

**Fine-tuning the Medium of Instruction (MOI) for Secondary Schools**  
**Frequently asked questions**

**Mother-tongue Teaching**

(1) **Q Given the recognised effectiveness in students' learning, why does the Government not require all schools to implement mother-tongue teaching?**

A Our policy objective is "upholding mother-tongue teaching and enhancing proficiency in Chinese and English". We aim at improving students' English proficiency while promoting mother-tongue teaching. This is particularly important for Hong Kong as a cosmopolitan city cum international financial centre. In addition, both Chinese and English are the official languages of Hong Kong. Besides possessing a good standard in Chinese, our younger generation has to be proficient in English in order to contribute to the development of our country and society. Given the ethnic homogeneity of the Hong Kong society, the use of Chinese prevails in almost every aspect of our life and there is a general lack of an English-rich environment. While our students may not have adequate exposure to English, schools provide a very suitable environment to increase their exposure to English.

(2) **Q The fine-tuned MOI arrangements for secondary schools have been implemented starting from the 2010/11 school year. Does it mean that the Government has given up mother-tongue teaching?**

A The Government has all along been actively encouraging and supporting mother-tongue teaching in schools. The effect of mother-tongue teaching on students' overall learning effectiveness in various aspects has been reaffirmed. These aspects include students' ability to think, assimilate knowledge and express themselves, as well as raising their motivation, interest and self-confidence. We have to reiterate that the fine-tuning aims to give schools some room for development to cater for the diverse needs, interests and expectations of students.

### **Objectives and Principles of Fine-tuning**

**(3) Q What are the basic principles of the Government in taking forward the fine-tuned MOI arrangements for secondary schools which have been implemented starting from the 2010/11 school year?**

A The objective of the fine-tuned MOI arrangements is to safeguard the interest of students so that every junior secondary student will have the opportunity to learn subject knowledge through English in a progressive manner. Under the fine-tuned arrangements, students will be given more opportunities to be exposed to and use English through reading, writing, listening and speaking, thus boosting their confidence in using English to facilitate their transition to senior secondary and tertiary education or to meet the language needs at work. Specifically, in taking forward the fine-tuned MOI arrangements for secondary schools, we have been strictly adhering to the following six principles:

- (i) Any arrangement made must be in the best interest of students.
- (ii) Premising on the effectiveness of mother-tongue teaching, our policy objective is to nurture students to be proficient in both Chinese and English.
- (iii) To cater for learner diversity and learning effectiveness, we should uphold the basic criteria for adopting English as the MOI (EMI) at junior secondary levels as recommended in the "Report on Review of Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation" (MOI & SSPA Report) published by the Education Commission (EC) in 2005. The prescribed criteria under the fine-tuned framework include "student ability", "teacher capability" and "school-based support".
- (iv) Schools are in the best position to keep track of students' learning progress and teach according to diverse abilities. Accordingly, schools meeting the above criteria should be allowed to determine their school-based MOI arrangements professionally.
- (v) Schools must maintain high transparency in their school-based MOI policy so that parents are well-informed of the MOI arrangement for each subject and have their right to know protected.
- (vi) Upon implementation of the fine-tuned arrangements, the Education Bureau (EDB) will monitor students' learning effectiveness under the current "School Development and Accountability" (SDA) framework.

**(4) Q Why does EDB not allow schools the full autonomy to determine their MOI arrangements?**

A Our education policy must be in the best interest of students. We need to implement the fine-tuning of MOI for secondary schools in an orderly manner while providing schools with the room for development. Such arrangements are premised on the prescribed criteria mentioned in the MOI & SSPA Report published by the EC for adopting EMI at junior secondary levels, i.e. "student ability", "teacher capability" and "school-based support". Besides, schools have the best knowledge of students' learning progress and will teach according to their abilities. Accordingly, schools meeting the prescribed criteria should be allowed to develop school-based MOI arrangements professionally, having regard to their specific circumstances.

The fine-tuned arrangements give schools more room for carrying out a student-centred approach to cater for learner diversity, but this does not mean taking a laissez-faire attitude. In making their MOI arrangements, schools must safeguard the interest of students. The community and parents also expect the Government to effectively monitor the outcomes of the school-based MOI arrangements. Therefore, schools are required to meet the basic criteria before they can determine their school-based MOI arrangements according to their specific circumstances in a professional manner.

### **Student Ability**

**(5) Q On what basis were the "top 40% EMI-capable students" assessed?**

A In 2004, the then Education and Manpower Bureau commissioned a research to the Chinese University of Hong Kong to conduct studies to assess the percentage of Secondary 1 (S1) students in Hong Kong capable of learning through the English medium. The research team employed a widely adopted standard-setting procedure known as the Angoff method. By observing lessons conducted in EMI for S1 classes, scrutinising textbooks adopted by ex-EMI schools and conducting group discussions, the research team made an analysis on the minimum English competence required of S1 students to learn various subjects through English. In doing so, two other standard-setting methods, namely the Bookmark method and the Contrasting Groups method, were also used to triangulate the Angoff method.

