

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **Education Bureau**

### **Integrated education**

*This audit review was carried out under a set of guidelines tabled in the Provisional Legislative Council by the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee on 11 February 1998. The guidelines were agreed between the Public Accounts Committee and the Director of Audit and accepted by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.*

Report No. 70 of the Director of Audit contains 8 Chapters which are available on our website at <http://www.aud.gov.hk>

Audit Commission  
26th floor, Immigration Tower  
7 Gloucester Road  
Wan Chai  
Hong Kong

Tel : (852) 2829 4210  
Fax : (852) 2824 2087  
E-mail : [enquiry@aud.gov.hk](mailto:enquiry@aud.gov.hk)

# INTEGRATED EDUCATION

## Contents

	<b>Paragraph</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b>	
<b>PART 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	1.1 – 1.3
Types of SEN	1.4
Number of students with SEN	1.5 – 1.7
Support measures to schools	1.8
Audit review	1.9 – 1.10
General response from the Government	1.11
Acknowledgement	1.12
<b>PART 2: IDENTIFICATION AND ADMISSION OF STUDENTS WITH SEN</b>	2.1
Identification of students with SEN	2.2 – 2.13
Audit recommendations	2.14
Response from the Government	2.15
Information needs of parents of students with SEN for choosing schools	2.16 – 2.20
Audit recommendation	2.21
Response from the Government	2.22
Installation of lifts in schools to create a barrier-free physical environment for students with disabilities	2.23 – 2.26
Audit recommendations	2.27
Response from the Government	2.28

	<b>Paragraph</b>
<b>PART 3: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES PROVIDED TO PUBLIC SECTOR ORDINARY SCHOOLS</b>	3.1 – 3.3
Administration of LSG	3.4 – 3.15
Audit recommendations	3.16
Response from the Government	3.17
Administration of IRTP	3.18 – 3.22
Audit recommendation	3.23
Response from the Government	3.24
Performance management	3.25 – 3.28
Audit recommendation	3.29
Response from the Government	3.30
SENCO	3.31 – 3.40
Audit recommendations	3.41
Response from the Government	3.42
<b>PART 4: TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT</b>	4.1
Teacher professional development framework on integrated education	4.2 – 4.5
Audit recommendation	4.6
Response from the Government	4.7
School-based Educational Psychology Service	4.8 – 4.17
Audit recommendations	4.18
Response from the Government	4.19

<b>Appendices</b>	<b>Page</b>
A : EDB’s Special Education Division: Organisation chart (extract) (31 January 2018)	66
B : A sample of the school year-end self-evaluation form (extract)	67 – 69
C : Summary on self-evaluation results of primary schools and secondary schools (2014/15 to 2016/17)	70
D : Acronyms and abbreviations	71



# INTEGRATED EDUCATION

## Executive Summary

1. In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487) and the Code of Practice on Education issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission, all educational establishments have the obligation to provide equal education opportunities to eligible students, including students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Students with SEN refer to students who need special educational support because of learning or adjustment difficulties categorised as: (a) Specific Learning Difficulties; (b) Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder; (c) Autism Spectrum Disorders; (d) Speech and Language Impairment; (e) Intellectual Disability; (f) Hearing Impairment; (g) Physical Disability; (h) Visual Impairment; and (i) Mental Illness (included as a type of SEN from 2017/18 onwards — unless stated otherwise, all years mentioned hereinafter refer to school years). In September 1997, the Government launched a two-year pilot project on integrated education under which participating schools were required to provide an accommodating learning environment for students with SEN. Integrated education was extended to all public sector ordinary schools from 1999/2000 onwards. The targets and beneficiaries of integrated education are not only the students with SEN but also other students, school staff, parents and even the whole society. The Government adopts a dual-track mode in implementing special education. For students with more severe or multiple disabilities, the Education Bureau (EDB) will, subject to the assessment and recommendations of specialists and the consent of the parents, refer them to special schools for intensive support services.

2. In 2016/17, there were 844 public sector ordinary schools comprising 454 primary schools and 390 secondary schools. About 42,890 students with SEN studied in the 844 schools. On top of the regular subventions provided to all public sector ordinary schools, the EDB provides schools with additional resources (in the form of cash grant and additional teaching staff), professional support and teacher training to help them cater for students with SEN. The Special Education Division of the EDB is responsible for the provision and administration of support measures for implementing integrated education. The EDB's expenditure on additional resources and professional services for integrated education increased by \$408.6 million from \$1,008.5 million in 2012/13 to \$1,417.1 million in 2016/17.

## Executive Summary

---

The Audit Commission (Audit) has recently conducted a review on the EDB's work in the implementation of integrated education.

### Identification and admission of students with SEN

3. *Need to enhance measures to identify students with SEN as early as possible.* In 2016/17, 6,159 students were assessed by school-based Educational Psychologists (EPs) for the first time. Of them, 6,131 were diagnosed as students with SEN or Academic Low Achievers (ALAs). Of these 6,131 students, while 4,181 (68.2%) were diagnosed in Primary One and Primary Two, 1,950 (31.8%) were diagnosed at higher class levels. As early identification of possible learning difficulties would enable parents and teachers to provide the appropriate support to the students as soon as possible, all efforts should be made to ensure that students with SEN are identified at the earliest opportunities (paras. 2.5 and 2.7).

4. *Need to strengthen measures in obtaining consents from parents to transfer information of students with SEN.* It is essential to have an effective mechanism to ensure that information of students with SEN can be made available to schools as early as possible so that timely and appropriate support can be provided. Primary schools are required to obtain consents from parents of upcoming Secondary One students with SEN before transferring to the recipient secondary schools the relevant information of the students with SEN. Although the percentage of parents who refused to give consent to the primary schools for transferring their children's information to the secondary schools had decreased from 25% in 2013/14 to 17% in 2017/18, there was still a notable number of parents (775 cases in 2017/18) who declined to give consent (paras. 2.8 and 2.10).

5. *Need to monitor the timeliness of assessment service.* According to the School-based Educational Psychology Service (SBEPS) Guide: (a) through post-assessment meeting, the EP should explain to parents and school personnel the assessment results and discuss the educational support for every student who was given an individual assessment; (b) EPs should provide parents with an assessment summary containing key information on intellectual functioning, learning difficulties and recommendations for support for every case given psychometric assessment, normally within three months; and (c) for every referral given assessment, EPs should send a copy of the assessment report to the school concerned for arrangement of appropriate supportive service, normally within three months. Audit noted that the



## Executive Summary

---

EDB did not record in its computer system the dates on which the post-assessment meetings were held and the assessment summaries and the assessment reports were issued (paras. 2.12 and 2.13).

6. *Need to release more school information on support for students with SEN to facilitate parents of students with SEN in selecting schools.* Parents of students with SEN may, based on their own choice, apply for a place in ordinary schools for their children through the established mechanisms. The profiles of primary schools and secondary schools published by the Committee on Home-School Co-operation are important sources of information about the schools. Audit noted that in the profiles, schools disclosed only three pieces of information on support for students with SEN. There is other school information on support for students with SEN that would be useful to parents of students with SEN, e.g. how resources are allocated to and amongst students with SEN, and school-based support services for students with SEN (paras. 2.16 to 2.19).

7. *Need to expedite installation of lifts in schools to create a barrier-free physical environment for students with disabilities.* Barrier-free access facilities (e.g. lifts) are needed for students with Physical Disability. Aided schools without lift may apply for lift installation after taking into account their individual school-based needs under the annual major repairs exercise. As at 28 February 2018, 110 applications received by the EDB had not been completed. Of the 110 applications, only 42 were approved. Of the 42 lift projects approved, the related works of one application were expected to be completed by April 2018. Another 10 were in the construction stage and the remaining 31 were either under the statutory submission, planning or detailed design stage. The Government announced in February 2018 that it would make an additional provision of \$2 billion to expedite installation of lifts for public sector schools (paras. 2.23 to 2.26).

### **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

8. *Need to improve the administration of the Learning Support Grant (LSG).* The LSG was launched in 2003/04. Schools should deploy the LSG flexibly and strategically to support ALAs (applicable to primary schools only) and students with SEN. Under the 3-Tier Intervention Model, students are provided with three levels of support ranging from Tier-1 (for students with less severe learning difficulties) to

## Executive Summary

---

Tier-3 (for students with more severe learning difficulties). Subject to a ceiling, the amount of the LSG per year provided to each school is calculated annually based on the number of ALAs and students with SEN enrolled at the school who require Tier-2 or Tier-3 support. In 2016/17, 696 of the 844 public sector ordinary schools received support from the LSG and \$539 million was allocated to the 696 schools. Audit identified the following room for improvement: (a) the tier of support a student with SEN needed was determined by the school concerned. To facilitate schools to cater for the needs of students with SEN, the EDB has provided guidelines to schools on the level of support according to the performance of the students under the 3-Tier Intervention Model. However, the guidelines did not explicitly spell out the criteria that schools could make reference to when determining the tier of support of students with SEN; (b) the ceiling was increased to \$1.5 million per school per year in 2013/14. Starting from 2015/16, the ceiling has been adjusted annually based on the change in the Composite Consumer Price Index but not the change in the number of students with SEN and ALAs. In the four-year period from 2013/14 to 2016/17, the number of Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN and ALAs had increased by 29% from 37,188 to 47,937. The number of schools reaching the LSG ceiling had increased by 13-fold from 4 in 2013/14 to 56 in 2016/17; and (c) the EDB stipulated that schools should fully utilise the LSG fund allocated in every school year. In 2015/16, of the 692 schools which had received the LSG allocation, 366 had surplus fund. Of the 366 schools, 122 (33%) had surplus fund of more than 10% of the annual allocation (paras. 3.4, 3.5 and 3.8 to 3.15).

9. ***Slow progress of schools in switching from Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP) to LSG.*** Under the IRTP implemented in 2000, schools are provided with one to three additional teachers in the establishment and a class grant is given for each additional teacher. With the introduction of the LSG in 2003/04, schools that have not participated in the IRTP can only apply for the LSG. Schools that are under the IRTP may continue to receive support under the IRTP. According to the EDB, the provision of the LSG enables schools to pool school resources together and deploy them more holistically and flexibly to render appropriate support services to students with SEN and ALAs based on their needs. Under the IRTP, the number of additional teacher posts granted to schools is based on the number of ALAs, students with Intellectual Disability and students with Specific Learning Difficulties but not other types of SEN. The EDB encourages schools implementing the IRTP to switch to the LSG as soon as possible. However, the response from schools was far from satisfactory. Over the eight-year period from 2009/10 to 2016/17, only 35 (13%) of 277 schools switched from the IRTP to the LSG. The remaining 242 schools were still participating in the IRTP (paras. 3.18 to 3.21).

## Executive Summary

---

10. *Need to address the large disparity in the ratio of Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to students with SEN among schools and the training of SENCOs.* In phases over a three-year period (2017/18 to 2019/20), the EDB will provide each public sector ordinary primary school and secondary school with one additional teaching post to facilitate school's assignment of a designated teacher to take up the roles of SENCO whose responsibility is to steer and coordinate services and support for students with SEN. In 2017/18, only 244 of 844 schools were each provided with a post for SENCO. By 2019/20, when the provision of SENCO is extended to the remaining schools, all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools would each have a SENCO. The annual recurrent expenditure would amount to about \$550 million in financial year 2021-22. Audit analysis on the distribution of students with SEN among schools in 2016/17 revealed that of the 844 schools, 469 (55.6%) each had fewer than 50 Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN while 45 (5.3%) each had 100 or more such students. As the number of students with SEN is not evenly distributed among schools, the ratio of SENCO to students with SEN varies among schools. Moreover, the EDB stipulated that a SENCO should have completed the Basic, Advanced and Thematic (BAT) Courses on catering for students with SEN. As at January 2018, 56 (23%) of the 244 SENCOs were still attending the required BAT Courses on supporting students with SEN (paras. 3.31 to 3.37).

### Teacher training and professional support

11. *Need to encourage schools to meet training targets.* In 2007/08, the EDB launched a teacher professional development framework on integrated education. Under the framework, BAT Courses are conducted for serving teachers. Since the launch of the framework, the EDB has launched three cycles of BAT Courses with training targets set for each school to attain in each cycle. Audit examined the attainment of BAT Courses training targets by all 844 public sector ordinary schools in the second and the third cycles based on the training position of schools in the end of 2016/17. Audit found that of the 844 schools: (a) 37 (4%), 83 (10%) and 47 (6%) did not meet the training targets of the Basic, Advanced and Thematic Courses respectively applicable for the second cycle from 2012/13 to 2014/15; (b) 219 (26%), 572 (68%) and 326 (39%) did not meet the training targets of the Basic, Advanced and Thematic Courses respectively applicable for the third cycle from 2015/16 to 2019/20; and (c) there were 11 schools that did not meet any of the training targets for the BAT Courses applicable for the second cycle and the third cycle (paras. 4.2, 4.4 and 4.5).

## Executive Summary

---

12. *Need to step up measures to ensure that schools receive the required number of visit days by EPs.* Audit examined the number of EP visit days of the 844 schools in 2016/17 and found that: (a) for 27 (8%) of the 330 schools that received the regular SBEPS provided by the EDB, each received less than the required 18 visit days per school year; (b) for 11 (2%) of the 484 schools that received the regular SBEPS provided by the school sponsoring bodies (SSBs), each received less than the required 14 visit days per school year; and (c) for 4 (13%) of the 30 schools that received the enhanced SBEPS, each received less than the required 30 visit days per school year. As the numbers of visit days were less than required, the educational psychology service provided to the schools might have been affected (para. 4.14).

13. *Need to strengthen monitoring of SBEPS provided by SSBs.* The SBEPS is provided to schools either by the EDB direct or the SSBs. In 2016/17, there were 11 SSBs that provided the SBEPS. Each of the 11 SSBs hired an EP supervisor. According to the SBEPS Guide, the EP supervisor must be an experienced EP generally with six years or more of EP experience and is required to provide about 130 supervision hours to each EP under his supervision each year. The EDB has not required the SSBs to submit proof of the qualifications of their EP supervisors. In addition, the EDB has not set up a robust mechanism to monitor the services provided by the EP supervisors (paras. 4.8, 4.16 and 4.17).

