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Performance Audit Report of the Auditor-General on the Management of the Education of Children with Special Needs



Good Governance and Accountability

This report has been prepared in compliance with Article 187(2) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana and Section 13(e) of the Audit Service Act, 2000 (Act 584) for submission to Parliament in accordance with Section 20 of the Act.

**Johnson Akuamoah Asiedu
Auditor-General
Ghana Audit Service
05 May, 2022**

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TRANSMITTAL LETTER

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5 May 2022

Dear Rt. Hon. Speaker,

PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL ON THE MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

I have the honour, in accordance with Article 187(2) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, Sections 13(e) and 16 of the Audit Service Act, 2000 (Act 584) to present to you a performance audit report on the management of education of children with special needs in the country.

2. In 2015, GH¢47.2 million (0.6%) of GH¢7.7 billion recurrent expenditure was spent on Inclusive Education (IE). Out of the GH¢47.2 million, GH¢32.4 million was allocated to children with disabilities in special schools while GH¢14.8 million was for children with disability in regular schools.

3. The Ministry of Education (MOE) Sector Analysis Report, 2018 indicated that Inclusive and Special Education was severely underfunded compared to other sectors.

4. In the light of these challenges associated with providing education for children with special needs, the Auditor-General, in line with Sections 13e and 19 of the Audit Service Act, 2000 (Act 584), commissioned a performance audit into the Management of the Education of Children with special needs to determine whether SpED has ensured that children with special needs are given the required education to enable them to live near-normal lives.
5. We carried out the audit at SpED and focused on awareness-raising on children with special needs, assessment activities as well as conditions (staff capacity, teaching and learning materials and appropriateness of infrastructure) to provide the required education to the children with special needs. We carried out the audit in the Greater Accra, Central, Western, Eastern, Ashanti, Ahafo, Bono and Upper West Regions of Ghana covering the period 2015 to 2021.
6. We noted that Special Schools to some extent undertook awareness creation during PTA, SMC meetings and other outreach programmes which were sponsored by benevolent individuals or institutions. SpED also collaborated with stakeholders to raise awareness at some public forums.
7. We also found that Assessment Centres were in all the regions, but Greater Accra and Western Regional Centres were uncompleted and where they were, they did not have the full complement of assessors, assessment, and assistive devices to ensure that the children were assessed.
8. Teacher to student ratios across the schools we visited was high, above the standard ratios of 1: 15 and 1:30 for basic and second cycle education respectively but lacked the required special educators in the schools to attend to the needs of the children.
9. Our audit also revealed that Teaching and Learning Materials (TLM) in the special schools were either not adequate, not functioning or not available in some schools to aid teaching and learning which affected teaching deliveries and learning in the special schools.
10. During the audit, we found that infrastructural facilities at the Special Schools were not disability friendly and some of the buildings were in poor conditions because they were not being maintained.

11. I have made recommendations to GES, the details of which are in this report to bring about improvement in their activities.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Johnson Asiedu', with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

JOHNSON AKUAMOAH ASIEDU
AUDITOR-GENERAL

THE RT. HON. SPEAKER
OFFICE OF PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENT HOUSE
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CWSN	Children With Special Needs
DSW	Department of Social Welfare
ENT	Ear, Nose and Throat
GES	Ghana Education Service
GoG	Government of Ghana
HI	Hearing Impairments
ICT	Information Communication Technology
ID	Intellectual Disability
IE	Inclusive Education
IEP	Inclusive Education Policy
IEP	Individualised Educational Plans
IGF	Internally Generated Fund
KG	Kindergarten
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
MDAs	Ministries, Department and Agencies
MOE	Ministry of Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SMCs	School Management Committees

SpED	Special Education Division
SRC	Students Representative Council
TLMSs	Teaching and Learning Materials
UDL RTI	Universal Design for Learning Reponse to Interventions
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
VI	Visual Impairments

Executive Summary

Children with Special Needs (CWSN) access to right care, facilities and opportunities during their childhood determines largely their future. The rights of these children to education are important because, with proper care and education they can live near to normal lives. These children have various forms of disabilities, which ranges from those with hearing and visual impairments as well as intellectual developmental disabilities. There are some with speech and language impairment, which makes it difficult for them to express themselves or understand others.

2. The Special Education Division (SpED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) plays a lead role in ensuring that CWSN are given the required education. SpED screen and assess the CWSN for learning difficulties and place them in special or general schools depending on their levels of impairment.

What we did

3. The audit was carried out to determine whether SpED has ensured that children with special needs are given the required education to enable them to live near to normal lives. We reviewed documents, conducted interviews, and inspected selected special schools and assessment centres. This was to enable us gather data with respect to our audit scope (availability of assessment devices, assistive devices and assessors, teachers, teaching and learning materials and infrastructural facilities at the special schools). The audit was carried out from December 2020 to January 2021.

What we found and recommendations

Awareness raising on the needs of special children

4. SpED collaborated with stakeholders to raise awareness at some public forums. The Special Schools raised awareness at the school level to identify children with special needs at the beginning of the academic year. However, these activities at the special schools, were not budgeted for and so they do not engage in yearly planned awareness raising activities.

5. We recommended that the SpED should engage more with its stakeholders to raise awareness on special children to the public, to increase awareness level of the needs of special children, the existence of special schools and build tolerance in the Ghanaian populace.

Assessment Centres for the assessment of children with special needs

6. SpED did not establish assessment centres in all the regions sampled and visited. The available assessment centres did not have the full complement of the Assessors and assessment devices to ensure that the children were assessed.

7. We recommended that the SpED should:

- *through the Director-General of GES, liaise with the Ministry of Education to ensure the completion of the national and western regional assessment centres.*
- *ensure that the regional and district educational directorates takes the initiative of having assessment centres in all the regions and districts without assessment centres.*
- *liaise with Human Resource Unit of GES and the GHS to make the assessors for visual impairments and intellectual disabilities available at the assessment centres.*
- *Provide the assessment centres with the needed assessment devices to facilitate their basic assessment of the children.*

Conditions existing for teaching and learning at the special schools

8. The teacher to student ratios across the schools visited was high and above the standard ratios of 1:15 and 1:30 for basic and second cycle education respectively. The teachers trained in regular education instead of special education had difficulty in handling and communicating with the children with special needs.

9. We recommended that the GES/SpED should:

- *motivate Teachers to undertake courses in special education.*
- *train the regular Teachers posted to the special schools in the communication skills they need in explaining concepts to the children in the various impairment levels.*

Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs)

10. The TLMs in the special schools were either not adequate, not functioning or not available in some schools to aid teaching and learning. This affects teaching deliveries and learning in the special schools.

11. We recommended that SpED should take measures to address the unavailability, inadequacies and faulty teaching and learning materials at the special schools to improve on teaching and learning.

Inappropriate infrastructure facilities in the Special Schools

12. The infrastructural facilities at the Special schools were not disability friendly and some of the buildings were in poor conditions because they were not being maintained. There was inadequate furniture in the classrooms, some doors and windows were not well secured, and the toilet pots at the dormitories had leakages and broken seats.

13. We recommended that the SpED should:

- *take measures to ensure the management of the special schools renovate and maintain their existing buildings that are not disable friendly.*
- *collaborate with the Planning department of GES to prioritise and undertake repairs and maintenance in the special schools.*

14. SpED responded to the audit finding. According to their management, the special schools carry out awareness raising through their PTAs, durbars and my first day at school. Also, they have assessment centres in all the 10 old regions except the 6 newly created ones. Though the Greater Accra and Western regional centres were still not completed at the time of our audits. Adding, the right conditions also exit for learning and teaching at the special school, but our audit period showed challenge with teaching and learning materials as well as poor infrastructural conditions at the schools. Details of their responses is attached as *Appendix 'D'* in the report.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Article 29 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, define a child as a human being below the age of eighteen. Section 59 of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006 (Act 715) defines a disabled person as ‘an individual with a physical, mental, or sensory impairment including a visual, hearing or speech functional disability. This situation gives rise to physical, cultural, or social barriers that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of that individual. Children with disabilities require special care to enable them to obtain similar privileges and opportunities like those without disabilities as such they are referred to as Children with special needs.

2. Children with special needs’ access to right care, facilities and opportunities during their childhood determines largely their future. The disabilities cause them to develop more slowly than children without disabilities. Children with special needs include those with intellectual developmental disabilities, speech, and language impairment, such as difficulty in expressing themselves or understanding others. Other conditions include Physical disability, such as vision problem or cerebral palsy. Some have learning disabilities (dyslexia, dyscalculia), which distort messages from their senses while others have emotional disabilities, such as antisocial or other behavioural problems.

3. Parents and government institutions are to fulfil the basic needs of children with special needs including the right - to food, clothing, shelter, entertainment and more importantly, right to education. The right to education is often a challenge especially for children with special needs in most developing countries, including Ghana. The rights of children with special needs to education are important because, with proper care and education they can live near to normal lives despite their disabilities.

1.1 Reasons for the Audit

4. Ghana ratified the treaty on inclusive education and have introduced a nationwide inclusive education policy since 2008. The policy works to enforce the

rights of children with disabilities to an education, and to educate parents through community sensitisation programmes on disabilities.

5. The Special Education Division (SpED) of the Ghana Education Service (GES) is responsible for ensuring that children are screened and assessed for learning difficulties, placed in special or general schools depending on their levels of impairment. The SpED collaborates with stakeholders such as National Council for persons with disability, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide financial support, awareness raising and learning interventions for special schools.

