



Performance Audit Report on the Management of School Facilities
by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology-October 2018

Guardian of Sierra Leone's Economic Security

**PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT ON THE
MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES
BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(MEST)**

OCTOBER 2018

FOREWORD



In submitting this Performance Audit Report for tabling, I refer to section 11 of the Audit Service Act, 2014 which defines the key role of the Audit Service Sierra Leone (ASSL) thus: ‘to audit and report on all public accounts of Sierra Leone and all public offices including the Judiciary of Sierra Leone, the central and local government institutions, the University of Sierra Leone and other public sector institutions of like nature, all statutory corporations, companies and other bodies and organisations established by an Act of Parliament or statutory instrument or otherwise set up wholly or in part out of public funds’.

Section 11 (2c) of the Audit Service Act 2014 confers on the Audit Service the right to carry out value for money and other audits to ensure that efficiency and effectiveness are achieved in the use of public funds. In addition, Section 63 (1) sub-section (1e) of the Government Budgeting and Accountability Act, 2005, provides that the Auditor General shall ascertain whether financial business has been carried out with due regard to economy in relation to results achieved. Sub-section 66 (4) of this same Act also states that ‘nothing in this section shall prevent the Auditor General from submitting a special report for tabling in Parliament on matters that should not await disclosure in the annual report’.

In line with my mandate as described above, I have undertaken this performance audit exercise on the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on the Management of School Facilities.



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Auditor General

ABBREVIATIONS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	
ADB	African Development Bank
ASSL	Audit Service Sierra Leone
AFROSAI-E	African Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
CA	Chief Administrator
DSDP	Decentralised Service Delivery Programmes
EFA/FTI	Education for All/Fast Track Initiative
ESP	Education Sector Plan
FY	Financial Year
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
JSS	Junior Secondary School
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPSE	National Primary School Examination
NPPA	National Public Procurement Act
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015, is the provision of quality education. The construction of new buildings and the upgrading of existing educational facilities that are learner-friendly, gender sensitive and non-discriminatory are crucial to the achievement of the SDGs¹. The Government of Sierra Leone has made education a priority in its bid to achieve the objectives of the Agenda for Prosperity². The 2010 education policy also identifies the provision of teaching and learning environments with basic water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, equipped libraries, laboratories and adequate and ideal recreational facilities as necessary for the improvement of access to school facilities for all children including the physically and mentally challenged.

The Audit Service Sierra Leone (ASSL) has undertaken a performance audit on the management of school facilities with the objective of assessing the management of school facilities by MEST and to determine whether the quality of school facilities are compliant with the required standards, and whether there are proper structures in place for the effective maintenance and inspection of school facilities

We collected data through interviews with key stakeholders, reviewed documents and observed school facilities. The audit was undertaken at the MEST headquarters in Freetown, as well as its regional offices in the provinces. 35 government and government assisted schools in two districts per province, and all local councils in these selected districts in the aforementioned locations were targeted.

The following findings, conclusions and recommendations were made:

STATUS OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND THEIR LEVEL OF ADHERENCE TO MEST STANDARDS

▪ Overcrowding in schools

During physical inspection and the review of class lists, we observed that there was overcrowding in all 35 schools visited. An analysis of enrollment records for schools that provided them revealed that there were more than 45 pupils per classroom and in some cases, the ratio of pupils per class was far higher. For instance, there were 11 schools in which the number of pupils per classroom ranged between 100 and 170 pupils.

In a bid to accommodate more pupils, some schools converted their laboratory and library facilities into classrooms, whilst other schools accommodated two different classes in one classroom with barely curtains separating one class from the other.

▪ Insufficient furniture

¹ SDGs, Goal 4 (4.7, 4a)

² Agenda for prosperity, page 60

We noted that only 3 schools out of the 35 visited had sufficient furniture. 32 schools representing 91.4% of the sample did not have sufficient furniture for the pupils in the various classes. There were cases where pupils were forced to sit in classrooms with no desks to take notes on. Instances were also noted of pupils sharing desks with others. According to interviews with heads of schools, repair of furniture was supposed to be funded out of schools fees and government subsidies but for the 2016/2017 academic year, no transfer of subsidies were effected up to June 2017.

During physical inspection, the auditors observed cases where five classrooms were packed with piles of broken desks and tables. The huge quantities of unusable furniture meant that only 5 children had access to regular sitting accommodation in the five classrooms in question. The late transfer of subsidies by MEST was said to have been responsible for the poor state of disrepair of the school's furniture

▪ **Physical condition of the schools**

The auditors noted that 10 out of the 35 sampled schools (about 28.5% of the sample), were in a deplorable condition. The following issues were also observed:

- Some classrooms had perforated rooftops. Consequently, the roofs leaked during the rains and hence, school work was disrupted during the period under review. The lack of ceilings; made the classrooms hot and less learner friendly especially in the hot season.
- Broken and dilapidated windows in the case of some buildings exposed classrooms to the elements and consequently left the children vulnerable to cold and respiratory and airborne diseases.
- Poor ventilation left some classrooms very dark. If not speedily addressed, this might in the future affect the sight of both pupils and teachers. The situation is worsened during the rainy season.

Most of the classroom floors were not paved and the dusty floors apparently provided excellent breeding ground for vermins which could compromise the health of children and teachers alike.

▪ **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Facilities (WASH Facilities)**

- **Schools without water supply facilities:** 17% of the sampled schools (representing 6 out of the 35 schools visited) did not have water supply facilities. This scenario could expose 13,394 pupils to diseases related to poor sanitation and hygiene.
- **Schools with limited water supply facilities:** Only 34.4% of the sampled schools (10 schools out of 29) had wells. These wells dry up during the dry season, and a scenario of this nature meant insufficient water supply throughout the year and this may have posed risks to the health of teachers and children alike.

- **Insufficient drop holes in schools:** We noted that none of the 35 sampled schools visited had the required ratio of drop holes per either boys or girls. While the standard required is one drop hole per 45 pupils, the average ratio for the 35 sampled schools visited in the provinces was 1 drop hole per 144 pupils. The Western Area Urban District had the worst drop hole per pupil ratio of 248 pupils per drop hole.

The toilets were hardly clean and in addition to this, no hand washing facilities were found in most of the schools visited. In fact, only four schools had such hand washing facilities but even in this case, the children didn't have soap for hand washing. This may have highly exposed the pupils to diseases related to poor hygiene and sanitation.

▪ **Inadequate laboratory facilities in the schools**

- 36% of schools visited, (9 out of 25 schools) did not have any form of science laboratory facilities even though they offer science subjects.
- Although 24% of the schools visited (6 schools out of 25) had rooms designated as laboratories these 'laboratories' were not functional; as they all lacked basic equipment required of a functional laboratory. Two of these 'laboratories' were converted to classrooms to remedy the issue of overcrowding; whilst the other 4 were simply dilapidated and unusable.
- Only 40% of the senior schools visited (10 schools out of 25) had functional laboratories. However, of these, only 4 were fully functional. The others were struggling with inadequate equipment/apparatus and other basic facilities.

▪ **Inadequate library facilities**

About 14% of the schools visited (5 out of 35 schools) had functional libraries whilst 54% (19 schools out of 35) had not enjoyed library facilities since their inception. 11% of the school libraries visited (4 schools out of 35) had inadequate furniture that could hardly sit up to 40 pupils. 20 % of the sampled schools (7 out of 35) did not have functional libraries for various reasons. In two schools, the 'libraries' were converted to classrooms to remedy the issue of overcrowding, while the others were not equipped with furniture and books.

▪ **Inadequate and inappropriate recreational facilities**

All the schools visited, with the exception of two (Kulafai Rashideen and Evangelical primary schools), had playgrounds. Most were however not ideal and child friendly. Some were rugged, unkempt and posed various risks to the safety of children. We also observed that the playground of the Islamic Call Primary School was used as a dump site by the community.

PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THE MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOLS FACILITIES

■ Annual maintenance plans not prepared

- **Planning at MEST Level:** The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has the primary responsibility to maintain schools. However, the Ministry did not have any plans in place for the maintenance of such facilities.
- **Planning at Council Level:** Out of 7 councils visited, five of them had maintenance plans in place for school facilities.
- **Planning at School Level:** None of the 35 sampled schools visited provided us with annual maintenance plans for school facilities

■ Maintenance of school facilities not budgeted for

- **Budgeting for maintenance by MEST:** The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology had over the years not prepared maintenance budgets for school facilities even though this is one of its primary mandates.
- **Budgeting for maintenance of school facilities by councils:** Out of 7 councils visited, five had prepared budgets for the maintenance of school facilities.
- **Budgeting for maintenance of school facilities by school management:** 60% of the sampled schools (21 schools out of 35) had prepared budgets for the maintenance of school facilities. However, out of the 21 schools that had prepared maintenance budgets, only 16 actually spent money on maintenance. Of these 16, evidence of maintenance works was seen in only 9 schools. Consequently, most of the classrooms were deplorable with dusty classroom floors, broken blackboards, leaking roofs without ceilings and broken window panes.

■ Inspection of school facilities

Irregular inspection of school facilities

For the 35 sampled schools, we found out that only 6 inspection exercises were carried out over a period of three years (2014-2016). In addition to this, inspection reports for the schools visited were not prepared in a manner that would provide the relevant information as required by the School Inspectorate Inspection Form. For instance, the issue of overcrowding and the deplorable physical condition of school facilities which are serious concerns were not mentioned in any of the inspection reports

OVERALL CONCLUSION

School facilities are far below the national standards set by the Ministry, and so cannot accommodate pupils comfortably. Overcrowding, inadequate and broken furniture, lack of WASH or proper WASH facilities, inadequate or non functional laboratory and library facilities were evident in all sampled schools visited. Lack of maintenance of school facilities, the disproportionate numerical

distribution of pupils per schools were some of the reasons identified for this malaise

OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

MEST should devise strategies to ensure the following:

- Systematic and coherent plans be put in place for the maintenance of school facilities by all parties entrusted with the management of school facilities in a timely manner.
- The placement of pupils into schools should be proportionate with the places available in those schools and this should be complied with by both MEST and heads of schools. This should significantly reduce overcrowding in schools.
- The 2015 WASH standards should be adhered to through the provision of sufficient and proper WASH facilities in schools in order to reduce the risk of hygiene related diseases.
- The inspection of schools should be properly planned for before they are executed and reports in respect of such inspections prepared in a manner that provides relevant information for end users.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Sierra Leone had a strong educational base dating as far back as the colonial era. As a centre of excellence in human resource development in the entire sub-region, it earned the enviable accolade of the “Athens of West Africa”. As stated in Sierra Leone’s Vision 2025, three decades of gradual neglect during the post-independence period led to the deterioration of the country’s educational system. Policy weaknesses have also crowded out resources for basic education. In 2001, a government funded universal free education for classes 1-6 in all government-owned and assisted schools was introduced.

A new system of education was also introduced that requires pupils to spend 6, 3, 3 and 4 years in primary, junior, senior secondary and tertiary levels respectively. However, the realisation of the anticipated positive impact of these reforms have been hampered by resource constraints ³

Students everywhere deserve schools with adequate, safe and clean facilities. They also deserve to spend their days in school feeling inspired to learn and grow. Two of the basic requirements crucial to ensure access to education are adequate and appropriate infrastructure and an effective classroom situation ideal for structured learning. The attributes of adequate and appropriate school facilities amongst others include:

- sufficient space for a maximum of 40-50 children per classroom usually guided by the standards set by a country’s MEST; to ensure an effective teaching and learning environment;
- construction standards that ensure the safety of children in schools and which guards against natural hazards peculiar to a particular environment ; and
- adequate and separate WASH facilities for boys and girls, as well as staff.

Although it was the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology that was responsible for the provision of education for children and other citizens nationwide, the management of basic education services had lately been devolved to the Local Councils since 2004. The Ministry’s main role now is to develop policies and monitor overall performance. The Ministry retains the responsibility of ensuring that educational infrastructure is adequate and appropriate.

Education was a key component of the President of Sierra Leone’s 6-9 Months Early Recovery Plan introduced in March, 2015 after the end of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). As part of the plan, new WASH facilities were to be built in all of the country’s 8,000 schools and tertiary institutions, with 100% protocol compliance. The plan also aimed at reducing class sizes. A Reduced Overcrowding Working Group was formed by the MEST in 2015 to identify schools in which overcrowding was prevalent in every district. One of the objectives of the group was to identify 75 badly affected schools for the

construction of three additional classroom blocks to each of the schools (225 classroom blocks in total) and completed with the construction of WASH facilities and furniture.

1.2 MOTIVATION OF THE AUDIT

The educational sector in Sierra Leone is faced with many challenges among which are inadequate classroom space, poor toilets and lack of pure drinking water, and basic WASH facilities.

The Educational Sector Plan 2014 to 2018 showed that 65% of school buildings were in a deplorable state while 35% of schools had no access to pure drinking water. The plan further highlighted issues relating to overcrowding, inadequate and broken furniture, dilapidated school structures, ill-equipped libraries, a serious dearth of science laboratories and equipment facilities, lack of proper toilet and WASH facilities and very limited access to pure and safe drinking water. Successive policy documents aimed at reducing poverty⁴ have also further highlighted the need to strengthen the country's educational system. The government's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) III now called the Agenda for Prosperity highlights one of the challenges in the educational sector as 'inadequate educational infrastructure to effectively and efficiently deliver education'. The Agenda documents seeks to improve quality education through the provision of adequate and gender sensitive school infrastructure that takes into account the provision of separate sanitation facilities for boys and girls.

Included in the President's 6-9 Months Early Recovery Priorities, was the improvement of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in schools, in order to create a safe and disease free learning environment for the children, especially in the wake of the dreaded Ebola scourge which killed thousands of citizens. It is against this background of challenges in the educational sector that the Audit Service Sierra Leone conducted an audit on the management of school facilities by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. It is hoped that this audit would elicit recommendations that would contribute to the achievement of the objectives of improving on education infrastructure as set out in the Agenda for Prosperity.