The study revealed that at that time about 32% to 40% of S1 students in Hong Kong were able to learn through English in most of the subjects. Having carefully studied the

comments received, the EC Working Group adopted a more lenient approach in proposing the threshold of "EMI-capable" in 2005, having regard to the actual circumstances in Hong Kong, and decided that the "top 40% students" were assessed to be capable to learn through English. [For details, please refer to Annex 5 to the MOI & SSPA Report.]

**(6) Q Can the "student ability" profile of a school be linked to the ability of individual students?**

A Under the fine-tuning framework, "student ability" is one of the basic criteria that schools must meet in adopting EMI teaching at junior secondary levels as recommended specifically by the EC in the MOI & SSPA Report, i.e. the ability data of S1 intake of a school under the Secondary School Places Allocation (SSPA) System in the previous two years under a six-year cycle should be taken into account in determining whether the school has met the "student ability" criterion. In brief, schools admitting a critical mass of students capable of learning in both the mother tongue and English are allowed to make professional MOI arrangements.

While the fine-tuning arrangement allows schools more room for making professional MOI arrangements, schools have already put in place a mechanism to stream students into classes or groups appropriate to their learning ability, progress, interest and expectations with reference to school circumstances such as distribution of teaching load and availability of support measures. The mechanism has all along been effective and facilitated schools to decide professionally the appropriate MOI arrangements.

**(7) Q How do schools determine which students belong to the "top 40%"?**

A Schools meeting the prescribed criteria are allowed to decide on their professional school-based MOI arrangements. To cater for learner diversity and enhance learning effectiveness, it has been a common practice for schools to stream classes and groups according to student ability. Schools are in the best position to keep track of students' learning progress and exercise their professional judgment in adopting different pedagogies for learner diversity. For instance, some schools streamed students into different classes and groups based on their results of the Pre-S1 Hong Kong Attainment Test.

**(8) Q Why are only the "top 40% students" allowed to learn in English? What is the rationale for setting the 85% threshold?**

A With reference to the experience of EMI schools before the implementation of the MOI fine-tuning and the views gathered by the EC Working Group from the education sector, we consider that the 85% threshold is acceptable for addressing learner diversity. We understand the different views from various parties: those in favour of a higher threshold percentage wish to reduce the within-school learner diversity, whereas those arguing for a relaxation of the 85% requirement wish to have more schools adopting EMI teaching to meet parents' aspirations. In the absence of any justifiable alternatives, the 85% threshold is maintained for the sake of a coherent and stable policy.

**(9) Q How do individual schools know the number of intake belonging to the "top 40% students"?**

A Schools can refer to the SSPA result each year to obtain information about the territory percentile group to which the allocated students belong. Under the fine-tuning framework, if a class of a school has an average proportion of at least 85% of Secondary One (S1) intake belonging to the "top 40%" group in the previous two years of each of the six-year planning cycles, and meets the criteria of "teacher capability" and "school-based support", the school is allowed to determine its school-based MOI arrangements professionally for the class concerned.

To minimise the impact of changes in S1 population on the stable environment for MOI arrangements, we have replaced the "allocation class size" adopted in the first and second MOI cycles with the "average class size" (i.e. average number of students per class from S1 to S6 in all secondary schools in the territory) in the 2020/21 school year as the parameter for determining the number of places for which schools will be given professional discretion to determine the school-based MOI arrangements according to the current "student ability" criterion. This could more accurately reflect the criterion of 85% of students belonging to the "top 40%" group in a cohort.

**(10) Q Will the change in "student ability" in the future affect schools' decisions on their MOI arrangements?**

A EDB will uphold the "student ability" criterion (i.e. using the average proportion of the S1 intake in 2008 and 2009 for the first cycle, 2014 and 2015 for the second cycle, and 2020 and 2021 for the third cycle as the basis) for a six-year planning cycle to ensure a steady development for schools.

**(11) Q If the "top 40%" proportion required of the S1 intake is only reviewed at an interval of 6 years, will this result in internal mismatch within schools?**

A The six-year planning cycle is to ensure a steady development for schools. With our support measures, teachers' efforts and schools' on-going review, students will surely have their potential well developed and the proportion of EMI-capable students may gradually increase.

**(12) Q If it is the school that makes the decision of which individual students belong to the "top 40%", will EDB monitor schools' practice? Is there any channel for parents to appeal?**

A It has been a common practice for schools to adopt different modes to stream students, e.g. by class/by group to cater for learner diversity, or by mixed-ability grouping to encourage peer learning. In this regard, it is not advisable or appropriate for EDB to step up its supervision, especially at the level of individual cases.

For an orderly implementation of fine-tuning, most stakeholders agree that schools can exercise their discretion to decide their MOI arrangements when the three prescribed criteria, i.e. "student ability", "teacher capability" and "school-based support" are met. In the teaching process, the challenges faced by teachers mainly come from learner diversity, yet it is a common practice for schools to stream the students with different abilities into classes or groups to reduce barriers in learning and teaching. For instance, some schools may make use of the Pre-S1 Hong Kong Attainment Test results to organise remedial and enrichment programmes for their new S1 intake, while some other schools may use internal assessment tests to stream their students into classes. Schools have to make public these arrangements and assessments so that parents will be well informed.

