



The Republic of Sierra Leone



Audit Service Sierra Leone

PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

**INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF
SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

DECEMBER 2009

FOREWORD

As the Supreme Audit Institution of Sierra Leone, the Audit Service Sierra Leone (ASSL) is set on expanding the scope of external audit. In addition to our traditional role in Regularity Audit we have therefore, in our Strategic Plan for 2009, taken necessary steps for establishing Performance Auditing¹ as one of the services provided by the ASSL. To achieve this, we have put lots of effort into upgrading the professional skills in the organisation and modernising the audit methodology².

In tabling this my first Performance Audit Report, I refer to the Constitution of Sierra Leone in which Section 119 (2) states "The public accounts of Sierra Leone and of all public offices including the courts, the accounts of the central and local government administrations, of the Universities and public institutions of like nature, any statutory corporation, company or the body or organisation established by an Act of Parliament or statutory instrument or otherwise set up partly or wholly out of Public Funds, shall be audited and reported on by or on behalf of the Auditor General, and for that purpose the Auditor-General, or any person authorised or appointed in that behalf by the Auditor-General shall have access to all books, records, returns and other documents relating or relevant to those accounts".

I further refer to the Government Budgeting and Accountability Act of 2005, Section 63 (1) Sub section (1e), which states "In his examination of the Final accounts the Auditor-General shall ascertain that in his opinion, financial business has been carried out with due regard to economy in relation to results achieved", and;

Sub section 66(4) further 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, we have undertaken this Performance Audit on the Inspection and Supervision activities in Secondary Schools, highlighting the poor performance of pupils at the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) and the key role inspection/supervision should play in securing a high quality of teaching and learning and, consequently, in improving the performance of pupils.

Anna Caesar (Mrs.)
Auditor General

¹ Performance Audit refers to "An independent audit of Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness with which the audited body uses its resources in carrying out its responsibilities" (INTOSAI Auditing Standards)

² Modernising the audit methodology includes making financial, logistical and human resources available, support auditors carrying out the performance audits, and being prepared to review, finalise and table performance audit reports in Parliament.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
ASSL	Audit Service Sierra Leone
BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
BoG	Board of Governors
CAT	Certified Accounting Technician
DD	Deputy Director of Education (Head of District Ed. Office)
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HoD	Head of Department
HQ	Headquarters
HTC	Higher Teacher's Certificate
JSS	Junior Secondary School
LGA	Local Government Act of 2004
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MOFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
NPSE	National Primary School Examination
SSS	Senior Secondary School
TC	Teacher's Certificate
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WAEC	West African Examinations Council
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examination

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Performance Audit has evaluated the Inspection of Secondary Schools by the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS) and the Supervision of Secondary Schools by principals. The motive for the audit was the poor performance of candidates at the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in June 2008.

The audit focused on finding the answers to each one of four audit questions:

1. "Is MEYS managing its Inspection activities in an efficient way?"
2. Have adequate working methods been established and implemented by the Inspectorate?
3. Has Inspection of Basic Education been devolved successfully and have Local Councils taken up their responsibilities?
4. How efficient is Supervision in the Schools?"

We arrived at the following answers to our audit questions:

1. MEYS is not managing its Inspection activities in an efficient way;
2. MEYS has not established and implemented adequate working methods;
3. Inspection of Basic Education has not been devolved to an extent that enables the Local Councils to take up their responsibilities, and;
4. The efficiency of Supervision in the Schools is hampered by a lack of support from the Inspectorate and by the dissolution of the Boards of Governors.

The poorer the quality of teaching and learning, the poorer the results should be expected for external examinations. Our general conclusion from the findings is that Inspection and Supervision of Secondary Schools have not been effective. A consequence of this is that necessary steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning have not been taken and it has been confirmed that this leads to continued poor performance of pupils at public examinations, especially WASSCE. Thus MEYS' mission to provide quality education for all has still not been met.