⁴ The Agenda for Change, 2008 to 2012, and the Agenda for Prosperity, 2013 to 2018,

1.3 AUDIT DESIGN

1.3.1 Audit objective and scope

Audit Objective

The objective of the audit was to assess the management of school facilities by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) and to ascertain whether the inspection of school facilities are done in compliance with the required standards, and whether there is a well planned and structured policy in place for the proper maintenance of these facilities.

Audit Scope

The audit client for this exercise is the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) which is the body charged with the responsibility of providing education for the citizens of the country. The audit focused on the Management of school facilities by MEST to ascertain the adequacy (or lack of it) of school facilities, and whether the quality of the facilities are compliant with the required minimum standards set by the Ministry. The audit also sought to establish whether proper policies are in place for the proper maintenance and inspection of school facilities

The audit spanned a period of three academic years (from 2013/2014, 2014/2015 to 2015/2016 academic years). In 2014, there was an outbreak of Ebola disease in the country which not only affected the academic calendar but also subsequently resulted in the closure of schools for parts of two academic years. Additionally, the long duration of the reviewed audit period was to provide ASSL ample time to carry out a reasonably detailed assessment of progress made in the maintenance and inspection of school facilities, as per the objective set out in the 2014-2018 Educational Sector Plan, which clearly highlights the need for improvements to be made in the quality of school facilities.

In order to give the audit a national dimension,, the audit team visited 35 government and government assisted schools, the MEST headquarters in Freetown, and its regional offices in the eastern, southern, and northern provinces including the local councils in these selected districts.

1.4. SAMPLE SELECTION

The audit team used the purposive sampling method (a method based on judgment and the objective of the study) in order to get a representation of schools across the four regions. Two districts were sampled from each region and schools with high enrolment of pupils were covered. The audit targeted four (one primary and three secondary schools) government and government assisted primary, junior and senior secondary schools in each district. In each region also, the audit targeted, four city and two district council schools. Since the audit targeted institutions that attract government resources, private schools were excluded from our sample because they do not receive funding from the government. The table below shows the selected provincial areas and is classified into urban and rural areas.

Table indicating the rural and urban areas within the Districts			
Total schools Per District	Province	Districts	Classification
652	East	Kono	Rural
795		Kenema	Urban
793	North	Port Loko	Rural
786		Bombali	Urban
586	South	Moyamba	Rural
883		Bo	Urban
642	West	Western Rural	Rural
1077		Freetown (Western Urban)	Urban

The detailed lists of schools covered within the sample are presented in **Appendix “1”**

1.5 AUDIT QUESTIONS

The audit focused on finding answers to the three audit questions below:

1. Is the quality of school facilities compliant with required MEST standards?
2. Is there proper planning in place for the maintenance of school facilities?
3. Does the Ministry conduct inspections of school facilities?

Audit criteria

The criteria used to assess the status of school facilities were obtained from the relevant Acts, regulations and policies. These same criteria were also used to ascertain whether the school inspection form identifies compliance gaps in MEST standards. These criteria are listed in **Appendix “2”**.

1.6 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This audit was conducted in accordance with the African Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions of English Speaking Countries (AFROSAI E) Performance Audit Manual of 2014 which is based on the International Standards of Supreme Auditing Institutions (ISSAIs).

The audit was planned and conducted in order to obtain sufficient and appropriate audit evidence and to provide a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on the audit objectives. A contact person appointed by the Ministry was regularly informed about the progress of the audit exercise. This contact person also assisted the auditors with the retrieval of documents and the provision of access to interviewees as and when required. A draft version of this report was presented to the Ministry for its comments and these responses and comments were considered during the finalisation of the report. See **Appendix “10”** for the Ministry’s comments and responses.

The following data collection methods were used:

Interviews

A total of 45 interviews were conducted with heads of schools, C.A.s of local councils, the deputy directors of education in the districts. The relevance of these was to obtain evidence based information on

the management of school facilities in Sierra Leone. The table below shows the personnel that were interviewed.

Personnel Interviewed	Reason For Interview
Deputy Directors of Education in Port Loko, Kono, Kenema and Moyamba	To understand their role in the management of school facilities
Chief Administrators of Moyamba, Kenema and Bo District Councils	To understand their role in the management of school facilities
Head of schools/Principal of the sample schools	To understand their role in the management of school facilities

Documents reviewed

Various documents were reviewed including the 2004 Education Act, the 2010 National Education Policy, and the enrolment lists of the various schools targeted. The WASH policy, and various budgets were also reviewed in order to obtain sufficient, appropriate and reliable audit evidence on the operations, processes of maintenance procedures for school facilities, and to source corroborative information from interviews and other sources. See **Appendix “3”** for complete list of documents reviewed.

Inspection of facilities

This was carried out in all the 33 selected schools in order to assess the structures, classrooms, WASH and recreational facilities and the learning environment of primary and secondary schools. School facilities were also inspected to ascertain the appropriateness and status of their learning environment.

1.7 AUDIT LIMITATION

The Ministry did not produce some of the operational information needed for the audit such as: information on the minimum standards of the quality of school infrastructure, report on the repair and maintenance of school facilities, expenditure and the status of the infrastructure of the schools. Consequently therefore, these limitations meant that the audit team could not make detailed comments on the above issues. The audit team was also constrained in the area of the review of documents because of the manner in which data and information were maintained by the Ministry and the schools. Information submitted was scanty and the relevant records were not maintained in a systematic manner.

In spite of the above bottle necks, efforts were made to discuss the issues as much as possible based on the available information. The auditors could also not assess some of the Ministry’s efficiency indicators regarding maintenance and coordination due to the non-availability of some relevant information needed for the exercise. Some information required for the assessment of budget and school facilities were also not provided. See **Appendix “4”** for schools that did not provide documents requested.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE AUDIT AREA

2.1. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The relevant laws regulating the provision of education in Sierra Leone are;

- The Education Act of 2004,
- The Local Government Act of 2004,
- The Education Sector Plan for 2014-2018,
- The Statutory Instrument No. 13 of 2004 and
- The MEYS' Handbook entitled "The Good Principal 2001".

The Education Act (2004) is the key piece of legislation that guides educational policy in Sierra Leone. This Act outlines the structure of the educational system from pre-primary to tertiary level for all categories of learners including those with special needs. Section 14 (a) requires the minister to establish and maintain government and government assisted schools with funds appropriated by Parliament for the purpose of education.

The Local Government Act (2004) re-established local councils and local governments and set out the pathway for the transfer of the management and supervision of basic education from the central to local councils. The Education Sector plan 2014-2018 provides a road map for tangible improvements in the nation's educational system.

2.1.2 MEST Vision and Mission

From the Mission and Vision statements of the Ministry of Education, it is clear that the Ministry's key mandate is the provision of basic quality education for all, and ensuring that the learning environment is child and learner-friendly. The Ministry is also charged with the provision of opportunities for each individual so as enable every child to realise his or her academic potentials.

2.1.3 Policy objective

According to the National Education policy (2010), the objective of basic education is to provide a common foundation of knowledge, skills and value for all citizens. The policy also ensures full participation, collaboration and involvement of internal and external stakeholders in the educational sector. To this end, the government shall:

- Ensure that all school facilities cater for the needs of all children; boys, girls and those with special needs.
- Ensure that every school has library facilities.
- Ensure that class sizes (or pupil-classroom/teacher ratio) do not exceed the 1:45 ratio.
- School buildings and classrooms shall be constructed in accordance with projected needs and in an equitable manner.
- Government shall put in place measures to improve the teaching/learning environment in schools in a manner that is child/learner-friendly.

2.2 STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM

The provision of education from pre-primary to tertiary level including technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is the sole responsibility of government and non-governmental organisations and private providers. The responsibility for the provision of educational facilities is however under the overall supervision and control of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) no matter who provides the service, while the Basic Education Programme falls under the portfolio of the Ministry of Local Government. Progress from primary to secondary school is subject to the pupil passing the NPSE which is conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). Below are the features of the various educational levels under MEST:

- **Pre-primary Education:** An entrance age of three years and a duration of three years is required for this stage. The objective of this programme is to shape child's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development and to prepare them for primary school.
- **Primary Education:** This generally starts at age six and lasts for six years. At the end of the last grade (class VI), all pupils are required to pass the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) designed and conducted by the WAEC for them to proceed to secondary education.
- **Secondary Education:** This stage is divided into Junior secondary school (JSS), which the final stage of basic education and is validated by the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE); and Senior secondary school (SSS) which is validated by the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) on completion of SSS IV. All these examinations (that is NPSE, BECE & WASSCE) are administered by the WAEC.
- **Tertiary Education:** This level includes: (i) Universities which award degrees, diplomas and certificates in various disciplines and (ii) teacher training colleges/polytechnics which are responsible for the award of Teacher's Certificate, Higher Teacher's Certificate (three years for each), National and Higher National Diplomas (two years for each) and many more other certificates in other vocational courses.⁵

There are three categories of schools in Sierra Leone with regard to proprietorship. Below is the categorization of the three categories of schools:

- **Government Schools:** These are schools that are exclusively owned by the government and it takes full responsibility for their operations like the recruitment of teachers, payment of salaries and infrastructure and administration expenses.
- **Government Assisted Schools:** These schools are owned by missions and communities. Approval for the establishment of such schools is granted by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry provides an oversight function, pays fee subsidies, and teachers' salaries.
- **Private Schools:** They are owned by sole proprietors, partnerships or groups of individuals. The

⁵ Education Country Status Report

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Ministry of Education only gives approval for their establishment which is contingent on certain criteria. The government provides oversight functions but does not meet their operational costs. The table below shows the total number of schools by category:

The Total Number of schools by Ownership							
No	Ownership/Proprietorship	Pre-primary Schools	Primary Schools	JSS	SSS	Tech. Voc.	No. of Schools
1	Government Schools	81	1,161	103	30	14	1,389
2	Government Assisted Schools	529	4,802	836	236	82	6,485
3	Private Schools	330	403	179	94	16	1,022
	Total	940	6,366	1118	360	112	8,896

Source: MEST school data 2016

2.3 THE PROCESS OF MANAGING SCHOOL FACILITIES

An effective school facility is responsive to the changing programmes of educational delivery, and at a minimum, should provide a physical environment that is comfortable, safe, secure, accessible, well illuminated and ventilated. Schools are established by the government, faith missions as well as private individuals.

The process of establishing school facilities involves the construction of school building and other infrastructure, provision of furniture and the rehabilitation and maintenance of the facilities. The establishment of school facilities is the responsibility of the Directorate of Planning and Policy which is specifically under the Deputy Director- Educational Facilities. Refer to the organizational structure of the Directorate of Planning and Policy in **Appendix “5”**.

The management of school facilities as revealed during interviews with key officials of the local councils and district education offices is as follows:

- Basic education falls under the mandate of the local council, while the Ministry of Education is responsible for senior secondary schools.
- Needs assessment for the proper management of schools facilities start from ward level in the form of needs analysis, participatory rural appraisal, and reports of inspectors of schools. When reports are sent to the council through the Chairman of the Education Committee they are prioritized, factored into the Ministry’s development plan and submitted together with a financial report for the year to parliament for approval.
- Approvals of schools are contingent on council’s recommendations. Budgets are prepared by the Education Committee and submitted to the councils. When budgets are approved and funds transferred, a letter is sent from the Local Government Finance Department informing the schools that allocations for the quarter have been transferred.
- A letter is done by the Chief Administrator (CA) informing the various sectors that funds are available. Concept notes are developed together with public expenditure tracking (PET) forms supported by a request letter to the council through the C. A. The C. A. then approves and forwards it

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to the Finance Department for screening. The Finance Department, the engineer (in cases of construction and rehabilitation) and the Procurement Committee work on the implementation of the project.

- The Education Department in the local councils plays an oversight role in the implementation process. For major construction or rehabilitation works, the procurement procedures as set out in the National Public Procurement Act, 2004 (NPPA) should be followed. After the evaluation and bidding process, contracts are awarded and funds are transferred directly to the contractor. Although the Ministry is expected to monitor the implementation process most of the documents with regards transfer of funds are kept in the district education offices

How pupils are placed in school.

At the end of the six years in primary schools, all pupils are required to pass the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) designed by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in order for them to proceed to Junior Secondary school. The government's pass mark is 230 marks out of a maximum total of 400. After three years in junior secondary, pupils take the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) which qualifies them for entrance into the Senior Secondary school if they score the required minimum of five credits including credits in core subjects such as English, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Integrated Science. In some cases pupils who fail to score the pass mark for their schools of choice, are placed by MEST into other senior secondary schools. Pupils who do not meet the requirements for senior secondary are sent to technical and vocational training centres/institutes.

2.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY PLAYERS

Main function of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is responsible for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies. Selected paragraphs of sections 6, 7, 8 and 14 of the 2004 Education Act specify that:

- Primary education and hence all primary schools, shall be controlled and caused to be inspected by the Minister;
- All primary schools shall conform to minimum stipulated national standards or will be closed down;
- The Minister shall set criteria for the recognition and approval of each junior secondary school to operate and shall ensure that such standards are maintained for the recognition to continue;
- The Minister shall continuously monitor and evaluate each senior secondary school and publish its findings thereon;
- The Minister shall have control and supervision of the educational system;
- Establish and maintain government and government assisted schools; and
- Provide for regular inspection and supervision of schools.

2. Main Function of Local Councils

The Local Government Act and Regulations of 2004 transferred the responsibility of the delivery of all

basic education services from the central government to the local councils. This includes the construction and rehabilitation of both government and government assisted schools under the Basic Education Secretariat and the provision of furniture and other facilities for the said institutions. In a nutshell, local councils are responsible for day-to-day service delivery at the basic education level.

Section 28 of the Education Act 2004 outlines the functions of local authorities at basic education level:

- To control, in accordance with rules made under this Act, the establishment of new pre-primary, primary and junior secondary schools within its area of authority by private persons; and
- To generally advise the Minister on any educational matter that is referred to him.