### Audit recommendations

14. **Audit recommendations are made in the respective sections of this Audit Report. Only the key ones are highlighted in this Executive Summary. Audit has recommended that the Secretary for Education should:**

#### *Identification and admission of students with SEN*

- (a) **review the timeliness of identifying students with SEN (para. 2.14(a));**
- (b) **in collaboration with schools, further encourage parents of students with SEN to give their consent to transfer related information from primary schools to secondary schools (para. 2.14(b));**

## Executive Summary

---

- (c) **record the dates on which the post-assessment meetings are held and the assessment summaries and the assessment reports are issued in the EDB's computer system to facilitate the monitoring of the timeliness of issuing assessment summaries and reports (para. 2.14(c));**
- (d) **urge schools to release more school information on support for students with SEN to facilitate parents of students with SEN in selecting schools (para. 2.21);**
- (e) **closely monitor the progress of the works of the 42 approved lift installations and expedite the lift installation works for schools without such facility under the new lift-installation programme announced in February 2018 (para. 2.27(a) and (b));**

### *Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools*

- (f) **consider issuing more specific guidelines to schools to facilitate their determination of the tier of support their students with SEN require (para. 3.16(a));**
- (g) **review the ceiling for the LSG periodically taking account of the changes in price level and the changes in the number of students with SEN and ALAs (para. 3.16(b));**
- (h) **take measures to further encourage schools to fully utilise the LSG fund allocated to them in each school year (para. 3.16(c));**
- (i) **take measures to address the concerns of the schools with a view to speeding up their switch from the IRTP to the LSG (para. 3.23);**
- (j) **take measures to address the large disparity in the ratio of SENCO to students with SEN among different schools (para. 3.41(a));**
- (k) **take measures to increase the number of teachers having completed the BAT Courses to stand ready to serve as SENCOs (para. 3.41(b));**

## Executive Summary

---

### *Teacher training and professional support*

- (l) **take measures to encourage schools to meet the BAT Courses training targets (para. 4.6);**
- (m) **step up measures to ensure that schools receive the required number of visit days by EPs (para. 4.18(c)); and**
- (n) **step up its monitoring of the SBEPS provided by the SSBs (para. 4.18(d)).**

## **Response from the Government**

15. The Government welcomes the audit review and agrees with the audit recommendations.

## **PART 1: INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This PART describes the background to the audit and outlines the audit objectives and scope.

### ***Background***

1.2 In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487) and the Code of Practice on Education issued by the Equal Opportunities Commission, all educational establishments have the obligation to provide equal education opportunities to eligible students, including students with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Students with SEN refer to students who need special educational support because of learning or adjustment difficulties. In September 1997, the Government launched a two-year pilot project on integrated education under which participating schools were required to provide an accommodating learning environment for students with SEN. After the two-year pilot project, integrated education was extended to all public sector ordinary schools from the 1999/2000 school year (Note 1) onwards. One of the long term goals of integrated education is to help all students, teachers and parents recognise, accept and respect individual differences, and even celebrate differences. To support diversity and promote inclusiveness, the targets and beneficiaries of integrated education are not only the students with SEN but also other students, school staff, parents, and even the whole society.

1.3 The Government adopts a dual-track mode in implementing special education. For students with more severe or multiple disabilities, the Education Bureau (EDB) will, subject to the assessment and recommendations of specialists and the consent of the parents, refer them to special schools for intensive support services. Each type of special schools focuses on students with specific disability. The class size, staffing ratio, curriculum and level of support provided for the special schools are different from the ordinary schools. Other students with SEN, who do not need to attend special schools for intensive support services, may attend ordinary schools

---

**Note 1:** *Unless otherwise specified, all years mentioned in this Audit Report refer to school years, which start on 1 September of a year and end on 31 August of the following year.*

## Introduction

---

so that they can interact with ordinary students and benefit from mainstream education. It is worth noting that many students with SEN cope well with learning in mainstream education and, in recent years, there have been examples of these students achieving good academic results in ordinary schools.

## Types of SEN

1.4 The EDB classified SEN into the following nine types:

- (a) ***Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)***. SpLD in reading and writing, also known as dyslexia, is the most common type of SpLD. Students with SpLD, despite having normal intelligence and having received formal instructions, are unable to read, spell and dictate words accurately and fluently. In supporting students with SpLD, teachers need to adopt diversified teaching strategies (e.g. multisensory, structured and small-step teaching to suit the pace and learning capabilities of the students);
- (b) ***Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD)***. Students with AD/HD usually have the following three characteristics:
  - (i) ***Inattention***. They have difficulty sustaining attention and have short attention span. They are often distracted by irrelevant signs and sounds. They also have difficulty organising tasks and activities or paying attention to details. Moreover, they often make careless mistakes;
  - (ii) ***Hyperactivity***. They cannot remain seated in class and usually keep fidgeting or fiddling with objects around them; and
  - (iii) ***Impulsivity***. They lack patience, are impulsive and often act without considering the consequences. They blurt out answers before the questions are completed. Moreover, they often interrupt others, cannot remain in line with the queue, and are unable to follow the instructions.

In teaching these students, the teachers need to provide a well-structured learning environment, give clear and specific instructions and give one



instruction at a time, break down the task into small units and establish clear-cut rules and award schemes for guiding the behaviour of the students;

- (c) ***Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)***. Children with ASD display social communication impairments and restricted repetitive patterns of behaviour in the early developmental period (but may not become fully manifest until social demands exceed limited capacities, or may be masked by learned strategies in later life). Students with ASD usually need explicit instructions for accomplishing tasks. Teachers can help by providing them with support for routines and procedures, visual organisers, priming, and structured assignments to improve their participation in lessons;
  
- (d) ***Speech and Language Impairment (SLI)***. There are four common types of speech and language difficulties:
  - (i) ***Articulation problem***. Articulation problem refers to the mispronunciation of words due to various causes to the extent that other people cannot understand what is being said, such as substitution or omission of sounds;
  
  - (ii) ***Language problem***. Language problem refers to the inability to understand fully the information conveyed in a message, which leads to misunderstanding or even communication breakdown, and/or difficulties in conveying messages at an age-appropriate level;
  
  - (iii) ***Fluency problem***. Fluency problem refers to the condition in which the flow of speech is interrupted by repetitions of syllables or words, or prolongation of sounds, or the speech rate is too fast or too slow, or blocks; and
  
  - (iv) ***Voice problem***. Voice problem refers to hoarseness, loss of voice, excessively high/low pitch, difficulties in controlling the loudness of voice, hyper- or hypo-nasality, etc. due to various causes.

In helping students with SLI, teachers may provide feedback to the students to facilitate the communication process, demonstrate the appropriate speech and language production, and give encouragement and reinforcement for the students;

## Introduction

---

- (e) ***Intellectual Disability (ID)***. ID is a group of developmental conditions characterised by significant impairment of cognitive functions, which are associated with limitations of learning, adaptive behaviours and skills. This disability originates before the age of 18. In supporting students with ID, teachers need to use differentiated instruction and employ diversified teaching strategies to enhance the effectiveness of learning. For example, they may use real objects and gestures as aids to supplement verbal instructions;
- (f) ***Hearing Impairment (HI)***. There are three major types of HI, namely conductive, sensorineural, and mixed. The level of impairment can be further classified into mild, moderate, moderately severe, severe and profound. Teachers need to try to stand and speak in front of the students so as to provide visual cues like lip-reading, facial expression and gestures;
- (g) ***Physical Disability (PD)***. Cerebral palsy, spina bifida and muscular dystrophy are common types of PDs which affect students' motor co-ordination, speech, writing and daily activities. Schools may help these students by providing them with accessible facilities such as lifts, accessible toilets and wheelchair access;
- (h) ***Visual Impairment (VI)***. VI refers to the visual acuity of 6/18 or below, taking measurement from the eye with better vision upon wearing spectacles or after refractive correction surgery. VI can be classified as mild low vision, moderate low vision, severe low vision or total loss of vision. Schools may help students with VI by allowing them to use assistive tools, including Braille book, audio tapes, magnifying glass, word magnifier and computer, in accordance with the students' residual visual functions; and
- (i) ***Mental Illness (MI)***. Effective from 2017/18, the EDB has included MI as a type of SEN. There are different types of MI including Anxiety Disorders, Depressive Disorders and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. There are also more severe MI such as Psychotic Disorders and Bipolar Disorder, the symptoms of which are usually more persistent and their influence are usually more pervasive. Students with MI need treatment by healthcare professionals. They are usually diagnosed by psychiatrists, and followed up by clinical psychologists, psychiatric nurses or medical social workers. Schools play a complementary role in coping with the advice on treatment and rehabilitation given by the healthcare professionals, and assist the students adapt to school life according to their needs.

## Number of students with SEN

1.5 In 2016/17, there were 844 public sector ordinary schools comprising 454 primary schools and 390 secondary schools. About 42,890 students with SEN studied in the 844 schools (Note 2) (see Table 1).

---

**Note 2:** *In 2016/17, about 7,700 students with more severe or multiple disabilities studied in 60 aided special schools. This audit review focused on the EDB's work in the implementation of integrated education (see para. 1.10). The review did not cover special schools.*

## Introduction

**Table 1**

**Number of students with SEN in public sector ordinary schools  
(2012/13 to 2016/17)**

	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Change between 2012/13 and 2016/17
<b>Primary schools</b>						
No. of students with SEN	16,810	17,390	18,200	19,830	21,860	+5,050 (+30%)
Total no. of students	258,527	259,867	266,153	273,006	282,482	+23,955 (+9%)
Students with SEN as a percentage of total students	6.5%	6.7%	6.8%	7.3%	7.7%	+1.2 percentage points
<b>Secondary schools</b>						
No. of students with SEN	14,580	16,440	17,990	19,640	21,030	+6,450 (+44%)
Total no. of students	347,851	323,691	302,110	282,525	268,609	- 79,242 (- 23%)
Students with SEN as a percentage of total students	4.2%	5.1%	6.0%	7.0%	7.8%	+3.6 percentage points
<b>Primary schools and secondary schools</b>						
No. of students with SEN	31,390	33,830	36,190	39,470	42,890	+11,500 (+37%)
Total no. of students	606,378	583,558	568,263	555,531	551,091	- 55,287 (- 9%)
Students with SEN as a percentage of total students	5.2%	5.8%	6.4%	7.1%	7.8%	+2.6 percentage points

Source: *Audit analysis of EDB records*

1.6 Table 2 shows the number of students with SEN in public sector ordinary schools analysed by major SEN type for the period 2012/13 to 2016/17.

**Table 2**

**Number of students with SEN in public sector ordinary schools analysed by major SEN type (2012/13 to 2016/17)**

SEN type	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	Change between 2012/13 and 2016/17
SpLD	17,440	18,080	18,610	19,390	20,120	+2,680 (+15%)
AD/HD	4,780	5,860	6,910	8,200	9,440	+4,660 (+97%)
ASD	4,150	4,970	5,790	6,800	7,820	+3,670 (+88%)
SLI	2,130	2,090	2,130	2,400	2,870	+740 (+35%)
ID	1,690	1,680	1,650	1,590	1,580	- 110 (- 7%)
HI	690	660	650	670	650	- 40 (- 6%)
PD	380	360	330	310	300	- 80 (- 21%)
VI	130	130	120	110	110	- 20 (- 15%)
Overall	31,390	33,830	36,190	39,470	42,890	+11,500 (+37%)

Source: EDB records

Remarks: The Learning Support Grant for public sector ordinary schools to support students with SEN has extended to cover students with MI starting from 2017/18. The EDB does not have the number of students with MI before 2017/18.

## **Introduction**

---

1.7 During the period 2012/13 to 2016/17, the number of students with SEN in public sector ordinary schools increased, mainly due to the increase in number of students with SpLD, AD/HD and ASD. According to the EDB:

- (a) the increasing number of students assessed to have SpLD and AD/HD may be due to the improvement in their identification process. To increase teachers' and parents' awareness and acceptance of needs of students with AD/HD, the EDB conducts annually territory-wide teacher and parent workshops and develops resource materials for schools to help them support students with AD/HD. In addition, a newsletter on helping those students was uploaded to the EDB website for promoting public awareness; and
- (b) the rapid increase in the number of students with ASD is similarly observed globally. It is likely to be a result of growing awareness among parents of the signs of children with ASD or developmental delay, hence they are more likely to seek diagnostic service and intervention. At school level, improvement in teacher training on SEN results in increased sensitivity and accuracy of teachers in spotting students who might have ASD and warrant assessment and support. Furthermore, the psychiatric services provided by the Hospital Authority (HA) which is responsible for diagnosing psychiatric disorders, including ASD and AD/HD, and follow-up services are improving.

## **Support measures to schools**

1.8 On top of the regular subventions provided to all public sector ordinary schools, the EDB provides schools with additional resources (in the form of cash grant and additional teaching staff), professional support and teacher training to help them cater for students with SEN. The Special Education Division of the EDB is responsible for the provision and the administration of the support measures for implementing integrated education (see Appendix A for the organisation chart of the Division). According to the EDB's records, the EDB's expenditure on additional resources and professional services for integrated education increased by \$408.6 million (41%) from \$1,008.5 million in 2012/13 to \$1,417.1 million in 2016/17 (see Table 3).

Table 3

**Expenditure on additional resources and professional services provided to  
public sector ordinary schools for integrated education  
(2012/13 to 2016/17)**

Nature	Expenditure (\$ million)					Change between 2012/13 and 2016/17
	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	
<i>Additional resources</i>						
Cash grant	348.9	390.0	511.4	566.1	607.6	+258.7 (+74%)
Additional teaching staff	552.7	555.0	570.3	580.5	599.7	+47.0 (+9%)
Subtotal (a)	901.6	945.0	1,081.7	1,146.6	1,207.3	+305.7 (+34%)
<i>Professional services</i>						
Educational psychology service	56.4	71.6	84.8	102.9	146.4	+90.0 (+160%)
Teacher training	50.5	58.8	55.2	60.5	63.4	+12.9 (+26%)
Subtotal (b)	106.9	130.4	140.0	163.4	209.8	+102.9 (+96%)
Total (c)=(a)+(b)	1,008.5	1,075.4	1,221.7	1,310.0	1,417.1	+408.6 (+41%)

Source: Audit analysis of EDB records

## **Introduction**

---

### **Audit review**

1.9 In 1999, the Audit Commission (Audit) conducted an audit review on services for students with SEN. The result was reported in Chapter 7 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 33 of October 1999.