Decisive steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning need to be taken to deal with the persistently poor performance of candidates at the WASSCE. The responsibilities of the Inspectorate, Local Councils and Schools for securing a high quality teaching and learning environment must be made clear, co-operation between the different levels improved and their roles must be played more efficiently.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE

The overall objective of this Performance Audit was to evaluate the Inspection of Secondary Schools by the Inspectorate Division of the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports (MEYS), and the Supervision of Secondary Schools by Principals. The motive for the audit was the poor performance of candidates at the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in 2008. The WASSCE results indicated poor quality of teaching and/or learning in secondary schools in Sierra Leone whereas, the general purpose of Inspection/Supervision is to secure a high quality education in line with relevant Acts and Objectives. At the end of the audit report, recommendations that can serve as a guide for the Ministry in planning and policy formulation were developed.

Education is needed for the advancement of the society and poverty reduction for an underdeveloped country like Sierra Leone. MEYS is charged with the responsibility of ensuring the attainment of quality education for all children based on the Education Sector Plan of Sierra Leone 2007- 2015³.

The minimum entry requirement for a Tertiary Institution in Sierra Leone is four passes with credit (A1-C6) in the WASSCE. The minimum requirement for entry to the University, without going through an access programme, is credit in five subjects including English Language and usually Mathematics.

The Government of Sierra Leone was responsible for paying the WASSCE fees to the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) of all candidates entering the examination for the first time. A total of 23,947 candidates registered for the May/June 2008 examinations. The WASSCE fee was Le115, 000.00 per pupil.

The total amounts actually paid to WAEC by MEYS for the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and WASSCE in 2008 are detailed in table 1.

³The Education Sector Plan of Sierra Leone is a document which was based on the government's 2006 Country Status Report (the diagnostic and analytical foundation of the situation of education in Sierra Leone) and the 2004 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. Together they map out how GOSL will build on the education gains made since the war so that by the year 2015 all children will be going to school and receiving a quality education."

Table 1 BECE and WASSCE Fees received by WAEC

Year	BECE (Le000')	WASSCE (Le000')	TOTAL (Le000')
2008	3,568,680	2,752,850	6,321,530

However, according to Statistics for the May/June 2008 WASSCE results, obtained from WAEC Sierra Leone, out of the 23002 candidates who actually attempted the exams in 2008, only 790 or 3.4% of the students obtained five or more passes with credits and of those only 206 or 0.9% met the requirements for direct entry to the University.

This situation led to public concerns regarding the quality of education in the country.

Inspection/supervision should ensure that teaching and learning are of high quality, in line with Acts, Standards and Syllabuses, and that available resources are used in a manner conducive to good teaching and learning. Inspection/Supervision should prevent, detect and correct any misuse or under-utilisation of resources. Thus, the purpose of the audit was to assess how efficiently these oversight functions were carried out by the Inspectorate Division of MEYS.

1.2 SCOPE, METHOD AND IMPLEMENTATION

In order to meet the audit objective and arrive at an assessment of how well the Inspectorate Division of MEYS is securing high quality of teaching and learning, we focused on seeking the answers to the following audit questions:

- “Is MEYS managing its Inspection activities in an efficient way?
- Have adequate working methods been established and implemented by the Inspectorate?
- Has Inspection of Basic Education been devolved successfully and have Local Councils taken up their responsibilities?
- How efficient is Supervision in the Schools?”

Data collection took place from May to July 2009. In order to have a national coverage, the audit covered five of the fourteen Education Districts, representing all the four regions of the country, namely: Western Urban, Western Rural, Bombali, Kenema and Pujehun.

We visited five education districts, fifteen secondary schools and five Local Councils (see Appendix) to obtain information on the operations of the Inspectorate in relation to inspection and supervision of secondary schools. This also gave the audit team the opportunity to seek further clarification on issues observed during the review of the documents submitted by MEYS.

During the visits extensive interviews were held with key personnel as follows:

- Director (Inspectorate)
- Heads of Specialised Divisions and Functions (MEYS)
- Deputy Directors (Education District)
- Inspectors of Schools (" ")
- Supervisors of Schools (" ")
- Devolved Inspectors and Supervisors of Schools (Council)
- Chief Administrators (Council)
- Chairpersons of Council Education Committees (")
- Principals (Secondary Schools)
- Heads of Departments, Teachers and Students (Secondary Schools)
- Chairpersons of Boards of Governors (Secondary Schools)

A contact person for the audit was appointed by the Ministry and was regularly informed about the progress of the audit and assisted the auditors in retrieving documents and contacting interviewees in the Ministry, when required.

2. INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

2.1 Regulatory Framework

The control of education in Sierra Leone shall be in accordance with the legal provisions, educational statutes and other relevant provisions and documents, the most principal of which are the Education Act of 2004, the Local Government Act of 2004, the Education Sector Plan for 2007-2015, the Statutory Instrument No. 13 of 2004 and MEYS' Handbook entitled "The Good Principal 2001".

Part X of the Education Act of 1st April 2004 deals with inspection of schools, defining the duties and powers of the Minister to cause inspections of every school. There is however no explicit mention of the Inspectorate as such in the Act.

Section 47 (Ss 1) of the Act states, "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 (.....)".

The Minister is however not required to cause Inspections if he is satisfied that suitable arrangements are in force. He may also authorise, in writing, any other person or approve the local authority for any area to inspect schools in his name and on his behalf.

The duties of the Inspectorate as described in detail in MEYS' Handbook 'The Good Principal'⁴ are:

- 'To provide the Honourable Minister with expert views on educational matters pertaining to schools and their potentialities.
- To visit individual schools to evaluate teachers at work and to report on the administration, organisation, staffing, discipline, financial management, physical facilities and general academic performance.
- It follows that these visits must be of some days' duration, the objectives being to assist, inspire and develop. It is therefore of paramount importance that the report of an inspection should receive the considered deliberations of the School Board, Principal and Members of staff, and its recommendations implemented within the minimum of delay.

⁴Embodies a network of Rules, Regulations, and Statements of minimum standards that constitutes the policies and expectations of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for Principals of Secondary Schools

- To provide professional services to schools generally. These include professional guidance to Board Members, Principals, Bursars and Teachers.
- Assistance in the recruitment and in-service training of teachers, enhancing ultimately the ethos of the teaching profession.
- To formulate new policies, interpret existing ones and ensure implementation of all relating to the various facets of education.
- To advance educational progress by the compilation of brochures, handbooks etc on specific or general aspects of education.
- To broaden the academic frontiers of its personnel by providing opportunities for study, research and travel and to facilitate active participation and promotion of the educational programme.
- To establish and maintain vital links with Local and National Institutions, Non Governmental Organisations, Professional Bodies and the public at large.'

The Local Government Act (LGA) of 2004 re-establishes Local Councils and provides for the decentralisation and devolution of functions, powers and services to Local Councils and for other matters connected therewith.

The path for the transfer of the management and supervision of Basic Education from the Central to Local Governments is set out in Statutory Instrument No.13 of November 2004, page 22, where the scheduled dates for activities within the functions of primary to mid-secondary schools and school supervision shall be assumed by the Councils are stated as follows:

Main Functions	Activities to Devolve	Year of Assumption of Functions by Local Councils
Primary to Mid-Secondary Schools (JSS III)	a. Payment of Examination Fees b. Payment of Salaries of Staff c. Provision of Furniture d. Provision of Subsidized Textbooks	2005 2006 2006 2006
School supervision	a. Inspection of Teachers and School Curriculum b. Inspection of Pupils	2007

Page 1 of the Statutory Instrument further stipulates that if "for any reasonable cause a Local Council is unable to assume any function within the period set out in the Schedule, it shall inform the Minister (*of Local Government and Community Development*) who shall, after consulting the Ministry, Government Department or Agency and the Local Council concerned, extend the time to such period as he may determine."

2.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY PLAYERS

2.2.1 THE INSPECTORATE

The Inspectorate Division at MEYS, with its Inspectors at the District Education Offices, is responsible for overall monitoring and supervision of the education sector. The Inspectorate is headed by a Director, Inspectorate of Education who reports to the Director General of Education. His main duties as laid down in the Scheme of Service is to advise on matters relating to policy, organisation management and resources of education and to monitor, evaluate and advise on necessary remedial actions to be taken.