3. Main Functions of District Education Committees

The functions of District Education Committees as specified in section 26 of the Education Act 2004 states that:

- District Education Committees shall be appointed to co-ordinate, monitor and promote education in each district in collaboration with the Chiefdom Education Committee;
- Chiefdom Education Committees shall be appointed to supervise and monitor all educational activities in each of the chiefdoms and shall be responsible to the District Education Committee, and shall promote all activities geared towards the promotion of education

4. Main Function of the School Administrator

The head of a school has the responsibility to monitor and control school activities and to supervise the activities of teachers. The principal/head teacher is the administrative head of the school and also a member of and secretary to the Board. At the school level, monitoring of pupils' performance and teaching and learning activities are the responsibilities of the principal/head teacher.

5. Main Functions of School Managers

The functions of managers of schools as specified in section 18 of the Education Act, 2004 are as follows:

- To ensure that the school premises and overall learning environment are maintained in a manner that is satisfactory to the Minister;
- To ensure that the accommodation provided at the premises is adequate enough to house all the pupils enrolled; taking in to consideration number, gender and age;
- To visit schools whilst they are in session and assure himself that the school is properly conducted, or cause it to be visited by a person approved by the Minister at least twice every year with an interval of not less than three month between any two such visits.

6. Main functions of Inspectors of School

The duties of the Inspectorate as described in the MEST Handbook "The Good Principal" are as follows:

- Provide the honourable minister with expert views on educational matters; and
- Visit individual schools and report on physical facilities and general academic performance.

7. Development Partners

Several donor agencies, such as the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the Islamic Development Fund, UNICEF and DFID work with MEST and the National Commission for Social Action to implement school projects which would improve the learning environment.

2.5 FUNDING

There are currently two main sources of funding for education; the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and the Decentralised Service Delivery Programmes (DSDP). The latter is a World Bank Programme which aims at changing people's lives for the better. Funds from the GoSL are mainly activity based, and those from DSDP are mainly for infrastructural development.

The Local Government Finance Committee (LGFC) receives funding for basic education from the central government through the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED). The grants for recurrent expenditure on education are intended to finance educational activities and services as per the Local Government Act 2004. These include: administration, inspection, science equipment, education, development grants, etc. The education development grants represent the funds actually given to schools and it covers the subsidisation of school fees for certain categories of pupils, provision of textbooks and learning materials, examination entrance fees, and minor repair and maintenance cost. The table below shows funds transferred to local councils from 2013 to 2016 in respect of school management.

Funding Received for School Management		
Year	GOSL (Le'000)	Decentralization (Le'000)
2013	4,909,675,500	5,608,025,614
2014	N/P	3,205,700,000
2015	6,249,600,000	7,520,900,000
2016	6,479,300,000	8,256,400,000

Source: Local Government Equitable Grant Distribution 2016

Funds are also provided by donor partners including: UNICEF, OXFAM, Save the Children, DFID, GOAL, Concern Worldwide, ACF etc. for the construction of government and government assisted schools.

2.6 CURRENT DEVELOPMENT

As part of the President's Post Ebola Recovery Plan, the following schools visited during the audit benefited from the construction of three classroom blocks each. The said classrooms are to be commissioned this year. See photos below of the newly constructed classroom blocks. **Appendix "6"** shows the number of schools that benefited from this package.

- Albert Academy - Freetown
- Government Model Secondary School – Freetown
- Muslim Congress Secondary School – Freetown
- A.D Wurie Memorial Secondary School – Lunsar

- Islamic Secondary School – Kono
- Benevolent Islamic Secondary School – Makeni
- Holy Trinity Secondary School – Kenema
- Nasir Ahamdiyya Secondary School – Kenema
- Kenema Government Secondary School – Kenema
- Methodist HighSchool – Bo
- Tahir Ahamdiyya Junior Secondary School – Bo



Front view of the newly constructed 3 classroom block at the Holy Trinity Secondary School in Kenema – Kenema Photo taken on 28/2/2017



Front view of the newly constructed 3 classroom block at the A.D Wurie Memorial Secondary School in Lunsar- Photo taken on 21/02/17

3.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses audit findings on the basis of data and information collected by the audit team including observations made during site visits. The findings highlight issues pertaining to the appropriateness of the school facilities such as, classroom size, library, laboratory, furniture, and WASH facilities. The findings in this report focus mainly on improvements in school facilities, the streamlining and strengthening of various systems and procedures available in the ministry, local councils and schools in respect of the maintenance of school facilities.

3.1. SCHOOL FACILITIES DO NOT MEET SET STANDARDS

3.1.1 Overcrowding in schools

Overcrowding in schools is measured by the number of pupils in a classroom as against the required number stated by the ministry.

According to section 18(g) of the Education Act 2004, classroom accommodations should be adequate and suitable enough to meet the convenience of children. The National Education policy (2010) further requires that the standard number of pupils in a class should not exceed 45.

In order to alleviate the problem of congestion in schools part of the funds provided under President's Post Ebola recovery programme which was supported by DFID were utilised construct three classroom block in schools where overcrowding was quite evident . Eleven schools visited during the audit have benefited from this scheme as listed in paragraph 2.6.

The auditors however noted that even with the construction of the additional three classroom blocks in these schools, the class sizes still remained above the ministry's set standard of 45.

▪ Extent of overcrowding

During physical inspection and review of enrollment lists of the 35 schools visited, we noted that their classroom sizes were far above the 45 standard. For instance, there were 11 schools in which the number of pupils per classroom ranged between 100 and 170 as shown in the table below:

Highest Population in classroom				
No	District	School name	Class	Highest populated classroom
1	Western Area Urban	Government Rokel S.S.S.	SSS Art 3A	123
2	Makeni City Council	Our Lady Of Fatima Primary R.C. Boys	Class 3 Green	105
3	Koidu District Council	Islamic Called Society Primary School	Class 3 Green	105
4	Kenema City Council	Holy Trinity Senior secondary School Kenema	SSS 1 Art	103
5	Bo City Council	Government Secondary School BO	SSS 1 Art 1	102
6	Koidu District Council	Koidu District Education Committee Primary	Class 2	158
7	Koidu District Council	Islamic Secondary School Koidu	SSS 1 Commercial	128
8	Bo City Council	Tahir Ahmadiyya Muslim JSS	JSS 2G	107

Highest Population in classroom				
No	District	School name	Class	Highest populated classroom
		IIG –Bo		
9	Moyamba District Council	Ahamadiyya Primay Gbangbatoke	Class 2	170
10	Kenema City Council	Nasir Ahmadiyya Senior Secondary School -Kenema	SSS 3 Com 2	160
11	Kenema City Council	College Secondary School Kenema	JSS 3B	129

Source: Analysis of data from Schools

In addition to congestion on the basis of number of children per classroom,, there were also instances where the sizes of classrooms fell far below the ministry`s standard of 25.6 feet by 28 feet. For instance, we observed that in the War Wounded Secondary school-Grafton and the College Secondary School in Kenema, classrooms sizes were not in compliance with the ministry`s standard. Refer to table below for details.

Size of classrooms inferior to standards set by MEST							
School Name	Class	School Classroom Length (A)	School Classroom Width (B)	Length Standard (C)	Width Standard (D)	Difference for length (C-A)	Difference for width (D-B)
War Wounded Secondary School	Room 8&9	20 ft	16 ft	28 ft	25.6 ft	8 ft	9.6 ft
	Room 1&2	19.4 ff	18.5 ft	28 ft	25.6 ft	8.6 ft	7.1 ft
	Room 8	20 ft	16 ff	28 ft	25.6 ft	8 ft	9.6 ft
Salama secondary school	Room 101, 102, 203, 301	24 ft	19 ft	28 ft	25.6 ft	4 ft	6.6 ft
	Room 103, 104, 201, 302	20 ft	18.6 ft	28 ft	25.6 ft	8 ft	7 ft
Rural primary school	Room 1, 2, 3	21.4 ft	17.5 ft	28 ft	25.6 ft	6.6 ft	7 ft
	Room 4	25 ft	20 ft	28 ft	25.6 ft	3 ft	5.6 ft

▪ Use of Laboratory and Library Facilities as Classrooms

In a bid to manage overcrowding in their classrooms, two schools, the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress and Government Rokel Secondary School tried to accommodate more pupils by converting their laboratory and library facilities into as classrooms. This scenario not only deprives the pupils of their library and laboratory facilities but also greatly undermines effective learning

▪ Combination of two different classes in one classroom

We also found out that in 6 of the schools we visited, two classes were forced to sit in the same classroom with some separated by only a curtain and worse still, some had no physical separation dividing the two classes. The distraction a scenario of this nature causes for the young learners cannot be over emphasized. See photos below for details:



Partial view of two classes in a single classroom at the Kono District Education Committee School, divided only by a curtain-photo taken on 27/02/17



Partial view of 2 classes in the same classroom at Kankaylay Primary School - Gbanbatoke, with no physical division between the two classes)-photo taken on 22/02/17.

The table shows schools that house 2 classes in one classroom.

Schools that housed 2 classes in one classroom					
No	Category	Council	School Name	Town /Location	Joint classes in one classroom
1	Government School	Makeni City Council	Our Lady Of Fatima Primary R.C. Boys	Makeni	All Classes (classes 1-6)
2	Government School	Moyamba District Council	Kankaylay Primary School	Gbangbatoke	All Classes (Nursery to – class 6)
3	Government School	Koidu City Council	Kono Dist. Edu. Committee	Mbaoma	2 classes (classes 4 & 5)
4	Government School	Kenema City Council	College Secondary Junior Combema	Kenema	Form 2
5	Government Assisted	Koidu City Council	Islamic Call Society Primary School	Koakoyima	2 classes (classes 2&3)
6	Government Assisted	Freetown City Council	Evangelical Mission Primary School	Wellington	All classes (classes 1-6)

MAIN CAUSES OF OVERCROWDING IN SCHOOLS

Disproportionate enrolment of pupils in schools

The enrollment of pupils in primary schools is the sole responsibility of the heads of those schools. At the junior and senior levels however, the MEST manages enrolment into schools in this category by preparing placement lists based on pupils' choice, score and schools' accommodation capacity.

From a review of placement lists prepared by MEST, we noted that neither heads of schools nor pupils adhered to the MEST placement lists. Some pupils did not enroll in the schools in which they were placed by the Ministry's and some heads of schools enrolled pupils in their schools in contravention of the Ministry placement preference. This creates a scenario where the MEST inadvertently finds itself placing pupils in already overcrowded schools.

For instance, for the academic year 2016-2017, the Government Rokel Secondary School had 312⁶ pupils in excess,-who had been placed in some other schools by MEST. For some reason, overcrowding in this school was further compounded when MEST placed an additional 199 pupils into this same school (Rokel). The table provides number of pupils sent to the Government Rokel Secondary School by MEST during that period

⁶ Minutes of B.E.C.E placement meeting of 8th August, 2016

Number of pupils sent to Rokel from other schools' Placement List		
No.	School of choice	No. of pupils placed in Rokel school
1	Annie Walsh Memorial Secondary School, Kissy Road	33
2	Prince Of Wales, Kingtom, Freetown	20
3	Albert Academy, Berry Street, Freetown	43
4	Methodist Girls High School, Wilberforce	22
5	Government Technical Secondary School Congo Cross Freetown	13
6	Govt. Model Secondary Sch. Circular Rd Freetown	35
7	St. Joseph's Secondary School, B/Fields	33
	Total	199

This scenario has worsened the overcrowding in some schools while leaving others under populated.

- An analysis of 277 schools⁷ in Western Urban revealed that some schools have an average class size of 13 pupils while others have above 100 pupils. For instance, 35 schools have classroom enrolments ranging between 13 and 30 pupils.

If MEST distributes pupils in schools proportionately and ensures that all heads of schools comply with its placement policy, overcrowding can be significantly reduced in schools to as low as 50 pupils per classroom which is still above the MESTs' requirement of 45 See table below for details:

Range of average no of pupils per classroom in the 277 sample schools in the Western Area					
No	Range of Average number of pupil in classroom	No of schools	Total No. of Pupils (A)	Total No. of Classrooms (B)	Average no. per classroom (A/B)
1	13-30	35	8,029	331	24
2	31-50	115	42,885	1,038	41
3	51-70	85	45,787	785	58
4	71-90	26	13,915	179	78
5	91-110	10	5,475	55	100
6	111-172	6	5,200	41	127
		277	121,291	2,429	50

Source: Analysis of data provided by Freetown City Council

- Furthermore, the comparison of nationally available number of JSS 1 classrooms to the number of pupils who passed NPSE in the year 2015, 2016 and 2017 revealed that it is possible to have an average class size respectively of 35, 38 and 42 pupils. See table below for details:

Comparison of number of pupils who passed NPSE with nationally available JSS1 classrooms			
year	No. of candidate that passed NPSE	Total No of JSSA Classrooms	Average pupils per class
2015	79,399	2,288	35
2016	86,985	2,288	38
2017	95,603	2,288	42

Source: MEST

⁷ The analysis was done based on available complete data from Western Urban.

The overcrowding in schools is impacting negatively on the quality of education because teachers can hardly identify pupils with challenge in those classes and subsequently would not be able to pay special attention to those challenged pupils. Overcrowding can also compromise effective oxygen intake and this may adversely impact pupils health and learning capacity. See photos below for details:



Rural Community Primary School- Freetown with a class size of 100 pupils. Photo taken on 19th January, 2017 by audit team



Ahmadiyya Primary School Gbangbatoke Moyamba district with a class 2 class size of 170 pupils clustered together Photo taken on 22nd February, 2017 by the audit team.

Recommendation

MEST should ensure that the placement of pupils is proportionate in all schools.