**(13) Q With the upholding of the "student ability" criterion, can parents get access to information about whether individual students belong to the "top 40%"?**

A Under the fine-tuning, the "top 40%" student ratio of a school is only an indicator to ensure learning effectiveness. The "top 40%" students allocated to a school refer to a percentage of the entire student population. During the calculation process, these data have been adjusted and converted for standardisation and, therefore, do not reflect the ability of individual students.

### **Teacher Capability**

**(14) Q Why does "teacher capability" become a requirement for non-language subject teachers using EMI and conducting Extended Learning Activities (ELA) in English under the fine-tuning? Will the requirement increase the pressure on non-language subject teachers?**

A For non-language subject teachers using EMI, regardless of whether they are teaching at junior or senior secondary levels, the MOI & SSPA Report published by the EC in 2005 sets out the basic requirement for their language proficiency - "teachers should be able to communicate the subject content to students intelligibly in English and that their use of English should have no adverse impact on students' acquisition of the English language". On this basis, the qualifications meeting the "teacher capability" are drawn up. The fine-tuned MOI arrangements at junior secondary levels are premised on the interest of students, and hence schools are given the flexibility. But to ensure the quality of teaching in the classroom, we uphold the English proficiency requirement of teachers as set out in the Report. The majority of the stakeholders concur with and support the relevant requirement to ensure teachers possessing the capability to teach through English effectively.

**(15) Q Concerning the "teacher capability" criterion for non-language subject teachers using EMI, are there any recognised qualifications?**

A To meet the "teacher capability" criterion, non-language subject teachers adopting EMI teaching should have Level 3 or above in English Language of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE), or Grade C or above in English Language (Syllabus B) of the defunct Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) (or Level 3 or above in English Language of the HKCEE in 2007 to

2011). Other recognised qualifications include:

	<b>Title of Qualification</b>	<b>Recognised Level</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
<b>1.</b>	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) - English Language (Syllabus A)	Grade A	
<b>2.</b>	International English Language Testing System (IELTS) - (academic domain)	Band 6 or above	
<b>3.</b>	Language Proficiency Requirements (English) - only the four parts on reading, writing, listening and speaking are required	Meeting the relevant requirements	
<b>4.</b>	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) - Internet-based test (iBT)	A score of 78 or above	
<b>5.</b>	Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) - computer-based or paper-based test before 2006	A score of 210 (computer-based) or 550 (paper-based) or above	Only applicable to "serving EMI teachers" * at that time
<b>6.</b>	Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE) - Use of English	Grade D or above	
<b>7.</b>	University of Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination - Use of English (defunct)	Grade D or above	
<b>8.</b>	Hong Kong Higher Level Examination (HKHLE) - English Language (defunct)	Grade C or above	
<b>9.</b>	Chinese University of Hong Kong Matriculation Examination - English Language (defunct)	Grade C or above	
<b>10.</b>	General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (Overseas) Examination (GCE 'O' Level Overseas) - English	Pass or above	Only applicable to "serving EMI teachers" * at that time

<b>11.</b>	General Certificate of Education (GCE) Examinations (London Examinations) - English	Pass or above	Only applicable to "serving EMI teachers" * at that time
<b>12.</b>	International General Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (IGCSE) - English (First/Second) Language	Pass or above	Only applicable to "serving EMI teachers" * at that time
<b>13.</b>	Institute of Linguists - having studied in courses related to the English language	Possessing membership	

Remarks: \*As the examination does not carry any oral assessment, the EC Working Group stated in its MOI & SSPA Report of 2005 that the recognised qualification is only applicable to those considered as "serving EMI teachers" at that time, i.e. those who had used English as the MOI to teach one or more non-language subjects in not less than two school years between September 1998 and August 2006.

For the purpose of meeting the "teacher capability" requirement, please note that all qualifications, once obtained, will continue to be recognised and teachers need not re-sit the test regularly.

### **Support Measures**

**(16) Q What kinds of "school-based support" are required by EDB for schools to implement their MOI arrangements?**

A According to the MOI & SSPA Report published by the EC Working Group in 2005, schools should put in place "support measures" strategically, systematically and continuously to provide an environment conducive to learning English. They should set out the related support strategies and specific measures in their school development plans and annual reports where necessary. The related strategies include:

- (i) strengthening the learning and teaching of English as a subject according to students' diverse abilities with a view to enhancing their English proficiency and better facilitating their learning of other subjects through English;

- (ii) creating an English-rich environment to increase students' exposure to English inside and outside the classroom;
- (iii) devising bridging programmes to help S1 students to switch from learning non-language subjects through CMI in primary schools to EMI at junior secondary levels; and
- (iv) strengthening the learning of English through language-across-the-curriculum by promoting collaboration between English Language teachers and non-language subject teachers, so that students will have more confidence in using English.