1.10 In October 2017, Audit commenced a review of the EDB's work in the implementation of integrated education. The audit has focused on the following areas:

- (a) identification and admission of students with SEN (PART 2);
- (b) additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools (PART 3);  
and
- (c) teacher training and professional support (PART 4).

Audit has found room for improvement in the above areas and has made a number of recommendations to address the issues.

### **General response from the Government**

1.11 The Secretary for Education welcomes the audit review and agrees to take necessary follow-up actions on the recommendations in this Audit Report. He has said that the Government has already commenced a review of the implementation of integrated education in schools and would introduce improvement measures with a view to delivering quality education for students with SEN and facilitating them to develop their potential to the full. As announced in the 2018-19 Budget, to achieve quality education, the Government has proposed to commit an additional recurrent expenditure of \$2 billion on top of the committed amount of \$1.4 billion. These new measures on integrated education will be included in the list of initiatives.

### **Acknowledgement**

1.12 Audit would like to acknowledge with gratitude the full cooperation of the staff of the EDB during the course of the audit review.



## **PART 2: IDENTIFICATION AND ADMISSION OF STUDENTS WITH SEN**

2.1 This PART examines the EDB's work on identification and admission of students with SEN, focusing on the following issues:

- (a) identification of students with SEN (paras. 2.2 to 2.15);
- (b) information needs of parents of students with SEN for choosing schools (paras. 2.16 to 2.22); and
- (c) installation of lifts in schools to create a barrier-free physical environment for students with disabilities (paras. 2.23 to 2.28).

### **Identification of students with SEN**

2.2 In 1985, the EDB put in place at all public sector ordinary primary schools the Early Identification and Intervention Programme for Primary One Students with Learning Difficulties (EII Programme — Note 3) to ensure that all children with learning difficulties could be identified early. Under the EII Programme, schools will identify students with learning difficulties and arrange follow-up action for them. Assessment will be arranged as appropriate.

---

**Note 3:** *Before primary education, children's developmental needs are addressed under the Comprehensive Child Development Service provided through the collaboration among the Department of Health, the HA, the Social Welfare Department (with non-governmental organisations) and the EDB. The objectives of the Service are the early identification and management of: (a) at-risk pregnant women; (b) mothers with postnatal depression; (c) families with psychosocial needs; and (d) pre-primary children with health, developmental and behavioural problems. Pre-primary teachers who have detected children with physical, developmental, behavioural and learning problems may refer the children to the Department of Health and the HA. Subject to their parents' consent, information on the problems of the children will be provided to the primary schools admitting them.*

## Identification and admission of students with SEN

---

2.3 The key work flow of the EII Programme is as follows:

- (a) **Observation.** From September to December, teachers will observe the learning and social adjustment of every Primary One student. Where appropriate, teachers may discuss their observation with the parents concerned. Teachers will provide in-class support to the students displaying learning or adjustment difficulties. Schools may arrange initial remedial support outside the lessons for the students concerned;
- (b) **Identification.** From December to February of the school year, teachers will complete the Observation Checklist for Teachers (OCT) for students suspected to have learning difficulties. Based on the OCT, together with the observation made by the teachers and review of the samples of work of students, the Student Support Team (Note 4), the teachers and the school-based Educational Psychologist (EP) hold meetings to identify students with learning difficulties. They will formulate and implement initial intervention plans for students identified with learning difficulties in the second half of Primary One; and
- (c) **Assessment.** Under the principle of intervention before assessment, intervention plans for students suspected to have marked learning difficulties will be implemented before they are referred to the school-based EPs for assessment (Note 5) to ensure that timely support will be rendered to the students. Students' response to the intervention will be taken into account when the related assessment is carried out when the students are in Primary Two. The level and intensity of the support needed will be adjusted following the assessment. For those Primary One students who have exhibited severe learning or adjustment difficulties, early assessment will be arranged in the second term of Primary One.

---

**Note 4:** *According to the EDB's guidelines, the Student Support Team may consist of the following members: (a) a principal, a vice principal or a senior teacher as a co-ordinator; (b) class teachers and subject teachers of the students with SEN; and (c) curriculum development leaders, guidance teachers and school social workers.*

**Note 5:** *The EPs have the professional expertise to assess and diagnose students having cognitive difficulties (e.g. ID) and learning issues (e.g. SpLD). Other types of SEN (e.g. suspected AD/HD, ASD and MI) will be referred to other professionals (e.g. child psychiatrists) for a final diagnosis.*

## **Identification and admission of students with SEN**

---

2.4 Apart from referring students suspected of having learning difficulties to EPs for assessment through the EII Programme, the teachers can refer the students from all grade levels identified with learning or adjustment difficulties for EP assessment throughout the school year, with the consent of parents. Students suspected to have ASD, AD/HD or MI, with the consent of parents, will be referred for further assessment by child psychiatrists of the HA for evaluation and diagnosis. According to the EDB, students who display learning or adjustment difficulties in senior primary or secondary school years may have the assessment conducted after Primary One and Two (instead of during Primary One or Two). Students who have been assessed by EPs may also be considered for reassessment if there are new concerns about their learning or behaviour adjustment. Hence, there is a notable percentage of students receiving EP assessment after junior primary school years.

### ***Need to enhance measures to identify students with SEN as early as possible***

2.5 In 2016/17, 6,159 students were assessed by school-based EPs for the first time. Of them, 6,131 were diagnosed as students with SEN or Academic Low Achievers (ALAs — see Note 7 to para. 3.5). Of these 6,131 students, while 4,181 (68.2%) were diagnosed in Primary One and Primary Two, 1,950 (31.8%) were diagnosed at the following stages:

- (a) 992 (16.2%) in Primary Three to Primary Six;
- (b) 726 (11.8%) in Secondary One to Secondary Three; and
- (c) 232 (3.8%) in Secondary Four to Secondary Six.

## **Identification and admission of students with SEN**

---

2.6 The EDB informed Audit in December 2017 and February 2018 that:

- (a) students who manifest learning or behaviour difficulties in higher class levels are given EP service as soon as they are identified by schools or parents;
- (b) parents of some students with SEN might have refused to give consent for their children to undergo assessment when they were in early primary schools. They might only see the need for an assessment when their children displayed greater difficulties in the senior grades or when they requested special examination arrangements for public examinations;
- (c) not all students with SEN would display learning or adjustment issues at elementary stage of schooling, especially those who are intellectually more capable and might be able to compensate for their difficulties to a large extent in primary schools. These students would slip through the detection of the EII Programme;
- (d) some students only manifest adjustment difficulties in adapting to secondary school life or only manifest acute emotional and behaviour difficulties in adolescence. These students are first assessed after admission to secondary schools; and
- (e) some students might arrive Hong Kong at class levels other than Primary One or Primary Two. Assessments for them are carried out after they displayed difficulties at schools.

2.7 Early identification of possible learning difficulties can enable parents and teachers to provide the appropriate support to the students as soon as possible. All efforts should be made to ensure that students with SEN are identified at the earliest opportunities so as to ensure that timely support can be provided to them. Although there may be various reasons hindering the early identification of students with SEN, given the notable percentage of students with SEN receiving EP assessment at Primary Three or later, the EDB needs to ensure the timeliness of identifying students with SEN and continue to explore ways to improve the identification process. For instance, the EDB may:

## **Identification and admission of students with SEN**

---

- (a) take action to further encourage parents to give consents to schools to refer their children for assessment at an early stage; and
- (b) further enhance the training of teachers on the identification of students with SEN.

### ***Need to strengthen measures in obtaining consents from parents to transfer information of students with SEN***

2.8 It is essential to have an effective mechanism to ensure that information of students with SEN can be made available to schools as early as possible so that timely and appropriate support can be provided. The existing information transfer mechanism is as follows:

- (a) ***Upcoming Primary One students with SEN.*** The Department of Health (DH) or the HA will, subject to parental consent, send the assessment information of those upcoming Primary One students with SEN to the EDB for onward transmission to the recipient schools before the commencement of the new school year. The DH/HA will provide/update their findings before passing the students' assessment information to the EDB. In general, the assessment information from the DH/HA will reach the EDB by July every year so that the EDB can send the information to schools in August to facilitate the schools to arrange timely and suitable learning support services for the students; and
- (b) ***Upcoming Secondary One students with SEN.*** Primary schools are required to obtain consents from parents of students with SEN before the relevant information is input into the Special Education Management Information System (SEMIS) of the EDB. After the Secondary School Places Allocation results are released, primary schools are required to transfer to the recipient secondary schools the relevant information of the students with SEN (e.g. their medical and assessment reports, learning records and suggested teaching strategies, etc.).

## **Identification and admission of students with SEN**

---

2.9 In February 2018, the EDB informed Audit that:

- (a) the EDB has all along encouraged parents to give consent to transfer information of students with SEN. To ensure that Primary Six students with SEN on the transfer to secondary schools will continue to receive suitable support upon their admission to secondary schools, primary schools have been requested to transfer relevant information of these students to the secondary schools concerned (recipient schools) subject to the consent of parents;
- (b) apart from issuing a circular entitled “Transfer of Information of Students with Special Educational Needs” in June 2013, the EDB also issues a letter in May every year to remind the primary schools about the arrangements. In addition, inspectors of the EDB will advise schools, at various occasions, such as school visits, daily contacts, etc., about seeking parental consent for transfer of information for students with SEN, the types of documents to be sent to the recipient schools, and the timeframe for sending the information to the recipient schools; and
- (c) the EDB has also been collaborating with a non-governmental organisation in running an annual seminar for parents of Primary Six students with SEN going to apply for Secondary One places. Among others, the EDB advises parents to give consent to the primary schools to transfer relevant information of their children with SEN to the secondary schools with a view to facilitating early identification and intervention by the secondary schools. The students with SEN, in turn, will continue to receive suitable support.

2.10 Audit examined the EDB’s records and found that although the number and percentage of parents who refused to give consent to the primary schools for transferring their children’s information to the secondary schools had decreased from 925 in 2013/14 to 775 in 2017/18 and from 25% in 2013/14 to 17% in 2017/18 respectively, there was still a notable number of parents who declined to give consent (see Table 4).

**Table 4**

**Number of cases whose parents declined to give consent  
for transferring information of Primary Six students with SEN  
to secondary schools  
(2013/14 to 2017/18)**

School year	Number of Primary Six students with SEN	Number of cases (percentage)
2013/14	3,675	925(25%)
2014/15	3,733	925(25%)
2015/16	3,884	731(19%)
2016/17	4,003	739(18%)
2017/18	4,578	775(17%)

*Source: EDB records*

*Remarks: According to the EDB, among the Primary Six students with SEN, about 2% of them each year were admitted to non-public sector secondary schools.*

2.11 Effective and timely information transfer from primary schools to secondary schools enables the continuation and timeliness of the support provided to students with SEN. Secondary schools which do not have the related information of their students with SEN may need to re-identify and re-assess them before providing support to them. The process may take time and delay the help rendered to the students with SEN. The EDB needs to, in collaboration with schools, continue to encourage parents of students with SEN to give their consent to transfer related information from primary schools to secondary schools. For instance, promoting the concept to parents that giving consent to transfer the SEN information to secondary schools would help secondary schools to provide timely support to their children.

## **Identification and admission of students with SEN**

---

### ***Need to monitor the timeliness of assessment service***

2.12 According to the School-based Educational Psychology Service (SBEPS) Guide issued by the EDB:

- (a) upon receipt of referrals, school-based EPs should arrange related assessments with the schools concerned as soon as possible. Normally the assessments should be completed within six months;
- (b) through post-assessment meeting, the EP should explain to parents and school personnel the assessment results and discuss the educational support for every student who was given an individual assessment;
- (c) EPs should provide parents with an assessment summary containing key information on intellectual functioning, learning difficulties and recommendations for support for every case given psychometric assessment, normally within three months; and
- (d) for every referral given assessment, EPs should send a copy of the assessment report to the school concerned for arrangement of appropriate supportive service, normally within three months.

2.13 According to the EDB, while schools would plan their follow-up actions by implementing the recommendations as discussed and agreed at the post-assessment meeting, the assessment summary and assessment report are also important documents of the students receiving the assessment because:

- (a) the assessment summary, which contains the major assessment results and recommendations on support strategies, facilitates parents' better understanding of their children's needs; and
- (b) the assessment report is a professional report on the students' psycho-educational functioning, a copy of which is provided for schools' record and reference so that they can regularly review their support based on the assessment results as well as professional advice.



Audit noted that while the EDB recorded in its computer system the dates of referrals of cases from schools and the dates of assessments conducted by school-based EPs, the system did not record the dates on which the post-assessment meetings were held and the assessment summaries and the assessment reports were issued. In order to facilitate the EDB's monitoring of the timeliness of issuing assessment summaries and reports, Audit considers that the EDB needs to record such information in its computer system.

### **Audit recommendations**

- 2.14 **Audit has recommended that the Secretary for Education should:**
- (a) **review the timeliness of identifying students with SEN to ascertain if there are any areas where improvements can be made;**
  - (b) **in collaboration with schools, further encourage parents of students with SEN to give their consent to transfer related information from primary schools to secondary schools; and**
  - (c) **record the dates on which the post-assessment meetings are held and the assessment summaries and the assessment reports are issued in the EDB's computer system to facilitate the monitoring of the timeliness of issuing assessment summaries and reports.**

### **Response from the Government**

2.15 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) in view of the regularisation of the Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services by the Social Welfare Department, the EDB and the Social Welfare Department have agreed on a mechanism to ensure pre-school children with special needs under the On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services or the Social Welfare Department's other subvented rehabilitation services will be given appropriate support when they proceed to primary schooling. Specifically, the specialists and special child care workers of the On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services and the other

## **Identification and admission of students with SEN**

---

rehabilitation services will offer their professional comments on the progress of their client children by completing a report form before the children begin primary schooling. With the coordination of the Social Welfare Department and the EDB and subject to parental consent, the report form of individual children will be sent from their pre-school centres/kindergartens to their designated public sector primary schools before September, so as to facilitate the primary schools to plan and provide appropriate support services for the respective Primary One students at the earliest time possible;

- (b) it is worth noting that while the EDB advocates the policy of early identification, it does not mean that all assessments could be done in Primary One or Primary Two, especially those students who do not display learning or adjustment difficulties in junior primary school years. Having said that, the EDB will continue to support schools to comply with the principle of “intervention before assessment” for supporting students and enhance the review mechanism so that students with late emerging learning or behaviour difficulties are identified in a timely manner; and
- (c) the EDB will revisit the requirements on the timeline for schools to conduct the post-assessment meetings, and the timeline for EPs to issue the assessment summaries and the assessment reports, as well as explore the mechanism for recording the information.