Management's Response

The Ministry has a policy of class size in primary schools as 45 and 35 for secondary. This policy needs to be reviewed to accommodate the growing number of school age pupils. There are inadequate government secondary schools to accommodate pupils who pass their National Primary School Examination from over 7,000 primary schools compared to less than 1,500 junior secondary schools and less than 500 senior secondary schools. In this regard, government relies on religious establishments (missions) and other private individuals to provide schools in most districts. In most cases, the proprietors of the schools admit pupils in their schools who are mostly rejected by other schools due to not having the requisite entrance requirement to enter those schools. Note also that MEST can only place pupils in government schools and not private schools. The Ministry with support from DFID/UK has constructed additional 330 classrooms to most of the critically overcrowded schools during the 10-24 months post-Ebola presidential Recovery Priorities programme. Additionally, the Ministry through the support of funds from the Saudi king has also awarded the construction of 215 classrooms nationwide. The construction of the additional classrooms was also accompanied with the provision of furniture for the constructed classrooms. It should also be noted that for sometimes now, government has not allocated any funds to the Ministry for construction of schools, neither for the provision of furniture. Every year, the Ministry submits the proposal for development budget to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for construction and fabrication of furniture for schools but no allocation is made to the Ministry to undertake development projects.

Combination of Two Different classes in one Classroom

For some time now, there has been moratorium on the recruitment of teachers. In case where a school does not have enough teachers the administration resorts to multi-grade teaching methodology wherein one teacher can put together two different classes and teach simultaneously.

3.1.2. Insufficient furniture in schools

For a conducive learning environment, it is ideal that pupils seat in a manner that gives them ample space to their desk and provides them with a comfortable sitting position for both note taking and the safe custody of their books. The case illustrated in the photo below shows a classroom at St Francis Senior Secondary school in Makeni, where pupils are seated comfortably and can take their notes with ease.



A picture of an SSS 3 class at St. Francis Secondary School showing an ideal and spacious classroom. Photo taken by the audit team on 1st March, 2017

However, this is not the case in many schools visited. During physical inspection of furniture in the classrooms of the various schools visited we noted that only 3 out of 35 schools visited had sufficient furniture. These are:

- St Francis Secondary school for Boys, Makeni;
- St. Joseph Secondary School for Girls, Makeni, and;
- R.C Boys Primary School, Lunsar.

The rest of the 32 schools, representing 91.4% of the 35 sampled schools did not have sufficient furniture in the various classrooms. For instance there were cases where pupils did not have desks to take notes on or keep their books. Instances were also noted where pupils shared desks with their colleagues who were awkwardly sitting on different benches. See photos below:



6 pupils to a bench without desks in a classroom at the Islamic Call Society Primary School Koidu. Photo taken by the audit team on 27th February, 2017



Nine pupils to a desk seated directly opposite each other with a poor view of the teacher and the blackboard in a difficult classroom situation at the Islamic Call Society Primary School Koidu. Photo taken by the audit team on 27th February, 2017

Interviews with heads of schools revealed that the issue of insufficient furniture is a big challenge in most

of the schools. This we were told was mainly due to the disproportionate pupils bench/desk ration. Lack of repairs to broken furniture also helped worsen the situation. Interview with heads of schools further revealed that delays in the transfer of subsidies from MEST to the schools out of which repairs of furniture is funded further exacerbates the situation. For instance, for the 2016/2017 academic year, up to June 2017, no transfer of subsidies were effected.

During physical inspection of Islamic Call Society Primary School –Koidu, Ahmadiyya primary school Gbangbatoke Moyamba and Government Rokel Secondary school –Freetown., auditors also observed five classrooms so cluttered with piles of broken furniture that they were no longer usable as classrooms. This has contributed to overcrowding in schools and may affect pupils’ level of concentration and participation in class.



An empty classroom at the Richard Allen High school. Photo taken by the auditors on 19th January, 2017



Piles of broken furniture at the Government Rokel Secondary School. photo taken on 9th January, 2017



Piles of broken furniture in a classroom at the Ahmadiyya Primary School Gbanbatokeh. Photo taken on 19th February, 2017

Recommendation

The Ministry of Education should consider increasing supply of furniture to schools so as to create room for increased enrolment. MEST should also ensure the timely transfer of fee subsidies to enhance timely repairs and maintenance of furniture.

In addition, MEST should ensure that a certain amount of money out of the subsidies is put aside purely for the timely repair and maintenance of furniture.

Management's Response

It should be noted that for some time now, government has not allocated funds to the Ministry for the provision of furniture. Every year the Ministry submits the proposal for development budget to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for construction and fabrication of furniture for schools, but no allocation is made to the Ministry to undertake development projects.

3.1.3. Physical condition of classrooms

According to section 18(g) of the Education Act (2004), school accommodations and premises should be adequate. The same Act stipulates that schools that do not conform to national standards shall be closed down.⁸

During visits to sampled schools, the auditors noted that 10 schools out of 35 which represented 28.5% of the sample were in deplorable condition. The following specific issues were also observed:

- Some classrooms had perforated roofs hence when it rains, school activities come to a halt.
- Some roofs had no ceilings. This made the classrooms too hot and not learner friendly especially during the hot season.
- Others had broken windows. This exposed the children to the elements and hence made them susceptible to cold and other respiratory and airborne diseases.
- Some classrooms were poorly lit. This could have impacted negatively on the vision of the children and the teachers. The situation we learnt is worsened during the rainy when there is very little sunlight.
- Some classrooms were unpaved and the dusty floors served as breeding grounds for vermins which may impact negatively the health of the children.

The photos below depicts the dilapidated condition of some classrooms.



⁸ Sections 6, 7, 8 and 14 of Education Act

A dilapidated classroom at the Khulafai Rashideen Islamic Primary School at Grassfield Kissy, Freetown - Photo taken on 21st October, 2016



A deplorable and dilapidated classroom structure at the Khulafai Rashideen Islamic Primary School at Grassfield Kissy, Freetown - Photo taken on 21st October, 2016



A classroom at the Government Rokel Secondary School Freetown, with no windows and worn out ceiling and roof.

Physical Condition of classrooms not conducive for learning		
No	Names of School	Status
1	Gov. Rokel Secondary School, Freetown	Dilapidated Zinc, leakage in ceilings, classrooms with mud floor, cracks on the walls, damaged windows and doors.
2	Khulafai Islamic primary School, Grass field, Freetown	Dilapidated Zinc, classrooms without ceilings and leakages, classrooms with mud floor, cracks on the walls,
3	Evangelical primary School, Freetown	A dwelling house used as School, the parlour was divided into various classrooms.
4	College Secondary School Kenema	The school is a dwelling house. Classrooms are divided with hard boards and the SSS is made of wood which is not ceil

Physical Condition of classrooms not conducive for learning		
No	Names of School	Status
5	Islamic Called Society Primary School- Koidu	Toilets are damaged; some classrooms are small and are divided into two.
6	Kankalay primary School, – Gbanbatoke	Building is made of mud and not ceiled; classrooms are divided into two, classroom floors are not paved.
7	Services secondary School, Freetown	The buildings in the school are deplorable; classrooms not ceiled and are without windows.
8	Richard Allen High School, Freetown	Cracks on the school walls and classroom floors. Roofs with damaged ceilings. The main school building is very old and not painted
9	Gov. Model Secondary School, Freetown	Some ceilings are damaged and some doors are damaged.
10	Sierra Leone Muslim Congress, Freetown	Broken windows and doors, on toilet.

The above deplorable conditions of buildings and classrooms is testament to the fact that set MEST standards for buildings and classrooms quality are not being complied with before schools are given approval by the Ministry. It is also an indication of poor maintenance and lack of effective inspection by the Ministry.

A scenario of this nature may impact negatively on the quality of teaching and learning and the safety of the children in these schools.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Ministry ensures that standards are enforced and met, and also regular inspections should be carried out. Issues observed by inspectors should be adequately addressed.

Through inspection, the Ministry should be able to identify schools that are in very deplorable condition and address the issues as a matter of urgency.

Management's Response

Before establishing a school the proprietor or the individual should first of all write to the local council in the case of primary school, and the local council should in turn write to the Ministry for site inspection as per our legal instruments. Most of the time, this procedure is not adhered to and they proceed to establish schools that do not comply with the standard as stipulated for construction of schools, and that is why you see some schools have classrooms that are very dark and have little or no ventilation.

Government pays primary schools fees subsidy per child. This money is however expected to be used for minor repairs to their schools. For secondary schools, they collect tuition fees and such fees are managed by the Board of Governors. This body should ensure that repairs are done to either the physical structure of the school or to furniture.

3.1.4 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene facilities in schools (WASH)

The standards and guidelines for WASH in Schools, set by MEST in 2015 clearly specify standards

expected of WASH facilities in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. However, during the audit, we observed the following:

▪ **Schools without safe drinking water facilities**

Access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and proper hygiene reduces the chances of infection, within the school environment. The 2015 WASH Policy recommends that 1.5 litres of safe drinking water per student per day, and another 1.5 liters per student per day for WASH purposes should be provided in all schools.

Although the provision of boreholes has helped meet the objectives of availing water for drinking, hand washing and cleaning in most of the schools, we however noted that there were schools that still did not have such basic facilities.

During the physical inspection of water facilities in schools, 17% of schools (representing 6 schools out of the 35 schools visited) did not have any source of safe drinking water. This situation exposes 13,394 pupils to waterborne diseases and diseases related to poor sanitation and hygiene. The errant schools in question are listed in the table below:

Number of pupil's exposed to diseases related to poor sanitation and hygiene.				
No	School name	Council	Number of pupils in JSS	Number of pupils in SSS
1	Richard Allen High School	Freetown City Council	1,445	1591
2	Government Rokel S.S.S.	Freetown City Council	1409	1710
3	Services Senior Secondary School	Freetown City Council	1206	1500
4	Government Model JSS	Freetown City Council	1468	N/A
5	Kulafai Rashideen Primary School	Freetown City Council	451	N/A
6	Sierra Leone Muslim Congress	Freetown City Council	978	1636
	Sub Total		6,957	6,437
	Total			13,394

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Ministry ensures that schools adhere to the 2015 WASH standards by providing safe water for drinking and WASH purposes in schools.

▪ **Schools with limited water supply**

The principal source of water in the majority of schools sampled are boreholes that were provided by MEST and donor partners. However from interview conducted with heads of schools, it was revealed that this water source is not sustainable as most of these boreholes dry up especially at the peak of the dry season in March and April. 10 schools out of the 29 representing 34.4% of schools with borehole facilities reported that their wells dry up in the dry season which they say greatly limits access to safe water for their pupils. This situation reportedly also exposed the pupils to health risks.

Recommendation

To ensure a sustainable supply of water throughout the year, it is recommended that the Ministry ensures that boreholes/water wells are sunk between the months of February and March (the hottest and driest period of the dry season).

It is further recommended that boreholes/water wells should be re-dug on a regular basis in order to access sufficient water that can serve the schools throughout the year.

▪ *Insufficient drop holes in schools*

The WASH policy stipulates that the ratio of drop holes/latrines in schools per pupils should be 45 boys and 45 girls each per drop hole.

During our visit to schools, we noted that none of the 35 schools visited had the required ratio of drop holes per either boys or girls. The actual average ratio for 35 schools visited in all provinces is 1 drop hole per 144 pupils. The Western Area Urban district has the highest ratio with 248 pupils per drop hole. As a result, pupils' access to toilets is greatly limited not to mention the inconvenience of such a scenario on the pupils. This situation may also increase the risk of infection and the spread of disease and especially WASH related diseases. See the table below for details.

Analysis of drop holes in schools visited							
No	District	No. of Schools	No. of pupils (A)	Available drop holes (B)	Ratio of drop holes per pupil in schools (C)=A/B	Required drop holes/MEST Standard (1:45) (D)	Unavailable drop holes /Difference (E)= D-C
1	Bombali	4	5,442	61	121	164	103
2	Port Loko	4	5,519	44	123	124	80
3	Kono	4	6,168	34	137	141	107
4	Kenema	4	6,429	36	143	172	136
5	Bo	4	6,494	28	144	146	118
6	Moyamba	2	1,104	10	25	16	6
7	Western Urban	8	11,168	71	248	341	270
8	Western Rural	5	5,884	50	131	162	112
TOTAL		35	48,208	334	144	1,266	932

Source: Analysis of data from MEST

▪ *Poor hygiene of toilets in schools*

According to standards and guidelines for WASH in schools, each school should have a designated cleaner/caretaker to ensure that toilet facilities are kept in a clean and sanitary condition. The same standards stipulate that girls' and boys' toilet facilities should be separated. The standard further requires

that each boys' facility should have one urinal and the one for girls should have bins for the disposal of disposable absorbent materials like pads and sanitary towels. Each toilet should also have secured doors with locks to ensure the privacy of pupils⁹.

During the inspection of toilets, we noted that none of the schools met all of the above standards. For e.g none of the schools' toilets had urinals, bins for sanitary towels and wash facilities. Though standards were not fully met by all the schools, we however observed that 3 schools -College Secondary School Kenema, Bullom Ahmaddiya SSS Lungi and Kankalay Primary School Gbanbatoke largely met the basic required toilet standards. Their toilets were clean; with secured doors fitted with locks. In an interview with the College school principal, it was disclosed that pupils pay Le5, 000 for the cleaning of the toilet. The photo below shows the College Secondary School toilets.



College Secondary School drop holes. Photo taken by the audit team on 1st March, 2017

Toilets in 11 schools out of the 35 visited, appeared to be reasonably clean compared to the toilets in the other 21 schools, (representing 60%) which were found to be very dirty and unsanitary.

However, the relatively good sanitary condition of the toilets in the 11 schools in question comes at a price for the pupils as it was revealed that access to them is restricted in a situation of limited availability of water. For e.g., we realized during our visit also that the toilets were only opened to enable the auditors carry out their inspection activities. A situation of this nature may encourage open defaecation within the school compound by pupils for lack of any option. This may compromise WASH standards and increase the risk of infection. Pupils may also be forced to resort to unsanitary options to relieve themselves at the risk of their health.

