



PRESS RELEASE

Ministry of Education
SINGAPORE

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Enhanced Learning Support Programme has Benefited Pupils

1. Enhancements to the learning support programme (LSP) have proved to be effective in helping more Primary 1 and Primary 2 students weak in literacy skills to level up. A research study shows 65 percent of students who participated in the study were found to be able to read at their age level and pass their school English Language examinations by the end of Primary 2. This is significantly higher than the previous LSP discharge rate of 40 percent.

2. As part of the Ministry of Education's (MOE) efforts to level up opportunities for children from the time they enter Primary 1, children who are weak in literacy skills undergo the Learning Support Programme for English (LSP) and children who need additional support in numeracy skills undergo the Learning Support Programme for Mathematics (LSM).

3. An enhanced LSP was piloted at the Primary 1 level in 34 primary schools in 2006 and at the Primary 2 level in 33 primary schools in 2007. MOE embarked on a two-year research from 2006-2007 to study the effects of the pilot. The enhanced Primary 1 LSP has since been rolled out to all primary schools from Jan 2007 and the enhanced Primary 2 LSP from Jan 2008.

4. While the original LSP provided remedial help to students in what is being taught in the regular English classes, the enhanced LSP focuses specifically on the basic literary skills needed to help students learn to read and spell. By getting the basics of reading and spelling in place, the enhanced LSP also helps students learn in all their subjects. More details of the LSP, enhanced LSP, as well as the LSM, can be found in Annex A.

Key Findings on the Enhanced LSP

4. The approach to equip young students with basic literacy skills via the enhanced LSP in primary schools has been found to be effective. In a recently completed research study, 65 percent of students were found to be able to read at their age level and pass their school English Language examinations by the end of Primary 2. This is significantly higher than the previous LSP discharge rate of 40 percent.

5. Findings also showed that a supportive home environment made a difference to students' academic performance in school at the lower primary levels. Providing a conducive home environment for reading and for the learning of basic mathematical concepts would promote students' language, literacy and numeracy development. This would include parents encouraging their children to read, taking an interest in their schoolwork, and ensuring their children attend school regularly.

6. The Ministry of Education will continue to enhance its efforts to equip students in the early primary years with the language and numeracy skills that they need to learn effectively.

7. One specific area in which more resources are being deployed is in addressing the needs of pupils with dyslexia. LSP students whose learning difficulties include dyslexia will be referred for intervention programmes at the Dyslexia Association of Singapore. They would also be supported in their schools through Teachers Trained in Special Needs (TSNs) and Special Needs Officers (SNOs), under the initiatives MOE has embarked on since 2005.

8. Since 2005, MOE has deployed SNOs to schools to support children with special learning needs such as dyslexia and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). There are currently 126 SNOs in 80 primary and 23 secondary schools. MOE is on target to achieve its aim of having 236 SNOs deployed to schools by mid-2010.

9. Alongside the provision of SNOs, MOE will continue to develop the skills and knowledge among mainstream teachers to help children with learning disabilities through the training of Teachers Trained in Special Needs (TSNs). We aim to have 10% of all primary school teachers and 20% of all secondary school teachers trained in special needs by 2012. By mid-2008, there will be 1125 teachers in primary and secondary schools who would have completed the TSN training.

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Learning Support Programme

The Learning Support Programme for English (LSP) started in 12 primary schools in 1992. The initial success of LSP led to the extension of the programme to other primary schools. In 1996, the programme was implemented in 93 primary schools and in 1998 the LSP was rolled out to all primary schools.

The LSP is an early intervention programme implemented in all primary schools at Primary 1 and 2 to provide additional support for children who enter Primary 1 with very weak oral language and beginning literacy skills in English. These children are identified each year at the beginning of Primary 1 in January through a screening test. Those who are found to require additional support in English language and literacy are provided daily support by qualified teachers designated as Learning Support Coordinators.

Each year, 12 to 14 percent of the Primary 1 cohort is identified to require support in the LSP. Results have shown that the LSP has helped around 30 percent of these children to read at their age level and pass their school-based English Language examinations by the end of Primary 1. Students who were not able to do so continued to receive support in Primary 2. At the end of Primary 2, another 10 percent of students would have been able to read at their age level and pass their examinations.

Enhanced Learning Support Programme

The original LSP provided remedial help to students in what is being taught in the regular English classes. The enhanced LSP, on the other hand, teaches skills which can be used to learn in the different subject areas. It was designed for Primary 1 and 2 students, and focuses on five major components that international research has found to be critical in helping students in early primary grades learn to read and spell. These five components are: alphabetic knowledge, knowledge of sound-letter correspondences, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Under the enhanced LSP, students are taught skills to recognise and write letters of the alphabet. They are also taught to spell letter sounds and to decode and spell words. The curriculum also focuses on developing students' oral and reading vocabulary. Opportunities are provided for students to develop reading fluency through oral reading of grade level texts. Attention is also devoted to reading comprehension to ensure that students understand what they read. Students' learning progress are monitored regularly for their responses to the teaching.

In addition, the enhanced LSP groups students according to their learning needs. Those who need the most help in English language and literacy skills are grouped separately from the other students at the beginning of Primary 1, to receive customised learning support.

The enhanced programme at the Primary 1 level has since been rolled out to all primary schools from Jan 2007, while the programme at the Primary 2 level had been rolled out this year.

40 percent of the students who underwent the enhanced LSP met the discharge criteria at the end of Primary 1. For the 60 percent who did not meet the discharge criteria at the end of Primary 1, they went on to the Primary 2 enhanced LSP where 25 percent met the discharge criteria, making it 65 percent who were discharged at the end of Primary 2. Those who did not meet the discharge criteria at the end of Primary 2 were assessed for dyslexia or other forms of learning disability, and were given appropriate and specific forms of support.

Learning Support for Mathematics (LSM)

First rolled out to all primary schools in Jan 2007, Learning Support for Mathematics (LSM) is an early intervention effort to provide additional support to Primary 1 students who do not have foundational numeracy skills and knowledge to access the Primary 1 Mathematics curriculum. Similar to the LSP, students are identified for the intervention through a screening test administered to all Primary 1 students in January each year.

About 5.5 percent of the Primary 1 cohort are identified and supported through LSM. Students are supported by qualified LSM teachers. The Ministry is currently in the process of collecting data for analysis and monitoring of the LSM. Preliminary data indicated that students in LSM have made progress.

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