## **Information needs of parents of students with SEN for choosing schools**

2.16 Under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance and the Code of Practice on Education, all educational establishments have the obligations to provide equal opportunities to eligible students, including students with SEN. Parents of students with SEN may, based on their own choice, apply for a place in ordinary schools for their children through the established mechanisms. The existing admission mechanisms of ordinary primary schools and secondary schools are as follows:

## **Identification and admission of students with SEN**

---

- (a) **Primary schools.** All eligible children (including those with SEN who opt for admission to ordinary primary schools) are allocated Primary One places in government or aided schools through the Primary One Admission System. The system is divided into two stages:
- (i) **Discretionary Places Admission Stage.** At this stage, parents can apply to one government or aided primary school of their preference. The schools concerned should admit children in accordance with the prescribed criteria laid down by the EDB (e.g. whether the applicant children have siblings studying or parents working in the school); and
  - (ii) **Central Allocation Stage.** At this stage, the EDB will centrally allocate Primary One places according to parents' choices of schools and applicant children's random numbers; and
- (b) **Secondary schools.** On completion of primary education, eligible students (including students with SEN) participate in the Secondary School Places Allocation System through their primary schools and are allocated subsidised Secondary One places. The system is divided into two stages:
- (i) **Discretionary Places Stage.** At this stage, students can apply to not more than two participating secondary schools of their preference. Secondary schools may admit students in accordance with their admission criteria; and
  - (ii) **Central Allocation Stage.** At this stage, Secondary One places are allocated according to individual student's allocation band, parental choice of schools and random number.

## Identification and admission of students with SEN

---

### *Need to release more school information on support for students with SEN to facilitate parents of students with SEN in selecting schools*

2.17 Parents can obtain information about the schools from the websites and open day activities of the schools. The profiles of primary schools and secondary schools published by the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (Note 6) each year are also important sources of information about the schools.

2.18 Audit noted that the types and details of information on support for students with SEN disclosed on school websites varied. For instance, some schools disclosed the number of training programmes arranged for students with different SEN types and some did not. In the profiles of schools published by the Committee on Home-School Co-operation, schools disclose the following three pieces of information on support for students with SEN:

- (a) percentage of teachers with special education training. No details of the training are disclosed (e.g. types and levels of the training);
- (b) support facilities available for students with SEN in the schools (e.g. accessible lift and accessible toilet); and
- (c) an account of school's approach to cater for student diversity.

2.19 Audit noted that other useful school information on support for students with SEN would facilitate parents of students with SEN in choosing schools for their children:

- (a) how resources are allocated to and amongst students with SEN;
- (b) school-based support services for students with SEN;
- (c) role played by parents of students with SEN; and

---

**Note 6:** *The Committee on Home-School Co-operation was set up in February 1993. It comprises the chairperson, ex-officio member from the EDB, educators (drawn from kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and special schools), parents of children in local schools, parent educators and professionals.*

- (d) arrangement of training for staff on support for students with SEN.

2.20 To facilitate parents of students with SEN in making an informed decision on their school choice, the EDB needs to ascertain and better assess their information needs and to address them accordingly. For example, the EDB may collect the views of parents through meetings with the parent groups, seminars and talks. Views gathered should be properly analysed to ensure that appropriate follow-up action is taken.

### Audit recommendation

2.21 **Audit has *recommended* that the Secretary for Education should urge schools to release more school information on support for students with SEN to facilitate parents of students with SEN in selecting schools.**

### Response from the Government

2.22 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendation. He has said that:

- (a) under the School Development and Accountability Framework, schools are required to self-evaluate their practice and to give an account in the School Report which will be uploaded to school website before end of November annually for public's information; and
- (b) the EDB has also proposed to the Committee on Home-School Co-operation to enhance the Primary and Secondary School Profiles to be distributed in the 2018/19 by adding a separate column entitled "Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" with illustrative examples for schools to give an account of schools' integrated education practice in supporting students with SEN. The EDB will keep in view the development.

### **Installation of lifts in schools to create a barrier-free physical environment for students with disabilities**

2.23 It is the Government's policy to create a barrier-free physical environment for persons with disabilities to facilitate their access to building and use of facilities, thereby enabling them to integrate into society. Students with VI, HI and PD studying in ordinary schools require accommodations in environment that cater to their special needs. While the needs of students with VI and HI can be addressed by minor conversion works (e.g. installation of additional lighting) and provision of special furniture and equipment (e.g. flashing fire alarm and optical enlargement devices), barrier-free access facilities (e.g. lifts and ramps) are needed for students with PD.

2.24 According to the EDB, all schools constructed after 1997 are in compliance with the prevailing requirement on barrier-free access promulgated by the Buildings Department. Schools with premises built before 1997 can apply for Government funding to install barrier-free facilities (such as lifts, accessible toilets, and ramps) in their premises. Subject to technical feasibility and having regard to the operational needs of individual schools, the EDB has installed in most of them (over 600) barrier-free facilities through the School Improvement Programme that were implemented in five phases between 1994 and 2006. Since April 2010 and April 2014, the EDB has taken up major and emergency repair works for non-estate aided schools and estate aided schools respectively. Aided schools without lift may apply for lift installation after taking into account their individual school-based needs under the annual major repairs exercise.

#### ***Need to expedite installation of lifts in schools***

2.25 Audit noted that the EDB issued circular memorandum in around April and May each year to invite applications from aided schools for installation of lifts in the following financial year under the major repairs exercise. As at 28 February 2018, 110 applications had not been completed. Of the 110 applications:

- (a) 42 were approved applications. The related works of one application were expected to be completed by April 2018. Another 10 were in the construction stage and the remaining 31 were either under the statutory submission, planning or detailed design stage; and

## Identification and admission of students with SEN

- (b) 68 applications had not yet been approved. Of these 68 applications, 30 (44%) were received before financial year 2012-13 (see Table 5).

**Table 5**

**Ageing analysis of 68 lift-installation applications  
not yet approved  
(As at 28 February 2018)**

Year of application received (financial year)	Number of applications (percentage)
2008 - 09	3 (5%)
2009 - 10	5 (7%)
2010 - 11	17 (25%)
2011 - 12	5 (7%)
2012 - 13	9 (13%)
2013 - 14	14 (21%)
2014 - 15	2 (3%)
2015 - 16	5 (7%)
2016 - 17	4 (6%)
2017 - 18	4 (6%)
Total	68 (100%)

*Source: Audit analysis of EDB records*

2.26 The Government announced in February 2018 that it would make an additional provision of \$2 billion to expedite installation of lifts for public sector schools as needed to build barrier-free campuses. The EDB will set up a dedicated team to handle the lift installation programme. Schools without lift installation but have not made such application before are invited to inform the EDB. The EDB will arrange preliminary technical feasibility assessment of the lift installation works for the schools in need from the first quarter of 2019 onwards. The EDB envisages that the installation programme can be completed in around eight years' time (i.e. by

## **Identification and admission of students with SEN**

---

financial year 2026-27). In Audit's view, the absence of lifts might deter or have deterred parents of students with PD from choosing the schools concerned for admission of their children. The EDB needs to closely monitor the progress of the works of the 42 approved applications and to ensure that the related works would be completed as soon as possible. Regarding the lift installation works for those schools without such facility (including the 68 applications pending approval), the EDB needs to expedite the works under the new programme announced in February 2018.

### **Audit recommendations**

- 2.27 **Audit has *recommended* that the Secretary for Education should:**
- (a) **closely monitor the progress of the works of the 42 approved lift installations and ensure that the related works would be completed as soon as possible; and**
  - (b) **expedite the lift installation works for schools without such facility under the new programme announced in February 2018.**

### **Response from the Government**

2.28 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) the EDB will closely monitor the progress of the 42 approved lift projects and seek to complete the relevant works as soon as practicable; and
- (b) the EDB will strive to expedite the lift installation works for schools without such facility under the dedicated programme announced in February 2018.



## **PART 3: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES PROVIDED TO PUBLIC SECTOR ORDINARY SCHOOLS**

3.1 This PART examines the administration of support measures provided to public sector ordinary schools for integrated education. Audit found room for improvement in the following areas:

- (a) administration of the Learning Support Grant (LSG — paras. 3.4 to 3.17);
- (b) administration of the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP — paras. 3.18 to 3.24);
- (c) performance management (paras. 3.25 to 3.30); and
- (d) Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO — paras. 3.31 to 3.42).

### ***Support measures to schools***

3.2 On top of the regular subvention provided to all public sector ordinary schools, the EDB provides schools with additional resources to help them cater for students with SEN (see Table 6).

## Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools

Table 6

### Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools for integrated education

	Primary school	Secondary school
<i>Cash grant</i>		
LSG	✓	✓
Other cash grant schemes	✓	✓
<i>Additional teaching staff</i>		
Additional Teachers for ALAs	N.A. (Note)	✓
IRTP	✓	N.A.
SENCO	✓	✓
Other non-cash grant schemes	✓	✓

Source: *Audit analysis of EDB records*

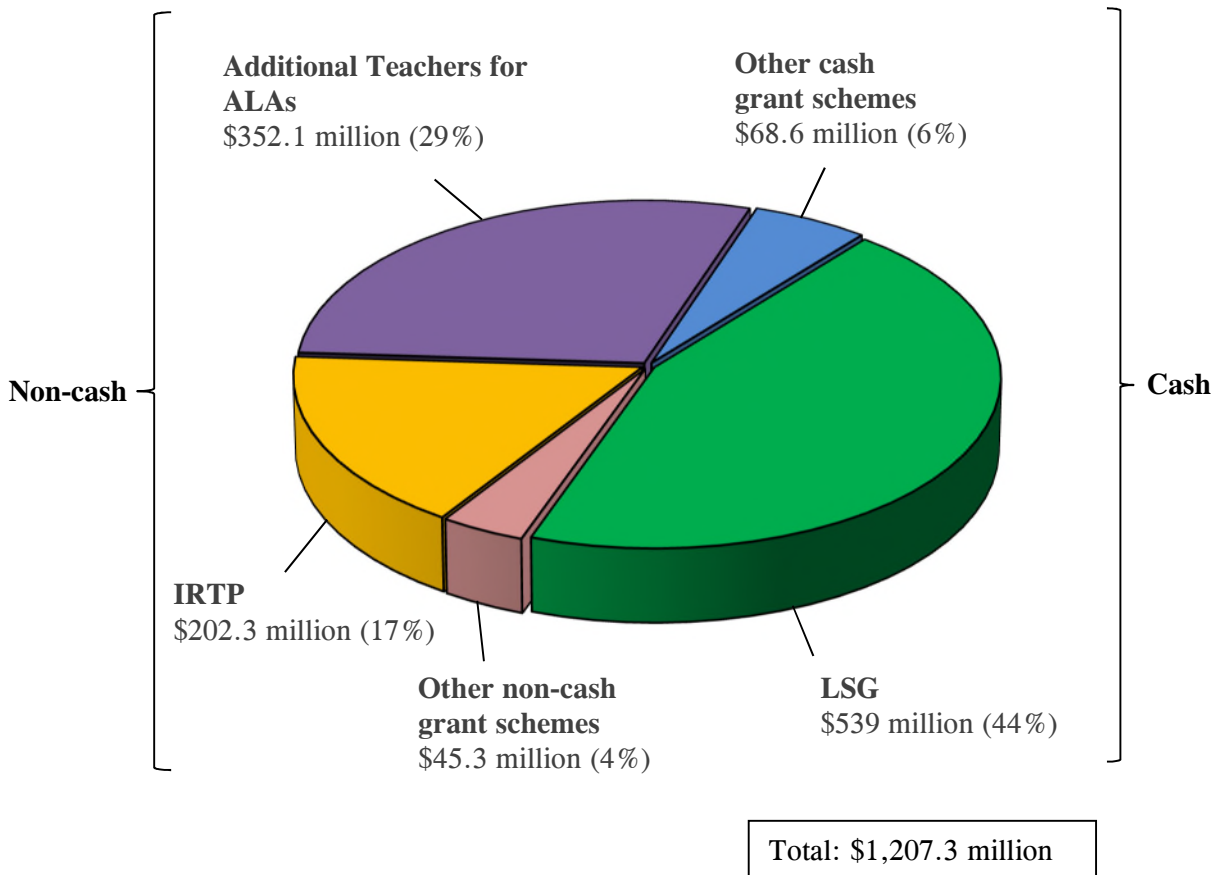
Note: *Resource is provided to support ALAs studying in primary schools under the LSG (see para. 3.5).*

3.3 For 2016/17, the total expenditure for the additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools amounted to about \$1,207 million. Expenditure of the LSG, the Additional Teachers for ALAs and the IRTP amounted to about \$1,093 million, representing about 90% of the total expenditure of \$1,207 million (see Figure 1). The Additional Teachers for ALAs is one of the nine relief measures introduced in 2006 aiming to reduce the workload of teachers and provide better support to ALAs following the change from 5 to 3 Banding under the Secondary School Places Allocation. The provision of the Additional Teachers for ALAs to schools depends on the number of Territory Band 3 and the bottom 10% junior secondary students admitted by the schools. The EDB included the expenditure for the Additional Teachers for ALAs in the additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools for integrated education.

## Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools

Figure 1

### Expenditure on the additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools (2016/17)



Source: Audit analysis of EDB records

### **Administration of LSG**

3.4 The LSG was launched in 2003/04. Unlike the IRTP (see para. 3.18) under which the provision depends on the number of ALAs and students with ID and students with SpLD, the LSG is a recurrent cash grant calculated according to the number of students with SEN enrolled at a school and their required level of support. In the circular issued by the EDB to the schools, the EDB stated that the schools should fully utilise the LSG provided in every school year to cater for the needs of the students of that school year and establish a regular mechanism to monitor the expenditure of the LSG, hence schools in general should not have large surplus of the LSG. To cater for schools which encountered unforeseeable circumstances affecting the planned utilisation of LSG, for example, the resignation of staff during the school year, the EDB allows schools to carry forward (government schools)/retain (aided/caput schools) 30% of the LSG across financial/school years. Any excess will be clawed back and returned to the EDB.

3.5 The LSG should be used for supporting students with SEN. For primary schools, the LSG can also be used to support students who are ALAs (Note 7). According to the EDB Guidelines, schools should deploy the LSG flexibly and strategically to support ALAs (applicable to primary schools only) and students with SEN through the 3-Tier Intervention Model. The Model consists of three levels of support for students:

- (a) ***Tier-1 support.*** This refers to quality teaching in regular classroom for supporting students with transient or mild learning difficulties;
- (b) ***Tier-2 support.*** This refers to “add-on” intervention for students with persistent learning difficulties, including those with SEN. Examples include small group learning, and pull-out programmes; and
- (c) ***Tier-3 support.*** This refers to intensive individualised support for students with severe learning difficulties and SEN, including the drawing up of an Individual Education Plan.

---

**Note 7:** *ALAs in primary schools refer to those students who are backward by two or more years in academic attainment in at least two of the three key learning areas (i.e. Chinese, English and Mathematics) as assessed by teachers using the measurement kit developed by the EDB. Under the 3-Tier Intervention Model, all ALAs are provided with Tier-2 support.*

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

3.6 According to the EDB, the 3-Tier Intervention Model is underpinned by the response to intervention approach in determining the tier of support provided for students with SEN recommended in the consultancy study in 2005. The Student Support Teams of primary and secondary schools will determine the tier of support of the students having regard to their difficulties and needs. This arrangement is so designed to ensure appropriate resources and services can be made available to students with diverse support needs.

3.7 Schools can use the LSG to:

- (a) employ additional teaching staff, on a full-time and/or part-time basis, to facilitate small group or individual remedial support;
- (b) employ additional teaching assistants to assist teachers in designing learning activities and materials, supporting students in classrooms learning activities, providing individual support on homework, training students with SEN on the use of assistive aids, collecting data and records of student progress and liaising with parents, etc.;
- (c) collaborate with other professionals through hire of services (e.g. school-based remedial support programmes, behavior guidance, and speech therapy);
- (d) purchase teaching resources and aids to facilitate the learning of students with SEN. For instance, schools may purchase graded readers or audio-visual software to strengthen the reading and writing abilities of students with SpLD or SLI;
- (e) organise programmes on learning or inclusive culture to promote peer acceptance and support for students with SEN;
- (f) conduct school-based teacher training programmes to enhance teachers' understanding of integrated education and support measures with a view to strengthening teachers' professionalism in catering for student diversity; and

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

- (g) strengthen home-school co-operation through organising groups of parent volunteers, for instance, to provide paired-reading programmes for students.

3.8 In 2016/17, 696 of the 844 public sector ordinary schools received support from the LSG, comprising 314 primary schools (including 102 primary schools in Mixed/Migration Mode — see para. 3.20) and 382 secondary schools. The total amount of LSG allocated to the 696 schools was \$539 million.

### ***Need to issue more specific guidelines on determining the tier of support required***

3.9 The amount of the LSG per year provided to each school is calculated annually based on the number of ALAs (applicable to primary schools only) and students with SEN enrolled at the school and the tier of support the students require. In 2016/17, the rates of grant for each school were as follows:

- (a) students requiring Tier-1 support do not affect the amount of grant;
- (b) \$13,725 per annum for each student requiring Tier-2 support;
- (c) a basic provision of \$164,700 per school per annum for the first one to six students requiring Tier-3 support; and
- (d) \$27,450 per annum for each student requiring Tier-3 support other than the first six such students.

The ceiling of LSG per school per annum was \$1,583,616.

3.10 Under the 3-Tier Intervention Model, schools are required to record the support and adaptations offered to the students with SEN as well as their progress for regular review to facilitate adjustment, where appropriate, of the level of support required. As such, the level of support for students with SEN may be adjusted upward or downward by schools according to the performance and prevailing support needs of the students. The tier of support a student with SEN needed was determined by the school concerned based on the student's support needs and taking into account the

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

EP's assessment (Note 8) and the EDB would review the school decisions during school visits. The details are as follows:

- (a) **Primary schools.** Primary schools are not required to indicate the recommended tier of support for their students with SEN in SEMIS ahead of meeting with the EDB. During school visits between September and November of a school year, the EDB officers will discuss with the Student Support Teams of the schools the planned tier of support for individual students with SEN on the Student Support Register, and give advice as appropriate. A list of the students with recommended support tiers will be discussed with the respective schools. Based on the list, the schools will submit information of the students to the EDB via the SEMIS by end of November for checking and provision of the LSG; and
  
- (b) **Secondary schools.** Unlike the primary schools, secondary schools will recommend the support tier required by individual students with SEN in the SEMIS when submitting their information to the EDB for the provision of the LSG. During the vetting process, the EDB officers verify whether these students recommended by the secondary schools to have Tier-2/3 support are eligible. The number of cases with tier of support revised after the vetting process for the 2015/16 and 2016/17 were 639 and 569 out of total number of cases recommended of 20,874 and 22,381 respectively. According to the EDB, the main reasons for not adopting the support levels recommended by secondary schools were that:
  - (i) schools have not submitted valid assessment reports;
  - (ii) students did not have SEN or the severity of their SEN did not meet the requirement for provision of the LSG; and
  - (iii) a few schools did not submit the Individual Education Plans for cases recommended for Tier-3 support.

---

**Note 8:** *The assessment summary of the EP contains key information on the intellectual functioning and the learning difficulties of the student with SEN and the recommended support to be provided to the student. The assessment summary does not provide recommendations on the tier of support for the student.*

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

3.11 To facilitate schools to cater for the needs of students with SEN, the EDB has prepared the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education (IE Operation Guide), which provides, among others, guidelines to schools on the level of support according to the performance of the students under the 3-Tier Intervention Model such as examples of specific differentiated teaching strategies for each of the three tiers of students with SEN. The IE Operation Guide stated that Tier-3 support should be provided to students with SEN having severe learning difficulties and some practical examples have been provided. However, Audit noted that the IE Operation Guide did not explicitly spell out the criteria that schools could make reference to when determining the tier of support of students with SEN. For instance, according to the EDB, students with ID have significant difficulties in learning academic subjects, social skills and adaptive life skills. They generally require Tier-3 support in the form of an Individual Education Plan. However, it was not explicitly mentioned in the IE Operation Guide that students with ID generally require Tier-3 support in the form of an Individual Education Plan. To ensure consistency in approaches among schools, Audit considers that the EDB needs to consider issuing more specific guidelines to schools to facilitate their determination of the tier of support their students with SEN require.

### ***Need to review the ceiling for LSG***

3.12 The amount of the LSG provided to each school per annum is subject to a ceiling. Since the introduction of the LSG in 2003/04, the ceiling had been increased twice from \$0.55 million to \$1 million in 2008/09 and to \$1.5 million in 2013/14. Starting from 2015/16, the ceiling has been adjusted annually based on the change in the Composite Consumer Price Index. In 2016/17, the amount of the ceiling was \$1,583,616.

3.13 In the four-year period from 2013/14 to 2016/17, the number of Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN and ALAs had increased by 29% from 37,188 in 2013/14 to 47,937 in 2016/17. Audit noted that the number of schools reaching the LSG ceiling had increased by 13-fold from 4 in 2013/14 to 56 in 2016/17. The revisions since 2015/16 of the ceiling based on the change in the Composite Consumer Price Index had only catered for change in price level only. The revisions had not catered for the significant increase in the number of students with SEN and ALAs. To ensure that adequate resources are provided to these schools for providing support to students with SEN and ALAs, Audit considers that the EDB needs to take into account the increase in the number of students with SEN and ALAs and review the ceiling for the LSG periodically.



***Need to encourage schools to fully utilise LSG fund allocated***

3.14 It was stipulated by the EDB that schools should deploy their resources, including LSG fund, flexibly for the provision of support to ALAs (applicable to primary schools only) and students with SEN. They should also fully utilise the LSG fund allocated in every school year (see para. 3.4). According to the EDB, individual schools having underspending leading to claw back at the end of a specific year were generally due to some unexpected circumstances, e.g. longer time required for employment of additional staff than expected, early termination of contract of additional staff, failing to hire the planned professional services, etc. The EDB had stepped up efforts to monitor the utilisation of the LSG fund by schools through providing schools with guidelines on the deployment of the LSG and claw-back mechanism, conducting regular school visits to advise on the deployment of resources for supporting students with SEN, organising experience sharing activities among schools, and issuing reminders to individual schools concerned for making improvement should undesirable situation be detected.

3.15 Audit noted that in 2015/16, of the 692 schools which had received the LSG allocation, 366 had surplus fund (see Table 7). Of the 366 schools, 122 (33%) had surplus fund of more than 10% of the annual allocation. Audit considers that notwithstanding the flexibility required by schools, the EDB needs to take measures to further encourage schools to fully utilise the LSG fund allocated to them in each school year.

## Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools

---

Table 7

### Schools with surplus LSG fund (2015/16)

Surplus fund as a percentage of the annual LSG allocated	No. of schools	Percentage
10% or less	244	67%
More than 10% to 20%	90	24%
More than 20% to 30%	26	7%
More than 30% (Note)	6	2%
Total	366	100%

Source: *Audit analysis of EDB records*

Note: *Surplus fund exceeding 30% was required to be returned to the EDB.*

## Audit recommendations

3.16 **Audit has recommended that the Secretary for Education should:**

- (a) **consider issuing more specific guidelines to schools to facilitate their determination of the tier of support their students with SEN require;**
- (b) **review the ceiling for the LSG periodically taking account of the changes in price level and the changes in the number of students with SEN and ALAs; and**
- (c) **take measures to further encourage schools to fully utilise the LSG fund allocated to them in each school year.**

## **Response from the Government**

3.17 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that the EDB will:

- (a) revisit the IE Operation Guide to provide more specific guidelines to schools to facilitate their determination of the tier of support their students with SEN require in consultation with relevant professionals (e.g. school-based EPs, school-based speech therapists and child psychiatrists) as appropriate, and to continue to provide professional training to teachers to enhance their capability to identify students' needs and render appropriate support to students with SEN. Yet the EDB wishes to stress that every student with SEN is unique, even students having the same SEN type will have different needs and require different tiers of support;
- (b) continue to provide training for teachers on the 3-Tier Intervention Model including the determination of tiers of support; and
- (c) keep on monitoring the utilisation of the LSG fund by schools through various means, such as providing schools with guidelines on the deployment of the LSG and claw-back mechanism, conducting regular school visits to advise on the deployment of resources for supporting students with SEN, organising good practice sharing activities among schools, and issuing reminders to individual schools concerned for making improvement should undesirable situation be detected.

## **Administration of IRTP**

3.18 Since 1983, educational provision for children of low academic achievement has been provided through a range of intensive remedial services, including Resource Class in primary schools, which was renamed as the IRTP in 2000. Under the IRTP, primary schools are provided with additional teachers in the establishment and a class grant for each additional teacher. The target students counted for provision are ALAs, students with ID and students with SpLD. Subject to the number of target students in the school, the school will be provided with one to three additional teachers. The mode of operation of the IRTP may take any combination of the following forms:

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

- (a) schools may adopt co-teaching and provide in-class support to the target students;
- (b) students may receive intensive remedial teaching in one of the three basic subjects outside school hours; and
- (c) students may be withdrawn from the ordinary classes to attend IRTP lessons in one or more of the three basic subjects.

### ***Slow progress of schools in switching from IRTP to LSG***

3.19 In 2016/17, the EDB incurred LSG expenditure of \$539 million and IRTP expenditure of \$202.3 million (see Figure 1 in para. 3.3). The EDB first offered the LSG to primary schools in 2003/04. With the introduction of the LSG, schools that have not participated in the IRTP can only apply for the LSG. Schools that are under the IRTP may continue to receive support under the IRTP.

3.20 The LSG is provided to schools according to the number of ALAs (for primary schools only) and students with SEN enrolled in the school and the tier of support the students require. According to the EDB, the provision of the LSG enables schools to pool school resources together and deploy them more holistically and flexibly to render appropriate support services to students with SEN and ALAs based on their needs. To cater for the year-on-year change in student profile and the respective support needs, schools would, among others, employ teachers and/or teaching assistants, and/or hire various professional services, such as school-based speech therapy services for students with SLI, and supplemental coaching on complex and subtle social communication and emotional regulation skills for students with ASD, etc. In view of the advantages of the LSG, namely, greater flexibility in deploying resources to employ staff and to bring in expertise to offer various support services specifically suit the required tier of support of students with various types of SEN and ALAs, the EDB encourages schools implementing the IRTP to switch to the LSG as soon as possible. In addition to switching direct from the IRTP to the LSG, the EDB made the following offers to schools:

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

- (a) **Mixed Mode.** Starting from 2003/04, schools operating the IRTP were allowed to adopt a Mixed Mode under which each school can retain one IRTP teacher and at the same time receive the LSG capped at \$0.35 million per year; and
- (b) **Migration Mode.** In 2009/10, with a view to facilitating schools to switch to the LSG, the Migration Mode was introduced where each school was allowed to retain one IRTP teacher and receive the LSG with a ceiling of \$0.6 million per year up to a maximum of six school years. During the migration period, schools can switch to the LSG in any school year but are not allowed to switch back to the Mixed Mode.

3.21 When the Migration Mode was introduced in 2009/10, there were 277 schools participating in the IRTP. By 2016/17, there were still 242 schools participating in the IRTP. Only 35 schools had switched from the IRTP to the LSG. Of the 242 schools, 140 had not even joined the Mixed Mode or the Migration Mode (see Table 8). There were 383 IRTP teachers in the 242 schools.