The 21 toilets which fell far below MEST standards were revoltingly filthy and fly and cockroach infested. The drop holes were also very shallow, filled to the brim with their contents virtually reaching the surface. We also observed broken toilet doors that definitely compromised the privacy of pupils. A scenario of this nature carried the risk of exposing pupils to very serious infections. It could also increase the risk of especially girl children dropping out of school out of pride and fear of exposure to diseases

The picture below depicts the status of some toilets found in certain schools.

⁹ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Standards and guidelines for water, sanitation and Hygiene in School, august 2015, page 2



Our Lady of Fatima Boys School toilets-Makeni.
Photo taken on 24th February, 2017 by the auditors



Koidu Secondary School toilets Photo taken by
the audit team on 28th February, 2017

The unsanitary condition of toilets in schools is exacerbated by the lack of WASH facilities in these institutions. To mitigate this appalling situation, schools were supplied with water storage tanks; unfortunately however, at the time of the visit of the audit team, none of them had water. Of the 35 schools sampled and visited, 25 of them had no water in these tanks. In an interviews with heads of schools, we learnt that the school authorities usually buy water from SALWACO in the provinces and Guma Valley Water Company in Freetown. Meeting the cost of water on a regular basis may have been a bit prohibitive for the schools

▪ Lack of hand washing facilities in schools

According to the standards and guidelines for water, sanitation and hygiene in schools, each school is required to have hand washing facilities on a ratio of 1 tap per 3 functional toilets. It is also required that each classroom has a minimum of 1 hand washing station placed in front of each classroom¹⁰.

During the inspection, we noted that all 35 schools did not have hand washing stations in front of each classroom.

Only 4 schools had hand washing facilities in their toilets but even in this case soap was not available,. Pupils attending these schools are highly exposed to the risk of sanitation related diseases.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Ministry ensures that sufficient WASH facilities be provided in schools to avoid the risk of diseases. In addition, local councils should regularly monitor and supervise the schools.

Management's Response

The Ministry will ensure that the developed standards and guidelines for WASH in schools will be adhered to by all our partners that will be providing these facilities in schools. MEST together with the Ministry of Water Resources will ensure that the construction of hand-dug wells is done between March and April seasonally. After the outbreak of Ebola, the Ministry together with our partners distributed hygiene kits to all schools nationwide. Some schools were even

¹⁰ Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Standards and guidelines for water, sanitation and Hygiene in School, august 2015, page 2

provided with water tanks to store running water, and schools without hand-dug wells benefited from the water harvested facility to help them with water.

3.1.5 Inadequate laboratory facilities in the schools

Science is different from any other area of study. In order to understand its concepts, one has to look beyond the books and conventional classroom teaching. Effective teaching and learning of core science disciplines involve findings, observation, hypothesis, analysis and result.

The National education policy 2010 states that “each government and government assisted school should have the necessary laboratories, workshops, and equipment for SSS to provide good quality instruction”.

For the 35 schools sampled, 25 of them are Senior Secondary Schools and were required to have laboratories. The remaining 10 schools are primary and junior secondary Schools.

▪ Schools without laboratory facilities

We observed that 36% of schools visited (9 schools out of 25) did not have any form of laboratory facility, yet they offer science subjects. Interviews with the heads of these schools revealed that these schools had not been equipped with laboratories since their inception.

▪ Non functional laboratories

We observed that 24% of schools visited (6 schools out of 25) had laboratories that were non-functional. Two of these laboratories were converted into classrooms to alleviate the problem of overcrowding while 4 others had no equipment and were largely dilapidated. See Photo below for details:



Government Rokel Secondary School Laboratory used as a classroom photo taken by the auditors on 9th January, 2017

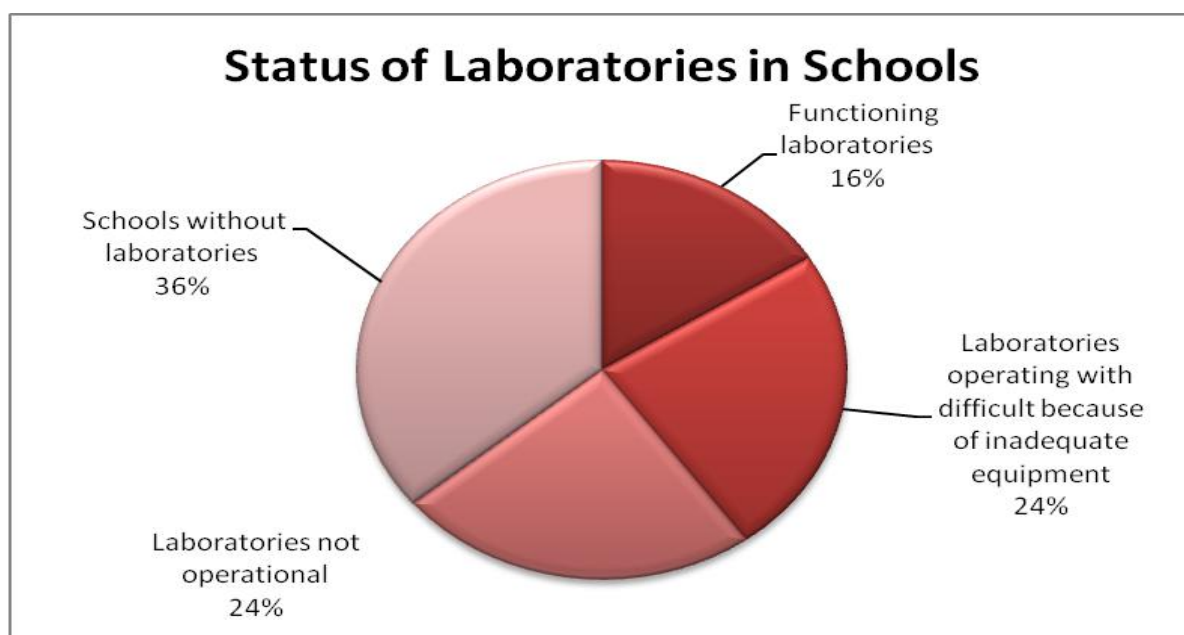


Albert Academy's dilapidated laboratory. Photo taken by the Auditors on 12th January, 2017

▪ Functional laboratories

We observed that 10 SS schools out of 25 SS schools had functional laboratories. However, only 4 of those were fully operational, the other 6 were barely operational as their equipment were not appropriate for the purpose of SS children.

Interviews with science teachers revealed that these laboratories were outdated and their equipment either obsolete or faulty. See **appendix 7** for details



The table below shows the effect on examinations of non-functional laboratories in schools as shown in the students' performance at the WASSCE examination in the 2015 – 2016 academic years.

Analysis of Science Subject Result 2015-2017 at the WASSCE

YEAR	SUBJECT	A1	B2	B3	C4	C5	C6	D7	E8	F9
2015	Biology	0.00%	0.00%	1.40%	1.50%	4.10%	15.80%	11.40%	17.30%	48.40%
	Chemistry	0.50%	0.70%	2.00%	2.20%	2.90%	11.50%	8.70%	12.90%	58.70%
	Physics	0.00%	0.20%	2.20%	1.60%	3.00%	10.90%	12.40%	15.10%	54.60%
	Science	7.00%	5.40%	16.70%	11.60%	9.90%	16.80%	12.60%	9.70%	10.30%

2016	Biology	0.10%	0.20%	2.00%	1.90%	2.50%	10.60%	12.80%	19.40%	50.50%
	Chemistry	0.00%	0.40%	1.70%	1.30%	1.40%	6.60%	6.70%	11.40%	70.50%
	Physics	0.30%	0.50%	3.60%	2.20%	3.90%	10.20%	9.60%	12.60%	57.20%
	Science	2.90%	2.90%	12.90%	8.90%	7.20%	16.00%	14.00%	15.10%	20.00%

2017	Biology	0.06%	0.16%	2.43%	2.98%	3.39%	13.11%	13.68%	20.56%	43.62%
	Chemistry	0.33%	1.04%	7.30%	4.06%	9.01%	21.25%	11.53%	11.40%	34.07%
	Physics	0.38%	0.40%	4.04%	2.17%	4.59%	10.04%	11.07%	16.55%	50.76%
	Science	3.45%	3.86%	10.14%	7.28%	7.25%	18.79%	13.29%	13.41%	22.53%

Source: MEST

For schools without properly functional laboratories, the teaching and learning of science subjects was not effective as pupils did not have access to appropriate and functional science laboratory equipment.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Ministry upgrades the laboratories in the senior secondary schools and establish one in all senior secondary schools that lack the facility and furnish all with sufficient equipment as a means of improving on the quality of education and the pass rate especially at public examinations in conformity with the National Education policy.

Management's Response

Before the war, many schools used to have fairly well equipped laboratories. The war however virtually wrecked all of such facilities. Considering setting up and procuring laboratory equipment still remains a huge challenge for many schools. MEST is however procuring small quantities of reagents and apparatus on a yearly basis and supplying to schools in turns.

3.1.6 Inadequate library facilities

According to the National Education Policy 2010, it is stated that each government and government-assisted school should have a well-resourced library facility.

During physical inspection in the 35 schools sampled, the following were observed:

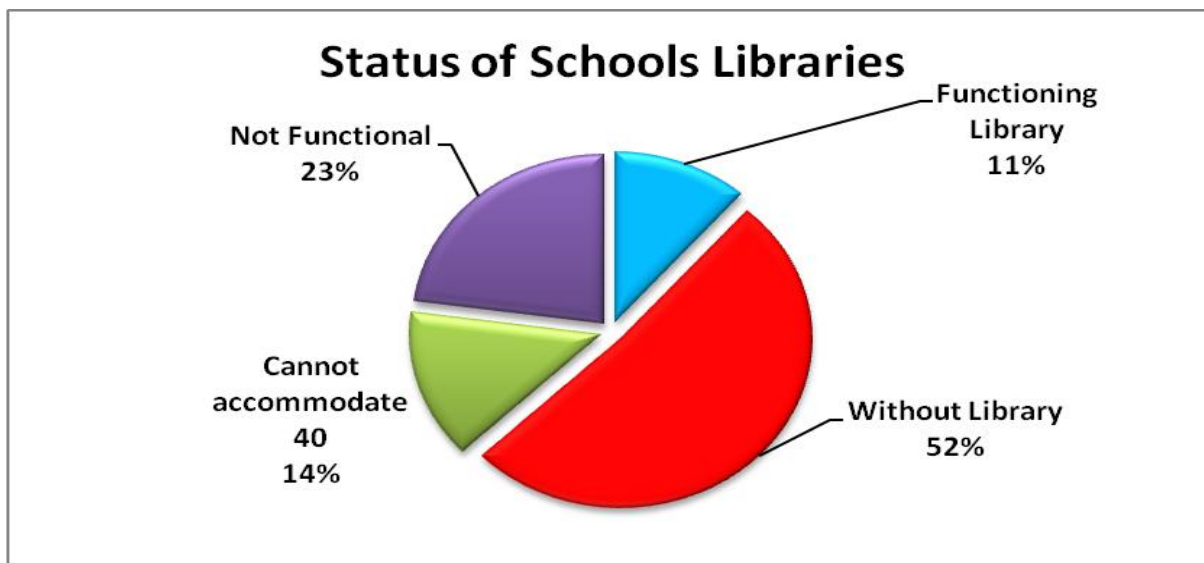
Schools with functional libraries: Out of the 35 schools sampled, only 4 had functional library facilities. These represent 11% of the total number of sampled schools.

Schools without library facilities: 52% of the schools sampled (18 schools out of 35) had not had a library facility since inception.

Libraries with insufficient furniture: 14% of schools sampled (5 schools out of 35) had inadequate sitting accommodation. At any one point in time, the library can accommodate only up to 40 pupils due to insufficient furniture.

Non- functional libraries: 23 % of the schools sampled (8 out of 35) did not have functional library facilities for various reasons. 2 had been converted into classrooms to alleviate the issue of overcrowding

while others are libraries only in name as they had neither furniture nor books. This is shown in the chart below and **appendix 8**:



Without proper functioning libraries, pupils can hardly develop a reading habit and cannot enrich their knowledge. The photos below depict a library used as a classroom and the one without sufficient furniture.



Partial view of Congress Secondary School Library Freetown now used as a classroom. Photo taken by the audit team on 24th February, 2017



Partial view of St. Francis Secondary School Makeni library with inadequate furniture. Photo taken by the audit team on 1st March, 2017

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Ministry should strengthen library facilities in schools where they exist and establish such facilities in schools where they do not exist.

Management's Response

No comments provided

3.1.7 Inadequate recreational facilities

The Education Policy 2010 requires that the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should ensure that JSS schools seeking approval must have a compound with a recreational facility before approval is granted for them to start operations as a school. Such a recreational facilities are described in the School Inspection Form as an: open playing ground/area, athletics field, a football field, volleyball and volleyball pitch, and lawn tennis court

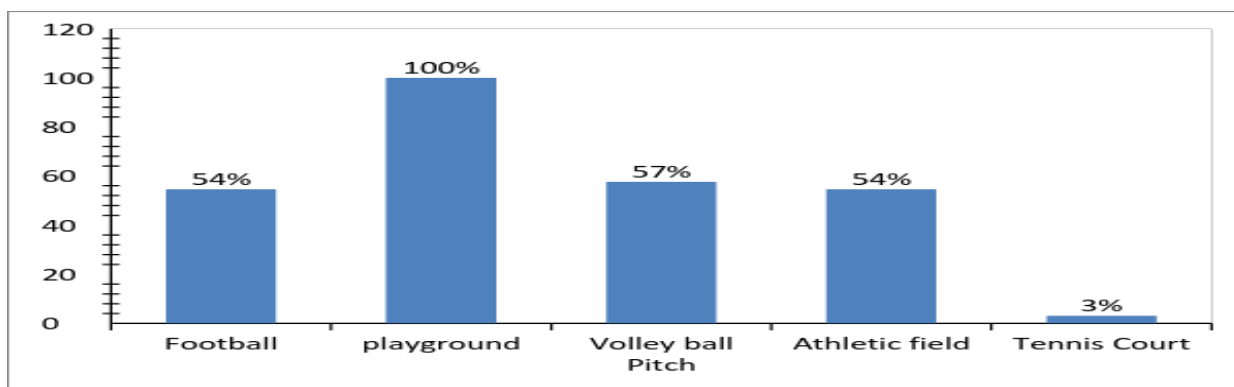
The school inspection form developed by MEST provides what should constitute a recreational facility. .

