

5 June 2009

Education Bureau Circular No. 6/2009

Fine-tuning the Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools

[Note: This circular should be read by:

- (a) Supervisors and Heads of all government and aided secondary schools, and caput schools for necessary action;
- (b) Supervisors and Heads of all government and aided primary schools for information;
- (c) Supervisors and Heads of all schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme and private independent schools for information; and
- (d) Heads of Sections for information.]

Summary

This circular informs (a) all schools about the details of fine-tuning the medium of instruction (MOI) for secondary schools; and (b) all government and aided secondary schools, and caput schools about the arrangements for devising MOI plans for Secondary(S) 1 entrants in the 2010/11 school year and reporting their plans to the Education Bureau (EDB) for vetting purposes.

Background

2. The Government has been promoting the use of the mother tongue as the MOI in secondary schools since the early 1980's. In 1997, the then Education Department issued the *Medium of Instruction Guidance for Secondary Schools (Guidance)*. Under the policy framework as set out in the *Guidance*, the mother tongue should primarily be adopted as the MOI for secondary schools. Schools wishing to use English as the MOI should fulfill three prescribed criteria as follows: students possessing the ability to learn through English, teachers possessing the capability to teach through English and schools having adequate support strategies/measures. In December 2005, the Education Commission (EC) published the *Report on Review of Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation (Report)*. In the *Report*, the EC reaffirmed the policy direction as set out in the *Guidance*, recommended to maintain the bifurcation of schools into schools using Chinese as the MOI ("CMI schools") and schools using English as the MOI ("EMI schools") at junior secondary

levels, and proposed specific standards for the three prescribed criteria and a review mechanism. The Government accepted the recommendations of the *Report* at that time and agreed that the revised MOI arrangements for secondary schools should be implemented with effect from September 2010.

3. However, many stakeholders are concerned that the bifurcation of schools into CMI schools and EMI schools may not fully meet and cater for the needs of individual students. We also hope to provide our students with more opportunities to be exposed to, and use, English at junior secondary levels under the policy goal of upholding mother-tongue teaching while enhancing students' proficiency in both Chinese and English, so as to enhance their ability to learn in English and to better prepare them for further studies and work in future. Against this, we have decided to fine-tune the recommendations on MOI arrangements for secondary schools as outlined in the EC's *Report*, with a view to allowing secondary schools the flexibility to decide professionally the appropriate MOI arrangements with regard to students' learning ability and interests as well as schools' circumstances (including teachers' capability and readiness and schools' support measures) so as to enhance the students' exposure to English and its use in schools.

Framework of Fine-tuning

4. The fine-tuned MOI arrangements for secondary schools will be implemented starting from the 2010/11 school year at S1 level and progressing each year to a higher form at junior secondary levels. The fine-tuning will uphold the three prescribed criteria for schools adopting English as the MOI as recommended in the *Report*, i.e. students possessing the ability to learn through English¹ ("student ability"), teachers possessing the capability to teach through English² ("teacher capability") and schools having adequate support strategies/measures³. The fine-tuned MOI framework is as follows:

- (a) Schools may choose to adopt CMI for teaching non-language subjects. To enhance the English learning environment of students, we will increase the

¹ According to a research study in 2004, at most 40% of S1 students in Hong Kong are able to learn through English. For details, please refer to paragraphs 3.13 and 3.29 of the *Report*.

² The basic requirement is Grade C or above in English Language (Syllabus B) of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) (or Level 3 or above in English Language of the HKCEE 2007 and thereafter), or other equivalent qualifications (e.g. Level 6 or above in the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) (academic domain)). For details, please refer to paragraph 3.35 of the *Report*. Please note: We will continue to provide classroom observation for "serving EMI teachers", i.e. teachers who have used English as the MOI to teach one or more subjects in not less than two school years between September 1998 and August 2006. We will reaffirm schools of the arrangements under a separate cover.

³ For details, please refer to paragraphs 3.36 and 3.40 of the *Report*.

percentage of the total lesson time (excluding the lesson time for the English Language) allowed for extended learning activities (ELA)⁴ in English from the original 15%, 20% and 25% for S1, S2 and S3 respectively as recommended in the *Report* to a uniform proportion of 25% for each of these levels. With this increase in ELA time, schools should give due regard to teachers' capability and readiness to teach through English in devising the teaching modes of ELA.

