

For discussion
on 10 July 2006

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Education for Children of Ethnic Minorities

Purpose

Further to the paper provided to the LegCo Panel on Education for discussion on 9 January 2006 [LC Paper No. CB(2)779/05-06(01)] and the follow-up reply on 25 March 2006, this paper briefs Members on –

- (a) progress with the identification of schools that are more ready to provide support for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students (or ethnic minority students¹), and the support measures to be provided for these schools;
- (b) the way forward in respect of the adaptation of our Chinese curriculum for NCS students; and
- (c) other support measures related to education for the ethnic minorities.

Schools that are more ready to provide support for NCS students

2. With the support of Members, we have been identifying schools to be designated for focused support by this bureau in serving NCS students. The objective of centralizing support is to better serve the needs of the NCS students in a manner that is cost-effective, when it may not be practical to expect each and every school to be equally equipped with the necessary expertise and dedication. While it is our intention to enhance support through the designated schools, the right of NCS students to apply for places in other schools under the existing school places allocation systems will be preserved.

¹ For the Education and Manpower Bureau, ethnic minority children generally refer to South Asian (mainly Indian/Pakistani/Nepalese) children who are residing in Hong Kong.

3. When identifying the schools to be so designated, our key consideration is the experience and performance of the potential candidates in handling the learning diversity brought about by the NCS students admitted. Another consideration is the geographical spread of the schools. Naturally, the seven primary and three secondary schools (Annex) that traditionally admit a larger number of NCS students on a territory-wide basis should be so designated. With a view to having a network of both primary and secondary schools spreading across districts with higher concentration of NCS students, we see a case for designating one secondary school each on Hong Kong Island and New Territories West, and two more primary schools in New Territories West, particularly in Kwai Tsing and Yuen Long. Given the relatively small population of ethnic minority students in New Territories East, and the lack of schools with experience catering to the needs of these students, we intend to designate schools in this region at a later stage.

4. We have, along the above lines, shortlisted some schools and started discussions with them on support measures (see section below) to be provided by this bureau, with a view to finalizing the list before the start of the 2006/07 school year.

Support measures

5. We note that most of the schools to be designated have already been implementing various support measures for NCS students by flexibly deploying existing resources such as the resources for Remedial Teaching, Intensive Learning Support Grant under the New Funding Mode, Capacity Enhancement Grant, etc. The measures include –

- (a) making special class arrangement, e.g. streaming according to students' ability, split class teaching, pull-out programme, remedial classes, tutorial classes and support programmes after school and/or during school holidays;
- (b) adopting a wide range of teaching pedagogy, e.g. use of big book, paired reading and peer mentoring scheme; and
- (c) employing teaching assistants to assist NCS students in learning, and

to assist schools in communicating with NCS parents.

6. Having consulted the prospective schools to be designated, we propose to enhance our support for these schools from the 2006/07 school year onwards, by –

- (a) providing intensive on-site support to teachers in designing and implementing the school-based Chinese curriculum, and in developing the related learning and teaching resources (see paragraphs 11 to 12 below);
- (b) providing funding for the schools to extend the summer Bridging Programme currently confined to incoming ethnic minority Primary (P) 1 entrants², to cover also ethnic minority students proceeding to P2, P3 and P4 in order to help them consolidate what they have learnt at Key Learning Stage 1 and to prepare for the transition to Key Learning Stage 2³;
- (c) providing funding for the schools to lengthen the duration of the 6-month Initiation Programmes for newly arrived children (including newly arrived ethnic minority children)⁴ to one year in order to enhance the readiness of these children to receive formal schooling (e.g. to have acquired the basic proficiency in Chinese and English)⁵; and
- (d) commissioning post-secondary institutions to run professional development programmes on teaching of Chinese Language to NCS students for teachers of the designated schools.

² The Education and Manpower Bureau has invited individual schools to run a 4-week Bridging Programme for ethnic minority P1 entrants during the summer vacations of 2004 and 2005 with focuses on exposure to oral and written Chinese in a classroom setting. Since we have received positive feedback from school heads, teachers, parents and pupils, we will continue to offer this programme in the 2006 summer vacation.