During the audit, 35 schools were visited and the auditors noted that:

- all schools with the exception of Kulafai Rashideen and Evangelical primary school had playgrounds although they were found to be rugged and not child-friendly. The team also observed that the playground of the Islamic Call primary school in Koidu is used as a dump site by the community; as is shown in the photo below.



The playground of the Islamic Call Primary school Koidu used as a dump site. Photo taken by the audit team on the 28th February, 2017



Source: Audit team

- Fourteen schools representing 40% of schools sampled had a playground but no other recreational facility as required by the policy. The photo below shows an example of a playground without any other recreational facility.



Albert Academy Freetown playground without any recreational facilities. Photo taken by the audit team

on 12th January, 2017

The auditors noted from interviews conducted that footballs and volleyballs were provided by MEST, UNICEF and other donor partners for schools.

Recreational facilities are important as they help refresh and reinvigorate both the body and mind this is underscored by the fact that Physical Health Education (PHE) is a subject in the school curriculum through which these skills are taught.

Recommendation

We recommend that MEST and the local councils ensure that schools upgrade their recreational facilities to make them compliant with section E of the School Inspection form.

Management's Response

No comments provided

3.2. PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

During the course of the audit, MEST policy and guidelines for the maintenance of school facilities were not made available to us.

The availability of a detailed and comprehensive maintenance policy could serve as a guiding instrument for the proper maintenance of school facilities. Such a policy should clearly specify the requirements for an economic and efficient maintenance of school facilities. The policy should also provide strategic focus and direction for all stakeholders including maintenance staff so as to enable them accomplish the requirements set in section 14 (a) of the Education Act of 2004 which stipulates that the Minister shall establish and maintain government and government assisted schools.

Letters dated 16th September 2016 and 6th January 2017 requesting guidelines and maintenance policy were sent to the Ministry by the audit team to enable them assess how maintenance activities should be undertaken by heads of schools and other stakeholders. Unfortunately however, the auditors did not see any guidelines or policy on the maintenance of schools that were requested by the schools from MEST. It was confirmed during interviews with heads of schools that the Ministry had not developed a comprehensive maintenance policy and related guidelines and procedures for undertaking the maintenance of school facilities

Although the Ministry did not have a maintenance policy, councils and heads of schools informed the auditors that school fee subsidies and school fees are used for minor repairs and maintenance of school facilities. However, there were no guidelines on how the various maintenance activities could be undertaken and the approach that should be followed by the local councils and the schools' management. There were also no specific standards to differentiate and specify the timeframe for periodic maintenance works from emergency/daily maintenance or repair works.

In the absence of a properly documented overall policy framework and detailed maintenance procedures, it is difficult to know who should do what and at what time. We observed that this had been impacting negatively on the planning, budgeting and timely maintenance and repair of schools facilities.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Ministry develops a comprehensive maintenance and repair policy and guidelines that would guide the efficient and effective maintenance and repair of school facilities.

3.2.1 Annual maintenance plans not prepared

The Education Act of 2004, Section 14(a) requires the Ministry to establish and maintain government and government assisted schools. Section 18(f) of the same Act requires school managers to ensure that school premises and sites are maintained in a manner that is satisfactory to the Minister.

To be able to deliver on the above requirements, proper maintenance plans are crucial for all institutions that are entrusted with the repair and maintenance of school facilities.

▪ Planning at MEST level

The Ministry of Education has primary responsibility for the maintenance of schools. However the Ministry, did not have any plan to guide the maintenance of school facilities. This was evidenced by the fact that in spite of many verbal requests and letters dated 16th September 2016 and 6th January, 2017 for the ministry's maintenance policy to be made available to us auditors, none was provided.

▪ Planning at council level

Out of seven councils sampled, five of them (Freetown City, Western Area Rural District, Koidu New Sembehun, Makeni and Kenema City Councils) had a maintenance policy for school facilities. The other two councils (Bo city and Moyamba district councils) did not provide proof of a maintenance policy for school facilities. We could not therefore ascertain whether these policies were maintained in these two councils.

▪ Planning at School level

During our field visit to thirty five schools sampled, none of them provided us with an annual maintenance policy for school facilities.

The proper maintenance could have assisted the institutions entrusted with the maintenance of schools facilities to systematically identify facilities that require repairs/renovation before they reach a dilapidated state.

Recommendation

For the maintenance of school facilities to be carried out in an economic and efficient manner, we recommend that:

- The Ministry prepares a systematic and coherent maintenance plan for repair/ renovation works on school facilities.

- The Ministry ensures that annual maintenance plans are prepared by schools at the beginning of every academic year.

Management's Response

No comments provided

3.2.2 Maintenance of School facilities not budgeted for

For a repair/renovation activity to be properly undertaken, proper budgeting is required to determine the amount of money needed for such work and where funding for such an activity would be sourced. All institutions entrusted with the maintenance of school facilities have the responsibility of determining the budget required for maintenance, the source of funding and the acquisition of such funding.

▪ Budgeting for maintenance by MEST

In spite of many verbal requests we made to the Ministry during meetings and interviews, and through a letter dated 16th September 2016), requesting copies of the MEST's maintenance budgets for school facilities, none was provided. This was evidence that the Ministry had been renegeing on its responsibility of drawing up maintenance budgets for school facilities.

▪ Budgeting for maintenance of school facilities by Councils

Out of 7 councils sampled, five of them (Freetown City, Western Area Rural District, Koidu New Sembehun, Makeni and Kenema City Councils) had prepared budgets for maintenance of school facilities. The remaining 2 councils (Bo city and Moyamba district councils) did not provide their budgets facilities. We could not therefore ascertain whether these budgets were maintained by these seemingly defaulting councils.

▪ Budgeting for maintenance of school facilities by School management

Out of the 35 schools sampled, 60% (21 schools) of them had prepared budgets for the maintenance of school facilities.

An anomaly was discovered in the maintenance budget of the various schools for e.g. for some schools, it was discovered that not all of the amount budgeted for school maintenance were actually spent on maintenance. Out of 21 schools that budgeted for maintenance of school facilities for the 2016/2017 academic year, only 16 schools actually spent the amount budgeted for on maintenance. See **appendix 9** for details.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Ministry ensures that maintenance and repairs are budgeted for by all institutions entrusted with repairs and maintenance of school facilities. The Ministry should also devise strategies of ensuring that the amounts budgeted by the various schools are actually utilised for that purpose.

Management's Response

No comments provided

3.2.3 Maintenance and repair works not visible in school facilities

An analysis of expenses from 16 schools that submitted records of expenditure on maintenance of school facilities revealed that the expenses were incurred for maintenance works. However, physical inspection revealed that the actual maintenance work was only seen in the 9 schools listed below.

Schools visited which incurred maintenance expenses and schools were reasonably in good condition		
No.	Name of School	Maintenance Cost (Le)
1	Holy Trinity Junior Secondary School, Kenema	13,170,000
2	Methodist High School, Bo	2,750,000
3	St. Francis Senior Secondary School, Makeni	18,395,000
4	A. D Wurie Memorial Secondary School, Lunsar	17,000,000
5	Richard Allen Secondary School, Freetown	18,875,000
6	St. Joseph Senior Secondary School, Makeni	1,800,000
7	Bullom Ahmadiyya Secondary School Lungi	24,445,000
8	Government Model Secondary School, Freetown	25,715,500
9	Sengbeh Pieh Memorial Secondary School	11,500,000

Source: School's cash books

For the seven schools listed below, it was not possible to ascertain whether maintenance and repair works actually took place because of the physical condition of the school facilities.

Schools visited which incurred maintenance expenses but could not be seen visible in the repair works		
No.	Name of School	Maintenance Cost (Le)
1	Government Secondary School Kenema	25,214,000
2	College Secondary School, Kenema	2,000,000
3	Koidu Secondary School, Kono	24,445,000
4	Benevolent Islamic Secondary School, Makeni	8,500,000
5	Islamic Call Society Primary School	4,758,000
6	Peninsula Senior Secondary School, Waterloo	16,567,000
7	Our lady of Fatima Primary School Makeni	6,168,000

Source: School's cash books

In letters addressed to heads of schools, we requested repair and maintenance reports on work done, these reports were however not made available to us.

During physical inspection, we observed that school buildings were in a deplorable state with rugged dusty floors in classrooms, broken windows and blackboards, perforated leaky roofs not affixed with ceilings as shown in pictures below taken by the audit team during a physical verification exercise

A picture of a dilapidated school building,



The Government Rokel Secondary School Freetown with damaged ceiling, leaky roof and broken windows. Photo taken by the audit team 9th January, 2017



Kankalay Primary school –Gbangbatoke; class1 with broken benches and desks. Photo taken by the audit team on 22nd February, 2017



Services Secondary school classroom with damaged ceiling, broken windows and leaky roof. Photos taken by the audit team on the 13th January, 2017



College Secondary School with makeshift classroom roof with no ceiling . Photo taken on 1st March, 2017



Peninsular Secondary School with broken; windows. Photo taken by the audit team on 13th January, 2017



Islamic Call Society Primary School-Koidu. Classroom with pupils seated on broken benches in a cluttered classroom. Photo taken on 27th February, 2017

When repairs and maintenance of schools, facilities are not carried out regularly and properly, the school facilities wear out faster. In the long run, the repairs become costly or impossible, as in the cases of ceilings and furniture reported on.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Ministry puts in place a policy whereby a certain percentage of funds from the income generated by schools are used for maintenance and repairs of school facilities.

The Ministry should devise strategies for ensuring that maintenance and repair works are carried out regularly and properly and that this is adequately reported on.

Management's Response

The 2004 Education Act and the Revised 2010 Education Policy need to be reviewed; and when this is done, the Ministry will also develop guidelines on the policy and the Act. These will take into consideration the maintenance of school.

The schools are mostly owned by proprietors and in most cases, they collect fees from the pupils and they also have some managing bodies which determine what happens with funds raised by the schools. The School Management Committee in the case of primary schools and the Board of Governor for secondary schools, are the ones that prepare, plan and budget for the running of the schools. The Ministry through the Act gives this authority to these bodies to manage the schools. The Ministry at the central planning does not prepare plan of budget for individual school repair but rather budget for educational programmes and services.

Where the repair is major, the Ministry through its yearly Annual School Census data collection will identify school that needs major repairs and this information is shared with our development partners who support either construction or rehabilitation as the case may be.

Through the local councils, there is allocation under grants to educational institutions. These funds are expected to be used by the local councils and the Deputy Directors of Education in the districts to rehabilitate school that are in need of repair, as well as the provision of furniture.

MEST will work with local council to put a percentage of educational grants for repair to school.

3.2.4 Irregular subsidy from government

Interviews conducted with heads of schools and documents reviewed revealed that, minor repairs are supposed to be funded by schools fees and subsidies from the Ministry of Finance. Our written request dated 6th January, 2017, for guidelines on the use of school subsidies from the MEST was not heeded as no documented information on the use of school subsidies was made available to us of

The analysis of data availed to us by the Local Government Finance Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for the 2014/2015 academic year revealed that only 3,219 out of 7,168 schools (45% of schools) received subsidies. At the time of our audit in March 2017, (seven months after the 2016/2017 academic year had started), no subsidy was transferred to the schools we visited. The table below shows the categories, total number of schools and the allocations received.

Total Subsidies received by levels					
No	Category	No. of Govt. & Assisted schools	No. of schools that have not received subsidy	Schools that received subsidy	Allocation Received from GoSL
1	Primary	5,963	3,331	2,632	8,038,760,000
2	Junior SS	939	491	448	15,884,922,361
3	Senior SS	266	127	139	8,634,188,914
	Total	7,168	3,949	3,219	32,557,871,275

Source: Analysis by audit team

Recommendation

The Ministry of Education should ensure that school fees subsidies are transferred to schools in time to enable them carry out maintenance and repairs of school facilities accordingly. The Ministry should devise strategies of ensuring that school fee subsidies are used efficiently, and for the intended purposes.

Management's Response

The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is charged with the responsibility of disbursing funds to all sector of government. The Ministry works with Heads of Schools on the correctness of their school bank details and will ensure that the list of schools for payment is prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on a timely manner.

3.3 INSPECTION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

3.3.1 Irregular inspection of school facilities

Section 47(1) of the Education Act 2004 stipulates that inspection of every school should be done by school inspectors at least once per term.

According to inspection reports from the Ministry and the District Education Offices for the 35 schools sampled, only 6 inspections were carried out during a period of 3 years (2014-2016). See table below for details of schools inspected.

SCHOOLS INSPECTED BY FCC FROM 2013 TO JUNE 2017		
No.	SCHOOLS	DATE OF INSPECTION
1	Richard Allen Secondary School, JSS	2013
2	Sierra Leone Muslim Congress, JSS	May-14
3	Services Secondary School, JSS	2015
4	Government Model Secondary School, JSS	May-June 2015
5	Government Rokel Secondary School, JSS	May-June 2016
6	Albert Academy Secondary School, JSS	May-June 2017

Source: Analysis by audit team

In addition to this, heads of schools revealed during interviews that schools inspectors had not been providing them with inspection reports. Hence, it was therefore not possible for schools to rectify anomalies observed by inspectors.

In the absence of regular inspections of schools, it is difficult for MEST to keep abreast with information on the status of schools and act on them accordingly and in a timely manner. Therefore, issues affecting schools in general and school facilities in particular could not be addressed by the Ministry

Recommendation

The MEST should ensure that inspectors of schools make available their inspection schedules to auditors and schools. These schedules should be monitored to ensure that they are executed.