**Table 8**

**Number of primary schools participating in the IRTP  
(2016/17)**

Mode	No. of schools	Percentage
IRTP	140	58%
IRTP (Mixed Mode)	92 (Note)	38%
IRTP (Migration Mode)	10 (Note)	4%
Total	242	100%

*Source:* Audit analysis of EDB records

*Note:* Schools participating in IRTP (Mixed Mode) and IRTP (Migration Mode) were also provided with LSG fund (see para. 3.20).

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

3.22 Under the IRTP, the number of additional teacher posts granted to schools is based on the number of ALAs, students with ID and students with SpLD. An analysis of the profiles of students with SEN of the 140 IRTP schools in 2016/17 revealed that these schools had a total number of 3,792 Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN other than ID and SpLD. These students were not the target students of the IRTP. Of the 140 schools, 49 (35%) each had 30 or more such students (see Tables 9 and 10). Resources provided to a school may not be adequate if the schools had many such students. According to the EDB, schools under the IRTP have been encouraged to switch to the modes of adopting the LSG, but the response is far from satisfactory. The EDB needs to take measures to address the concerns of the schools with a view to speeding up their switch from the IRTP to the LSG.

**Table 9**

**Number of Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN other than ID and SpLD  
in the 140 IRTP schools by SEN type  
(2016/17)**

<b>SEN type</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
ASD	1,571	41.4%
AD/HD	1,355	35.7%
SLI	781	20.6%
PD	46	1.2%
HI	29	0.8%
VI	10	0.3%
Total	3,792	100.0%

*Source: Audit analysis of EDB records*

## Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools

Table 10

Number of Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN other than ID and SpLD  
in the 140 IRTP schools  
(2016/17)

No. of students	No. of schools	Percentage
1 to 9	5	3.6%
10 to 19	44	31.4%
20 to 29	42	30.0%
30 to 39	24	17.1%
40 to 49	15	10.7%
50 to 72	10	7.2%
Total	140	100.0%

Source: *Audit analysis of EDB records*

### Audit recommendation

3.23 Audit has *recommended* that the Secretary for Education should take measures to address the concerns of the schools with a view to speeding up their switch from the IRTP to the LSG.

### Response from the Government

3.24 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendation. He has said that:

- (a) the EDB has conducted several consultation sessions with schools operating the IRTP in January 2018 to gauge their views on possible improvement areas. They in general acknowledged the benefits of using the LSG but showed concern about the stability of the teaching force in school should they opt to change from the IRTP to the LSG; and
- (b) the EDB would consider re-structuring the additional resources provided for all public sector ordinary schools under the LSG, the IRTP and the

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

Integrated Education Programme so that the stability of schools' teaching force could be strengthened while the flexibility of using resources could be maintained. The re-structuring of resources should also help address the challenges faced by those schools with a high concentration of students with SEN but with the LSG capped at the ceiling.

## **Performance management**

### ***Need to review school year-end self-evaluation on catering for students with SEN***

3.25 According to the EDB's IE Operation Guide, at the end of every school year, each public sector ordinary school is required to:

- (a) review the student progress and collect the comments and suggestions of parents on the school support for the students with SEN. Schools may gather and compare the students' overall performance and review the effectiveness of all support measures so as to formulate the support mode for the next year; and
- (b) conduct reviews on the school's implementation of the Whole School Approach to integrated education (Note 9). Each school is required to complete a school year-end self-evaluation form, which should include the following items:
  - (i) the progress of the school on catering for students with SEN, measured in three aspects, namely inclusive culture, inclusive policies, and inclusive practices. For the sub-items named under each aspect, the school can rank its performance on each sub-item

---

**Note 9:** *Under the Whole School Approach, all staff of the school are responsible to cater for the needs of all students. Characteristics of the Whole School Approach include: (a) school curriculum can be adapted and/or expanded to cater for different needs; (b) diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment are used to cater for students' diverse learning needs; (c) learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organised; (d) specialists collaborate with teachers in improving the learning environment; and (e) assessment methods are adapted to facilitate students' demonstration of their learning outcome.*



## Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools

by four scales (i.e. “highly satisfactory”, “satisfactory”, “acceptable”, and “need improvement”); and

- (ii) based on the review of the student progress conducted by the school in (a) above, summarise the performance of students with SEN in three aspects, namely students’ social adjustment, learning performance, and learning attitude or motivation. For each sub-item named under each aspect, the school can rank the students’ performance by three scales (i.e. “showing significant improvement”, “showing some improvement”, and “no improvement”).

Appendix B shows a sample of the school year-end self-evaluation form.

3.26 Audit examined the EDB’s summary on the self-evaluation results of all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools for three years from 2014/15 to 2016/17 (see Appendix C). Audit noted that while the majority of schools had rated their progress on catering for students with SEN as “satisfactory” or “highly satisfactory”, notable number of students with SEN had been rated as showing “no improvement”. For instance, in 2016/17:

- (a) ***Progress of schools on catering for students with SEN.*** 88% to 99% of the schools rated themselves “satisfactory” or “highly satisfactory” in the three aspects (i.e. inclusive culture, inclusive policies, and inclusive practices) for their progress on catering for students with SEN; and
- (b) ***Performance of students with SEN.*** 20% to 31% of students with SEN were rated as showing “no improvement” in the three related aspects (i.e. social adjustment, learning performance, and learning attitude or motivation).

3.27 In response to Audit’s enquiry, the EDB commented that:

- (a) the school year-end self-evaluation form is for school’s self-evaluation on integrated education. The first part is to guide schools to self-evaluate their inclusive culture, inclusive policies and inclusive practices. As regards the second part, schools fill in the data for the performance of students with

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

SEN premised upon the data collected from the evaluation form for individual students;

- (b) there is no direct and positive correlation between the two parts of the year-end evaluation (i.e. progress of school on catering for students with SEN and performance of students with SEN). It is feasible that a school does well in the aspects in the first part while students show less significant improvement in the second part in spite of the good inclusive culture of a school; and
- (c) under the existing evaluation mechanism, schools would, upon evaluation via this form or other means, review support measures for students with SEN. The EDB staff would, during school visits, discuss with schools their review and give advice as appropriate.

3.28 According to the EDB's IE Operation Guide, schools may gather and compare the students' overall performance and review the effectiveness of all support measures so as to formulate the support mode for the next year (see para. 3.25(a)). Audit considers that the EDB needs to review the school year-end self-evaluation with a view to better understand the challenges and achievement of the support measures. For example, the EDB should evaluate whether the aspects used to measure schools' progress and students' performance are sufficiently comprehensive and correlative.

### **Audit recommendation**

3.29 **Audit has recommended that the Secretary for Education should review the existing mechanism for analysing the school year-end self-evaluation with a view to better understand the challenges and achievements of the support measures.**

### **Response from the Government**

3.30 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendation. He has said that the EDB will review the existing mechanism for analysing the school year-end self-evaluation results to better understand the achievements of the support measures. The review could include possible enhancement of SEMIS to

systematically analyse the data collected, which would in turn provide evidence for professional staff of the EDB to provide more focused advice and support to schools.

## **SENCO**

3.31 In 2014, the Subcommittee on Integrated Education under the Legislative Council Panel on Education reviewed the resources and support provided to schools for implementation of integrated education. In September 2014, the Subcommittee issued its report on integrated education. In consideration of the heavy workload of frontline teachers in providing support to students with SEN, the Subcommittee recommended in its report that the EDB should implement a pilot project by creating a SENCO post in schools to steer and coordinate services and support for students with SEN. In 2015/16, the Community Care Fund launched a three-year Pilot Project on Special Educational Needs Coordinators (Pilot Project) to provide a cash grant of about \$220 million to ordinary schools with relatively more students with SEN to enable them to designate a teacher for coordinating the support measures for students with SEN. To be eligible to participate in the Pilot Project, the number of financially-needy students in the school should account for at least 55% of the total number of students, and the school should have at least 50 students with SEN in need of Tier-2 or Tier-3 support. In 2015/16, 124 (65 secondary schools and 59 primary schools) of the 844 public sector ordinary schools participated in the Pilot Project.

3.32 In October 2017, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region announced that in phases over a three-year period (2017/18 to 2019/20), the Government would regularise the Pilot Project. The EDB will provide each public sector ordinary primary school and secondary school with an additional teaching post to facilitate school's assignment of a designated teacher to take up the roles of SENCO to support integrated education. A SENCO is required to lead the Student Support Team in performing duties including:

- (a) strategically plan, implement, monitor, review and evaluate various support measures for students with SEN and the resource deployment;
- (b) promote early identification and early intervention for students with SEN;

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

- (c) collaborate with other teachers/functional teams to devise support programmes, curriculum and teaching adaptations, and special examination and assessment arrangements;
- (d) guide fellow teachers to make use of effective support strategies to enhance the learning effectiveness of students with SEN;
- (e) collaborate with the Guidance Team to cater for the learning needs of students with MI;
- (f) enhance home-school co-operation and work with parents to support students with SEN;
- (g) review the special education training needs and profiles of teachers in the school, arrange teachers to receive relevant training, and plan and organise school-based professional development activities; and
- (h) strengthen external liaison with parties such as professionals, community resource providers and parents.

3.33 The EDB stipulated that schools should ensure that 50% to 70% of the SENCO's time would be spent on performing duties relating to the support of students with SEN, with the remaining time spent on classroom teaching. The SENCO should have:

- (a) at least three years' experience in teaching and implementing integrated education; and
- (b) completed the Basic, Advanced and Thematic (BAT) Courses on catering for students with SEN (see para. 4.3 for details).

The EDB advises new SENCOs who have not yet received training in special education to complete the training as soon as possible, preferably within the first year of their assumption of the role.

## Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools

3.34 In 2017/18, only 244 schools were each provided with a post for SENCO. According to the EDB, the SENCO provision would be extended to about another 35% of schools in the second year (i.e. 2018/19). By 2019/20, when the provision of SENCO is extended to the remaining schools, all public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools would each have a SENCO. The annual recurrent expenditure would amount to about \$550 million in financial year 2021-22.

### ***Ratio of SENCO to students with SEN varies among schools***

3.35 Audit analysed the distribution of students with SEN among schools in 2016/17 and noted that the number of students with SEN among schools varied. For example, in 2016/17, 469 (55.6%) of the 844 schools each had fewer than 50 Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN while 45 (5.3%) schools each had 100 or more such students (see Table 11).

**Table 11**

**Number of Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN per school  
(2016/17)**

No. of Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN	No. of schools
0	3
1 to 24	206
25 to 49	260
50 to 99	330
100 to 149	40
Over 150	5
Total	844

*Source: Audit analysis of EDB records*

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

3.36 Under the SENCO provision, there would be one SENCO in each public sector ordinary school. SENCOs would lead and work collaboratively with the Student Support Team to provide support for students with SEN under the Whole School Approach. Table 11 shows that in 206 schools, one SENCO has to lead the Student Support Team to work with 1 to 24 students, while in 5 schools, one SENCO has to lead the Student Support Team to work with over 150 students. As the number of students with SEN is not evenly distributed among schools, SENCOs at different schools would have very different workloads. Three schools had no Tier-2 and Tier-3 students with SEN in 2016/17. Audit noted that other resources provided by the EDB such as the LSG and the SBEPS have taken into account the number of students with SEN. The EDB needs to take measures to address the large disparity in the ratio of SENCO to students with SEN among different schools.

### ***Some SENCOs have not yet completed the BAT Courses or holding equivalent qualifications***

3.37 As at January 2018, 56 (23%) of the 244 SENCOs were still attending the required BAT Courses (see para. 3.33(b)) on supporting students with SEN arising from the SENCO provision initiative debuted in 2017/18. SENCOs yet to complete the BAT Courses are required to complete the Courses in the first year of their assumption of the role. All SENCOs were still under training, be it the SENCO training provided by the SENCO training expert and/or the BAT Courses. In 2018/19, another 35% of the schools will have to designate a teacher as SENCO and in 2019/20, all public sector ordinary primary schools and secondary schools will each have a SENCO. The EDB needs to take measures to increase the number of teachers having completed the BAT Courses to stand ready to serve as SENCOs.

### ***Need to strengthen SENCOs' training on SEN of students with MI***

3.38 With effect from 2017/18, the EDB has included MI as a type of SEN. To raise teachers' concerns on mental health so as to enhance schools' capacity to identify and support students with mental health needs, the EDB commenced a professional development programme on mental health in 2017/18. The programme includes elementary training for teachers at large and in-depth training for designated teachers who are tasked with the related responsibilities, such as members of school's Guidance Team.

## **Additional resources provided to public sector ordinary schools**

---

3.39 One of the duties of SENCOs was to collaborate with other staff in the school to cater for the learning needs of students with MI by giving input from the perspectives of teaching and learning as well as resource deployment, and to strengthen mental health education. On the other hand, the Guidance Team is to review the developmental needs of students in a comprehensive manner, devise overall plans for guidance services, provide individual/group intervention or referral services for students with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, including those with MI. According to the EDB, the roles of SENCOs and Guidance Team in supporting students with MI differ and they need to work in collaboration. The Guidance Team would need to continue to take the lead in supporting students with MI, which is the existing practice in school.

3.40 According to the EDB, the SENCO training has included the topic of “Social Emotional Mental Health”. Seminars and talks on supporting students with MI are organised with a view to equipping SENCOs to discharge the said duty more effectively. Nonetheless, Audit noted that SENCOs are required to complete the BAT Courses on supporting students with SEN but the contents of the Courses do not specifically cover the needs of students with MI (Note 10). The EDB needs to offer more training to SENCOs to further strengthen their knowledge on the needs of students with MI.

### **Audit recommendations**

- 3.41 **Audit has *recommended* that the Secretary for Education should:**
- (a) **take measures to address the large disparity in the ratio of SENCO to students with SEN among different schools;**
  - (b) **take measures to increase the number of teachers having completed the BAT Courses to stand ready to serve as SENCOs; and**
  - (c) **take further measures to strengthen the training and knowledge of SENCOs on the needs of students with MI.**

---

**Note 10:** *For example, the Thematic Courses are grouped under three categories, focusing specifically on the needs of eight types of students with SEN except for students with MI (see para. 4.3(c)).*

## **Response from the Government**

3.42 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

- (a) the EDB will study the consultant's evaluation report on the Pilot Project to be published in late 2018 and consider how the implementation of the Whole School Approach to integrated education in schools with various number of students with SEN could be facilitated by the provision of SENCOs;
- (b) the EDB will continue to encourage schools to plan and nominate teachers to attend the BAT Courses more systematically so that more teachers could be ready to serve as SENCOs; and
- (c) the EDB will enrich the element on supporting students with MI in the SENCO training appropriately.