6. Many communities in Ghana have traditional perceptions of persons with disabilities. Children born with intellectual disabilities were generally believed to be 'children of the rivers and forest. Many parents have little or no knowledge on how to educate their children with special needs. Sometimes, they do not have the resources to support this special need. Most of these children, especially those with cerebral palsy or autism are locked up in homes, to prevent others from knowing their conditions because of the associated stigma thereby making such children shy away from society and do not enjoy childhood and other societal privileges.

7. Disabled groups make up about 3% of Ghana's population of 25 million¹. Approximately 100,000 Ghanaian children aged 6-14 have a disability and more than 16,000 of these children are out of school². Children with disabilities are often left at home, unable to go outside or to go to school. According to Ghana's 2010 Population and Housing Census data, one child in every three has a disability and is not in school because of it.

8. The SpED with support from UNICEF organised a forum in Cape Coast in 2013. Among the participants were Directors of education, heads of special needs schools and other stakeholders. The Director of SpED said at the forum that the estimated number of children with special needs were 6,314. Out of this number, less than 126 (2%) were in special schools and units across the country and requested that more had to be done to provide education for children with special needs.

¹ Ghana Statistical Service. 2012. "2010 Population and Housing Census". Accra: Ghana Statistical Service

² Source: <https://www.volunteerworld.com/en/volunteer-program/caring-for-disabled-children-in-ghana>

9. In an article published by myjoyonline.com on 8 October 2014 ‘Neglected Wa School for the deaf calls for help’, the headmaster of the school lamented that apart from the school dormitories, the over 40 acres campus of the school had no lights. This is worrying he added that the pupils communicate through sign language and facial expressions, something that is difficult to interpret without adequate visibility, and especially at night without lights.

10. On the 2nd of November 2020, CITI Tv News reported on ‘Visually impaired students decry inadequate logistics at facility in Wa,’ the students at the Wa Methodist School for the blind lamented about the absence of basic teaching and learning materials. While they complained about their textbooks being out of date, the recently supplied ones to the school were not appropriate for the blind because they were not in braille.

11. Government of Ghana is investing resources to address these issues on the national scale. In 2015, GH¢47.2 million (0.6%) of the GH¢7.7 billion recurrent expenditure was spent on Inclusive Education (IE). Out of the GH¢47.2 million, GH¢32.4 million was allocated to children with disabilities in special schools while GH¢14.8 million was for children with disability in regular schools³. The Ministry of Education (MOE) Sector Analysis Report, 2018 indicated that Inclusive and Special Education was severely underfunded compared to other sectors.

12. In the light of these challenges associated with providing education for children with special needs, the Auditor-General, in line with Sections 13e and 19 of the Audit Service Act, 2000 (Act 584), commissioned a performance audit into the Management of the Education of Children with special needs.

1.2 Purpose and Scope

1.2.1 Purpose

13. To determine whether SpED has ensured that children with special needs are given the required education to enable them to live near normal lives. The required education in this context means:

- *awareness raising to the public (parents, communities, and institutions) on special children and their educational and social needs,*

³ Source: Sector Analysis Report (2018) of the Ministry of Education (Page 67)

- *assessment of children with special needs and placement into appropriate schools, and*
- *conditions put in place for the special schools.*

1.2.2 Scope

14. The audit was carried out at SpED, and we focused on awareness raising on children with special needs, assessment activities as well as conditions (staff capacity, teaching and learning materials and appropriateness of infrastructure) to provide the required education to the children with special needs. The team carried out the audit in the Greater Accra, Central, Western, Eastern, Ashanti, Ahafo, Bono and Upper West Regions of Ghana. We selected these regions based on the special schools across the country and we wanted to ensure that the sample was representative of the entire country. The audit was carried out between December 2020 to January 2021 and covered the period 2015 to 2021.

1.3 Audit Objectives

15. The main audit objectives are to determine whether:
- i. *SpED had collaborated with other organisations to raise awareness to the public on children with special needs,*
 - ii. *measures put in place by SpED have ensured that children are assessed, and*
 - iii. *SpED had put conditions in place for the special schools to facilitate teaching and learning.*

1.4 Audit Questions and Assessment Criteria

16. The audit questions we sought to answer with the corresponding assessment and sources of criteria are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Audit Questions and Assessment Criteria

No.	Audit Question	Assessment Criteria	Source of criteria
1.	How has SpED collaborated to raise awareness to the public on children with special needs?	We expect SpED to raise awareness among the public (parents, communities, and institutions) on special needs children. SpED is also to create platforms for PTAs, SMCs, and other stakeholders to discuss and understand IE issues.	Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Accountability Handbook and Policy Objective 2 and 3, Inclusive Education Policy (IEP) 2015; International best practice on awareness raising ⁴ .
2.	How has SpED put measures in place to ensure children are assessed?	SpED is required to improve and adapt education and related systems and structures to ensure the inclusion of all learners particularly learners with special educational needs.	Policy Objective 1, IEP
3.	What learning conditions has SpED put in place to ensure the effective running of the special schools?	SpED is required to provide conditions such as staff, teaching and learning materials, and infrastructure at the special schools	IEP, 2015

1.5 Audit Standards Used

17. The audit was carried out in accordance with INTOSAI standards. These standards require that the audit is planned and performed to obtain sufficient and appropriate evidence. This will provide a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions based on audit objectives. It is believed that according to the audit objectives, the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for the findings and conclusions reached.

1.6 How the Audit was carried out

18. We considered three different types of impairments (*Visual Impairments – (VI)*, *Hearing Impairments – (HI)* and *Intellectual Disability – (ID)*) to scope. The Eastern and Upper West Regions were selected because they are the only regions with special schools exclusively for the blind. Regional assessment centres were selected based on the locations of the special schools we visited. The schools and assessment centres visited is attached as *Appendix ‘A’*.

⁴ Source: Sustainable Development Goal Accountability Handbook (Raising awareness through public outreach campaigns)

19. We collected data using documents review, interviews as well as physical inspection and observation as evidence to support our findings.

1.6.1 Documents Review

20. We reviewed documents and files to understand the policies, programmes and activities for the management and education of the children with special needs. The documents are:

- *Inclusive Education Policy,*
- *Inclusive Education Policy, Implementation Plan 2015-2019,*
- *Education strategic plan 2018,*
- *Standards and Guidelines for practice of inclusive education in Ghana, 2015,*
- *Annual Reports (2015 to 2019),*
- *Monitoring reports (2015 to 2019),*
- *Screening and assessment reports, and*
- *2010 population and housing census report.*

1.6.2 Interviews

21. We interviewed the Director of SpED and the unit heads at SpED to seek clarification on issues identified during documents review and visits to the special schools and assessment centres. We interviewed headteachers and used focused group discussion to interact with the teachers at the special schools visited to solicit their perspectives with respect to the audit areas.

1.6.3 Physical Inspections

22. We sampled and visited ten Assessment Centres and 14 Special Schools (*attached as Appendix 'A'*). At the assessment centres, we inspected the assessment and assistive devices⁵ available and the rooms for carrying out assessments. We also inspected the special schools to find out the facilities available and user conditions.

⁵ Audiometer, otoscope, acoustically treated room, Snell charts, tossing rings

CHAPTER TWO

MANAGEMENT OF THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

2.1 Historical Background

23. Special Education Development in Ghana started from 1936 when Missionaries attempted at providing special education to children with disabilities. In 1945, the Basel Mission, a Christian missionary society, established the first special school for children with disabilities in Ghana focusing first on children with visual and orthopaedic impairment (blindness, and then on deaf students). In 1948, the Presbyterian and the Methodist Churches established the second special school for blind students at Wa, in the Upper West Region. The special schools at the time, mainly offered literacy courses, and training in how to weave baskets using local materials (Anson-Yevu Victor, 1988; Avoke Mawuto, 2001)⁶.

24. The Government of Ghana (GoG) took the responsibility of catering for the educational needs of children with disabilities in 1957, when Ghana became independent. However, full responsibility did not begin until the passage of the Educational Act of 1961. The Educational Act stated that the GoG should provide compulsory and free basic education for all Ghanaian children, including children with disabilities. The Ministry of Education (MoE) took over the administration of special education in the late 1960s (*Anthony Jane and Kwadade Doris, 2006*), and in 1970, the Special Education Unit (*currently known as the Special Education Division*) of GES assumed full responsibility for special schools (Anson-Yevu Victor, 1988). In 1988, the GoG established 17 special schools for students with deafness, blindness, and intellectual disabilities⁷. The number of special schools in the country is now 48 as at 2020.

⁶ www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedudev (*International journal of educational development 41(2015) 143-152*)

⁷ www.elsevier.com/locate/ijedudev (*International journal of educational development 41(2015) 143-152*)

2.2 Mandate, Vision, Mission and Functions of SpED

2.2.1 Mandate

25. The Special Education Division (SpED) works towards the creation of equal opportunities for learners and young people with disabilities and Special Educational Needs at the pre-tertiary level through the efficient management of resources, provision of suitable and sustainable support structures in an inclusive school environment.

2.2.2 Vision

26. To increase access to quality education and training of learners and young people with disabilities and special educational needs in an Inclusive School Environment leading to employable skills for economic and independent living.

2.2.3 Mission

27. To work towards the creation for equal educational opportunities for learners and young people with disabilities and special educational needs through the promotion of suitable and sustainable support structures in an inclusive school environment.