At the district level, each District Education Office is headed by a Deputy Director of Education (DD). The DD is responsible to the Director, Inspectorate of Education. His duties are to provide regular technical and professional advice on matters relating to policy, programmes, services and resources for education. He also directs activities for, among others, effective coordination, supervision and management of education and ensuring appropriate policy interpretation and implementation.

Other key players at the district level are the Inspectors and Supervisors of Schools. The Inspectors of Schools are responsible to the DD and their duties include: the provision of professional advice, support and guidelines to teachers; reporting on matters affecting facilities, staff and pupils in the district; organising In-service Courses for teachers; and conducting regular inspection of all educational institutions and reporting accordingly. The Supervisors who report to the Inspectors of Schools should, among other things, give demonstration lessons, examine methods and contents of syllabuses, coordinate and organise In-service Training and maintain records of schools, staff, pupils and facilities.

2.2.2 THE LOCAL COUNCIL

According to the LGA, a Local Council may appoint such committees as it thinks fit. One such committee that can be found in each Local Council is the Council Education Committee. The Chairman of this committee serves as liaison between the Council and the District Education Office and plays a key role in the planning of educational activities and all matters regarding the preparation and implementation of the budget. The Chief Administrator is the Administrative Head of the Council and responsible for planning and implementation of the budget,

including procurement, monitoring and reporting.

2.2.3 THE WEST AFRICAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

The West African Examinations Council (WAEC) is the examination body responsible for conducting all public/external examinations with regard to schools and other institutions, for example the National Primary School Examination (NPSE), the BECE and the WASSCE. WAEC also facilitates other exams like the London General Certificate of Education (GCE) Ordinary Level (O-level) and Advanced Level (A-level), Certified Accounting Technician (CAT), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), etc. It is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that examinations are conducted in accordance with laid down rules and regulations and are free of malpractices.

2.2.4 THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

All Government Secondary Schools are required by statute to have a Board of Governors (BoG) to oversee the management of the school. The Board plays a supervisory role and is also involved in the recruitment and promotion of teachers. It conducts Board Meetings where policies are interpreted, decisions taken and recommendations made. Certain capital expenditures are usually approved by the Board.

2.2.5 THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

The Principal has the responsibility to monitor and control school activities and supervise the teachers. The Principal 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 learning is the responsibility of the Principal. Schools are expected to use continuous assessments to track students' performance. Students also sit End of Year Exams which usually determine transition to a higher grade.

Teachers are crucial to the delivery of a quality education system because they are directly responsible for equipping students with the necessary skills and knowledge. However, Heads of Departments (HoD) assisted by Senior Teachers have a special responsibility to ensure that other teachers perform their respective duties. They usually allocate classes to teachers, give out the syllabus, check teachers' Lesson Notes, supervise and monitor their teaching, vet exam questions suggested by

teachers and oversee the examination processes. All teachers have a responsibility to ensure discipline and monitor the progress of the pupils.

2.3 PROCESS OF INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION

The inspection process, as explained during the course of our interviews with representatives of the District Education Offices, is as follows:

The Inspectorate Staff should meet to discuss and plan a format for inspection and supervision. An itinerary is to be prepared by the Inspectors and Supervisors of Schools and approved by the DD before commencement of field work. Inspection formats developed by MEYS should be used during the inspections.

The types of inspection/supervision undertaken by the Inspectors/Supervisors are inspection for promotion of teachers, approval for establishment of new schools, approval for financial assistance and routine inspections on actual teaching and learning - covering the presentation of materials to pupils and content validity of what is taught, data collection, data on utilisation of resources. In addition, the Minister may assign other duties relating to inspection/supervision.

After inspection and supervision, the Supervisors should discuss their findings with the school administrators and prepare a report which is submitted to the Inspector of Schools. The Inspector should oversee, check and give advice on the report for onward transmission to the DD who should then review the report before submission to the Director Inspectorate at MEYS Headquarters in Freetown.

2.4 FUNDING

The major source of funding for the Inspectorate Division at MEYS headquarters is from budgetary allocations made by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MOFED) to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MEYS). The actual budget for the Inspectorate for the Year 2008 amounted to one hundred and thirty-five million, six hundred and twenty-five thousand Leones (Le135,635,000.00) of which the sum of one hundred and twelve million and eighty-eight thousand Leones (Le112,088,000.00) was spent by the HQ Administration and the balance of twenty-three million, five hundred and thirty-seven thousand Leones (Le 23,537,000.00) was allocated to the fourteen District Education Offices.