- (b) To enhance students' motivation to learn English and to facilitate their transition to senior secondary levels at which EMI may be adopted in subject teaching, schools may choose to transform the ELA time into the adoption of EMI in individual non-language subjects up to a maximum of two subjects. However, schools should take into consideration the guiding principles set out in paragraph 9 below so as not to compromise students' learning effectiveness.
- (c) For schools fulfilling the "student ability" criterion, i.e. the average proportion of S1 intake of a school admitted to a class belonging to the "top 40%" group in the previous two years under a six-year review cycle reaches 85% of the size of a class (with regard to the allocation class size in 2010, 85% means 29 students⁵), they will be given professional discretion to determine the MOI arrangements in the classes/groups concerned, with regard to other prescribed criteria (including teachers' capability and readiness in EMI teaching and school support measures).

We will adhere to the six-year review cycle as set out in the *Report* to facilitate schools to develop teaching and learning under a more stable environment. Based on the S1 allocation results of 2008 and 2009, we will provide schools in early July this year with information of the average proportion of their S1 intake belonging to the "top 40%" group in the 2008 and 2009 years for devising school-based MOI arrangements for the first six-year cycle starting from September 2010 (i.e. 2010/11 to 2015/16 school years). In the sixth year of the

⁴ For details on ELA in English, please refer to paragraphs 4.10 to 4.16 of the *Report*. In brief, the teaching modes of ELA in English include collaboration between non-language subject teachers and English Language teachers to conduct cross-curricular English enrichment programmes; allocation of some lesson time of individual non-language subjects to using EMI to go through subject concepts and contents already taught in CMI; using EMI to teach individual modules or themes in the non-language subjects concerned; using EMI with regard to the nature of the learning materials (e.g. when the materials are mainly English-written information obtained from the Internet); strengthening the bridging programmes to facilitate a smooth transition for students who choose to switch to EMI learning at senior secondary levels, etc.

⁵ Since "through-train" secondary schools will admit S1 entrants from their "linked" primary schools and know these students well to better address their learning diversity, we will uphold the recommendations in the *Report* to adopt 75% as the threshold percentage for calculating the "student ability" of S1 entrants from "linked" primary schools. The threshold percentage for S1 entrants from other primary schools will be maintained at 85%. With regard to the proportion of these two groups of S1 entrants, we will work out the threshold percentage of "student ability" to be met by individual "through-train" secondary schools by a weighted average methodology.

first review cycle (i.e. 2015/16 school year), we will provide schools with relevant information of their S1 student profile, based on the S1 allocation results of 2014 and 2015, for devising school-based MOI arrangements for the second six-year cycle, starting from 2016/17 school year, as part of the S1 school places application process. Should schools wish to make any changes to their MOI arrangements, they have to announce the changes one year prior to implementation, starting from S1 and progressing each year to a higher level, to safeguard students' learning effectiveness.

Diversified MOI Arrangements

5. Under the above-mentioned framework, schools will no longer be classified into CMI schools and EMI schools⁶. Their MOI teaching modes will become more diversified, including all CMI, CMI/EMI in different subjects and total EMI immersion.

6. It is worth-noting that under the arrangement set out in paragraph 4(c) above, it does not call for a simple segregation of classes using either CMI or EMI within a school as mentioned in EC's *Report* of 2005. The fine-tuning allows schools more flexibility in using EMI for one or more subjects for different classes. Schools with a critical mass of students meeting the criteria for EMI teaching may make reference to their own circumstances and students' needs to make professional judgment and to decide on the most appropriate MOI arrangements. In other words, the choice and number of subjects taught in EMI would likely vary between classes within individual schools as well as among schools. As schools may conduct ELA in English for classes adopting mother-tongue teaching, MOI arrangements in schools will become more diversified.

7. To safeguard students' learning effectiveness, schools should ensure that their MOI arrangements are included in the whole-school language policy, and that the directions of both should be consistent.