2.2.4 Functions of the Special Education Division of GES

28. The functions of the Special Education Division of GES are to:

- *collaborate with stakeholders to raise awareness on special children (their needs, available special schools, and public acceptance of these children)*
- *screen and assess children for early identification, correct placement in schools and other interventional measures,*
- *provide educational facilities and services for children and young people with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs (SEN),*
- *provide appropriate Teaching and Learning Materials and Assistive Devices for learners at the pre-tertiary level,*
- *transcribe textbooks and other reading materials into Braille,*

- *build the capacity of Special Education Teachers across the sector at the pre-tertiary level,*
- *ensure and facilitate the timely release of feeding grants to special schools,*
- *facilitate effective administration of Special Schools, and*
- *supervise and monitor special schools and units.*

2.3 Organisational Structure of SpED

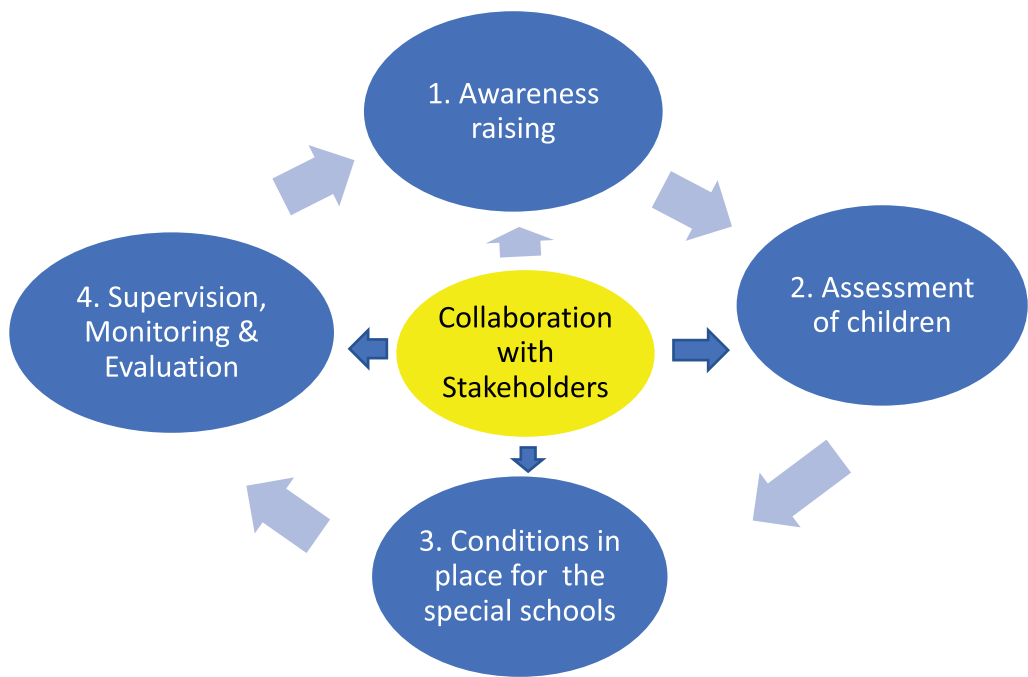
29. The organisational structure of SpED in relation to management and education of Children with special needs has been attached as *Appendix 'B.'*

2.4 System Description

30. The SpED is responsible for ensuring that special needs children are identified, and given the appropriate intervention, to enable the children live near normal lives. The intervention is dependent on the levels of impairment. These are categorised into mild, moderate, severe, and profound. Thus, a child will be given the needed intervention – which may be in the form of assistive devices or placed in general or special schools. SpED also oversees the running of the special schools in the country.

31. The system begins with awareness raising on Special Children; Assessment of children; Placement of children in appropriate schools; resourcing the special schools, supervision, monitoring & Evaluation to provide support to the course of these children. This is shown as *Figure 1.*

Figure 1: System description of the management of the education of children with special needs



2.4.1 Awareness raising

32. The head and staff of the special schools, and Assessors at the assessment centres and the unit heads of SpED carry out awareness raising to sensitise the public (parents, communities, and institutions) to help them understand and accept children with special needs. They also sensitise the children with special needs about their rights to enable them to integrate in society. Awareness raising activities include organising sensitisation workshops for educators, parents, School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Department of Social Welfare (DSW) and children with special needs; Ministries, Department and Agencies (MDAs) on the need for inter-sectoral collaboration in resolving SEN issues at the district level; developing awareness raising materials for educational personnel.

33. The media for awareness raising are through radio, television, PTA meetings, outreach programmes at churches, communities, and durbars. The awareness raising exercise is carried out at the beginning of the academic year to enable parents make informed decision about the type of school their children can access.

2.4.2 Assessment of Children

34. The Assessment of children includes screening and diagnosis of children to enable the assessors identify the children with special needs. Screening is the basic assessment carried on the children by observing their appearance, behaviour and through complaints to identify their special needs. Parents, teachers, and assessors can screen the children at this stage. After a child has been screened and identified as having a special need, the child is sent to the Assessment centre for diagnosis to determine the level of impairment.

35. The level of impairment may be mild, moderate, severe, or profound, and determines whether the child should be provided with an assistive device or placed in a special school. The Assessors refer Children with severe conditions to a public or private institution with specialists such as Clinical psychologist, Physiotherapist, Speech therapist, Ophthalmologist, Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) for further diagnosis.

36. The Assessors recommend the children for placement in the appropriate special school after they have ascertained the level of their impairment, which could be severe or profound. The special schools in Ghana are for the hearing impaired, visually impaired, and intellectual and developmental disability.

2.4.3 Conditions in place for the Special Schools

37. The unit heads at SpED identify and put in place necessary conditions that should exist in the special schools. This they do, through monitoring, annual reports of the special schools, and correspondence with the heads of the special schools. The SpED provides the resources such as infrastructure, staff, teaching and learning materials in the special schools to ensure good conditions exist for the education of these special children.

38. Infrastructural facilities such as ramps and rails are provided to ensure the safety of children at special schools. SpED provides learning equipment, materials and ensures that teachers are equipped with child-centred teaching methods. GES (SpED) also build capacity through continuous professional development for teachers as well as orientation, modular courses for other educational personnel (head teachers, school support staff), and related administrators at district and regional levels.

2.4.4 Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation of the special schools

39. The unit heads of SpED carry out the supervision activities which includes overseeing classroom activity of every school and pupils/learners' performance. Monitoring is done to track progress of inclusive education and identify the needs of the special schools. The Monitoring team of SpED comprises the Director, unit heads, regional and district special education coordinators. The evaluation activities are developing monitoring and evaluation tools for all institutions, conducting periodic review meeting of all stakeholders on school performance targets at national, regional, district and schools' levels. The officers at SpED carry out these exercises twice in a year in each of the special schools.

2.4.5 Collaboration with Stakeholders

40. The Director and unit heads of SpED serve as coordinating agency under the MoE, helping to facilitate collaboration between governments, key stakeholder, and their partners. These may include parents, teachers, institutions, non-governmental organisations, District Assemblies as well as private entities to enable them to play their respective roles in ensuring that children with special needs are given the required education. The officers of SpED and the heads of the special schools collaborate with the relevant stakeholders in terms of raising awareness, enhancing assessment of children, and providing resources for the special schools. The officers of SpED are required to enhance participation of all stakeholders in planning, implementation, and coordination of Inclusive Education (IE) through effective advocacy and dissemination strategies for persons with SENs.

2.5 Key Players, Stakeholders, and their responsibilities

41. The key Players, Stakeholders and their responsibilities are attached as *Appendix 'C.'*

2.6 Funding

42. The main sources of funds for the SpED are Government of Ghana (GoG) and Donor (UNICEF). Table 2 shows approved budget, actual funds received and expenditure on special education from GOG and UNICEF between 2015 and 2020.

Table 2: GOG/UNICEF approved budget, actuals, and expenditure on special education (2015 to 2020)

Year	GOG		UNICEF		
	Approved Budget (GH¢)	Actual Receipt (GH¢)	Actual Expenditure (GH¢)	Requested/ Received (GH¢)	Expenditure (GH¢)
2015	6,541,620.00	2,028,730.90	2,028,064.50	478,192.45	478,192.45
2016	6,629,700.00	3,500,000.00	3,500,000.00	893,609.00	893,609.00
2017	7,696,508.40	7, 638,418.00	7,638,418.00	271,918.00	271,918.00
2018	11,469,168.50	7,174,684.20	7,147,162.40	264,294.80	241,957.40
2019	14,048,628.00	13,814,628.00	13,221,259.00	210,351.02	205,681.02
2020	12,825,944.00	4,061,623.72	4,061,623.72	924,444.88	924,693.50
Total	59,211,568.90	38, 218,084.82	37,596,527.62	3,042,810.15	3,016,051.37

Source: Accounts office/SpED of GES (29 April 2021)

43. From 2015 to 2020, Parliament approved GH¢59,211,568.90 for the education of children with special needs. Out of the approved amount GOG released GH¢38,218,084.82 (64.54%) to SpED, and expended GH¢37,596,527.62 (98.40%) at the special schools for feeding and administrative grants. The SpED made a request of GH¢3,042,810.15 from the UNICEF to fund specific activities over the period 2015 to 2020 which was granted in full. The SpED had a surplus of GH¢648,315.98 on its total receipt over total expenditure from GOG/UNICEF for the period 2015 to 2020.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Introduction

44. The Special Education Division (SpED) of the GES was established to promote the education of children with special needs. The SpED does this by collaborating with relevant stakeholders to raise awareness, assessing, and placing the children in the appropriate schools, providing conditions for learning, and teaching as well as monitoring of the special schools.