The Local Councils receive tied grants for Administrative Costs, School Supervision, Library Board and Education Development Grant on a quarterly basis through the Local Government Finance Department. The grants for administrative costs and school supervision are used to cover costs linked to devolved functions (see table 2).

Table 2. Actual expenditure for Inspection and Supervision of Secondary Schools in 2008, excluding Salaries (Le000')

Inspectorate Division			Devolved Functions			Grand Total
HQ	Regions	Total Inspect	Admin. Cost	Super-vision	Total Dev	
112,088	23,537	135,625	731,570	234,096	965,667	1,101,292

Other sources of funding of the Inspectorate as a whole are from UNICEF, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Plan International and SABABU Education Project that have provided logistics like vehicles, motor bikes, computers, printers, etc. The Local Councils may also decide to provide funds from their own budgets.

2.5 CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

A Presidential Commission of Inquiry on "Poor Educational Standard" in Sierra Leone has been established. It will investigate the poor performance of school children with particular reference to the BECE and WASSCE. An oath of office to a six man team was administered by the President on the 21st of May 2009. The Commission, which is referred to as the "Professor Gbamanja Commission of Inquiry", should report within the shortest possible time.

In 2009, twenty nine thousand, two hundred and forty-four (29,244) candidates (including 2,460 repeaters) registered for the examination. This was an increase of five thousand two hundred and ninety– seven (5,297) compared to the twenty three thousand, nine hundred and ninety-seven (23,947) who registered in 2008. One thousand four hundred and ninety –four (1,494) or 5.2% of them succeeded in obtaining at least five passes with credit. Out of these, four hundred and thirteen (413) or 1.4% obtained credits in both English Language and Mathematics

and thus qualified for direct entry into the University. These results, though far from satisfactory, show some improvement compared to 2008, when the corresponding results were 3.4% with five credits and 0.9% who qualified for the University. There was a significant improvement in English Language and some other subjects, but in Mathematics and 20 other subjects the results were poorer in 2009 than in 2008. Comparisons between the years should however be made with caution since the fluctuations in individual subjects are large and data on the number of repeaters, sitting the exam a second time or more, were not available for 2008.

The BECE and WASSCE examination fees paid to WAEC amounted to more than Le7 billion, an increase of 15 percent compared to 2008.

Table 3 BECE and WASSCE Fees Received by WAEC

Year	BECE (Le000')	WASSCE (Le000')	TOTAL (Le000')
2009	4,170,180	3,080,160	7,250,340

There was also a call by the Minister of MEYS to undertake a verification exercise referred to as 'Operation Clean the Voucher' which aimed at revealing the true numbers of teachers. This exercise has now been completed.

A Code of Conduct for Teachers has recently been developed. According to our interviews MEYS was also in the process of developing an Inspection Manual since 2008 and there was no indication as to when it would be completed. The format for clinical inspection, called inspection instrument, was undergoing a review funded by UNICEF.

Further steps were underway in the devolution of functions to the Local Councils; as from September 2009, Councils are responsible for the payment of School Subsidies, procurement and distribution of textbooks for non-core-subject and teaching and learning materials.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 MANAGEMENT OF INSPECTIONS

3.1.1 UNAVAILABILITY OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

The ASSL observed that management of the Inspectorate has not been in line with sound principles of management. MEYS has not established a planning format defining the Inspectorate's goals and objectives in relation to the vision and mission of the Ministry as a whole. Consequently the objectives of the Inspectorate have not been clear to staff and no strategic plan developed as to how to achieve them. The Inspectorate was also unable to provide a comprehensive updated list of schools in the country that could have been used as a basis for the planning of inspections.

In addition to insufficient objectives and no strategic planning, we also observed a lack of guidance, coordination and monitoring of inspections of schools from the central Ministry and there were no plans as to how MEYS could promote the devolution of inspection of basic education to Local Councils.