³ Other primary schools which are not designated schools would have to enrol at least a minimum threshold of ethnic minority entrants at the study level concerned before they could run the Programme.

⁴ Currently, a block grant is provided to some schools for running full time 6-month Initiation Programmes for newly arrived children who choose to be enrolled in bridging courses before they formally start their schooling.

⁵ Other schools which are not designated schools would have to enrol at least a minimum threshold of newly arrived children at the study level concerned before they could run the Initiation Programmes.

The estimated additional recurrent cost of providing the above enhanced support measures is in the order of \$17 million a year, not counting the time-limited funding to be provided for the training under (d) and the financial implications of the proposal in paragraph 12 below.

7. The Government will continue to earmark funding for ongoing support measures. These include inviting non-Government organizations (NGOs) to run 60-hour Induction Programmes for newly arrived children, including newly arrived ethnic minority children, and providing public sector schools admitting these students with a School-based Support Scheme Grant.

Chinese Curriculum, Assessment Standards and Qualifications

The need for adaptations to address student diversity

8. No matter how a Chinese curriculum is designed, it is necessary for a school to adapt the curriculum for different students, including NCS students, in order to effectively deal with student diversity. In fact, the issue of learning diversity is not restricted to NCS students alone. Children, irrespective of origin and age, do exhibit varying extent of learning diversity during their schooling. While the Curriculum Development Council has prepared one central Chinese Language Curriculum Guide for all, this bureau has been assisting schools to develop their school-based Chinese curriculum by making suitable adaptations to the central Guide. Detailed guidelines and teacher development programmes have been/are being provided on how schools can cater for learner diversity, provide suitable challenges while paying heed to the realistic ability of students to encourage higher level of proficiency, promote self-learning skills among students, as well as how to develop bridging and language enrichment programmes.

9. We have school reports of P6 NCS students attaining the Chinese proficiency of P6 local students (the NCS students concerned may have been exposed to the language at an early age with adequate support). However, there are also P6 NCS students who have only attained the Chinese proficiency of P3 local students (which may be due to a late start in the learning of Chinese; difficulties in coping with two foreign languages, i.e.

English and Chinese, at the same time without family support, etc.). In other cases, there are newly arrived NCS students joining at the P6 level. This is why we have been encouraging schools to apply the same “school-based” approach in adapting the central Chinese curriculum framework, with the aim of ensuring that NCS students of different abilities are taught and assessed with reference to appropriate standards.

10. While there should be no question about the need for adaptations, some have questioned the appropriateness of adapting with reference to the current Chinese curriculum, which they think is designed for native Chinese speakers. We wish to clarify that our Chinese curriculum is not designed just for native Chinese speakers. The current curriculum, with its language competency and cultural contents, is designed for all learners (irrespective of whether they are native Chinese speakers) who are learning the language for integration into the local Chinese society. Our curriculum framework for Chinese Language, divided into key stages, is robust, open and flexible enough to accommodate different adaptations in catering for a wide range of learner abilities and interests. The modified curriculum for the new academic structure for senior secondary education will be even broader to provide even greater flexibility for adaptations. Seen from the professional perspective of curriculum design, an adapted school-based version of the Chinese curriculum (which is competency-based) suitable for NCS students is essentially an “alternative” curriculum for second Chinese language learners, and one with enough flexibility and room to cater for the needs and differences of students, but without the discriminative label.

Enhancing school-based support

11. The support team of the Education and Manpower Bureau has been providing intensive on-site support to seven schools admitting the NCS students. In future, such intensive on-site support would be provided to all the designated schools. The support includes assisting teachers to design and implement school-based Chinese Language curriculum, advising teachers on teaching, learning and assessment strategies and on the development of learning and teaching resources, teaching demonstration and evaluation of students’ learning. The support team reviews regularly with school heads and teachers the progress of their students’ learning and shares views on issues relating to teacher development.