45. We found the following after our visits to the special schools and our interactions with officials at the assessment centres and the SpED of GES. We have outlined the findings under these thematic areas:

- ❖ *Awareness raising on the needs of special children.*
- ❖ *Assessment Centres for the assessment of children with special needs.*
- ❖ *Conditions existing for teaching and learning at the special schools.*

3.2 Awareness raising on the needs of special children

46. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Accountability Handbook⁸ defines awareness raising as a process that seeks to inform and educate people about a topic or issue with the intention of influencing their attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs towards the achievement of a defined purpose or goal. Awareness raising is carried out by identifying the problem to address, the objectives, target groups or audience, issues, and activities to consider in delivering a message.

47. Some of the activities that can be carried out on awareness raising on a topic are press releases, publications, convening conferences and workshops, holding public meeting and events. The media for awareness raising are through radio, television, newspapers, and outreach programmes.

48. To help influence attitude, change in behaviours and beliefs towards children with special needs, the policy objective 2 and 3 of the IEP requires SpED to ensure that parents and communities are encouraged and supported in

⁸ <http://www.partners-for-review.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/SDG-Accountability-Handbook.pdf>

changing attitudes that are detrimental to the well-being of learners from poor background, from minority, linguistic, religious, or ethnic groups, children with disabilities and others who are marginalised.

49. We found through interviews with the heads of the special schools that, awareness raising activities were often done at Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), and School Management Committees (SMCs) meetings. Also, awareness raising is carried out at the beginning of the academic year, to identify children with special needs, their level of impairment and guide placement into special schools or provide the required assistive devices if need be.

50. We visited the special schools and found that at the Akropong School for the blind, the school band performed during outreach programmes as a form of sensitisation. These outreach programmes are held at churches, community gatherings and other schools. The performances are invitation driven and seized by the churches as an opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of the children and to raise awareness on special children.

51. Also, at the Twin City Special School in Sekondi, awareness is raised through the children's exhibitions of their arts and craft works. In Asokore Mampong, at the Garden City Special school students performed cultural display once in a year to raise awareness and to display the Intellectual abilities of children in special education facilities. Some of such cultural displays were done at the 2015 annual national conference of the Ghana Bar Association held in Ashanti region on 14 September 2015 and the 2019 student representative council (SRC) women's week at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST).

52. We found that though the special schools carried out forms of awareness raising, they were done when the schools had sponsorship from benevolent organisations or during their PTAs, SMC meetings or arts and crafts exhibitions by the schools. According to the head of these special schools, their awareness raising activities are not budgeted so they do not engage in yearly planned awareness raising activities. In a typical example, the Wa school for the deaf, used to carryout radio medium of awareness raising, sponsored by Action Aid Ghana which reached a greater community, but they had stopped because sponsorship had expired in 2017. At the assessment centre at Achimota, the head also mentioned they use to go on community outreach to sensitise people in homes,

but it was called off and they only educate when parents come to the centres with their special children.

53. The Director in charge of special education division confirmed that most of the special school's awareness raising were at their PTA meetings and social engagements such as churches and social gatherings. She said SpED carries out public awareness and have supporting budget line for their awareness raising. We reviewed the programme outlines, SpED reports and budget for awareness raising activities and confirmed their engagements with stakeholders.

Conclusion

54. The Special schools raised forms of awareness creation during PTA and SMC meetings and other outreach programmes, which were sponsored by benevolent individuals or institutions. SpED also collaborated with stakeholders to raise awareness at some public forums.

Recommendation

55. To enable the special schools, raise awareness to change the public perception about children with special education needs, SpED should engage more with its stakeholders to raise awareness on children with special needs to the public, to increase awareness level of the needs of special children, the existence of special schools and build tolerance in the Ghanaian populace.

3.3 Assessment Centres for the assessment of children with special needs.

56. The Inclusive Education Policy (2015) of the GES requires the SpED to establish⁹ a national assessment centre, and the Regional Education Directorates to establish assessment centres at the Regional and District levels. The policy also requires the SpED to resource the centre with qualified Assessors and assessment devices for its effective operation. The assessment is to facilitate the early identification of children with special need conditions and the levels of impairments, make referral to specialist health institutions and to provide

⁹ For the purpose of this report, "establish" means that GES/SpED should consult relevant stakeholders to make available assessment centres, being it putting up a new structure or an already existing structure.

interventions for these children. The assessment centres require an educational assessor each for visually impaired, hearing impaired, and intellectual disabilities. The Assessors are responsible for carrying out comprehensive assessment of all forms of disabilities, such as social behaviours, hearing, and visual.

57. The required assessment devices are Snellen charts (to check vision), audiometer, acoustically treated room, otoscope, tympanometry drum, rattle, Xylophone, etc (to check hearing), tossing rings, puzzles, Legos, tennis balls etc (to check motor and cognitive skills). After assessment, the Assessors are able to determine whether the impairment is mild, moderate, severe or a profound case and where necessary the Child is given an assistive device and placed in a general or special school.

58. We found that the SpED liaised with the Ministry of Education and the GETFUND and made available a National Assessment Centre at Achimota for assessment of children to identify their special needs. Five regional education directorates¹⁰ had also established assessment centres at the regional level as shown in Table 3. We found during our visits to ten assessment centres that, though the SpED had provided some Assessors and assessment devices to resource the assessment centres, the assessment centres did not have the full complement of the Assessors and assessment devices to determine the levels of impairment (*refer to Table 3*). We found that only three¹¹ of the ten assessment centres we visited had acoustically treated rooms. Noise from outside interferes with the assessment of suspected deaf client, distract the children, and may produce poor results from the assessment if the rooms are not soundproof.

¹⁰ Eastern, Greater Accra, Central, Upper west and Ahafo regional education directorates

¹¹ Central, Ahafo regional assessment centres, and Ashanti School for the Deaf

Table 3: Resources at the Assessment Centres as at January 2021

Assessment Centre	National	Eastern	Greater Accra	Central	Upper West	Ahafo	Sekdeaf *	Ashdeaf *
Type of impairment	Number of Assessors available at the centre							
Hearing Impaired	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
Visually Impaired	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Intellectual Disability Development	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Assessment Devices	Number of devices available at the centre							
Hearing Impairments								
Audiometer	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Acoustically treated room	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1
Otoscope	1	0	0	2	1	1	1	3
Tympanometer	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Toy Drum	1	76	5	0	0	1	1	2
Xylophone	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Rattle	1	0	10	0	2	2	1	2
Visual Impairments								
Snellen chart	8	125	0	0	0	1	5	0
Intellectual Disabilities Development								
Puzzles	7	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
Tossing rings	1	79	4	0	0	0	1	0
Legos	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Tennis Ball	0	81	6	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Audit team compilation from the Assessment centres

**Sekondi School for the deaf, Ashanti School for the deaf*

59. We inspected the assessment devices and found that some were in good working condition, others were faulty and needed repairs, and others were spoilt beyond repairs. Some were obsolete and needed to be recalibrated or replaced with advanced devices. The state of the devices may affect the completeness or accuracy of assessment results of special children.

60. We found that there were inadequate assessors at the centres in terms of either numbers or required assessors to carryout comprehensive assessment of

the children. In all the ten assessment centres visited, only two¹² had the full complement of the required assessors (*see Table 3 for details*). From Table 3, the National and Eastern Regional Assessment centres each had an Assessor for hearing, visual impairments, and intellectual and developmental disabilities.

61. Data we analysed on the assessors showed that, assessors for the hearing impaired were available in all the eight operational assessment centres we visited. However, this was not the case for assessors for visual impairments and intellectual disabilities in six of the ten sampled assessment centres. By the staff establishment of the assessment centres, we expected at least one assessor each for visually impairments and intellectual disabilities development. However, there was none at the assessment centres at the Greater Accra, Central, Upper west and Ahafo regions, as well as Sekondi and Ashanti schools for the deaf. The Ashanti and Western regional assessment centres were not in operation at the time of our visit in January 2021 and therefore no assessors for three different impairments.

62. The head teacher at the Garden city special school in Ashanti region said in an interview that she referred the children with intellectual disabilities to the psychiatric department of the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital for psychological and behaviour assessment before admission. The team reviewed the students' files and confirmed that there were clinical reports from the psychiatric department on the intellectual disabilities of the children.

63. Interviews with officers at the Assessment centres showed that some clients (Parents or Guardians of the children) do not go to the referred medical facilities because of the costs of services or transportation to know the level of impairment of the child. There is the likelihood that a parent, whose child is referred, may discontinue the process of identifying the level of impairment of the special child. This may affect the child's educational development. For example, the child may not be enrolled in school at all or maybe inappropriately placed.

64. The team found from our visit that two¹³ out of the seven sampled Regional Education Directorates had not established the regional assessment centres in their respective regions. We also found that the Cape Coast School for the deaf,

¹² National and Eastern regional assessment centres

¹³ Ashanti and Western regional education directorates.

and Wa School for the deaf in collaboration with stakeholders had established assessment centres in their schools, which served as the regional assessment centres.