### **"By class" Arrangement**

**(17) Q With the fine-tuning, has EDB considered that there will be within-school labelling effects caused by schools adopting the "by class" MOI arrangement, which will impact negatively on the confidence and motivation of the students in learning English?**

A First of all, we need to emphasise that, under the fine-tuning, schools do not bifurcate classes into CMI and EMI classes. Schools have the flexibility to adopt EMI for teaching different classes or groups, and/or a varied degree of EMI for teaching one or a number of non-language subjects.

Schools have to meet the prescribed criteria before they can, having regard to their school-based circumstances, exercise professional discretion to determine the MOI arrangements for the class(es)/ group(s) concerned, such as adopting EMI for all non-language subjects, or adopting CMI for some non-language subjects. The so-called "labelling" effect is unavoidable when there are conditions for using English in teaching, including student ability. Moreover, it has been the normal practice of schools to stream S1 students according to their ability, thus having a kind of by-class arrangement. As a matter of fact, the number of subjects and curriculum offered are school-based decisions.

However, we have to point out in particular that "labelling" originates from social values, which change over the passage of time and are subject to societal development. We hope, through the fine-tuned arrangements, that students who learn the non-language subjects in their mother tongue will have the chance to increase their exposure to and use of English, such as through conducting ELA in English or learning one or two non-language subjects in English. When the learning effectiveness of these students becomes obvious, the labelling effect will naturally recede with time.

### **"By session" Arrangement**

**(18) Q What are Extended Learning Activities (ELA)?**

A ELA enables junior secondary students to have systematic exposure to subject-related English while learning non-language subjects in the mother tongue during lesson time for transition to a senior secondary curriculum conducted more in English. To this end, schools can take each junior secondary level as a unit to strategically allocate a maximum of 25% of the total lesson time (excluding the lesson time of English Language subject) for ELA conducted in English. At present, ELA commonly take the following forms: cross-curricular English enrichment programmes, go through the relevant subject concepts and contents that have already been taught through the mother tongue in English, using English to teach individual modules or themes of individual non-language subjects, etc.

To cater for schools' actual needs and facilitate students' smooth transition to the senior secondary curriculum, we will allow greater flexibility in schools' planning of ELA and "allocation of time to subjects" in the third cycle. Schools may opt to take the entire junior secondary learning stage (i.e. S1 to S3) as a unit, and adopt an orderly and progressive approach to make blanket allocation of ELA lesson time from S1 to S3 for the same cohort of students, up to 25% of the total lesson time (excluding the lesson time of the English Language subject) in the junior secondary learning stage.

**(19) Q On what basis is the lesson time for ELA calculated?**

A In order to provide students with more opportunities to be exposed to, and use, English to boost their confidence in learning English, we have increased the percentage of total lesson time (excluding the lesson time for the English Language subject) allowed for ELA from the original 15%, 20% and 25% for S1, S2 and S3 respectively as recommended by the EC to a uniform proportion of 25% for each of the three levels. With this increase in ELA time, and taking together the lesson time of English Language subject, the English learning environment for students will be enhanced.

To cater for schools' actual needs and facilitate students' smooth transition to the senior secondary curriculum, schools may, in the third cycle, opt to take the entire junior secondary learning stage (i.e. S1 to S3) as a unit, and adopt an orderly and progressive

approach to make blanket allocation of ELA lesson time from S1 to S3 for the same cohort of students, up to 25% of the total lesson time (excluding the lesson time of the English Language subject) in the junior secondary learning stage.

As to how the 25% ELA time is derived, the EC does not provide any specific basis for calculation other than the suggestion "on top of language lessons...not more than...of the total lesson time". In principle, the lesson time of all language subjects (i.e., Chinese Language and English Language) should be deducted before calculating the 25% ELA time. However, to avoid oversplitting the lesson time, we will deduct the lesson time of English Language from that of all subjects before calculating the 25% ELA time.

**(20) Q How do schools work out the specific lesson time for ELA?**

A Upon the implementation of the ELA, the EC, EDB and the school sector are aware that "the percentage of total lesson time" is only an indicator for conducting ELA. It will be impractical to ask teachers to measure and record the ELA time in classroom teaching.

In terms of monitoring, schools are required to set out their overall ELA strategies, specific arrangements and self-evaluation of teaching outcomes in their school development plans and annual school reports. EDB will take follow-up actions whenever necessary under the established mechanism, having regard to the continuous academic performance of students as a whole.

**(21) Q Why is the ceiling of ELA time not extended?**

A Based on the original ELA time recommended by the EC that no more than 15%, 20% and 25% of the total lesson time should be allocated for ELA in English at S1, S2 and S3 respectively, we have increased the ELA time to a uniform proportion of 25 % of the total lesson time (excluding the lesson time of English Language subject) for each of the three levels in response to the request of the education sector so as to avoid having too many small ELA time slots. In addition, we also allow flexibility for schools to transform the ELA time into using the English medium in individual non-language subjects up to a maximum of two subjects. In the third cycle, we will allow greater flexibility in schools' planning of ELA and "allocation of time to subjects", so that schools may opt to adopt an orderly and progressive approach to holistically allocate ELA lesson time from S1 to S3 for the same cohort of students, up to 25% of the total lesson time (excluding the

lesson time of the English Language subject) in the junior secondary learning stage; and/or transform the ELA lesson time for “allocation of time to subjects” arrangement holistically for the same cohort of students, with the aggregate count of such transformation in the junior secondary learning stage capped at six for this cohort of students.