Management's Response

Believes that the number of school sampled for the purpose of this study is too small to warrant generalisation. We however concede that owing to the small number at our inspectorate offices country wide, we are unable to conduct the required number of inspections. Appeals have been made to the Public Service Commission for recruitment of staff, but this request is yet to receive favourable consideration. I wish to state however that with support from UNICEF, MEST implements cluster monitoring activities in these six districts country wide and in these districts effective supervision is undertaken and reports are available to the effect.

3.3.2 Inspection report not comprehensive

According to the MEST Handbook “The Good Principal”, the duties of the inspectors of schools is to visit individual schools and report on their physical facilities and general academic performance.

The Inspectorate School Inspection Form stipulates that inspection reports should provide reliable information that would assist in proper planning for the improvement of school facilities based on the actual situation observed during inspection.

From our review of inspection reports received from councils and the District Education Offices, we noted that inspection reports were not prepared in a manner that would provide the needed information as required in the Inspectorate School Inspection Form.

For instance, the issue of overcrowding as well as the physical condition of school facilities which could be best described as deplorable and which are major concerns for the MEST, were not reported on in any of the inspection reports.

In the absence of relevant information on the status of schools and school facilities, it is difficult to properly plan for the proper running of schools.

Recommendation

The Ministry should ensure that inspection reports are prepared in a manner that would provide relevant information useful for planning purposes and sufficient enough to enable decision makers make informed decisions.

Management’s Response

No comments provided

4. CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Education Science and Technology is the body charged with the responsibility of providing basic quality education for all through the establishment and maintenance of government and government assisted schools as adequate school facilities are key to delivering on this responsibility, and to ensure that the learning environment is child-friendly and that each individual is given the opportunity to realise his or her intellectual potential^{11, 12}. We acknowledge the progress made by the Government of Sierra Leone towards addressing the issue of overcrowding in schools through the 'GoSL, 6-9 Month Early Recovery Priorities' Programme. However, we note the following:

▪ STATUS OF SCHOOL FACILITIES IN LINE WITH NATIONAL STANDARDS

The quality of school facilities are far below the national standards set by the Ministry, and obviously this undermines the quality of education.

- Overcrowding is a very big problem in schools. While a normal classroom ratio is 45 per class, we found out that some classrooms had more than 100 pupils per class!!! . This overcrowding is mainly caused by a disproportionate distribution of pupils to schools by MEST which anomaly saw some schools having only 13 pupils per class while other schools had 177 pupils per class. If MEST distributes pupils in schools proportionately, and ensures that all heads of schools comply accordingly,, this disproportionate level of overcrowding in schools would be significantly reduced to about a manageable 50 pupils per class ¹³.
- WASH facilities are not adequate. Water where it is available, is in limited supply, many of the schools have no hand washing stations and the number of toilets is as low as a ratio of only one drop hole per 144 pupils (on average) Keeping the toilets in a clean and sanitary condition is a major challenge because of the pressure on the limited number of drop holes, and the unavailability or shortage of water as the case may be. The above challenges facing the young learners particularly the girl children, may impact negatively on regularity and in effect prove an impediment to girl's education as many would feel their privacy and personal hygiene is compromised by these challenges.

▪ PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF THE MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

Planning and budgeting for the maintenance of school facilities is grossly inadequate. At Ministry level, no planning and budgeting takes place at all. This explains the reason for the deplorable condition of school facilities as funds cannot be provided for an activity/activities not budgeted for.

¹¹ Education policy, 2010

¹² Education Act, 14 (a)

¹³ The analysis was done based on available complete data from 277 schools in the Western Urban.

▪ **INSPECTION OF SCHOOL FACILITIES**

While there is an Inspection Directorate at MEST which is required to provide reliable information on the status of school facilities, the reality is that the inspection of schools is almost non-existent. For e.g. over a period of 3 years, only 6 inspections were carried out. It is even possible that the Ministry is largely unaware of the status of most school facilities.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF SAMPLED SCHOOLS

No	Category	Council	School Name	Town	Total Population
1	Government Assisted	Port Loko District Council	Bullom Ahmadiyya Secondary School	Masoila	1192
2	Government Assisted	Port Loko District Council	Schlenker Senior Secondary School	Port Loko	955
3	Government Assisted	Makeni City Council	Benevolent Islamic Secondary School	Makeni	1806
4	Government Assisted	Makeni City Council	Saint Francis Senior Secondary School , Makeni	Makeni	1556
5	Government Schools	Makeni City Council	Our Lady Of Fatima Primary R.C. Boys	Makeni	720
6	Government Schools	Port Loko District Council	Roman Catholic Boys Primary School Lunsar	Lunsar	1696
7	Government Schools	Port Loko District Council	A.D Wurie Memorial Secondary School	Lunsar	653
8	Government Schools	Moyamba District Council	Kankaylay Primary School	Gbangbat oke	557
9	Government Schools	Bo District Council	Home Economics Centre Iv	Bo Town	1271
10	Government Assisted	Bo City Council	Methodist High School , Bo City	Bo City	1140
11	Government Schools	Bo City Council	Home Economics Center 11	Bo	881
12	Government Assisted	Moyamba District Council	Ahamadiyya Muslim Primary School Gbangbatoke	Gnangbat oke	735
13	Government Assisted	Bo City Council	Tahir Ahmadiyya Junior Secondary School	Bo	1818
14	Government Assisted	Bo City Council	Ahmadiyya Muslim Senior Sec. School	Bo City	1700
15	Government Assisted	Koidu City Council	Islamic Secondary School	Koidu	1380
16	Government Assisted	Koidu City Council	Koidu Senior Secondary School	Koidu	1169
17	Government Assisted	Kenema City Council	Nasir Ahmadiyya Secondary	Kenema	2370
18	Government Schools	Koidu City Council	Kono Dist. Education Committee	Mbaoma 11	834
19	Government Schools	Kenema City Council	Holy Trinity Junior Secondary	Kenema	1825
20	Government Schools	Kenema City Council	College Secondary Junior Combema	Kenema	1065
21	Government Schools	Kenema City Council	Government Senior Secondary	Kenema	1051
22	Government Assisted	Koidu City Council	Islamic Call Society Primary School	Koakoyim a	738
23	Government School	Freetown City Council	Government Model JSS	Freetown	1460
24	Government Assisted	Freetown City Council	Albert Academy S.S.S.	Freetown	2075
25	Government School	Freetown City Council	Government Rokel S.S.S.	Freetown	1763
26	Government Assisted	Freetown City Council	Richard Allen S.S.S.	Freetown	3843
27	Government Assisted	Freetown City Council	Sierra Leone Muslim Congress Secondary School	Freetown	1614
28	Government School	Freetown City Council	Services Senior Secondary School	Freetown	1904
29	Government Assisted	Western Rural District Council	War Wounded Academy S.S.S	Grafton	653
30	Government Assisted	Western Rural District Council	Salaam Islamic Secondary School	Kossoh Town	1467
31	Government Assisted	Western Rural District Council	Peninsula S.S.S.	Waterloo	1233
32	Government	Western Rural District Council	Rural Education Committee Primary Songo Colony	Songo	225
33	Government Assisted	Western Rural District Council	Sengbe Pieh Memorial Secondary School	Hamilton	614

No	Category	Council	School Name	Town	Total Population
34	Government Assisted	Freetown Council	City Evangelical Mission Primary School	Wellington	475
35	Government Assisted	Freetown Council	City Khulafai Rashideen Islamic Primary School	Wellington	636

APPENDIX 2: SOURCE OF ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Audit question	Assessment criteria
1. Does the status of school facilities comply with the National Education policy 2010?	<p>According to the National Education Policy 2010, it is stated that “each government and government assisted SSS has a well-resourced library facility, have the necessary laboratories, workshops, and equipment for SSS to provide good quality instruction,</p> <p>The Education policy 2010 requires that: The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology shall ensure that JSS must have a recreation ground before recognition and approval to operate.</p> <p>The school inspection form developed by MEST provides what should be part of recreational facilities including: open play ground/area, athletics field, football field/football, volley ball pitch/volley ball, lawn tennis court etc.</p> <p>According to section 18 (g) of the Education Act 2004 accommodations provided at the premises should be adequate and suitable for children. The National Education policy 2010 further requires that the standard number of pupils in a class should not exceed 45.</p> <p>The Standard and Guidelines for Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) in School Policy 2015 clearly set out the guidelines and standards expected of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities that are being implemented in schools in Sierra Leone for pre-primary, primary and secondary institutions</p>
2. Are there proper planning and execution in the maintenance of school facilities?	The Education Act of 2004 section 14 (a) clearly stipulates that the Minister shall establish and maintain government and government assisted schools.
3. Does the Ministry inspect school facilities?	Section 47 (1) of the Education Act state: it shall be the duty of the Minister to cause inspection of every school to be made by inspectors at such intervals as shall be determined by the Minister

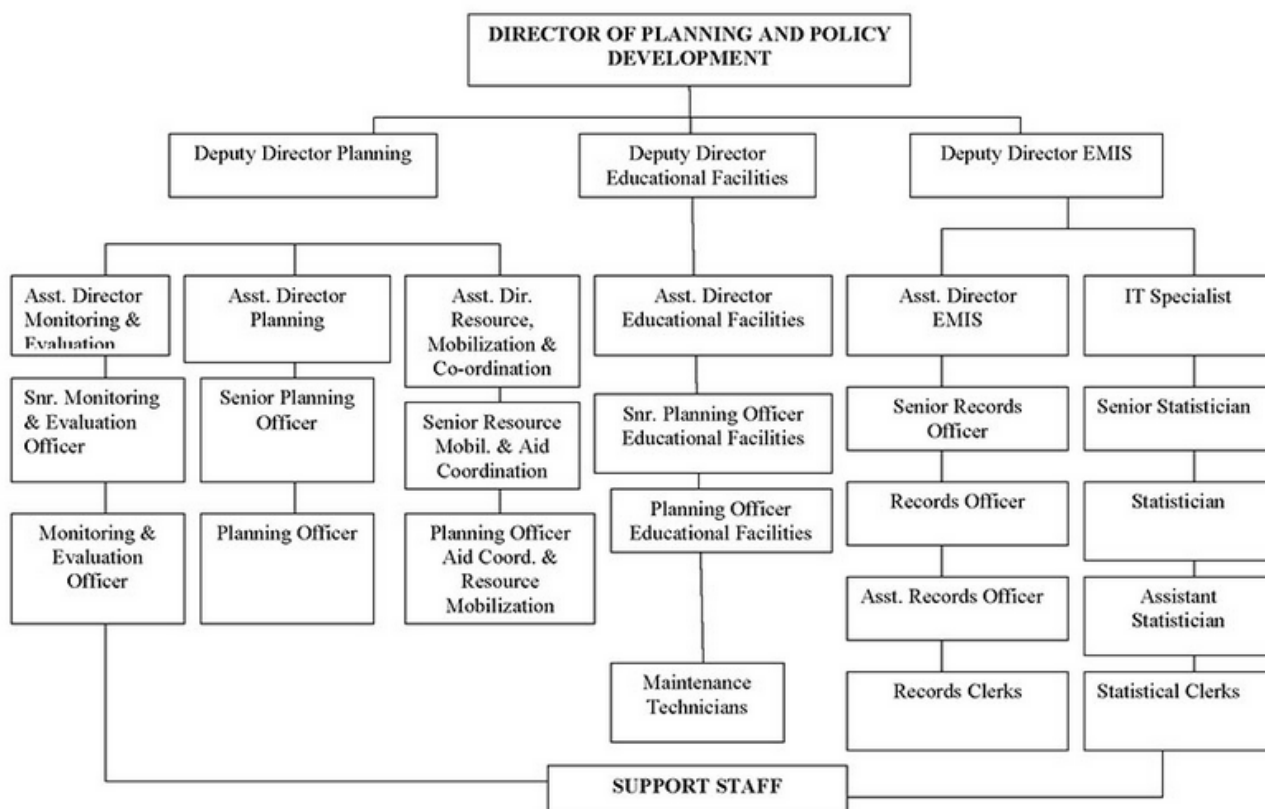
APPENDIX 3: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED AND REASONS FOR THE REVIEW

No	Document Reviewed	Reasons for Review
1	The Education Act, 2004	To understand the acts/regulations that regulate the educational system in the country
2	The Local Government Act, 2004	To ascertain the powers/mandates given to the local councils on education
3	National Decentralization Policy, 2010	To understand the roles and responsibilities of National Decentralization Secretariat in the day to day administration of Local Councils
4	The 2010/11 School Census Report	To collate the number of schools in the country and problems associated with the schools
5	Educational Sector Plan 2007 – 2015	To have a clear understanding on development plans for the educational sector since 2007 and be able to access which has been accomplished.
6	Government of Sierra Leone Inspectorate School Inspection forms	To have a clear understanding on what should be expected as school facilities and to provide reliable data/information on school in the country
7	Reports of City and District Councils	To have a clear understanding on the activities of the operations of the councils towards education.
8	National Education Policy 2010	To have clear guidelines or benchmarks to be implemented in schools.
9	GoSl, 6-9 Month Early Recovery Priorities	To have clear understanding on one of the initiatives in the education sector that geared toward Water Sanitation Hygiene infrastructure in school
10	WASH Policy 2015	To have clear understanding on the guideline and standards that are expected on the Water Sanitation Hygiene facilities in schools.
11	Local Governments Equitable Grants Distribution Formulae and Annual Allocation 2013,2015 &2016	To have a clear understanding on the distribution of Grant to the local councils on behalf of the central government.
12	The Local Government (Assumption of Function) Regulations, 2004	To ascertain the different functions devolved to Local Councils from various MDAs
13	The New Education Policies for Sierra Leone 1995 and 2007	To be able to understand different policies binding education and how they are adhered to.
14	The Constitution of Sierra Leone	To ascertain the rights and mandates given to Audit Service to audit all Local Councils
15	Government White Paper on the Gbamanja Commission of Inquiry	To identify recommendations proffered by the commission for the improvement of the performance of pupils.
16	Inventory of Different Schools	To ascertain the number of furniture in the various school.
17	Budget and actual expenditure submitted from various schools	To ascertain the actual money that was received by the various schools.