65. We found that there were no assessment centres in the districts. As a result, Parents and their children with special needs travelled long distances to access the National or regional assessment centres. Some of the clients that visited the National Assessment centre at Achimota were from Agbozume in the Volta region, which is 169 kilometres. We found that some clients from Prampram visited the Greater Accra regional assessment centre at Kaneshie, a distance of 53 kilometres because there was no assessment centre in their District. In an interview with the head, of the I.D unit of Reverend Father John Memorial School at Winneba, he said the nearest place they could go for a child to be assessed for an intellectual disability condition was the National Assessment Centre at Achimota, a distance of 62 kilometres.

66. We found from our inspections that National Assessment Centre, Achimota and western regional assessment centre were not completed. SpED could not explain why these buildings had not been completed. The contract for the construction of the building for the National assessment centre at Achimota was awarded to KNAK Designs Partnership on 27 May 2010 for completion within six months. This became necessary, as the previous structure was dilapidated with intrusion of water, weak roof members and the roof almost collapsing (*refer to Picture 1*).

67. We found during inspection that the contractor had roofed, plastered, fitted electrical installations in the building and furnished three out of the 25 rooms for assessment of the visually and hearing impaired. Outstanding works were screeding, ceiling, fixing louvre frames and blades, fixing W.C and basins in the washrooms and painting. According to the Assessors at the National Assessment Centre, they had to move to the uncompleted building in February 2018, to avoid the risk of the dilapidated structure collapsing on them and clients.

Picture 1: The state of the Assessment centres at the time of our visit

Old Building for the National Assessment Centre	
<p><i>A: dilapited structure</i></p> 	<p><i>B: weak roof members</i></p> 
New Building for the National Assessment Centre	
<p><i>C: roofed and plastered</i></p> 	<p><i>D: unscreed floor</i></p> 
Uncompleted Building for werstern regional assessment centre	



Source: Audit team inspections

68. We found from our inspection on 17 December 2020 that works on the western regional assessment centre located at Sekondi was not completed as shown in Picture 1. Our review of document at the GES directorate in Sekondi showed that GETFund awarded the project on 22 January 2014 to WL & C Ghana Ltd and Lifespan Construction Ghana Ltd for completion on 21 December 2016. GES did not explain to us the reason(s) for the delay in its completion.

69. For the Ashanti Regional assessment centre, the Ashanti Regional Education Directorate had allocated a building at the Yaa Achiiaa Girls JHS at Roman Hill in Kumasi for its establishment (refer to Picture 1). Our visit showed that the Directorate had not resourced the centre with Assessors and devices for

the assessment of the children. Thus, though a building was earmarked for assessment of children, it was not functional, and this will affect access to an assessment centre in the region for children with special needs.

Conclusion

70. The assessment centres were not in all the regions sampled and visited. Moreover, the available centres did not have the full complement of assessors, assessment, and assistive devices to ensure that the children were assessed.

Recommendation

71. The SpED should:

- *through the Director-General of GES, liaise with the Ministry of Education to ensure the completion of the national and western regional assessment centres.*
- *ensure that the regional and district educational directorates should take the initiative of having assessment centres in all the regions and districts without assessment centres.*
- *liaise with Human Resource Unit of GES and the GHS to make the assessors for visual impairments and intellectual disabilities available at the assessment centres.*
- *Provide the assessment centres with the needed assessment devices to facilitate their basic assessment of the children.*

3.4 Conditions existing for teaching and learning at the special schools

72. The Inclusive IEP, 2015 requires SpED to provide conditions such as staff, teaching and learning materials, and infrastructure at the special schools. This is to enhance the quality delivery of education at the special schools. The policy requires SpED to promote the development of a well-informed and trained human resource unit, and disability friendly infrastructure to enable the special children access the facilities with ease. We found inadequacies in staff, teaching and learning resources, and infrastructure at the special schools visited.

3.4.1 Inadequate staff

73. The Policy Objective 3 of the MOE's Inclusive Education Policy, 2015 requires SpED) to train and deploy more special educational needs resource teachers to all schools to support school heads and teachers to develop Individualised Educational Plans (IEP) and provide teacher and pupil support in schools. Standards and Guidelines for Practice of Inclusive Education requires that all schools in Ghana should have qualified supporting staff (Attendants/Learning support assistants) for lower primary classes (KG – P3).

74. SpED requires a standard teacher-to-student ratio of 1:15 and 1:30 for basic education and second cycle education respectively. Apart from the teaching staff, the special schools should have non- teaching staff such as house mothers, security officers to keep the school running and to provide good support services.

75. We analysed the data gathered on the teaching staff and found that the ratio of the teachers trained in special education to the number of students averaged 1: 93 for the kindergarten, 1:49 for the primary and 1:29 for the JHS. We found these ratios to be high in the special schools as compared to the SpED standard ratio of 1:15. Our review of the MOE's Education Sector Performance Report 2015, confirmed a high teacher-to-student ratio at an average of 1:80 in special schools.

76. The Director of SpED explained that the high ratio was because of the low numbers of teachers trained in special education. She said that previously teachers did not express interest in special education due to the negative perception they had about children with special needs. The GES therefore needed to employ the services of the regular Teachers to improve on the student to teacher ratio in the special schools.

77. We analysed the data gathered on the teaching staff and found that there were lesser number of Teachers trained in special education compared to those trained in regular education as shown in Table 4. There were 390 teaching staff in the sampled special schools, out of this 191 (49%) Teachers were trained in special education and 199 (51%) in regular education. This situation was more prevalent in Ashanti school for the deaf, Bechem School for the deaf, Wa Methodist School for the blind and Garden City Special School.

Table 4: Teaching Staff strength at the sampled Special Schools

Teaching Staff				
School for the deaf				
1	Mampong Demo.	31	27	58
2	Sekondi	29	30	59
3	Cape Coast	33	13	46
4	Ashanti	11	27	38
5	Bechem	13	32	45
6	Wa	10	17	27
School for the blind				
1	Akropong	33	4	37
2	Wa Methodist	8	26	34
School for Intellectual disabilities development				
1	Twin City	9	4	11
2	Rev. Fr. John	4	2	6
3	Garden City	5	10	15
4	Life community	4	5	9
5	Techiman St. Paul	1	2	3
Total		191	199	390

Source: Audit team compilation from the special schools

78. Teachers interviewed said, their regular colleague teachers had difficulty in communicating with the children with special needs. For example, the regular teachers in the schools for the deaf with no training on sign language had difficulty in explaining (signing) concepts to the children during lessons. The regular teachers in the special schools without training on how to handle and teach children with intellectual disabilities had difficulties in handling the children. The teachers at the schools for the blind who could not read the braille are unable to mark the work of the blind students and assess their performance level.

Conclusion

79. The teacher to student ratios across the schools visited was high and above the standard ratios of 1: 15 and 1:30 for basic and second cycle education respectively. Moreover, the special schools did not have the required special educators in the schools.

Recommendation

80. The GES/SpED should:

- *motivate Teachers to undertake courses in special education.*
- *train the regular Teachers posted to the special schools in the communication skills they need in explaining concepts to the children in the various impairment levels.*

3.4.2 Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs)

81. The Inclusive Education Policy, Section 4.6 spells out responsibilities of stakeholders. GES is required to provide all schools with teaching and learning materials (TLMs), and assistive devices for all learners with special educational needs, annually. Some of the TLMs are computer with braille keypads, textbooks in braille and large prints, braille papers and embossers, hand frames, stylus, tactile diagrams, translators, etc for the education of the visually impaired.

82. The hearing-impaired schools make use of TLMs such as real objects, television, projectors, computers, wall charts, manila cards, etc to enable the children visualise concepts since they cannot perceive sound. The Intellectual disability development schools use real objects, Legos, wall charts, manila cards, puzzles, televisions, projectors, computers, communication boards, flip charts, sound systems, etc as TLMs. Some of the assistive devices are hearing aids for the hearing impaired and spectacles for the visually impaired. They are provided for children with mild impairment and can join the regular school.

83. The team found that the SpED provided TLMs such as projectors, computers, television, textbooks to the sampled special schools (*refer to Table 5 and 6 for details*). We computed the gap between the TLMs required and received and found that the TLMs provided by SpED to the schools were not adequate. The SpED did not provide some of the TLMs required to some of the special schools. We inspected the computers and found that some were not functioning, or the

peripheral devices were faulty beyond repairs. The Information Communication Technology (ICT) Teachers said that this situation often disrupted computer classes and prolonged the time spent. Each student had to take their turn to have practical experience on the few computers in good condition.

Table 5: Teaching and Learning Resources provided for the sampled special schools

TLMs		Television			Projector			Sound system		
No.	School	No. required	No. received	Gap	No. required	No. received	Gap	No. required	No. received	Gap
Schools for the deaf										
1	Bechem	5	0	5	5	1	4	N/A		
2	Mampong Demo.	10	0	10	5	0	5			
3	Sekondi	10	2	8	5	2	3			
4	Ashanti	4	0	4	3	1	2			
Schools for intellectual disability development										
1	Life community	3	0	3	3	0	3	1	0	1
2	Garden city	13	0	13	1	0	1	1	0	1

Source: Audit team compilation from the schools visited

Table 6: Computers provided to the sampled special schools

No.	School	Number required	Number received	Gap	Number functioning	Number faulty	Number of students per computer class
Computers							
School for the deaf							
1	Bechem	40	30	10	4	36	
2	Mampong demon.	60	0	60	N/A		
3	Sekondi	30	7	23	21	21	25
5	Ashanti	35	10	25	5	5	30
School for intellectual disabilities development							
1	Garden city	20	0	20	N/A		
2	Life community	50	0	50	N/A		

Source: Audit team compilation from the schools visited

84. Hearing impaired children learn by what they see, visual learning because they cannot perceive sound. The inability to perceive sound makes the vocabulary available to them limited. For instance, a child in a regular school who has no challenge in hearing while studying English language can have a variety of vocabulary like methods, means, ways and type of harvesting corn. The hearing impaired is not privy to sound and these varieties in vocabulary will be difficult to explain to such a person. The use of visual descriptions are the best forms of teaching and learning for these children. Thus, use of demonstrations and explanations by watching videos makes concepts easier to be understood by the hearing-impaired students and it also makes teaching easier and effective for the facilitator.