If the limit of the 25% of the ELA time is further extended, not only will it adversely affect the schools' efforts in catering for learner diversity and enhancing learning effectiveness, but it will also affect non-language subject teachers in terms of their workload and pressure.

**(22) Q What is meant by "allocation of time to subjects"? What are the considerations for adopting this arrangement?**

A Under the fine-tuned arrangements, all schools are allowed to transform the ELA lesson time into using the English medium in no more than two non-language subjects. This is commonly known as the arrangement of "allocation of time to subjects". Meanwhile, schools may, in the third cycle, opt to make blanket allocation of subjects to be covered by “allocation of time to subjects” from S1 to S3 for this cohort of students, up to six counts of transformation of the ELA lesson time in the junior secondary learning stage.

In order to safeguard learning effectiveness, secondary schools should consider the following guiding principles in deciding whether and in which subject(s) they will adopt the "allocation of time to subjects" arrangement:

- As the MOI is inseparable from the holistic curriculum, secondary schools must consider whether the “allocation of time to subjects” arrangement will be consistent with their overall curriculum and whether they can maintain a coherent and holistic curriculum before making any decision.
- Schools should adhere to "student-centred" approach, giving careful consideration to students' abilities, needs, interests and expectations.
- Schools should consider their school-based circumstances, including teachers' capability and workload, the prevalence of a culture of lesson observation and cross-curricular collaboration. In addition, they should also review the learning

effectiveness of students in EMI arrangements by class/group streaming at senior secondary levels, etc.

- Schools should develop clear indicators to evaluate academic and language learning performance so that students will be able to bridge over to senior secondary and post-secondary education and prepare themselves for future careers. With reference to these outcome-based indicators, schools should also conduct self-evaluation and assessment to build up a challenging and interactive classroom environment favourable to students' learning under the "allocation of time to subjects" arrangement.

### **Monitoring and Reporting of Information**

**(23) Q How does EDB monitor schools' implementation of the fine-tuned arrangements?**

A Schools are given flexibility under the framework of MOI fine-tuning to devise professionally their school-based MOI arrangements having regard to students' ability to learn in English, teachers' capability and readiness to teach in English, and school support measures for effective learning and teaching in English. We require schools to submit their MOI plans for each school year one year in advance. Schools are also required to provide the MOI information for each non-language subject in the Secondary School Profiles (SSP) for parents' reference.

The above reporting mechanism aims at facilitating schools to devise MOI arrangements systematically and providing us with the necessary information for conducting professional dialogue with schools to review and, if necessary, modify their plans.

Schools have to review and be accountable for the effectiveness of their MOI arrangements through a self-evaluation mechanism of "Planning - Implementation - Evaluation" and report the findings in school reports.

**(24) Q Would the requirement for schools to submit plans on school-based MOI arrangements generate much workload on teachers?**

A Upon implementation of the fine-tuned arrangements in schools, EDB monitors students' learning effectiveness under the existing School Development and Accountability (SDA) Framework. Under the SDA framework, schools are required to consult their

stakeholders on their proposed language policy, MOI arrangements and justifications thereof. It is the participation of all stakeholders that forms the basis of monitoring for the fine-tuning of MOI for secondary schools. Moreover, schools are required to review the effectiveness of their MOI through a self-evaluation mechanism of "Planning-Implementation-Evaluation", and present the findings in school reports. EDB conducts evaluation on schools under the established mechanism to review their work and effectiveness and give suggestions for improvement.

To enhance transparency, schools should also specify the MOI arrangement for each non-language subject, including the lesson time allocated for ELA in subjects taught in Chinese, in the SSP published annually for the parents' reference.

**(25) Q While EDB has stopped emphasising the "by class" arrangement, some schools still adopt a high profile in publicising the number of EMI classes they will operate. Will EDB take any action?**

A Schools are held accountable for the information they release and are responsible for answering parents' queries on any information they publish. EDB will take appropriate actions on these cases once identified.

**(26) Q The "allocation of time to subjects" arrangement does not fulfill the criterion of "student ability" for EMI teaching. Are schools required to submit applications for adopting the "allocation of time to subjects" arrangement? If yes, under what circumstances will EDB approve or disapprove the applications?**

A Under the fine-tuned MOI arrangements, schools are allowed to transform the ELA lesson time into teaching non-language subjects in the English medium (i.e. "allocation of time to subjects") according to their school-based circumstances. This is to enhance students' confidence in learning English to facilitate their transition to senior secondary/tertiary education in which the English medium is used to a larger extent or for preparation for future career. On the other hand, this also allows schools to plan their curriculum and whole-school language policy systematically and in a coherent manner.

