teachers erred in their spoken English in terms of pronunciation and grammar. In view of this, the SCOLAR will provide English courses under the “extended scheme” to teachers of the participating kindergartens. The English courses will focus on areas like pronunciation, phonics knowledge and classroom language. They will form part of the professional development programme in the form of workshops.

Appendix A

Summary of Pre- and Post-Teacher Survey Results

Table 1: Teachers' belief on objectives of English language teaching for children at pre-primary level

	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Providing pupils at Pre-primary with initial exposure to English	73%	85%
Meet parents' expectation	33%	25%
Prepare pupils for primary education	63%	55%
Arouse pupils' interest in listening to and taking part in simple conversations	91%	90%
Arouse pupils' interest in listening to and reading stories	88%	90%
Arouse pupils' interest in listening to and reading nursery rhymes	76%	90%
Arouse pupils' interest in recognizing and using vocabulary items related to their everyday life	85%	80%
Cultivate pupils' interest in English	94%	90%
Help pupils appreciate English and other cultures	60%	55%

Table 2: English language activities conducted for pupils

	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Games	100%	100%
Songs	88%	100%
Group activities	52%	60%
Storytelling	64%	85%
Reading Aloud	64%	95%
Conversation	88%	65%
Shared Reading	27%	75%
Dictation	9%	0%
Shared writing	3%	20%
Individual writing activities	3%	0%
nursery rhymes	39%	85%
Discussion	6%	20%
Drama	42%	55%

Table 3: Teachers' belief on what children should learn through English language activities

	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Recognize and write letters in English alphabet	76%	55%
Recognize and use vocabulary items related to pupils' everyday life	100%	95%
Recognize and use vocabulary items related to pupils' interest	73%	60%
Recognize some simple sentence patterns	85%	90%
Recognize and say letter sounds	85%	55%
Recognize and understand basic phonics	67%	50%
Listen to, understand and take part in simple conversations	91%	90%
Recognize some sight words	42%	55%
Listen to and understand stories	79%	85%
Listen to and understand nursery rhymes	39%	75%
Listen to and follow simple instructions	82%	90%
Pronounce English letters and words accurately	70%	30%

Table 4: Learning/ teaching materials used by teachers for English language activities

	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Textbook	85%	55%
Story books	61%	95%
Listening and speaking materials	70%	60%
Audi-visual materials	48%	60%
Self-produced learning/teaching materials	67%	90%
Materials from the media, e.g. newspaper, magazines	0%	45%
Phonics packages	18%	40%

Table 5: Languages used for conducting English language activities

	Pre-survey	Post-survey
All English	18%	65%
Lots of English and little Chinese	45%	30%
Partially in English and partially in Chinese	36%	5%
Little English and lots of Chinese	0%	0%
All Chinese	3%	0%

Table 6: Difficulties encountered by teachers when conducting English language activities

	Pre-survey	Post-survey
Challenges in speaking English	76%	80%
Challenges in reading English	15%	10%
Challenges in writing English	30%	40%
Challenges in listening to English	12%	10%
Lack of confidence in speaking English	64%	55%
Lack of subject knowledge	24%	5%
Lack of knowledge in teaching pedagogy	67%	45%
Lack of knowledge in selecting learning/teaching materials to meet pupils' needs and interests	33%	25%
Lack of professional development opportunities	58%	20%

**Overall Evaluation of Professional Development Programme
for Teachers**

Questions: To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

1. The training programme has widened my horizon for innovative pedagogical skills in exposing young children to English as a second language.
2. The training programme has assisted my professional development as a teacher.
3. The workshop materials are well-designed and relevant to my professional needs.
4. Presentation of workshops, e.g. learning materials, handouts, is adequate.
5. Interaction between consultants and participants in workshops are adequate and good.
6. Discussion and exchange of views and experience between participants in workshops are adequate and good.
7. The training programme has been given me useful and valuable experience.
8. The training programme should be introduced to more teachers at pre-primary level.