85. A focus group discussion with 14 Teachers at the Sekondi School for the deaf showed there were no drawing charts and real objects. The only projector of the school was faulty, and the ICT Teacher said he uses his personal projector to teach the children. In 2013, the SpED provided RLG branded Laptop computers to the Teachers but at the time of our audit, all were faulty. Macbeth, a non-governmental organisation donated 15 Laptop computers to the school, but all were not in working condition at the time of our visit.

86. According to a science teacher at Ashanti school for the deaf, Jamasi, since 1987 that the JHS system was introduced the science laboratory had not benefitted from science equipment. Almost all his teachings were abstract. The laboratory did not have a thermometer, conical flask and round bottom flasks to help with teaching science practical lessons. We noted a similar issue at the Wa School for the deaf where the science teacher said the school had to visit the Wa Senior High School to access their science laboratory for practical lessons which access has often not been frequent.

87. At the schools for IDD visited, the heads of the institutions identified the absence of projectors and televisions as a major challenge, since these children learn better with the use of audio-visuals. Their absence at the IDD schools makes teaching and learning difficult for these children.

88. The 2019 annual report of the GES showed that the SpED had embarked on a monitoring and assessment of schools on the implementation of the Universal Design for Learning Response to Interventions (UDL RTI) in West Gonja District after head teachers and selected teachers in September 2019 were trained

on UDL RTI approaches. The report indicated that, though some of the teachers were using these new approaches, most teachers did not have enough teaching and learning resources, which affected teaching and learning.

89. We found that there were inadequate textbooks in the special schools the team visited. Our analysis of the textbooks required and received indicated that there were gaps in the number received as compared to the number required. In a focus group discussion with the Teachers, they mentioned that the students often shared the textbooks during lessons, which have often resulted in poor handling of the textbooks, making them worn out and often pages are torn.

90. The team interviewed SpED on their views on the situations that the audit team found prevalent in the schools regards to TLMs. SpED said that they occasionally distribute TLMs to the schools. Annual reports of some of the selected schools showed that they have reported consistently on the lack of certain basic materials such as projectors and Laptop computers to aid teaching and learning at the schools.

91. Review of files showed that in a letter dated 30 August 2018, the Municipal Director of Education requested some learning materials to support impaired children across a number of schools in the Ho Municipality. Again, 5 January 2019 the headmistress of Dzorwulu Special School requested for learning materials for the school. Also, on the 3 October 2019 the head of Akropong School for the Blind requested for Braille sheets. According to SpED the distributions are done when the request come from the schools and that the heads of special schools come to the Division to sign for the materials.

92. The unavailable TLMs makes teaching and learning difficult. According to teachers, they become easily exhausted moving from one class to another, which may affect delivery of lessons. Also, teachers spent so much time explaining concepts over and over in the absence of the right TLMs and lessons run into other lessons.

Conclusion

93. The TLMs in the special schools were either not adequate, not functioning or not available in some schools to aid teaching and learning. This affects teaching deliveries and learning in the special schools.

Recommendation

94. To improve on teaching and learning, SpED should take measures to address the unavailability, inadequacies and faulty teaching and learning materials at the special schools.

3.4.3 Inappropriate infrastructure facilities in the Special Schools

95. Sections 6 and 17 of the Persons with Disability Act, 2006, (Act 715) requires the Minister of Education as well as owners of public places to provide appropriate facilities that make the place accessible to and available for use by a person with disability. To achieve this, the Ministry of Education in its Inclusive Education Policy (2015) Objective 1, requires t that existing infrastructure in the special schools are modified and new infrastructure are built based on the principles of universal design. SpED should make input in the design of infrastructure project.

96. The Ministry of Education's Standards and Guidelines for Practice of Inclusive Education in Ghana, 2015 also seeks to guarantee a learning environment that aims at eliminating all forms of physical barriers and to create access for safe and free movement It specifies that:

- *all entrance paths/sidewalks and/or walkways shall be smooth, devoid of nonslip materials and shall have firm level surfaces suitable for walking,*
- *provide doors and doorways, ramps, handrails, water and toilet facilities in school buildings,*
- *the classroom environments should be well organised, equipped with age-appropriate furniture, well illuminated and ventilated, and*
- *safety and security measures must be put in place to make the environment conducive for teaching and learning. Also, provide safe and healthy learning environments that includes notices and signposts, secured doors and windows, school fenced with locks and keys, fire escape exits, alarm and warning systems.*

97. We assessed the physical infrastructures in the special schools, to determine whether they were friendly for persons with special needs. The key structures that we considered were dormitories, classrooms, dining halls and assembly halls.

98. Our visits to 14 sampled special schools showed that, existing building facilities, constructed as old as when the schools were established were not disable friendly compared to the new building facilities, which often had facilities such as ramps and handrails.

99. Generally, we found that most existing building facilities had not undergone any major maintenance works. Visits to the classrooms showed, they did not have adequate furniture and some of the available ones were broken down. The toilet and urinal facilities at the dormitories, were in poor conditions as the toilet seats were broken and leaks from the toilet pots, making the entire environment unfriendly. Some doors and windows were not well secured. There were no signposts and notices to direct students as well as visitors to know their environment. The paths and walkways were not friendly, as some were riddled with potholes and undulating surfaces not friendly for the visually impaired.

100. We found the following with specific reference to three special schools: hearing impaired, visually impaired and intellectual disability development:

i. Hearing Impaired

101. Our physical inspection of five (5) hearing impaired schools with 22 different structures showed that, 83 out of 115 standard indicators key structures inspected were not equipped with disable friendly facilities. We noted that with regards to the availability of gentle ramp with handrail and accessible entrance, only 8 out of the 22 standard indicators were available leaving a gap of 14. For example, at the Ashanti and Wa schools for the Deaf, a one-storey classroom block and boy's dormitory respectively, were without ramps and handrail. Table 7 shows the status of the physical facilities at the hearing-impaired schools visited.

Table 7: Status of physical facilities at hearing impaired (HI) schools

Indicators	Number required	Number available	Gap
Ramp with handrail and accessible entrance	22	8	14
Toilet and urinal facilities	22	10	12
Notices and signposts	22	0	22
Secured doors and windows	22	10	12
School fenced with locks and keys	5	4	1
Fire escape exits, alarm and warning systems	22	0	22
Total	115	32	83

Source: Audit Team’s Analysis, 2021

ii. Visually Impaired

102. Our physical inspection of 10 different structures selected from the two main visually impaired schools (Akropong and Wa) in Ghana, consisted of five structures (two classroom blocks, two dormitories and a dinning/assembly hall) from each school. This indicated that 21 out of the 36 for Wa and 16 out of the 36 for Akropong’s facilities inspected had no disable friendly standards. We observed that, three out of five facilities at the Wa school for the blind had no ramp with handrail and accessible entrance available to serve as alternative access routes to students. This situation was the same at the Akropong School for the blind. The visually impaired students need this facility to guide their path and prevent fall and injury in their learning environments.

103. We also found that regarding safety measures such as safety roads, routes, walkways and paths, fence wall, secure doors, electrical wiring and fire alarm and warning systems, cumulatively 13 out of 21 and 10 out of 21 were without these measures for Wa and Akropong schools respectively as indicated in Table 7.

104. Akropong School for the blind’s access roads were tarred, which made access to the classroom, and assembly/dining hall disable friendly. However, there were debris of stones and cement blocks on the paths and routes leading to the dormitories, which could impede the movement of the student. The grass and weeds were overgrown at the time of our visit.

105. The Akropong school for the blind particularly had portions of their fence wall broken during the period of our audit, making the environment unsafe as it becomes open to intruders. At the Wa school for the blind, some of the classrooms and dormitories had exposed wiring and none of the visually impaired facilities had fire alarms and warning systems. In effect, there was no form of alert for these special children when there was any fire situation in their learning environment. Table 8 indicates the status of facilities in the visually impaired schools.

Table 8: Status of physical facilities in visually impaired (VI) schools

Indicators	WA			AKROPONG		
	Number required	Number available	Gap	Number required	Number available	Gap
Ramp with handrail and accessible entrance	5	2	3	5	2	3
Furniture for learners	5	3	2	5	3	2
Toilet and urinal facilities	5	2	3	5	4	1
Secured doors and windows	5	3	2	5	2	3
School fenced with locks and keys	1	1	0	1	1	0
Safety roads, routes, walkways and paths,	5	3	2	5	3	2
Secured electrical wiring	5	1	4	5	5	0
Fire alarm and warning systems	5	0	5	5	0	5
Total	36	15	21	36	20	16

Source: Audit team’s analysis, 2021

iii.Intellectually Disabilities Development (IDD)

106. Our visit to 14 building structures at the five ID schools visited indicated that, 61 out of 117 standard indicators of physical facilities were not equipped with disable friendly infrastructure facilities as indicated in Table 9 below:

Table 9: Status of physical facilities of Intellectually Disabled (ID) schools

Indicators	Number required	Number available	Gap
Ramp with handrail and accessible entrance	14	8	6
Furniture for learners	14	10	4
Toilet and urinal facilities	14	8	6
Notices and signposts	14	0	14
Secured doors and windows	14	11	3
School fenced with locks and keys	5	3	2
Safety roads, routes, walkways and paths,	14	6	8
Protected electrical wiring	14	9	5
Fire escape exits, alarm and warning systems	14	1	13
Total	117	56	61

Source: Audit Team’s Analysis, 2021





107. With regards to the safety and security of intellectually disabled (ID) schools, the head of Rev. Father John Special School at Winneba narrated a theft incident to the audit team. The robbers had made away with teaching and learning materials because of inadequate security at the school. At the time of our visit, the school had been locked up by the police to enable them carryout further investigations into the robbery.