When deciding if the "allocation of time to subjects" arrangement should be adopted, schools should give serious consideration to our guiding principles. They should inform EDB of the concrete arrangements, e.g. levels and subjects involved, etc.

We have repeatedly emphasised that MOI is by nature a teaching strategy. On this basis, we conduct professional dialogue with schools when necessary to support schools in enhancing their teaching effectiveness through coherent planning involving "allocation of time to subjects" arrangement, information on student ability, expectation on students' learning progress, etc.

**(27) Q Individual parents may have grievances about the schools' MOI arrangements in pursuit of more EMI learning for their children at the junior secondary levels (including when progressing to S2 and S3). How should this be handled?**

A We have once conducted a random survey on the class streaming arrangements of schools. We found that most schools normally stream the new S1 intakes into different classes/groups according to their abilities before the commencement of school. With a view to stretching the abilities of the able ones and catering for the needs of the weaker, they will adopt different teaching strategies and design appropriate learning tasks for them. At the same time, there are schools adopting the mode of "mix-ability" teaching at S1 and then streaming the students according to their abilities at S2 and S3 to cater for learner diversity and to facilitate them to have a smooth transition to the senior secondary education. As the existing arrangements for "class streaming" and "form promotion" are both effective and meeting students' needs, schools can continue to adopt these practices upon the MOI fine-tuning. Nevertheless, there should be an established mechanism in schools to keep parents well informed of these arrangements.

Parents should understand that the junior secondary stage is a continuous stage of learning. Apart from a small number of students who need special care and arrangements, it is not advisable for most of the students to change their class frequently when progressing to S2 and S3 levels.

### **Transparency**

**(28) Q Before the implementation of the MOI fine-tuning, it is easy for parents to know the MOI of a school, i.e. CMI or EMI. With the diversification of MOI arrangements under the fine-tuning policy, how can parents be properly informed?**

A Schools are required to specify the MOI arrangement for each non-language subject, including the lesson time allocated for ELA in subjects taught in CMI, in the SSP

published annually for the parents' reference. They should also appropriately elaborate their school-based language policy (including the MOI arrangements) in their school development plans.

**(29) Q Why does EDB not simply inform parents of the number of EMI-dominant classes operated by each school?**

A Under the policy framework of MOI fine-tuning, schools are allowed to make professional judgment to devise their own MOI arrangements. It is possible that different classes within a school may have different MOI arrangements. Even if English is used as the MOI of non-language subjects, the number of subjects, extent of EMI teaching and lesson time may vary. It is therefore not advisable for EDB to generalise the diversified school-based MOI arrangements of schools into crude figures for parents' information. On the other hand, we expect schools to explain clearly to parents their MOI arrangements for each non-language subject.

### **School and Teacher Support**

**(30) Q Upon the MOI fine-tuning, what support measures will Government provide for teachers to release their heavy workload?**

A We understand and recognise teachers' concern over their workload and the change in the teaching environment. The success of the implementation of various educational initiatives in the past was attributed to the professionalism and incessant efforts of the teaching profession. The selfless dedication of teachers to their profession is worth noting.

Under the fine-tuned arrangements,

- (i) Resources will be redeployed to provide training programmes for serving non-language subject teachers of secondary schools to enhance their teaching pedagogy and strategies when adopting different MOIs in teaching, with the provision of supply teachers to schools. As a matter of fact, adopting different MOIs in teaching is part of the teaching strategies to suit students' abilities, interests and aspirations to facilitate students to have a smooth transition to the senior secondary and tertiary education and prepare them for work. Therefore, when schools modify their MOI arrangements, they should not allow the lessons to become "translation lessons" or teachers become 'translators'.

- (ii) Workshops will be conducted to help schools enhance the effectiveness of their school-based MOI arrangements. While considering their MOI arrangements for the junior secondary levels, schools should make reference to their whole-school learning and teaching objectives so as to make sure the arrangements can be integrated into the school curriculum and that the consistency as well as coherence of the school curriculum can be achieved.
- (iii) Studies will be conducted with a view to providing support to schools in the development of teaching resources and conducting assessment on the effectiveness of teaching strategies and disseminating good practices to schools.
- (iv) Sharing sessions will be arranged to share the effective teaching strategies with schools and promote good practices.
- (v) Schools will be regularly reminded that they should first take into consideration the effectiveness of students' learning, the school-based language policy and other school circumstances including teachers' readiness. The Committee on Home-School Co-operation also encourages the Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations in all districts to advise primary school parents, while making school choices, not to pursue for schools solely for the number of EMI subjects. Whereas for the parents of secondary school students, they should not pressurise schools to adopt greater proportions of EMI teaching.