	Q.1	Q.2	Q.3	Q.4	Q.5	Q.6	Q.7	Q.8
Mean score	5.1	5.2	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.0	5.2	5.6

**Summary of Focus Group Meetings with Principals and Teachers
of the Participating School**

The Support Unit of the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR) organized two focus group meetings with the participating school principals and teachers by the end of Phase I and II of the pilot scheme on 23 May 2006 and 24 January 2007. In the meetings, participating school principals and teachers discussed and shared their views and comments on the following questions:

Do you find the pilot scheme meet your expectation? Do you think the support measures provided to your school/ teachers useful?

2. All schools reflected that the support measures, including centralized workshops; school visits for lesson planning, classroom observation and follow-up discussion by consultants; and provision of learning and teaching materials were very useful to them. The advice given by the consultants during on-site school visits was very useful and allowed exchange of views among teachers. The experience of co-planning, lesson observations and feedback sessions was invaluable and had helped teachers a lot in enhancing their professionalism in different ways.

How do you think the support measures have helped your teachers/ colleagues expose pupils to quality English language in your school in terms of English proficiency, pedagogy, subject knowledge and learning and teaching materials?

3. Through the on-site school visits paid by the consultants, the participating teachers had not only learnt strategies of curriculum planning, but also the skills of conducting such activities as story-telling, show & tell, real life experiences, etc. Some teachers opined that the skill of story-telling learnt from the consultants was very useful as it could also be applied to the teaching of stories in Chinese lessons.

4. It was reported that using English in class had been a great challenge to some of the teachers. With the advice from the consultants, teachers' pronunciation and classroom English had been improved.

They were more confident in using English with pupils. Pupils could, in return, learn English through English and have greater exposure to English.

5. The participating teachers reflected that another useful technique that they had learnt was the criteria of selecting learning and teaching materials. At this stage, they could use their judgment to select materials, such as story books, CDs and VCDs, which were suitable for use with their pupils.

6. Some schools reflected that they had gained clearer ideas than before about how to teach English and draw up teaching plans after joining the scheme. They also appreciated the classroom language learnt and packages/materials published by EMB. Realizing that language learning was a long process, project schools did not expect quick and great improvement of teachers in English proficiency.

How do you think the support measures have helped your pupils?

7. The majority of schools reflected that pupils' interest in English was enhanced. Teachers were amazed to find that pupils could understand and follow English instructions after a few lessons of activities. Some reflected that their pupils spoke more English in class and read English story books to or with their parents at home.

8. It was agreed, among majority of the participating schools, that the learning content became richer after taking the advice from the consultants. A variety of activities, such as story-telling, songs and rhymes, show & tell, real life experiences, had been incorporated in the lessons. This helped increase the interests and motivation of pupils in learning English. A school reported that their pupils were looking forward to having English lessons as the pupils enjoyed the activities very much.

9. A majority of schools agreed that reading story books became popular among their pupils. Pupils enjoyed reading the books in class and many of them even read the stories to their parents at home. Their self-confidence and sense of satisfaction had been developed when they managed to sing the songs or tell the stories to others.

Do your school/ teachers want to stay and extend the pilot scheme? What other support measures do you think would enhance and facilitate your teachers/ colleagues in providing quality exposure to English language for pupils in your school?

10. All schools hoped that scheme could continue and cover another entire school year. Some hoped that the scheme could accommodate more teachers so that it would form a critical mass to improve English education at school.

11. Some schools reflected that they had encountered difficulties in sourcing useful and suitable learning and teaching materials in Hong Kong by themselves. They would appreciate the provision of some quality learning and teaching materials for them from SCOLAR.

12. A majority of participating school principals and teachers opined that kindergartens need teachers with understanding and training in English language education, and thus, more formal training of English language education, including pre-service and in-service teacher training, should be provided to teachers of pre-primary level.

13. Some schools expected detailed explanation of the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum as the two-page guidelines on English language education were too general, which would lead to different interpretations by different schools and different teachers.

14. Most schools expected more sharing among project schools, e.g., arrangement of school visits and putting the lesson plans of project schools in the Internet.

15. Many schools reflected the need for parent education, e.g. on how to interpret the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum (as schools should gain support from parents in implementing the curriculum) and skills of reading story books with children at home.