108. The team’s review of Monitoring reports for November 2019 indicated that there was congestion in both classroom and dormitory making it difficult to admit new entrants especially females at the Garden city special school, Asokore Mampong and the Ashanti school for the deaf, Jamasi. Our interview with the head of the Garden city special school confirmed that for two years room facilities at the schools had been a challenge. She said the school had only two rooms for 50 girls. This had affected making new admissions for girls.

109. The team’s interviews with head of Mampong Secondary Technical School for the deaf also showed that, the children were being ejected from the premises, since the land was not for the school. According to the head of SpED the head of the institution complained about the current intake of 150 students for the 2021 academic year with the pending accommodation challenge.

110. Our inspections of six out of 10 VI schools building facilities showed signs of deterioration. We noted that the boy's dormitories at Wa and Akropong schools for the blind were without window frames, louvre blades, torn nets, paintings had peeled off, facial boards were rotten, window hinges had fallen off, exposed electrical wires and screeded floors had worn out. Picture 2 show sections of the infrastructure facilities at the special school that required minor repairs or maintenance to keep them in good state.

Picture 2: Sections of the infrastructure facilities at the special schools that required minor repairs or maintenance

Akropong School for the blind	
<i>Worn off screed floor at dining hall</i>	<i>Rotten ceiling facial board at the dining hall</i>
	
Ashanti School for the deaf, Jamasi	
<i>The section of dormitory without louvre glass & frame</i>	<i>Section of the dormitory showing the broken ceiling</i>
	

Wa School for the deaf	
<i>Weak window frame with broken window at the KG block</i>	<i>Broken and leaking ceiling at the washroom of the boy's dormitory</i>
	
<i>Exposed electrical wires in a primary classroom</i>	
	

Source: Audit team inspection, 2020/21

111. Similarly, the team's inspections of 43 building facilities of HI and ID schools, noted that, washroom and toilet facilities have torn nets, paintings worn off, facial boards were rotten, window frame have fallen off, faulty electrical wiring systems as well as exposed electrical wires and screeded floors have worn off. We also observed that part of the roof of various classroom blocks and dormitories showed signs of leakages causing the ceiling to rot, walls have developed cracks as shown in *Picture 2*.

112. According to the School Heads, they have no maintenance plans and budgets for minor repairs and rely on SPED to undertake maintenance of school facilities. Almost all the heads of the institutions visited said their buildings had not been repaired and maintained since they were constructed. The Management of SpED, said they included maintenance plans and budget for buildings and school structures in their annual budget presented to GES. They indicated that implementation of the maintenance plan was the sole responsibility of the Planning department of GES. The management of SpED however did not provide any documentation to prove that the selected projects were planned and budgeted for annually.

113. The infrastructural facilities were in poor conditions, and this made the children susceptible to some risks in the special schools. Poor netting and window frames make the children prone to mosquito bites and the likelihood of contracting malaria is high. The state of the toilets and bathrooms made these children also open to diseases associated with unhygienic conditions. The poor security doors and locks makes them exposed to theft and loss of valuable learning and teaching materials.

Conclusion

114. The infrastructural facilities at the Special schools were not disability friendly and some of the buildings were in poor conditions because they were not being maintained.

Recommendation

115. We recommended that the SpED should:

- *take measures to ensure the management of the special schools renovate and maintain their existing buildings that are not disable friendly.*
- *collaborate with the Planning department of GES to prioritise and undertake repairs and maintenance in the special schools.*

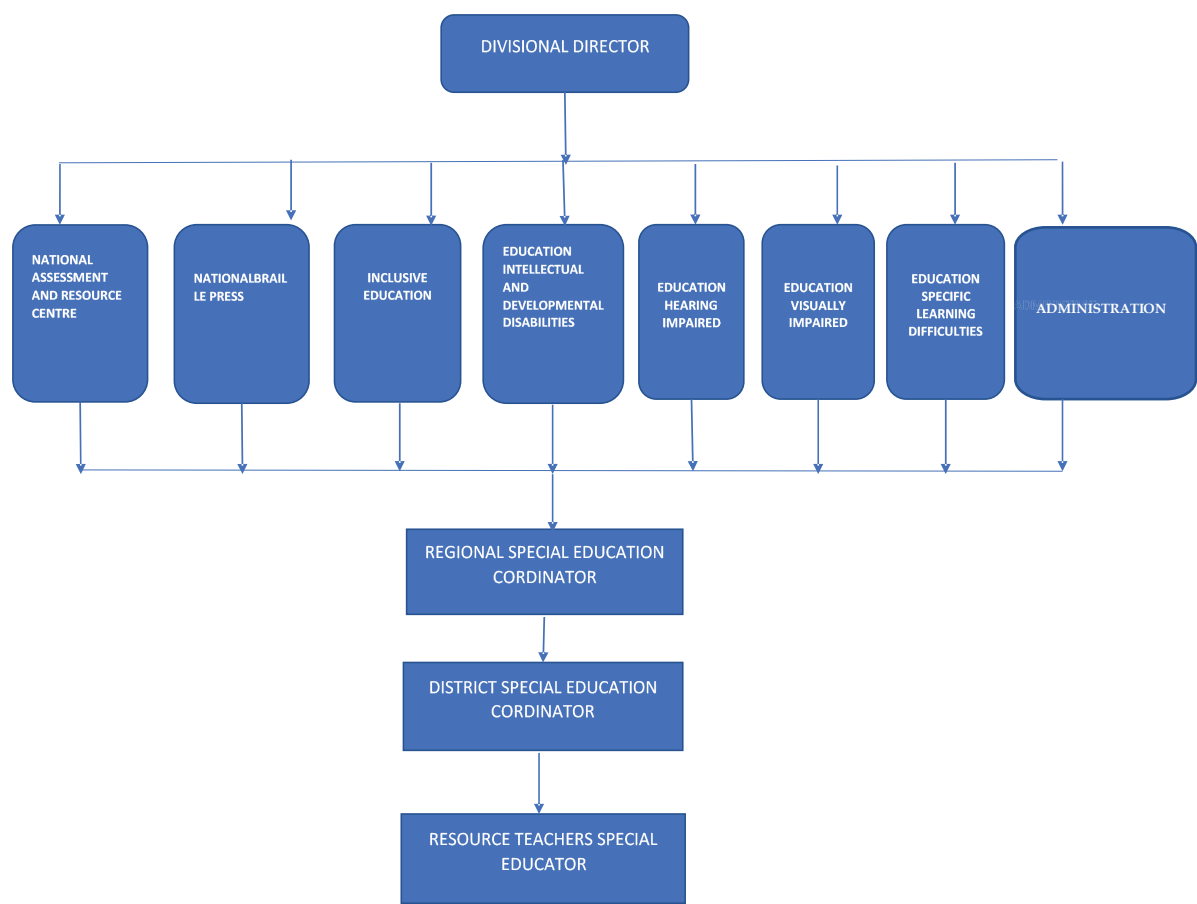
APPENDICES

Appendix ‘A’: The Special schools and Assessment centres visited

No.	School	Location	Region
School for the deaf			
1	Mampong Demonstration School for the Deaf	Mampong	Eastern
2	Mampong Secondary Technical School for the Deaf	Mampong	Eastern
3	Sekondi School for the Deaf	Nchaban	Western
4	Cape Coast School for the Deaf & (VI Unit)	Cape Coast	Central
5	Ashanti School for the Deaf	Jamasi	Ashanti
6	Bechem School for the Deaf & (VI Unit)	Bechem	Ahafo
7	Wa School for the Deaf	Wa	Upper West
School for the blind			
1	Akropong School for the Blind	Akropong	Eastern
2	Methodist School for the Blind	Wa	Upper West
School for intellectual and developmental disability			
1	Twin City Special School	Takoradi	Western
2	Rev. Fr. John Memorial Inclusive School (ID Unit)	Winneba	Central
3	Garden City Special School	Asokore Mampong	Ashanti
4	Life Community Special Vocational School	Deduako	Ashanti
5	Techiman St. Paul R/C (ID Unit)	Techiman	Bono East
No.	Assessment Centre	Location	Region
1	National Assessment Centre	Achimota	Greater
2	Greater Accra Regional Assessment Centre	Kaneshie	Accra
3	Eastern Regional Assessment Centre	Akropong	Eastern

4	Central Regional Assessment Centre	Cape coast	Central
5	Western Regional Assessment Centre	Sekondi	Western
6	Sekondi School for the Deaf	Nchaban	
7	Ashanti Regional Assessment Centre	Roman Hill	Ashanti
8	Ashanti School for the Deaf	Jamasi	
9	Ahafo Regional Assessment Centre	Bechem	Ahafo
10	Upper West Regional Assessment Centre	Wa	Upper West