### **Improvement of English Proficiency**

**(31) Q How will EDB ensure that secondary schools will improve their learning and teaching of English under the fine-tuning? And how will it ensure that the English proficiency of primary school students will be enhanced so as to tie in with the implementation of the fine-tuning?**

A The objective of fine-tuning is to allow schools to devise their MOI arrangements based on their individual circumstances in a professional manner. We hope that with the fine-tuning, students' exposure to and use of English in the four aspects of listening, speaking, reading and writing will be increased at the junior secondary levels. Hence, their confidence and motivation in learning English will be enhanced, and their ability to learn through English will also improve. But we have to understand that to help students learn English well, the basic thing is to learn and teach the English language as a subject, and to provide students with an English environment both inside and outside the school to

increase their exposure to English. Using English as the MOI undoubtedly facilitates the provision of the English environment, but this is not the only way. As a matter of fact, educational initiatives are inter-locked with each other and they should be planned holistically in the school context to achieve the best effect. For many years we have been implementing a number of measures to enhance the teaching of English in schools and the language environment so as to raise the students' standard of English. EDB will also continue to enhance English teaching in primary schools by, for example, establishing a scholarship to attract talented young people to pursue a career in education, strengthening school-based support, providing professional training for teachers, re-deploying the existing resources and further enhancing the English language environment in primary schools, to support the implementation of the MOI fine-tuning.

### **Definition**

**(32) Q How are "CMI teaching" and "EMI teaching" defined?**

A Language is a medium through which we acquire knowledge, analyse issues, think and express opinions. MOI covers the language used in classroom teaching, textbooks, school works inside and outside the classroom to consolidate learning, as well as assessments/examinations. If a school adopts Chinese as the MOI, then Chinese will be the main language for thinking and application by students in the above areas. If English is used as the MOI, then English will be mainly used for thinking and application by students in the above areas.

**(33) Q Are schools allowed to adopt "CMI teaching using English textbooks" for smooth delivery of lessons by non-language subject teachers and students to have more exposure to English?**

A It may be a sketchy description to say that "CMI teaching using English textbooks" is a teaching strategy. We will not accept situations where schools use "English textbooks" as the core textbooks and teachers teach in Chinese, while the schools claim that they teach the subjects concerned in English.

Under MOI fine-tuning, we have clearly defined "CMI teaching" and "EMI teaching". Regardless of whether EMI or CMI teaching is adopted, students are encouraged to read more in Chinese and English. Under MOI fine-tuning, schools wishing to provide students with more exposure to English in the classroom may conduct ELA in English,

e.g. using English to teach individual modules or to consolidate subject content already taught in Chinese, etc. This is how students may get an all-round exposure to English, in listening, speaking, reading and writing, under MOI fine-tuning.

In principle, the MOI of the textbook and the medium of teaching should be consistent so as to facilitate students to master the subject contents. In this connection, it is hard to understand why individual schools find it more effective to use English textbooks than Chinese textbooks under a CMI teaching environment. This approach poses learning barriers to students' listening and reading, and increases their need to use the dictionary to work between translations when doing their revisions.

Considering the varying circumstances and student ability of individual schools, we did not, at the time of introduction of fine-tuned arrangement, impose a blanket ban on "CMI teaching using English textbooks" while we encourage "CMI teaching using Chinese textbooks" and "EMI teaching using English textbooks". Instead, schools wishing to adopt "CMI teaching using English textbooks" were required to explain to EDB and stakeholders with solid supporting evidence/justifications. This enabled us to gather necessary information for professional dialogue with schools concerned.

## **Others**

### ***Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools***

**(34) Q Should EDB have the same set of criteria for the MOI arrangements for both public-sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS)?**

A Before the implementation of the MOI fine-tuning, both DSS and public-sector schools have to meet the three prescribed criteria of "student ability", "teacher capability" and "school-based support" before they can make professional decisions on the MOI arrangements for junior secondary levels, while DSS schools are allowed flexibility in the "student ability" criterion.

Given its flexibility, the DSS allows schools to respond more quickly to the greater diversity and variations in the number and overall ability of students in terms of curriculum development and teaching strategies including the MOI arrangements. When it comes to the actual implementation of the policy on MOI fine-tuning starting from the 2010/11 school year, since DSS schools admit students territory-wide, they are generally able to cater for students' learning needs in a more timely and appropriate manner. Thus, we continue to allow DSS schools to enjoy flexibility with regard to the criterion of

"student ability". Meanwhile, we will continue to review the situation of DSS schools under the existing mechanism to ensure that their MOI arrangements can safeguard students' learning effectiveness.

### *Trough-train Schools*

**(35) Q In general, the ability data of S1 intake of a school under the SSPA System in the previous two years under a six-year cycle are taken into account in determining whether the school has met the "student ability" criterion, i.e. an average of 85% students belonging to the "top 40% group". Are "through-train" schools subject to the same requirement?**

A A primary school and its linked secondary school work as an entity under the "through-train" mode. Students from the primary school will therefore find it easier to adapt to the learning environment in the linked secondary school when they proceed to S1. Their secondary school teachers will also have a better idea of what they have learned in the linked primary school. Besides, these schools have more coherent curricula and can provide students with more timely support to cater for their needs at different learning and development stages. All these give room to "through-train" secondary schools to slightly relax the "student ability" criterion. The threshold for S1 entrants from linked primary schools can be lowered to 75%, whereas the threshold for those from other primary schools should be maintained at 85%. A weighted average is used to calculate the threshold required for individual "through-train" secondary schools according to the proportions of S1 entrants from the linked and other primary schools, with their respective thresholds set at 75% and 85%.