The inspections on individual schools have not been used for systematic analyses as a basis for more general initiatives from the Inspectorate in order to report to the Ministry and advise on educational matters.

Our interviews disclosed that very little activity was undertaken by the Inspectorate to secure continuous improvement of its own operations.

The operations of the Inspectorate at district level have not been planned according to a strategy focusing on how to reach specific results. They have not been monitored and evaluated systematically.

3.1.2 POOR RECORD KEEPING

Review of files and records revealed that record keeping regarding inspections was inadequate. Inspection Files were not available and their existence at central and district level could not be verified. Personnel files were held at the Human Resource Division and School Files at the Records Section within MEYS. For the 125 teachers who have been attached to the inspectorate as supervisors⁵ a total of 103 personnel files have been compiled.

⁵Ministry of Education Youth and Sports 'Status of teachers attached February 2009'

Out of these only 13 were found to be complete, 46 were incomplete and according to the movement records, 44 had been taken out, usually by the staff themselves. It was not possible to assess whether moved files were complete or not. See Table 4 below for further details of the status of the files.

Table 4 Files for Teachers attached as Supervisors/Inspectors

Staff	Complete Files	Incomplete Files	Files Taken Out (Movement Records)	Total
Supervisors	8	33	20	61
Inspectors	5	13	24	42
TOTAL	13	46	44	103

3.1.3 INEFFICIENT USE OF LIMITED RESOURCES

There were no criteria or principles for allocating resources to the District Education Offices. Needs assessments were not done and there was no reliable information on the availability and use of resources.

According to interviews, only staff that possess a university degree are sufficiently qualified to carry out inspections of teaching and learning in JSS and SSS. Almost 80% of the supervisors were found to have only Teacher's Certificate (TC) or Higher Teacher's Certificate (HTC). Our interviews in the districts further revealed that the assignment of inspection duties between the supervisors was based entirely on geographical zones. In those zones, one supervisor was responsible for primary as well as secondary schools. Thus supervisors with sufficient academic qualifications were not able to focus on supervision of secondary schools.

In 2009 a large proportion of the Inspectorate staff had either reached or was approaching retirement age. Twenty percent were above sixty or would reach that age before the end of 2009. Most of the others were between the ages of fifty and fifty-nine. See Table 5 for details.

Table 5 Supervisors by age and qualification 2009⁶.

Age	TC	HTC	BSc.	Others	Total
60 and above	16	4	1	3	24
50-59	23	33	10	1	67
40-49	6	11	9	1	27
30-39	0	1	0	1	2
Total	45	49	20	6	120

Of those supervisors holding a University Degree seven were posted in the Western Urban Area, three in Bo District and two in the Western Rural Area. Seven Districts recorded one each. In Pujehun, Kambia, Koinadugu and Bombali there were no academically qualified supervisors in 2009: Thus in most of the Education Districts in the country the capacity to inspect secondary schools was very limited.

Table 6 Supervisors with Academic Qualifications

Education District	Number
Western Urban	7
Bo	3
Western Rural	2
Pujehun, Koinadugu, Kambia, Bombali	0
Others	1 each

The ASSL did not find any clear criteria for the allocation of staff and other resources to the districts. Neither the Councils nor the District Education Offices were aware of what priorities lay behind the distribution of resources. Logistical problems due to lack of resources and problems of accommodation were mentioned by several interviewees. There appears to have been an imbalance between staff resources and other resources not enabling staff to work effectively.

Interviews and review of documents, revealed that the Inspectorate Division for Western Urban Area shared its resources with the Inspectorate in the MEYS Headquarters. There was no clear division of responsibilities between the district and the national level.

⁶Calculation based on Ministry of Education Youth and Sports 'Status of teachers attached February 2009' and 'Submission of teachers attached staff list for the year 2008'.

Funds for devolved activities are allocated as Tied Grants from the Local Government Finance Department to the Local Councils on a quarterly basis. It was noted that funds were released to the Local Councils very late. This has led to delays in implementing activity plans and sometimes caused logistical constraints in addition to the other factors that hinder efficient supervision.