Proper Delivery of Fine-tuning Arrangements

Definition of MOI

8. Under the fine-tuning arrangements, should schools claim to adopt English as the MOI for any non-language subject, the medium for delivering the subject content in the lesson, the basic textbooks, assignments for learning reinforcement and assessment/evaluation for learning should primarily be in English. Similarly, for

⁶ Upon the implementation of MOI fine-tuning, all schools may make professional judgment and decide on the appropriate MOI for the non-language subjects, including Liberal Studies, at senior secondary levels, according to students' abilities and needs as well as schools' circumstances (including teachers' capability to teach through English and schools' support measures).

schools adopting Chinese as the MOI for any non-language subject, the medium for delivering the subject content in the lesson, the basic textbooks, assignments for learning reinforcement and assessment/evaluation for learning should primarily be in Chinese.

Guiding Principles for Transforming the ELA Time

9. Should a school consider allocating the ELA time to the teaching of non-language subjects in English (not more than two subjects), the school has to make professional judgment on the basis of the following principles:

- The school should make sure that the arrangements can be integrated into the school curriculum and that the consistency as well as coherence of the school curriculum can be maintained.
- The school should adopt a student-centred approach and consider thoroughly whether the arrangements can meet students' ability and progress in learning through English as well as their needs, interests and aspirations.
- The school should also consider its own circumstances, including teachers' capability, readiness and workload in adopting EMI, its culture of lesson observation and cross-curricular collaboration as well as its strategies and measures to enhance teaching effectiveness. The school's experiences and learning effects in adopting EMI by class/group at senior secondary levels are useful references.
- The school should devise specific assessment criteria for academic and language learning when adopting such arrangement for self-evaluation and internal review to ensure that a challenging and interactive classroom environment can be cultivated for students. This is to enhance learning effectiveness and facilitate students' smooth transition to senior secondary/tertiary education or preparation for future career.

Monitoring

10. In line with the School Development and Accountability Framework, schools are held accountable for their MOI arrangements in relation to students' learning outcomes. Schools should report in their School Development Plan their whole-school language policy, including the MOI plans, the rationales behind, the specific arrangements and school-based support measures to enhance EMI teaching. Schools should also upload the School Development Plan on their website.

11. In terms of monitoring, schools have to conduct annual review of their whole-school language policy (including evaluation criteria for MOI arrangements) and report the findings in the School Report. The EDB will step up focused inspections to help schools review the effectiveness of their MOI arrangements. We will set up an advisory panel drawn from the education sector to consider observations and findings made at the focused inspections and make recommendations to the EDB on follow-up actions. We need to ensure students' learning effectiveness and that the students' interests would not be compromised as a result of any MOI arrangements which are not professionally sound. We will, if situation warrants, direct schools to revise the school-based MOI arrangements and undertake remedial measures, where appropriate. In case of schools' non-compliance (such as where schools implement certain MOI arrangements without meeting the prescribed criteria and without the EDB's consent), we would consider issuing warning letters to the schools concerned, make it known to the public and undertake follow-up actions as required for individual cases.

Transparency of Information

12. Under the fine-tuning arrangements, schools are required to increase the transparency of information on their MOI arrangements, to set up mechanisms and to explain to parents their modes of teaching and arrangements as individual students move up to S2 and S3, and how to set the criteria for student allocation, especially when the schools adopt the "by class" arrangement. Such arrangements (including the criteria for allocation of students to classes where applicable) should be spelled out in detail in the School Development Plan (as mentioned in paragraph 10 above).

13. Schools are required to report annually to the EDB their school-based MOI arrangements including any subsequent revisions. Schools should complete Annex A "School-based Medium of Instruction Plan for Junior Secondary Levels (Arrangements for Secondary 1 Students Admitted in the 2010/11 School Year)", and return it to the respective Senior School Development Officer **on or before 15 October 2009 (Thursday)** for vetting purposes. If necessary, schools will be engaged in professional dialogue to review their school-based MOI arrangements. In line with the spirit of the School Development and Accountability Framework, schools are held accountable for the arrangements, and should explain them to stakeholders and the EDB. Schools may also have to review and revise their arrangements where appropriate and if situation warrants.