## **PART 4: TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT**

4.1 This PART examines the management of teacher training and professional support provided by the EDB. Audit found room for improvement in the following areas:

- (a) teacher professional development framework on integrated education (paras. 4.2 to 4.7); and
- (b) School-based Educational Psychology Service (paras. 4.8 to 4.19).

### **Teacher professional development framework on integrated education**

4.2 In 2007/08, the EDB launched a teacher professional development framework on integrated education to tie in with the 3-Tier Intervention Model and to enhance the professional capacity of teachers in catering for students with SEN. Under the framework, BAT Courses (see para. 3.33(b)) are conducted for serving teachers and training targets are set for schools with a view to enhancing the capacity of their teachers in catering for students with SEN.

4.3 The contents of the BAT Courses are as follows:

- (a) ***Basic Course on catering for diverse learning needs.*** This is a 30-hour course consisting of principles, theories and practices of teaching strategies, curriculum and assessment accommodations to cater for diverse learning needs. It aims at helping teachers better grasp the appropriate strategies and skills to provide Tier-1 support and to some extent, Tier-2 support of the 3-Tier Intervention Model for students with SEN;

## Teacher training and professional support

---

- (b) *Advanced Course on catering for diverse learning needs.* This is a 102-hour course consisting of a core module (including an attachment programme), elective modules and a school-based project for teachers to put the support strategies into practice. The Course aims at further strengthening teachers' professional capacity in providing Tier-2 support for students with SEN; and
  
- (c) *Thematic Courses on supporting students with SEN.* The Thematic Courses aim at providing in-depth training for teachers to help them acquire the knowledge and skills in catering for students with SEN who require Tier-3 support. The Courses will be grouped according to the educational needs of students under three categories. One or more Thematic Course(s) with a duration ranging from 90 to 120 hours will be offered under each category. The three categories are:
  - (i) *Cognition and learning needs.* This category focuses on the needs of students with SpLD or ID;
  
  - (ii) *Behavioural, emotional and social development needs.* This category focuses on the needs of students with ASD or AD/HD; and
  
  - (iii) *Sensory, communication and physical needs.* This category focuses on the needs of students with PD, VI, HI or SLI.

Starting from 2017/18, MI has been included as a type of SEN. Since then, the EDB has conducted a professional development programme for mental health “Elementary and In-depth Courses on Mental Health Promotion at Schools and Support Students with Mental Health Needs” to raise teachers’ concerns on mental health and to enhance school’s capacity to identify and support students with mental health needs.

### *Need to encourage schools to meet training targets*

4.4 Since the launch of the teacher professional development framework on integrated education in 2007/08, the EDB has launched three cycles of BAT Courses (from 2007/08 to 2011/12, from 2012/13 to 2014/15 and from 2015/16 to 2019/20 respectively), with training targets set for each school to attain:

## Teacher training and professional support

---

- (a) **First cycle.** The training targets set for each public sector ordinary school to achieve by 2011/12 were:
- (i) at least 10% of teachers should complete the Basic Course;
  - (ii) at least three teachers should complete the Advanced Course; and
  - (iii) at least one Chinese language teacher and one English language teacher should complete the Thematic Course on SpLD and at least one teacher should complete the related Thematic Course to cater for other types of students with SEN;
- (b) **Second cycle.** The training targets set for each public sector ordinary school to achieve by 2014/15 were:
- (i) at least 10% to 15% of teachers should complete the Basic Course;
  - (ii) at least three to six teachers should complete the Advanced Course; and
  - (iii) at least three to six teachers should complete the Thematic Courses (with at least one teacher completing the course(s) under each category as far as possible); and
- (c) **Third cycle.** The training targets set for each public sector ordinary school to achieve by 2019/20 are:
- (i) at least 15% to 25% of teachers will have completed the Basic Course;
  - (ii) at least six to nine teachers will have completed the Advanced Course; and
  - (iii) at least six to nine teachers will have completed the Thematic Courses (with at least one teacher completing the course(s) under each category as far as possible).

## Teacher training and professional support

---

4.5 Audit examined the attainment of BAT Courses training targets by all 844 public sector ordinary schools in the second and the third cycles based on the training position of schools in the end of 2016/17 (Note 11). Audit found that:

- (a) of the 844 schools, 37 (4%), 83 (10%) and 47 (6%) did not meet the training targets of the Basic Course, the Advanced Course and the Thematic Courses respectively applicable for the second cycle from 2012/13 to 2014/15. Of the 844 schools, 219 (26%), 572 (68%) and 326 (39%) schools did not meet the training targets of the Basic Course, the Advanced Course and the Thematic Courses respectively set for the third cycle from 2015/16 to 2019/20 (see Table 12); and

---

**Note 11:** *At the end of the first cycle (i.e. 2011/12), of the 857 schools, 277 (32.3%), 259 (30.2%) and 748 (87.3%) did not meet the training targets of the Basic Course, the Advanced Course and the Thematic Courses respectively. At the end of the second cycle (i.e. 2014/15), of the 847 schools, 97 (11.5%), 111 (13.1%) and 77 (9.1%) did not meet the training targets of the Basic Course, the Advanced Course and the Thematic Courses respectively.*

**Table 12**

**Attainment of BAT Courses training targets by schools  
in the second and third training cycles  
(training position of schools in the end of 2016/17)**

Attainment	Number of schools (percentage)		
	Basic Course	Advanced Course	Thematic Courses
<i>Second cycle (2012/13 to 2014/15)</i>			
Not meeting target	37 (4%)	83 (10%)	47 (6%)
Meeting target	807 (96%)	761 (90%)	797 (94%)
Total	844 (100%)	844 (100%)	844 (100%)
<i>Third cycle (2015/16 to 2019/20)</i>			
Not meeting target	219 (26%)	572 (68%)	326 (39%)
Meeting target	625 (74%)	272 (32%)	518 (61%)
Total	844 (100%)	844 (100%)	844 (100%)

*Source: Audit analysis of EDB records*

- (b) of the 844 schools, there were 11 schools that did not meet any of the training targets for the BAT Courses applicable for the second cycle and the third cycle. As at September 2016, there were 301 students with SEN in these 11 schools.

## **Audit recommendation**

4.6 **Audit has recommended that the Secretary for Education should take measures to encourage schools to meet the BAT Courses training targets.**

### **Response from the Government**

4.7 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendation. He has said that the EDB will:

- (a) step up monitoring the progress in target attainment of the schools through various means, such as school visits and reminders to individual schools concerned;
- (b) inform public sector ordinary schools of their teacher training situation on an annual basis so as to facilitate their school-based planning and review; and
- (c) evaluate the progress in target attainment of the schools.

### **School-based Educational Psychology Service**

4.8 The SBEPS is an integrated educational psychology service provided to public sector ordinary primary schools and secondary schools aiming at enhancing schools' capacity to cater for students' diverse educational needs. The SBEPS is provided to schools either by the EDB direct or the school sponsoring bodies (SSBs). In 2016/17, there were 11 SSBs that provided the SBEPS. The SBEPS is delivered by qualified EPs through regular school visits. The EPs render remedial, preventive and developmental services at the school system level, the teacher support level and the student support level. Examples of the services provided by EPs include:

- (a) at school system level, EPs support schools in developing school policies and mechanism to meet the diverse educational needs of students;
- (b) at teacher support level, EPs support teachers in early identification of at-risk students, and planning and implementation of intervention measures of these students; and
- (c) at student support level, EPs provide psycho-educational assessment, counselling and guidance services to students, as well as promote home-school collaboration and deliver parent training programmes.

## **Teacher training and professional support**

---

4.9 In 2016/17, to enhance support for schools to cater for students with SEN, the EDB extended the provision of SBEPs to cover all 844 public sector ordinary primary schools and secondary schools. The expenditure on the SBEPs was \$146.4 million comprising salaries and benefits of the EPs hired by the EDB and the grants given to the SSBs for operation of the SBEPs. The SBEPs was provided by 134 EPs comprising 65 (49%) EPs from the EDB and 69 (51%) from the SSBs.

4.10 The Chief Executive announced in the 2016 Policy Address that the Government would further enhance the SBEPs by progressively improving the ratio of EP to school for schools with a large number of students with SEN. From 2016/17 onwards, the EDB had provided the enhanced SBEPs to schools with a large number of students with SEN by phases. According to the EDB:

- (a) apart from helping the schools strengthen their preventive and developmental work, EPs will pay more frequent visits (not less than 30 days per school year) to each school receiving the enhanced SBEPs;
- (b) in selecting schools to receive the enhanced SBEPs, the EDB will accord priority to schools based on various factors such as the number of students with SEN and its proportion to the student population of the school, and the number of students requiring individual support; and
- (c) there is limited supply of EPs in Hong Kong. The shortage of manpower poses difficulties in catering for the increase of schools to be served by the enhanced SBEPs.

### ***Need to extend the enhanced SBEPs***

4.11 In 2016/17, 381 of the 844 schools applied for the enhanced SBEPs. Only 80 (21%) of 381 schools succeeded in obtaining the enhanced SBEPs. Thirty schools started receiving the enhanced SBEPs in 2016/17 and 50 schools in 2017/18. The remaining 764 (91%) schools of the 844 schools were not provided with the enhanced SBEPs and continued to receive regular SBEPs. Among the 764 schools not provided with the enhanced SBEPs, 74 (10%) schools each had more than 80 students with SEN in 2016/17 (see Table 13). The EDB needs to extend the enhanced SBEPs to cover more schools in order to better support them in meeting the needs of students with SEN as soon as practicable.

## Teacher training and professional support

Table 13

Analysis of number of students with SEN in public sector ordinary schools (2016/17)

No. of students with SEN	Total no. of schools	No. of schools provided with	
		enhanced SBEPS	regular SBEPS
1 to 40	349	1	348
41 to 80	370	28	342
81 to 120	94	26	68
121 to 160	23	17	6
161 to 200	5	5	0
201 or more	3	3	0
Total	844	80 (Note)	764

Source: *Audit analysis of EDB records*

Note: *Of the 80 schools that successfully obtained the enhanced SBEPS, 30 schools started receiving the enhanced SBEPS in 2016/17 and 50 schools in 2017/18.*

### ***Need to rationalise SBEPS provided by EPs of the EDB and SSBs***

4.12 The SBEPS is delivered by EPs through regular school visits. The EDB has stipulated in the SBEPS Guide that:

- (a) for schools receiving the enhanced SBEPS provided by EPs of the EDB or the SSBs, each school will have not less than 30 visit days from EPs per school year;
- (b) for schools receiving the regular SBEPS provided by the EDB's EPs, in general each school will have visit days from EPs ranging from 18 to 22 days per school year;



## Teacher training and professional support

---

- (c) for schools receiving the regular SBEPS provided by the SSB's EPs, each school will normally have not less than 14 visit days from EPs per school year; and
- (d) each SSB's EP will pay not less than 140 school visit days per school year (Note 12).

4.13 The objectives, nature and service scope of the SBEPS provided by the EDB direct and the SSBs are the same. There is no documentary evidence showing the justifications for the difference in the service level provided by the EPs of the EDB (in general 18 to 22 days) and the SSBs (normally 14 days). The EDB needs to rationalise the service level of the SBEPS provided by the EDB and the SSBs.

### *Need to step up measures to ensure that schools receive the required number of visit days by EPs*

4.14 In 2016/17, of the 844 schools, 814 received the regular SBEPS (330 provided by the EDB and 484 provided by 11 SSBs) and 30 received the enhanced SBEPS. Audit examined the number of EP visit days of the 844 schools and found that:

- (a) for 27 (8%) of the 330 schools that received the regular SBEPS provided by the EDB, each received less than 18 visit days per school year (ranged from 10 to 17.5 days) specified in paragraph 4.12(b). The remaining 303 schools (92%) each received 18 or more visit days (see Table 14);

---

**Note 12:** *Apart from providing the SBEPS to schools, the EDB's EPs have other duties including the monitoring and development of the SBEPS, development of SEN-specific support models and strategies, etc. Therefore, some of the EDB's EPs are not required to pay 140 school visit days per school year.*

## Teacher training and professional support

**Table 14**

**Visit days by EDB's EPs  
(2016/17)**

No. of visit days	No. of schools	Percentage
10 to <12	1 (Note)	0.3%
12 to <14	0	0.0%
14 to <16	8	2.4%
16 to <18	18	5.5%
18 to <20	112	33.9%
20 to <22	159	48.2%
22 or above	32	9.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

*Source: Audit analysis of EDB records*

*Note: The number of visit days for the school was 10.*

- (b) for 11 (2%) of the 484 schools that received the regular SBEPs provided by the SSBs, each received less than 14 visit days per school year (ranged from 4 to 13.5 days) specified in paragraph 4.12(c). The remaining 473 schools (98%) each received 14 or more visit days (see Table 15); and

## Teacher training and professional support

**Table 15**

**Visit days by SSB's EPs  
(2016/17)**

No. of visit days	No. of schools	Percentage
1 to <11	1 (Note) } 11	0.2% } 2.2%
11 to <12	3	0.6%
12 to <13	5	1.0%
13 to <14	2	0.4%
14 to <16	41	8.5%
16 to <18	71	14.7%
18 to <20	89 } 473	18.4% } 97.8%
20 to <22	203	41.9%
22 or above	69	14.3%
Total	484	100.0%

*Source: Audit analysis of EDB records*

*Note: The number of visit days for the school was 4.*

- (c) for 4 (13%) of the 30 schools that received the enhanced SBEPS, each received less than 30 visit days per school year (ranged from 27 to 29 days) specified in paragraph 4.12(a). The remaining 26 schools (87%) each received 30 or more visit days.

As the numbers of visit days were less than required, the educational psychology service provided to the schools might have been affected. As the EDB has an established mechanism to collect the number of visit days by EPs, Audit considers that the EDB needs to make use of the information and step up measures to ensure that schools receive the required number of visit days by EPs.