12. We are also exploring the feasibility of running Chinese Language Learning Support Centre(s) with the assistance of post-secondary institutions, for the purpose of providing further support for the current population of NCS students in our secondary schools. This group of NCS students may not have received comprehensive education in Chinese Language when they were in primary schools (the seven primary schools which have traditionally admitted a greater number of NCS students started teaching Chinese systematically to their intake of NCS students in recent years). Tutorial classes may be arranged after school and/or during school holidays in the Chinese Language Learning Support Centre(s). It is expected that through intensive remedial support, this group of NCS students may catch up in their level of proficiency and be better equipped for attempting the relevant exit examinations upon their graduation. The Learning Support Centre(s) would also be of help to those NCS students who have a late start in the learning of Chinese due to their arriving Hong Kong and entering our school system beyond the entry level.

Assessment standards and attainment of qualifications in Chinese Language

13. It should be noted that curriculum is different from assessment. Having one central curriculum does not mean the prescription of one performance standard to be achieved by all. It is also worth noting that standards-referenced reporting will be adopted in Chinese Language and English Language from the 2007 Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) onwards as well as in the future Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). Instead of reporting a student's results in grades that show how he/she performs compared with the norm, the student's results will be reported in levels, each of which will be accompanied by descriptors that make it clear what a typical student at a given level is able to do. In addition, there will be annotated samples of student work and performance on examinations to illustrate the standards at each level. By having standards-referencing, an NCS student taking HKCEE or the future HKDSE (Chinese Language) will be able to demonstrate his/her proficiency in Chinese for further education and employment purposes.

14. We understand that individual NCS students would like to be provided with the avenue to attain alternative qualifications in Chinese. We believe that suitable school-based adaptations of the central curriculum, coupled with effective learning and teaching strategies and resources support, should enable the students concerned to acquire, upon completion of secondary education, different qualifications in Chinese Language. In this regard, we are discussing with the relevant examination authorities the arrangements for administering the General Certificate of Secondary Education (Chinese) examination in Hong Kong for these NCS students beginning 2007.

Vocational Education and Training

15. The Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE) of the Vocational Training Council (VTC) uses English as the medium of instruction for its post-secondary courses and NCS students who meet the basic entrance requirements may apply for admission to the IVE programmes on a competitive basis. To provide more vocational education and training opportunities to NCS students, the VTC will offer additional craft and foundation level courses specifically targeted at NCS students in the 2006/07 school year at both IVE and the VTC's industry-specific Training Centres. As regards the Construction Industry Training Authority (CITA), it also offers some vocational training courses in English, particularly the occupational safety courses. For courses which are only conducted in Chinese for practical reasons (e.g. only Chinese will be used in the actual workplace concerned), CITA has agreed to supplement the courses with English reading materials/assessment for NCS students who can communicate in Chinese orally but are not fully literate. Besides, both VTC and CITA are willing to meet and discuss with the NGOs and ethnic minority concern groups with a view to understanding and meeting the training needs of the ethnic minorities. Both institutions are also prepared to consider suitable flexibility in applying entry requirements involving qualifications in the Chinese Language for admission of NCS students to individual programmes.

16. To enhance the employability of those NCS who do not understand the Chinese language and speak no Cantonese and have already completed their schooling, we will invite the Standing Committee on Language

Education and Research, which has experience in administering the Workplace English Campaign, to develop a Workplace Chinese Programme, under which some institutions will be commissioned to develop workplace Chinese courses leading to qualifications recognized under the future Qualifications Framework.

Advice Sought

17. We welcome Members' views on the various proposals in this paper.

Education and Manpower Bureau
July 2006

Annex

List of Schools Traditionally Admitting a Larger Number of Non-Chinese Speaking Students

Hong Kong Island	<u>Primary schools</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sir Ellis Kadoorie (Sookunpo) Primary School (Wan Chai)• Li Sing Tai Hang School (Wan Chai)
Kowloon East	<u>Primary schools</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hong Kong Taoist Association School (Kwun Tong)• Man Kiu Association Primary School (Kwun Tong) <u>Secondary school</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delia Memorial School (Hip Wo) (Kwun Tong)
Kowloon West	<u>Primary schools</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yaumati Kaifong Association School (Yau Tsim Mong)• Li Cheng Uk Government Primary School (Sham Shui Po) <u>Secondary schools</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delia Memorial School (Broadway) (Sham Shui Po)• Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (West Kowloon) (Yau Tsim Mong)
New Territories West	<u>Primary school</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Islamic Primary School (Tuen Mun)