14. To keep parents and the public well informed of schools' MOI arrangements for each non-language subject as well as the adoption of ELA in English for different subjects, schools are required, similar to the existing practice, to provide such information in the Secondary School Profiles and report the arrangements in the

“Language Policy” under “Learning and Teaching Strategies of School Characteristics”. As schools will start to update their e-version of the Secondary School Profiles for the 2010/11 school year from late June this year, the EDB will download the relevant school information on 15 October 2009 (Thursday) for verification before printing the Profiles for parents’ reference in making school choices for the S1 admission in the 2010/11 school year.

Professional Support for Teachers

15. To enhance the quality of learning and teaching in the classroom, we propose to provide the necessary training and professional support for non-language teachers who may be required to switch their MOI from CMI to EMI in order to improve their teaching strategies. Supply teachers will be made available to encourage them to participate in relevant professional development courses. The EDB will invite teachers to participate via the EDB’s Training Calendar in due course. Learning and teaching resources would be further produced for modules/topics in Key Learning Areas where ELA in English could be effectively used to expose students to English. Our on-site support to school-based curriculum development would provide more guidance on whole-school language policy planning and language across the curriculum for individual schools. We will also invite schools to share their good practices on teaching methodology at half-yearly intervals.

16. With diversification of the MOI arrangements, we propose that another longitudinal study be conducted, in addition to the current study on ELA, to analyse the effectiveness of and collect data on different teaching modes. We will plan in collaboration with research institutions to support schools through developing effective teaching resources.

Review of Existing Support Measures

17. Under the fine-tuned MOI arrangements, the school-based MOI arrangements will be implemented starting from the 2010/11 school year, after which we would then have a comprehensive picture of how schools increase students’ exposure to English in the classroom under the diversified MOI arrangements. This will facilitate our consideration on the need to review accordingly the existing support measures for CMI schools, including the provision of additional English teachers and whether the criterion for calculating the number of additional teachers is still applicable. We have pledged that we would review the demand and supply of teachers in the 2011/12 school year and consider the feasibility of adjusting the standard class size in the 2012/13 school year as set out in the EDB Circular No. 5/2008 “New Measures for Facilitating Development of Secondary Schools”. We would cover the above-mentioned support measures in the

review to be conducted in the 2011/12 school year.

18. In 2006, we launched the English Enhancement Scheme under which different budgetary ceilings for funding purposes have been set for CMI and EMI schools given that their differences in English environment and learning modes warrant different levels of support. All approved school projects have commenced and we will conduct the mid-term review in accordance with EDB Circular Memoranda No. 47/2006 and No. 48/2006. When the majority of schools have completed the mid-term review, we will invite applications from schools should there be any surplus funding.

MOI Arrangements for Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) Secondary Schools

19. DSS secondary schools will basically continue to enjoy flexibility in deciding professionally school-based MOI arrangements for their students with due regard to student ability, teacher capability and support measures. DSS schools have to include their MOI philosophy and strategies as well as school support measures in their School Development Plan and School Report. Regarding the criterion on teacher capability as mentioned above, we will inform DSS schools later, under a separate cover, to update the relevant information of teachers adopting EMI and conducting ELA in English in the e-Services Portal.

Improving English Proficiency of Primary School Students

20. It is important to enhance the teaching and learning of English in primary schools so as to build a solid language foundation for our students. Apart from implementing a number of ongoing and new support measures with a view to enhancing the English proficiency of primary school students, we will introduce the following support measures to further enhance English teaching and learning in primary schools:

- (a) To attract young talent for the teaching profession, we will establish a scholarship for qualified school graduates planning to pursue a relevant degree and teacher training in English Language and undertake to teach in a local school, preferably primary school, for at least three years.
- (b) For serving primary school teachers not yet attaining the qualifications set by the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR)⁷, we will offer courses on pedagogy and subject knowledge for them. Supply teachers will be provided to enable schools to release them for the training.

⁷ A language teacher should hold a Bachelor of Education (BEd) degree majoring in the relevant language subject; or both a first degree majoring in the relevant language subject and a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate in Education (PGDE or PCEd) majoring in the same language subject.