## Teacher training and professional support

---

### *Need to strengthen monitoring of SBEPs provided by SSBs*

4.15 For the SBEPs provided by the SSBs, the EDB enters into a service agreement with each SSB. According to the service agreement, the SSB is required to:

- (a) identify a school under its sponsorship to be the “base school” to handle the employment matters of the EP as the school’s non-teaching specialist staff; and
- (b) comply with the requirements as detailed in the SBEPs Guide.

4.16 To meet the operational expenses of the SBEPs provided by the SSBs, the EDB provides every base school with the SBEPs Grant on a recurrent basis. According to the SBEPs Guide:

- (a) the base school shall ensure this Grant is used for SBEPs-related expenditures, including the hiring of professional supervision for the EP (i.e. the EP supervisor) (Note 13); and
- (b) the EP supervisor shall aim to advise, facilitate and advance the development of the SBEPs under the SSB concerned in general and the practice of its individual EPs in particular. The EP supervisor:
  - (i) must be an experienced EP (generally with six years or more of EP experience); and
  - (ii) is required to provide about 130 hours of regular professional supervision and support to each EP under his supervision each year.

---

**Note 13:** *The amount of the SBEPs Grant is subject to adjustment according to the Composite Consumer Price Index. For 2017/18, the amount of each Grant was \$102,100. According to the EDB, about 60% of the Grant was used for the hiring of EP supervisors.*

4.17 Audit identified room for improvement in the EDB's monitoring of the SBEPS provided by the SSBs, as follows:

- (a) ***Need to strengthen monitoring of service provided by EP supervisors.*** In 2016/17, each of the 11 SSBs hired an EP supervisor to provide professional supervision to their EPs. The SBEPS Guide has set out the qualification and work requirements of EP supervisors. However, the EDB has not required the SSBs or their base schools to submit supporting documents to validate the qualifications of EP supervisors. In addition, the EP supervisors are employed by the SSBs through hire of service. Audit noted that while there were regular meetings between the EDB and the EP supervisors, the EDB had not set up a robust mechanism to monitor the service provided by EP supervisors. For instance, the EDB had not defined and monitored the scope and effectiveness of supervision and the number of supervision and support hours given by the EP supervisors to the EPs; and
  
- (b) ***Employment terms for and requirements on part-time EPs not stipulated in SBEPS Guide.*** In 2016/17, the SSBs hired 15 part-time EPs. Audit noted that the SBEPS Guide did not stipulate:
  - (i) the terms of employment for part-time EPs; and
  
  - (ii) the requirements on part-time EPs, such as the qualification and work experience requirements.

Audit considers that the EDB needs to step up its monitoring of the SBEPS provided by the SSBs by reviewing the mode of supervision, as well as requiring the SSBs or their base schools to provide documentary evidence on the qualifications of their EP supervisors. Audit also considers that the EDB needs to set out employment terms for and requirements on part-time EPs.

### Audit recommendations

- 4.18 **Audit has *recommended* that the Secretary for Education should:**
- (a) **extend the enhanced SBEPS to cover more schools in order to better support them in meeting the needs of students with SEN as soon as practicable;**
  - (b) **rationalise the service level of the SBEPS provided by the EDB and the SSBs;**
  - (c) **step up measures to ensure that schools receive the required number of visit days by EPs; and**
  - (d) **step up its monitoring of the SBEPS provided by the SSBs, such as:**
    - (i) **reviewing the mode of supervision and monitoring of the supervision provided by EP supervisors;**
    - (ii) **requiring the SSBs or their base schools to provide documentary evidence on the qualifications of their EP supervisors; and**
    - (iii) **setting out employment terms for and requirements on part-time EPs.**

### Response from the Government

4.19 The Secretary for Education agrees with the audit recommendations. He has said that:

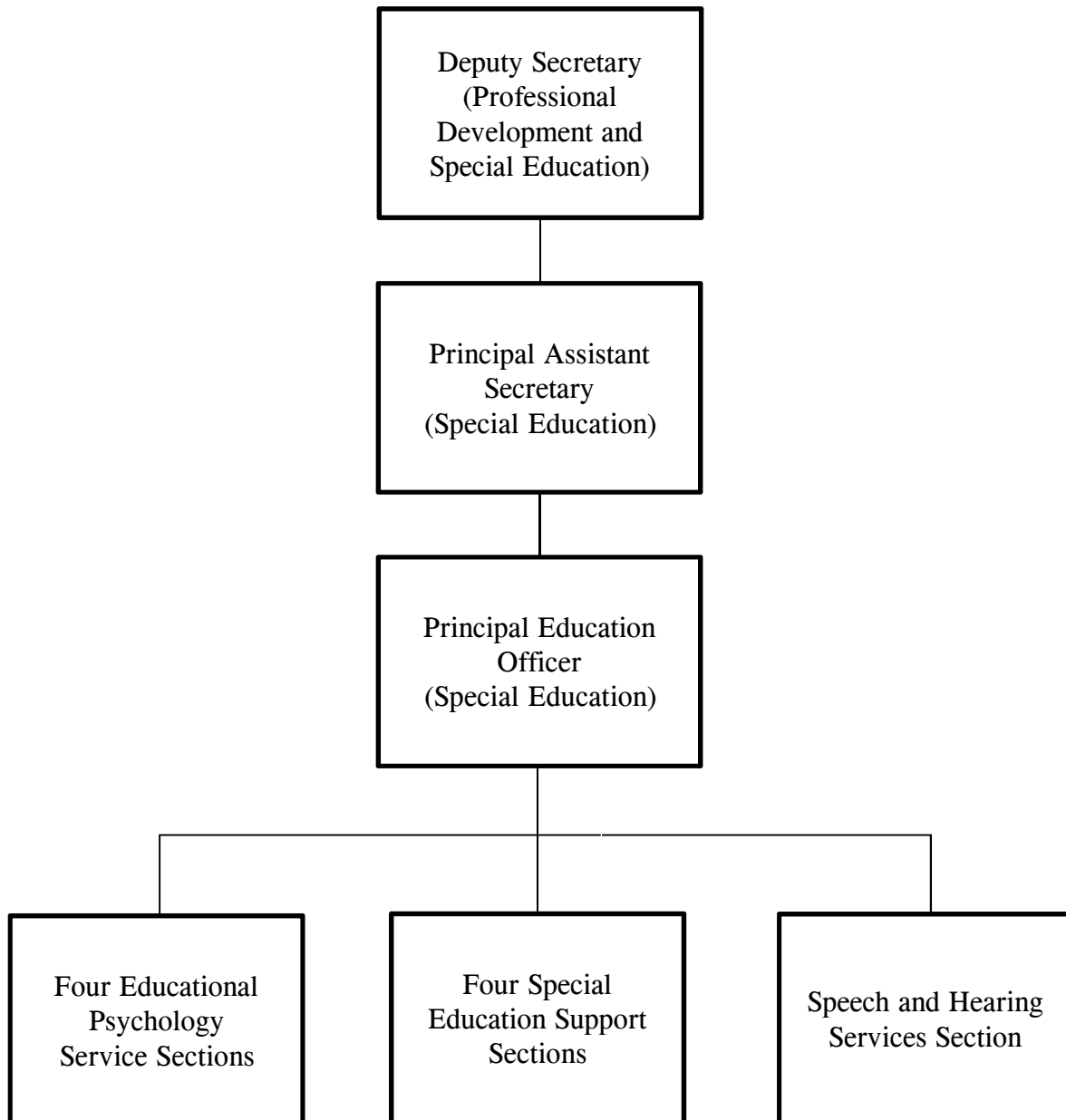
- (a) the EDB has noted the schools' demand for more EP service for better support in meeting the needs of students with diverse educational needs, including students with SEN. The EDB will seek additional resources to extend the enhanced SBEPS provision to more schools, in particular schools with a great number of students with SEN. To achieve this, the EDB will also liaise with the local tertiary institutions to increase the EP training places in order to increase the supply of EPs;

## **Teacher training and professional support**

---

- (b) since the SBEPS provided by the EDB and the SSBs, including the requirements on school visit days, should be basically the same, the EDB will revisit the SBEPS Guide to align the requirements on school visit days for schools served by the EDB and the SSBs;
  
- (c) under the current monitoring system, the EDB requires EPs to submit information including the number of visit days paid to each school. In 2016/17, over 95% of schools that received the SBEPS were given visit days as stipulated on the SBEPS Guide. The major reasons for EPs paying less than the required number of days were sick leave and maternity/paternity leave. The EDB will step up measures to monitor the school visit days so that such situation can be identified and followed up in a timely manner; and
  
- (d) the EDB will step up the monitoring of the SBEPS, such as:
  - (i) stepping up the requirements for SSBs to collect the qualifications of the EP supervisors they hire, and data on the effectiveness of the supervision services to facilitate review of the supervision;
  
  - (ii) reviewing the mode of supervision to ensure the effectiveness of the SBEPS; and
  
  - (iii) revisiting the relevant guidelines and documents to review the need for setting out of the employment terms for and requirements on part-time EPs, and make the necessary revisions as and when appropriate.

**EDB's Special Education Division:  
Organisation chart (extract)  
(31 January 2018)**



Source: EDB records



**A sample of the school year-end self-evaluation form (extract)**

Aspect	Sub-item
<i>For schools</i>	
Inclusive culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Staff accept students with SEN and are committed to supporting them.</li> <li>(b) Staff share the concept of the Whole School Approach and support each other in the implementation process.</li> <li>(c) Students accept each other’s uniqueness and individual differences.</li> <li>(d) Learning activities are arranged in accordance with students’ abilities.</li> <li>(e) Staff generally agree that everyone is equal and has the right to participate in all school activities.</li> <li>(f) There is good home-school collaboration and frequent communication between parents and teachers about the student progress.</li> </ul>
Inclusive policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The school management establishes policies to cater for students with SEN, and review the objectives and effectiveness regularly.</li> <li>(b) Continuing professional development on special education for staff is strategically planned.</li> <li>(c) With reference to the “Catering for Student Differences — Indicators for Inclusion”, a school development plan and contents of school self-evaluation are laid down according to the developmental needs of the school.</li> <li>(d) Schools resources are pooled and deployed flexibly to provide appropriate support to students.</li> </ul>

**Appendix B**  
(Cont'd)  
(para. 3.25 refers)

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Sub-item</b>
Inclusive practices	<p>(a) Teachers can early identify students' SEN through teachers' classroom teaching and the use of assessment tools provided by the EDB.</p> <p>(b) A Student Support Team or its equivalent has been established to follow up and coordinate support measures for students with SEN.</p> <p>(c) A SEN Register has been established and the effectiveness of support measures is periodically reviewed.</p> <p>(d) The school has improved the accessibility of its premises and assistive technology to cater for students with different needs.</p> <p>(e) Teaching skills are improved through professional exchange.</p> <p>(f) Diverse teaching strategies (such as collaborative teaching and co-operative learning) are used to facilitate students' learning.</p> <p>(g) Various classroom activities are conducted in accordance with students' abilities to facilitate the development of their potentials.</p> <p>(h) Various curriculum accommodation strategies are implemented to cater for students' needs.</p> <p>(i) Individual Education Plans are used to cater for those students in need of individual intensive support.</p> <p>(j) Peer support programmes provide learning support and facilitate the cultivation of an inclusive culture.</p>
<b><i>For students with SEN</i></b>	
Social adjustment	<p>(a) Compliance with the school regulations</p> <p>(b) Good relationship with peers</p> <p>(c) Good relationship with teachers</p> <p>(d) Participation in classroom or school activities</p> <p>(e) Self-esteem</p>

**Appendix B**  
 (Cont'd)  
 (para. 3.25 refers)

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Sub-item</b>
Learning Performance	(a) Reading skills (b) Numeracy skills (c) Writing skills (d) Academic performance (e) Development of multiple intelligence
Learning attitude or motivation	(a) Completing the task within time limits (b) Working independently (c) Adjusting smoothly to the changes in the daily school routines

Source: EDB records

**Summary on self-evaluation results of primary schools and secondary schools  
(2014/15 to 2016/17)**

Aspect	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
<b><i>Primary schools</i></b>			
<b><i>Percentages of schools rating themselves at the levels of “highly satisfactory” or “satisfactory”</i></b>			
Inclusive culture	98%	99%	99%
Inclusive policies	96%	96%	96%
Inclusive practices	95%	96%	96%
<b><i>Percentages of schools rating the performance of students with SEN at the level of “no improvement”</i></b>			
Social adjustment	19%	19%	20%
Learning performance	30%	30%	31%
Learning attitude or motivation	27%	26%	27%
<b><i>Secondary schools</i></b>			
<b><i>Percentages of schools rating themselves at the levels of “highly satisfactory” or “satisfactory”</i></b>			
Inclusive culture	94%	94%	93%
Inclusive policies	92%	93%	92%
Inclusive practices	87%	88%	88%
<b><i>Percentages of schools rating the performance of students with SEN at the level of “no improvement”</i></b>			
Social adjustment	23%	22%	23%
Learning performance	32%	31%	31%
Learning attitude or motivation	26%	26%	26%

*Source: Audit analysis of EDB records*

*Remarks: The percentage of each aspect was computed by Audit by taking simple average of the percentage of every sub-item under that particular aspect.*

## Acronyms and abbreviations

AD/HD	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
ALAs	Academic Low Achievers
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorders
Audit	Audit Commission
BAT	Basic, Advanced and Thematic
DH	Department of Health
EDB	Education Bureau
EII Programme	Early Identification and Intervention Programme for Primary One Students with Learning Difficulties
EP	Educational Psychologist
HA	Hospital Authority
HI	Hearing Impairment
ID	Intellectual Disability
IE Operation Guide	Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education
IRTP	Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme
LSG	Learning Support Grant
MI	Mental Illness
OCT	Observation Checklist for Teachers
PD	Physical Disability
Pilot Project	Pilot Project on Special Educational Needs Coordinators
SBEPS	School-based Educational Psychology Service
SEMIS	Special Education Management Information System
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
SLI	Speech and Language Impairment
SpLD	Specific Learning Difficulties
SSBs	School sponsoring bodies
VI	Visual Impairment