APPENDIX 4: LIST OF SCHOOLS THAT DID NOT SUBMIT DOCUMENTS

No	Category	Council	School Name	Town
1	Government Assisted	Freetown City Council	Albert Academy S.S.S.	Freetown
2	Government Assisted	Freetown City Council	Sierra Leone Muslim Congress Secondary School	Freetown
3	Government	Freetown City Council	Services Senior Secondary School	Freetown
4	Government Assisted	Western Rural District Council	War Wounded Academy S.S.S	Graton
5	Government Assisted	Western Rural District Council	Salaam Islamic Secondary School	Kossoh Town
6	Government	Western Rural District Council	Rural Education Committee Primary Songo Colony	Songo

APPENDIX 5: ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE DIRECTORATE OF PLANNING AND POLICY IN MEST



Source: <http://www.education.gov.sl/content/ministry>

APPENDIX 6: PROPOSAL FOR DFID SUPPORT ON CLASSROOMS, WASH CONSTRUCTION AND FURNITURE PROCUREMENT

DISTRICT	No. of School	No. of Pupils	DFID Target 75 secondary schools	DFID Target 225 Classroom	DFID Target Classroom No. JSS	DFID Target Classroom No. SSS	DFID Target Furniture No.	Water needs in Targeted School	Latrine Needs in Targeted School
Bo	347	108354	9	27	18	9	1323	1	0
Bombali	249	96053	8	24	15	9	1176	1	0
Bonthe	116	23083	1	3	3	0	147	0	0
Kailahun	167	51446	6	18	12	6	882	0	0
Kambia	166	45667	5	15	9	6	735	1	0
Kenema	321	91661	6	18	12	6	882	1	0
Koinadugu	110	38262	4	12	9	3	588	1	1
Kono	160	56077	5	15	9	6	735	2	1
Moyamba	192	40189	1	3	3	0	147	0	0
Port Loko	303	92804	9	27	18	9	1323	0	1
Pujehun	147	36973	3	9	6	3	441	2	0
Tonkolili	212	59009	6	18	12	6	882	0	0
Western Rural	80	31806	3	9	6	3	441	0	2
Western Urban	291	135235	9	27	18	9	1323	2	1
Grand Total	2,861	906,619	75	225	150	75	11,025	11	6

APPENDIX 7: LABORATORY STATUS

(A) Functioning laboratories

No	School name	Council	Category
1	Saint Joseph's Senior Secondary School, Makeni	Makeni City Council	Government Assisted
2	Government Senior Secondary School, Kenema	Kenema City Council	Government Schools
3	Government Secondary School BO	BO City Council	Government Schools
4	Ahmadiyya Muslim Senior Secondary School- BO	BO City Council	Government Assisted

(B) Laboratories operating with difficulties because of inadequate equipment

No	School name	Council	Category
1	Koidu Senior Secondary School	Koidu City Council	Government Assisted
2	Bullom Ahmadiyya Secondary School	Port Loko District Council	Government Assisted
3	Benevolent Islamic Secondary School	Makeni City Council	Government Assisted
4	Saint Francis Senior Secondary School , Makeni	Makeni City Council	Government Assisted
5	Schlenker Senior Secondary School	Port Loko District Council	Government Assisted
6	Nasir Ahmadiyya Senior Secondary School – Kenema	Kenema City Council	Government Assisted

(C) Laboratories not operational

No	School name	Council	Category
1	Peninsula S.S.S., Waterloo	Western Rural District Council	Government Assisted
2	Government Model	Freetown City Council	Government Schools
3	Services Senior Secondary School	Freetown City Council	Government Schools
4	Albert Academy S.S.S.	Freetown City Council	Government Assisted
5	Salaam Islamic Secondary School	Western Rural District Council	Government Assisted
6	Government Rokel School	Freetown City Council	Government Schools

(D) Schools without laboratories

No	School name	Council	Category
1	Richard Allen High School	Freetown City Council	Government Assisted
2	War Wounded Academy J.S.S.	Western Rural District Council	Government Schools
3	A.D Wurie Memorial Secondary School	Port Loko District Council	Government Schools
4	Holy Trinity Senior secondary School Kenema	Kenema City Council	Government Schools
5	College Secondary School	Kenema City Council	Government Assisted
6	Islamic Secondary School Koidu	Koidu City Council	Government Assisted
7	Methodist High School –Bo	BO City Council	Government Assisted
8	Ahamadiyya Primary Gbangbatoke	Moyamba District Council	Government Assisted
9	Sengbe Pieh Memorial S.S.S.	Western Rural District Council	Government Schools

APPENDIX 8: STATUS OF LIBRARIES IN SCHOOLS.

A) Schools with Functioning Libraries

No	School Name	Council	Category
1	Ahmadiyya Muslim Senior Secondary School, Bo	Bo City Council	Government Assisted
2	Government Senior Secondary School, Kenema	Kenema City Council	Government School
3	Albert Academy S.S.S.	Freetown City Council	Government Assisted
4	Government Secondary School, BO	Bo City Council	Government School

B) Schools with Libraries that cannot accommodate 40 pupils

No	School Name	Council	Category
1	Government Model JSS, Freetown	Freetown City Council	Government School
2	Services Senior Secondary School, Freetown	Freetown City Council	Government School
3	Peninsula S.S.S., Waterloo	Western Rural District Council	Government Assisted
4	Richard Allen High School	Freetown City Council	Government Assisted
5	Saint Joseph Secondary School	Makeni City Council	Government Assisted

C) Schools which Libraries are not Functional

No	School Name	Council	Category
1	Schlenker Senior Secondary School	Port Loko District Council	Government Assisted
2	Saint Francis Senior Secondary School, Makeni	Makeni City Council	Government Assisted
3	Roman Catholic Boys Primary School Lunsar	Port Loko District Council	Government Schools
4	A.D Wurie Memorial Secondary School	Port Loko District Council	Government Schools
5	Koidu Senior Secondary School	Koidu City Council	Government Assisted
6	Salaam Islamic Secondary School	Western Rural District Council	Government Assisted
7	Sierra Leone Muslim Congress Secondary School	Freetown City Council	Government Assisted
8	Government Rokel Secondary School	Freetown City Council	Government Schools

D) School without Libraries

No	School Name	Council	Category
1	Bullom Ahmadiyya Secondary School	Port Loko District Council	Government Assisted
2	Benevolent Islamic Secondary School	Makeni City Council	Government Assisted
3	Our Lady Of Fatima Primary R.C. Boys	Makeni City Council	Government Schools
4	War Wounded Academy Secondary School	Western Rural District Council	Government Schools
5	Tahir Ahmadiyya Junior Secondary School	Bo City Council	Government Assisted
6	Islamic Secondary School	Koidu City Council	Government Assisted
7	Kono Dist. Education Committee	Koidu City Council	Government

No	School Name	Council	Category
			Schools
8	Holy Trinity Junior Secondary	Kenema City Council	Government Schools
9	Islamic Call Society Primary School	Koidu City Council	Government Assisted
10	Sengbe Pieh Memorial Secondary School	Western Rural District Council	Government Assisted
11	Khulafai Rashideen Islamic Primary School	Freetown City Council	Government Assisted
12	Kankaylay Primary School	Moyamba District Council	Government Schools
13	Methodist High School , Bo City	Bo City Council	Government Assisted
14	College Secondary Junior Combema	Kenema City Council	Government Schools
15	Rural Education Committee Primary Songo Colony	Western Rural District Council	Government School
16	Evangelical Mission Primary School	Freetown City Council	Government Assisted
17	Ahamadiyya Muslim Primary School Gbangbatoke	Moyamba District Council	Government Assisted
18	Nasir Ahmadiyya Secondary	Kenema City Council	Government Assisted

APPENDIX 9: SCHOOLS THAT SPENT ON MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

No.	Name of School	Maintenance Cost 2015/2016 (Le)
1	Government Secondary School Kenema	25,214,000
2	Holy Trinity Junior Secondary School	13,170,000
3	College Secondary School, Kenema	2,000,000
4	Koidu Secondary School	24,445,000
5	Methodist High School. Bo	2,750,000
6	Benevolent Islamic Secondary. School Makeni	8,500,000
7	St. Francis Senior Secondary. Sch. Makeni	18,395,000
8	A. D Wurie Memorial Sec. School. Lunsar	17,000,000
9	Richard Allen Secondary School Freetown	18,875,000
10	St. Joseph Senior Sec. School. Makeni	1,800,000
11	Bullom Ahmadiyya Secondary School Lungi	24,445,000
12	Model Government Secondary School	25,715,500
13	Islamic Call Society Primary School	4,758,000
14	Peninsula Senior Secondary School	16,567,000
15	Sengbeh Pieh Memorial Secondary. School	11,500,000
16	Our lady of Fatima Primary School Makeni	6,168,000

APPENDIX 10: MINISTRY OF EDUCATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY RESPONSES ON PERFORMANCE AUDIT DRAFT REPORT

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT ON THE MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL FACILITIES:

1) Overcrowding in Schools and Insufficient Furniture in

Schools: The Ministry has a Policy of class size in Primary Schools as 45 and 35 for Secondary. This policy needs to be reviewed to accommodate the growing number of school age pupils. There are not much government schools especially at the secondary level to accommodate the pupils that pass their National Primary School Examination from over 7,000 primary schools compared to less than 1,500 Junior Secondary Schools and less than 500 Senior Secondary Schools, so government relies on Missions and other private individuals to provide schools in most districts. In most cases, the proprietors of the schools admit pupils in their schools who are mostly rejected by other schools due to may be not having the requisite requirement to enter those schools. Note also that MEST can only place pupils in Government Schools and not private schools. The Ministry with support from the DFID/UK has constructed additional 330 classrooms to most of the critically overcrowded schools during the 10-24- months post-ebola Presidential Recovery Priorities. Additionally, the Ministry through the support of funds from the Saudi King has also awarded contracts for the construction of 215 classrooms nationwide. The construction of the additional classrooms was also accompanied with the provision of furniture for the constructed classrooms. It should also be noted that for some time now, Government has not

allocated any funds to the Ministry for construction of schools and even for the provision of furniture. Every year the Ministry submits proposal for Development Budget to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development for construction and fabrication of furniture for schools but no allocation is made to the Ministry to undertake development projects.

2) Combination of Two Different Classes in one Classroom:

For some time now, there has been a moratorium on the recruitment of teachers and what usually happens in the case where a school does not have enough teachers the Administration resort to multi-grade teaching methodology where in one teacher can put two different classes and teach simultaneously.

3) Physical Conditions of Classrooms: Before establishing a school the proprietor or the individual should first of all write to the Local Council in the case of primary school and the Local Council should in turn write to the Ministry for site inspection as per our legal instruments. Most of the time, this procedure is not adhered to and they proceed to establish a school to commence operations. A year or two later they will now write to the Ministry for approval. Most of these schools do not comply with the standards as stipulated for construction of schools and that is why you see some schools have classrooms that are very dark and have little or no ventilation.

Government gives primary schools fees subsidy per child and this money is expected to be used for minor repairs to their schools. For secondary schools, they collect tuition fees and such fees are

managed by Board of Governors, this body should ensure that repairs are done to either the physical school structure or the furniture.

a) **WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE FACILITIES IN SCHOOLS (WASH):**

The Ministry will ensure that the developed Standards and Guidelines for WASH in schools will be adhered to by all our Partners that will be providing these facilities to schools. MEST together with the Ministry of Water Resources will ensure that the constructions of hand-dug wells are done between the months of March and April to avoid seasonality. After the outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease, the Ministry together with our Partners distributed hygiene kits to all the schools nationwide. Some schools were even provided with water tanks to keep running water throughout and schools without hand-dug wells benefited from water harvesting facility to help them with water.

b) **PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES:**

The 2004 Education Act and the Revised 2010 Education Policy needs to be reviewed and when this is done, the Ministry will also develop guidelines on the Policy and the Act which will take into consideration the maintenance of schools.

The Schools are mostly owned by proprietors and in most cases, they collect fees from the pupils, and they also have some managing bodies who determine what happens with funds raised by the schools. The School Management

Committees in the case of primary schools and the Board of Governors are the ones that prepare plan and budget for the running of the schools. The Ministry through the Act gives this authority to these bodies to manage the school the Ministry at the central planning does not prepare plan of budget for individual school repairs but rather budget for educational programmes and services.

Where the repair is major, the Ministry through its every year Annual School Census data collection will identify schools that needs major repairs and this information are usually shared with our Development Partners who support either construction or rehabilitation as the case may be.

Through the Local Councils, there is allocation under grants to educational institutions. These funds are expected to be used by the Local Councils and the Deputy Directors of Education in the districts to rehabilitate schools that are in need of repairs and also furniture.

MEST will work with the Local Council to put a percentage of educational grants for repair to schools.

4) IRREGULAR FEES SUBSIDY TO PRIMARY SCHOOLS: The Ministry of Finance and Economic Development is charged with the responsibility of disbursing funds to all sectors of government. The Ministry works with Heads of Schools on the correctness of their schools bank details and will ensure that the list of schools for payment is prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on a timely manner.

5) INADEQUATE LABORATORY FACILITIES IN SCHOOLS

Before the war, many schools used to have fairly well equipped laboratories but the war virtually wrecked all of such facilities and considering setting up and procuring laboratory equipment, this still remains a huge challenge.

MEST is however procuring small quantities of reagents and apparatus on a yearly basis and supplying to schools in turns.

6) INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS FACILITIES. IRREGULAR

INSPECTION OF SCHOOL MEST believes that the number of schools sampled for the purpose of this study is too small to warrant generalization. We however concede that owing to the small number of staff at our Inspectorate Office country wide, we are unable to conduct the required number of inspections. Appeals have been made to the Public Service Commission for recruitment of staff but this request is yet to receive favourable consideration. I wish to state however that with support from UNICEF, MEST implements cluster monitoring activities in these six districts country wide and in these districts effective supervision is undertaken and reports are available to the effect.