- (c) We will re-deploy necessary resources for time-limited provision to primary schools in order to facilitate them in adopting school-based enhancement measures in enriching their English language environment.
- (d) We will form a network of voluntary professionals to conduct English activities for students.

We will inform schools of the details and invite schools to participate under a separate cover in due course.

Briefing Sessions

21. We will brief all government and aided secondary schools, and caput schools on details of this circular. Details of the briefing sessions are at Annex B. Schools should return the reply slip on or before 12 June 2009 (Friday).

Enquiry

22. For enquiries, please contact the respective Senior School Development Officer.

Ms Mable CHAN
for Secretary for Education

To: Secretary for Education
(Attn: the respective Senior School Development Officer)

**School-based Medium of Instruction Plan for Junior Secondary Levels
(Arrangements for Secondary 1 Students Admitted in the 2010/11 School Year)**

The school-based medium of instruction (MOI) plan of our school has been devised according to the MOI fine-tuning arrangements and our school's own circumstances. Our plan applies to Secondary (S) 1 students admitted in the 2010/11 school year, and the same cohort of students proceeding to S2 and S3 in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 school years respectively. Our plan is mapped out on the basis of the planning parameters of "student ability" information provided by the Education Bureau (EDB) to our school on 7 July this year and the number of S1 classes capped after allocation of S1 students in 2009. The plan, on which relevant stakeholders have been consulted, has been endorsed by the School Management Committee (SMC) / Incorporated Management Committee (IMC). The key information is at the Appendix.

Under the School Development and Accountability Framework, our SMC/IMC will explain to the EDB the school-based MOI arrangements and review and revise the arrangements where appropriate.

Our school undertakes to ensure that teachers teaching non-language subjects and "extended learning activities" (ELA) (if applicable) in English have fulfilled the requirement of "teacher capability", and will verify the information updated by teachers concerned in response to EDB's correspondence on the e-Services Portal at a later stage. Moreover, our school has provided details of "support measures" in the School Development Plan.

Signature of School *Supervisor/ Principal : _____

Name of School *Supervisor/ Principal : _____

Name of School : _____

School Telephone No. : _____

Teacher-in-charge : _____

Post : _____

Contact Telephone No. (if different from the above) : _____

* Please delete where inappropriate

Please put a “√” in the appropriate boxes

* Please delete where inappropriate

- (I) Our school would adopt mother-tongue teaching for all non-language subjects for all S1 students admitted in the 2010/11 school year.

Besides, our school *will/ will not implement ELA in English.

(If the former is applicable, please continue with Item (VI) in the Appendix. No need to complete the remaining items in the Appendix if the latter is applicable.)

- (II) Our school would adopt EMI for all non-language subjects for all S1 students admitted in the 2010/11 school year.

(If applicable, no need to complete the remaining items in the Appendix.)

- (III) Items (I) and (II) do not apply to our school. Our school would adopt MOI arrangements for S1 students admitted in the 2010/11 school year as reported in Items (IV) to (VI) in the Appendix.

- (IV) With regard to the “student ability” information provided by the EDB to our school on 7 July this year, our school has made reference to our number of approved S1 classes capped after allocation of S1 students in 2009 as the planning parameters [i.e. _____ S1 classes x 36 students (the upper limit of number of students per class in the 2010/11 school year) = _____ students in total]. The **non-language subjects to be taught in EMI** for students admitted to S1 in the 2010/11 school year and when the same cohort of students proceeds to S2 and S3 in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 school years respectively (the actual number of S2 and S3 students is subject to the promotion arrangement within our school) as well as the relevant number of students are as follows:

Key Learning Area (a)	Subject taught in EMI (excluding subjects with ELA in English) (b)	Admitted to S1 in 2010/11 No. of students learning in EMI (c)	Proceeding to S2 in 2011/12 No. of students learning in EMI (d) ^{note}	Proceeding to S3 in 2012/13 No. of students learning in EMI (e) ^{note}
Mathematics Education	Mathematics			
Science Education	Science			
	Physics	--	--	
	Chemistry	--	--	
	Biology	--	--	
Personal, Social and Humanities Education	Integrated Humanities			
	Geography			
	History			
	Economics and Public Affairs			
Technology Education	Computer Literacy			
	Home Economics			
	Design and Technology			
Arts Education	Music			
	Visual Arts			
Moral and Civic Education	Religious Education			
	Civic Education / Social Education / Life Education			
Physical Education	Physical Education			
#				
#				
#				
#				

Please list other subjects

note (d) and (e) above are not applicable. The MOI arrangements in S1 also apply when the same cohort of S1 students proceeds to S2 and S3 in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 school years respectively.