### *Non-Chinese Speaking Students*

**(36) Q What are the effects of the fine-tuned arrangements on the non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students? How will the Government support their learning needs?**

A Under the fine-tuned arrangements, more flexibility is introduced to the system so that all students, including NCS students, can have the opportunities to develop their language ability. As schools are provided with greater autonomy to make professional judgement on the teaching strategies (including the teaching medium) in accordance with the needs, aspirations and capabilities of their students as well as school-based circumstances, this will facilitate schools to cater for the learning needs of students, including NCS students.

Besides, starting from the 2014/15 school year, EDB has substantially increased the additional funding to schools, and provided schools with teaching resources, teacher training and professional support to further enhance the support for NCS students' effective learning of the Chinese language and the creation of an inclusive learning environment in schools, including the implementation of the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework" ("Learning Framework"), in primary and secondary schools. The enhanced support measures would gradually improve the Chinese language proficiency of NCS students and in turn help NCS students study other subjects taught in Chinese.

### **Arrangements for the Second Cycle**

**(37) Q What is the overall arrangement of MOI fine-tuning for the second cycle?**

A EDB has maintained the policy goal and overall arrangement of MOI fine-tuning for the second cycle (i.e. 2016/17 to 2021/22 school years), allowing schools to extend their school-based MOI arrangements of the first cycle to the second cycle. Schools are required, as usual, to devise professionally their MOI arrangements taking into account their school-based situation in each of the school years of the cycle.

The arrangement for the second cycle was decided after close examination of the situation of the first cycle, with the goal and spirit of the fine-tuning implemented since the 2010/11 school year maintained in a consistent and coherent manner. Upon examination, EDB considered that the MOI arrangements of schools (including schools which first started to adopt EMI fully or partially in the first cycle) had begun to take root with students in general benefitting from the teaching experience of teachers and the effectiveness of school-based support measures. A stable language environment would also be crucial for teachers to develop learning and teaching strategies of non-language subjects (including learning the English language across the curriculum and the related support measures). Besides, schools had to consolidate and integrate their whole-school language policy to tie in with the school-based curriculum. Should schools be required to change their MOI arrangements in haste for the second cycle (i.e. from the 2016/17 school year onwards) merely on the basis of the "student ability" criterion, the needs of the schools and teachers would not be well catered for and the effectiveness of the school-based MOI arrangements would be affected.

### **Arrangements for the Third Cycle**

**(38) Q Is there any policy change to the fine-tuned MOI arrangements for the third cycle?**

A After reviewing the implementation in the past two cycles, EDB considers that schools in general have professionally capitalised on the flexibility accorded by the fine-tuned arrangements and enabled students to benefit from diversified MOI arrangements, under which schools offered their students more opportunities for exposure to and use of English, while ensuring their efficacy in learning non-language subjects. Therefore, EDB has decided to take forward the existing fine-tuned framework into the third cycle. Schools' discretion on MOI arrangements in the third cycle will continue to be determined by the three prescribed criteria of "student ability", "teacher capability" and "school-based support", so that students can continue to benefit from the merits of fine-tuned arrangements.

Besides, we will refine the implementation details in the third cycle, including (i) adopting the "average class size" in the 2020/21 school year as the parameter for determining the number of places for which schools will be given professional discretion to determine the school-based MOI arrangements according to the current "student ability" criterion; and (ii) allowing schools to opt for taking the entire junior secondary learning stage (i.e. S1 to S3) as a unit, and adopt an orderly and progressive approach to make blanket allocation of ELA lesson time from S1 to S3 for the same cohort of students, and/or subjects to be covered by "allocation of time to subjects".

**(39) Q Will EDB engage with schools in devising their school-based MOI plans in each school year of the third cycle?**

A To ensure the effectiveness of learning and teaching, EDB will continue to engage schools in professional dialogue upon receipt of the school-based MOI plans in each school year of the third cycle. EDB will also provide professional development for teachers and conduct studies to consolidate and conceptualise the experience gained and good practices of school-based support with a view to further enhancing the MOI policy in the future.

## **Way Forward**

**(40) Q The fine-tuned MOI arrangements have been implemented for more than 10 years. Will EDB consider refining the existing mechanism, e.g. reviewing the “student ability” criterion?**

A To ensure the quality of classroom learning and teaching, EDB will continue to provide various kinds of school-based support and teacher training programmes, with a view to consolidating the experience gained and promoting professional exchange. We will also step up the support for language across the curriculum for the English medium and elevate teachers’ professional standards in the relevant aspects. In parallel, we are conducting a comprehensive review of the fine-tuned MOI policy for secondary schools, which includes reviewing the “student ability” criterion as well as students’ learning efficacy under different MOI arrangements, with a view to refining our policy according to review findings by the end of the third cycle to cater for the development and needs of the society.

Review and Planning Section

Education Bureau

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