Appendix ‘B’: organisational structure of SpED



Appendix ‘C’: Key Players, Stakeholders and their responsibilities

No.	Key Players	Responsibilities in relation to management and education of children with special needs
1.	National Assessment and Resource Centre	Screens and assesses children to identify disabilities Provides placement for children with special needs in special/ general schools
2.	National Braille Press	Transcribe and produces existing textbooks in braille
3.	Unit For Inclusive Education	Collaborates with relevant stakeholders to implement the Inclusive education policy Work hand-in-hand with regular schools to accommodate children with special educational needs in inclusive settings. Provides special education for children with special needs.
4.	Unit for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities	Manages and monitors activities of schools for the intellectual and developmental disability
5.	Unit for Education for Hearing Impaired	Coordinate activities and programmes for schools for hearing impaired. Ensure provision of concessions for the hearing-impaired learners during BECE and WASCE Collaborates with partners to build capacity of both teachers and learners in schools and units for the visually impaired Collate data on enrolment of students and staffing of teaching and non-teaching staff of the schools for hearing impaired

No.	Key Players	Responsibilities in relation to management and education of children with special needs
6.	Unit for Education for Visually Impaired	<p>Coordinate activities and programmes for schools and units for the visually impaired.</p> <p>Ensure provision of concessions for the visually impaired learners during BECE and WASCE</p> <p>Supervise the Ghana Braille Press for production of braille books for use by the visually impaired students and teachers</p> <p>Collaborates with partners to build capacity of both teachers and learners in schools and units for the visually impaired</p> <p>Collate data on enrolment of students and staffing of teaching and non-teaching staff of the schools for hearing impaired</p>
7.	Unit for Specific Learning Difficulties	<p>raise awareness on the relevance of identifying children with specific learning difficulties</p> <p>Create a database of children with special learning difficulties</p> <p>Provides training for teachers to identify special learning difficulties.</p>
8.	Special Schools	<p>Admits children with special educational needs</p> <p>Facilitate special education programmes for children with SEN</p> <p>Manage and maintain infrastructure as well as provide skill training for non-academic achievers</p> <p>Coordinate and prepare reports to update the Special Education Division on activities carried out in the schools</p>

No.	Key Players	Responsibilities in relation to management and education of children with special needs
Stakeholders		
1	The Ghana Education Service	<p>Oversight responsibility of the implementation of the IE policy.</p> <p>Provides advice, direction and monitoring progress on IE measures and practices.</p> <p>Provides all schools with adequate and requisite teaching and learning materials including assistive devices for all learners in the special educational needs.</p>
2.	The Ministry of Education	<p>Provides overall leadership for Inclusive Education.</p> <p>Overseeing of policy implementation, review, coordination, monitoring and evaluation and impact assessment.</p> <p>Leads the submission of budget proposals for inclusive education financing to ensure inflow of funds to Inclusive education programmes.</p> <p>Overseeing the review of curriculum, training and professional development of all educational personnel.</p>
3	Ministry for Gender, Children and Social Protection	<p>Ensure equal educational opportunity for young girls and promote rights of children.</p> <p>Ensure all schools work under child protection policies.</p> <p>Ensure that Social Protection programmes for children are effectively implemented and take account of the special vulnerability of children with</p>

No.	Key Players	Responsibilities in relation to management and education of children with special needs
		disabilities, orphans, street children and other marginalised groups.
4.	National Council for Persons with Disability	<p>Play an advocacy role to ensure implementation of the IE policy.</p> <p>Advocate for adequate budget provision for addressing the special educational needs of all persons.</p>
5.	Ministry of Health/Ghana Health Service	Collaborations with the Assessment Centres for screening, treatment, and referrals of Pupil/student.
6.	Non-Governmental Organisations / Philanthropists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Communities to help them support their children. • raising awareness to change negative attitudes. • Offering Scholarships / supports to learners at the risk of exclusion. • Mobilise resources and advocate for increased funding for Inclusive Education. • Provision of assistive devices. • Provision of adapted teaching / learning materials. • Mobilise and sensitise the population on inclusive education. • Construction of physically and environmentally accessible schools, as well as modifications of existing schools to make them accessible. • Contribute to the development of research, monitoring and evaluation initiatives.
7.	Communities, Families and Parents	Supplying vital information about the child's health prior to referral for appropriate intervention.

No.	Key Players	Responsibilities in relation to management and education of children with special needs
		<p>Participating in school-related decisions e.g., collaborating with teachers and administrators to set realistic goals for their children.</p> <p>Fulfilling their home-school obligations or expectations in order to meet the needs of their children.</p> <p>Engage in advocacy for the rights of all children</p>
8.	Development Partners	<p>Development of adapted teaching/learning materials and resources.</p> <p>Provision of Basic Screening Materials and Assistive devices.</p> <p>Strengthening human resource capacity for implementation of IE.</p> <p>Assisting with Monitoring and Evaluation in collaboration with civil society.</p> <p>Facilitate interactions to gain access to best practices in other countries and support the shared information.</p>

Appendix 'D': Management response

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

*In case of reply the number
and date of this letter should
be quoted*

GES/SPED/APR/04/001



Republic of Ghana

HEADQUARTERS
Ministry Branch Post Office
P. O. Box M45
Accra

12/04/2022

THE AUDITOR GENERAL
GHANA AUDIT SERVICE
ACCRA

RESPONSE TO THE MANAGEMENT LETTER

On behalf of Management of the Ghana Education Service, kindly find below responses to the Performance Audit on the Management of the Education of Children with Special Needs.

1. Awareness raising on Children with Special needs

There is Documentary evidence of such activities in the reports of the Division available for audit verification.

Awareness creation has always been a regular activity by the Heads of Schools through various meetings such as P.T.As, School Durbars and orientation/ Capacity building programmes with groups by the Staff of the Special Education Division.

2. Assessment Centres for the assessment of Children with Special Needs

The Task of liaising with the Ministry of Education for completion of the national and western regional assessment centres is in the hands of the planning officer for which several contacts have been made to ensure speedy completion of the Centres.

Assessment centres have been established in the ten (10) old regions through their various regional directors. The only regions left to be established are the six (6) new regions recently created and steps are being taken by regional directors to get assessment centres established through the support of the Special Education Division.

All the other regions visited operate in facilities identified by the regions and as such were given equal distribution of assistive devices which are still in use. The regions therefore depend on the Regional Special Education Coordinators to conduct periodic screening thereby liaising with the

districts SpED Coordinators to carryout periodic assessment for children and place them appropriately when identified.

SpED has personnel responsible for screening children to identify children with hearing impairment, visual impairment and Intellectual and Development disabilities, so that referrals are made to the health centres for further assessment, diagnosis and treatment.

Provision has been made for the Assessment centres in terms of various assistive devices and distributed to children with special needs as and when necessary.

Reference can be made to the situation whereby provision is made through the regional SpED coordinators to facilitate national screening exercise for my first day at school and this done in collaboration with Ghana Health Service. On such occasion, screening tools are provided by the Regional assessment centres for which effective screening exercise is always accomplished.

3. Conditions existing for teaching and learning at the special schools

Enough provision is made by management of GES with regards to teaching and learning resources through the yearly budgetary allocation for procurement of items for special schools. The special schools therefore apply for supply of the items as and when they need them.

4. Inadequate Staff

The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) captured in the standard guideline is meant to correct and keep track of learners with specific learning difficulties and this report is available in the special schools. Most of the lower primary classes are handled by at least two (2) teachers in a class.

In view of the figures stated in point 75, the explanation to the situation on hand looks quite different as compared to the current situation in the schools. The pupil teacher ratio has improved to agree with the policy indicator.

The figure for the pupil teacher ratio is not the true reflection of the current situation in the schools. A sample finding from few schools with high numbers revealed the pupil teacher ratio as 1:10, 1:15, and 1:17 respectively. Though some of these Teachers are not special education trained, they are oriented to facilitate teaching in the various classes. A gradual procedure is being put in place to ensure that we have a full set of Specialized Teachers in all the schools. Study leave options are made available for teachers to undertake programmes in special education for specialized courses. However, there are few schools that have vacancies for teaching and non-teaching staff. Critical areas of concern with the non-teaching staff are drivers, labourers, and security and this is yet to be filled as and when there is financial clearance for recruitment.

SpED will continue to liaise with the department of Special Education, Winneba to enrol more teachers to be trained in the specialised areas to fill the required vacancies.

5. Inadequate Teaching and Learning Materials

There is a system in place for distribution of TLMS, whereby all heads are invited for distribution of specific items to be taken to their schools. Thereafter, schools need to apply for additional allocation as and when necessary. Provision is made with regards to teaching and learning resources through the yearly budgetary allocation for procurement of items for special schools.

There is documentary evidence of such distributions available.

6. Inappropriate infrastructure facilities in the Special Schools

SpED through the periodic monitoring programmes ensure that Heads of Schools maintain their infrastructure facilities.

SpED has always been in constant touch with Head of Planning to help address some of the complex situations in the schools.



For: Director General

**Mrs. Bernice Aduo Addae (Mrs.)
Director- SPED.**

**CC: Director General
Deputy Director General MS
Deputy Director General Q&A
Chief Internal Auditor**

Mission Statement

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accountability and probity in Ghana's
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