(V) Our school *has / has not transformed the ELA lesson time into teaching one to two non-language subjects in EMI. (For the former, please continue to answer this item.)

(i) Our school has transformed the ELA lesson time into teaching the following subjects in EMI:

Please specify when different subjects are involved at S2 and/or S3.

(ii) Our school undertakes to ensure that the relevant lesson time has not exceeded 25% of the total lesson time (excluding the lesson time for English Language).

(VI) Our school *will/ will not conduct ELA in English. (For the former, please continue to answer this item.)

Our school would conduct ELA in English in the following modes:

Cross-curricular English enrichment programmes through the collaboration of non-language and English Language subject teachers.

Non-language subjects involved : _____

Allocating some lesson time of individual subjects to go through in English the concepts and contents that have been taught in the mother tongue.

Non-language subjects involved : _____

Teaching individual modules or themes in English in the relevant subjects.

Non-language subjects involved : _____

Using EMI with regard to the nature of the learning materials (e.g. the learning materials downloaded from the Internet are mainly in English).

Non-language subjects involved : _____

Strengthening the bridging programmes of the relevant subjects to facilitate a smooth transition for students who choose to switch to EMI learning at senior secondary levels.

Non-language subjects involved : _____

Other modes (Please briefly describe) _____

Non-language subjects involved : _____

Our school undertakes to ensure that in conducting ELA in English for the non-language subjects as mentioned above, the relevant lesson time has not exceeded 25% of the total lesson time (excluding the lesson time for English Language).

Should there be subsequent revisions to the MOI arrangements for the S1 students admitted in 2010, our school will inform the EDB of the rationale and revised arrangements in writing. On receipt of the EDB's reply, our school will revise relevant information in the "Secondary School Profiles" and other documents accordingly for parents' reference.

Reply Slip

Please return the completed Reply Slip on or before 12 June 2009 (Friday)

To: Senior Education Officer (Review and Planning)
(Fax No.: 2904 7387 / 2574 0340)

Briefing Session Fine-tuning the Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools

Our school will attend the captioned briefing session with details as follows –

Note: The four identical briefing sessions aim to facilitate a better understanding of the fine-tuning arrangements and how to complete the “School-based Medium of Instruction Plan for Junior Secondary Levels – Arrangements for Secondary 1 Students Admitted in the 2010/11 School Year”. Each school may nominate 2 or 3 representatives to attend the briefing session according to the respective district as far as possible.

Session *	Date	Time	Venue	District
	16 June 2009 (Tuesday)	3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Tsuen Wan Government Secondary School (School Hall), 70 Hoi Pa Street, Tsuen Wan, NT	<u>NT West</u> Kwai Chung & Tsing Yi, Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long
	17 June 2009 (Wednesday)	3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Lecture Theatre, 4/F, West Block, Education Bureau Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre, 19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong, Kln	<u>Kowloon</u> Kowloon City, Sham Shui Po, Sai Kung, Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin, Yau Tsim & Mong Kok
	18 June 2009 (Thursday)	3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	Tai Po Government Primary School (School Hall), 8 Tai Wo Road, Tai Po, NT	<u>NT East</u> Tai Po, North, Sha Tin
	19 June 2009 (Friday)	3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	St. Joseph's Primary School (School Hall), 48 Wood Road, HK	<u>Hong Kong</u> Central & Western, Southern, Wan Chai, HK East, Islands

* Please put a “✓” in the appropriate box

The following representatives of our school will participate in the briefing session :

- (1) _____ (Post: _____)
- (2) _____ (Post: _____)
- (3) _____ (Post: _____)

Name of School : _____

Name of School Head : _____

Signature : _____

Name of Contact Person : _____

Contact Tel. No. : _____

Date : _____