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SPECIAL ASSISTANCE PLAN TO RAISE THE ENGLISH
PROFICIENCY OF PUPILS IN NON-ENGLISH-MEDIUM
SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The trend of parents sending children to English-medium schools is likely to continue unless non-English-medium schools can teach their pupils English up to a standard comparable to that in English-medium schools. This year Chinese schools, other than the well established and popular ones, had difficulty in filling up their Primary 1 places for 1979. Hence the standard of English in Chinese schools must be raised.

In January 1978 additional English Language teachers were deployed to 28 Chinese primary schools under an Assistance Plan. More English Language teachers will be sent to these schools. It will take time for this Plan to show results which will be when the pupils progress to secondary schools.

Meanwhile the Ministry has worked out a Special Assistance Plan for Chinese secondary schools. The Plan has two facets:

- a A long-term scheme to develop nine selected Chinese secondary schools into effectively bilingual schools where pupils can attain as high a standard of English as in English-medium schools, whilst preserving the Chinese school environment to nurture social discipline and cultural values in the tradition of the best of the Chinese schools.
- b A short-term scheme to raise the English proficiency of pupils in non-English-medium secondary schools. These pupils will in

addition attend either English-medium schools or Supplementary English Language Programmes.

The objectives of the nine selected schools are effective and fluent bilingualism, and inculcation of Asian values and culture. Only students who can achieve effective bilingualism, namely those likely to make it to university, will be admitted to these schools. Studies carried out by the Ministry show that only the top 8% of pupils will be able to meet the high standards demanded.

The selected schools are:

- a Anglican High
- b Catholic High
- c Chinese High
- d Chung Cheng High (Main)
- e Dunman Government Chinese Middle
- f Maris Stella High
- g Nanyang Girls High
- h River Valley Government Chinese Middle
- i St Nicholas Girls.

They have been chosen on the basis of their well-established tradition, academic performance, good facilities and faithful staff, and popular choice of parents. They will be helped to develop their physical facilities (including provision of new school sites with playing fields and buildings, if necessary) and will eventually be staffed by the best English-medium and Chinese-medium teachers.

On the release of this year's Primary School Leaving Examination results, the top 8% of the Chinese-medium pupils and the top 8% of the English-medium pupils who attain a minimum standard in Chinese (CL2), will be invited by letter to join these nine schools. 1,000 Chinese-medium primary pupils have applied for transfer to Secondary One in English-medium schools. Those who come within the top 8% will be given this new option.

Non-English-medium pupils who pass the ISLE with an adequate standard in EL2, other than those admitted to the nine selected schools, can apply for transfer to the English-medium at Secondary One where they will attend regular classes with the pupils promoted from

Primary Six of the English-medium but do a modified curriculum. If they pass they will be promoted to Secondary Two the following year. If they find difficulty in coping they will be allowed to complete Secondary One in two years; in other words, they will be given a year additional to the maximum two retentions normally allowed.

In the interim period before an English-speaking capacity is created in the nine selected schools, all Secondary One to Four pupils of these schools will be offered the opportunity of immersion in regular classes in English-medium schools in the sessions when they are not attending their present schools. Other Secondary One to Four non-English-medium pupils who can cope will also be offered these immersion classes where places are available. The English-medium classes they attend will be at the same grade or one grade lower, depending on their ability. The timetable and curriculum of their present schools and their immersion English-medium schools will be adjusted so that they can get the most out of immersion in English-speaking classes.

The Chinese-, Malay- and Tamil-medium pupils who do not have immersion places in English-medium schools, will be given Supplementary English Language Programmes outside normal curriculum time. Meanwhile, the Chinese Language syllabus in Chinese secondary schools will be adjusted so that pupils can attain a higher standard of English.

The present system of inter-stream transfer for those in Primary Six, going on to Secondary One, and those who are in Secondary One to Four, will continue.

The pupils in the non-English-medium who obtain at least three GCE O-level passes will be allowed to repeat Secondary Four in the English-medium and sit for the Cambridge GCE O-level examination. The aim is more to improve their employment prospects than to help them gain admission to A-level or technical colleges.

Participation of pupils in the Special Assistance Plan is optional. Any pupil who wishes to stay on the present Chinese school curriculum will be allowed to do so.

There will be no retrenchment of teaching staff but reassignment of duties for those affected will be necessary.

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