3.2 INSPECTION ACTIVITIES

3.2.1 UNAVAILABILITY OF UNIFORM METHODOLOGY FOR INSPECTIONS

There has been insufficient development and no continuous improvement of the methods for inspections. Lessons learnt from one inspection have not been properly communicated and discussed with other schools. The general inspection form is very detailed and would require inspection visits of some days' duration. It was further noted that this inspection form was rarely used by the Inspectors and Supervisors of schools. There was a lack of consistency in the use of methods and guidelines for inspection with different supervisors using different approaches.

No other measures have been presented on how to overcome methodological problems or the scarcity of resources except for the ongoing work on the new Inspection Manual.

There were no criteria for selection or ranking of schools for inspection and there were no fixed times for undertaking such inspections. Inspection should be an on-going activity. According to the Inspectorate, selection of schools for inspection was based on what was prevailing on the ground.

Most of the schools that were inspected had been selected on the basis of requests from schools for approval, funding or promotion of teachers.

3.2.2 INADEQUATE REPORTING AND UNAVAILABILITY OF DATA ON INSPECTIONS.

During the audit, there was no aggregate data on the volume of the respective types of inspection existing. Inspection files were not kept in a way that allowed easy compilation of such data.

Hardly any inspection of SSS was carried out; most of the inspections centred on data collection and inspection for approval of new schools. In a bid to verify the

extent to which the 15 selected schools have been inspected, evidence of such inspections was requested from the District Education Offices and from the respective schools.

The District Education Offices were unable to provide us with any such evidence or other information that could reflect on the situation of teaching and learning of the respective secondary schools. Except for one of the schools receiving an inspection report in 2007 (Services Senior Secondary School in Western Urban Area) reports were not submitted to any of the schools. In a few cases, the Inspectors/Supervisors signed the Visitor's Log Book and feedback was given in the form of verbal discussion, usually with Principals. There was also no mention of any inspection visits in the form of minutes from Board meetings or staff meetings. Principals of some of the schools could not even recall ever having been visited by the Inspectorate.

According to interviews with MEYS at central and district levels, annual reports and other reports should be produced by the Inspectorate. In addition to this, comprehensive reports, based on the individual reports for each school, should be submitted to MEYS by the District Education Offices. No such reports were made available to the auditors; thus ASSL was unable to verify the existence of these VVreports .

3.2.3 STAFFING PROBLEMS NOT ADDRESSED

The Inspectorate should evaluate and report on the performance of teachers as well as provide professional guidance and assistance in the recruitment of teachers (see Chapter 2.1). However, there was no evidence that the Inspectors/Supervisors were addressing or giving guidance on the staffing problems that were observed during the audit.

A serious shortage of teachers was noted in almost all the schools visited. This shortage was as a result of difficulties experienced in recruiting and retaining sufficiently qualified candidates. The problem was compounded by the delays in approval and promotion of teachers by MEYS. The ASSL found a large number of unapproved teachers teaching at the schools as illustrated in Table 7. Although these teachers were recruited at the beginning of the academic year in September 2008

or during the previous academic year, they were still not approved at the time of the audit in May/July 2009.

Table 7 Number of Unapproved Teachers in Secondary Schools visited

Secondary School, District	Unapproved Teachers
Annie Walsh Memorial, Western Urban	12
Henry Fergusson, " "	5
Services, " "	19
Waterloo Peninsula, " Rural	9
Regent Mountain " "	0
York, " "	4
Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood, Bombali	14
Makeni Comprehensive, "	5
St. Joseph's, "	8
Ahmadiyya Nasir, Kenema	8
Methodist, "	10
Holy Trinity, "	4
St. Paul's, Pujehun	6
St. Stephen's, "	2
Holy Rosary, "	1
TOTAL	107

In most cases the Personnel Files for the unapproved teachers had been submitted to MEYS for approval, but in some instances they remained with the Principals in line with advice given by the District Education Office. According to the former, all of them met the formal requirements for appointment and had been working full time, at least, since September 2008. Detailed investigation also disclosed that the Conference of Principals recommended sometime ago that, in the absence of a salary from the Government, these teachers should be paid monthly allowances from the school funds, of Le120,000.00 for graduate teachers and Le100,000.00 for HTC holders.

In some cases, the school administration had also employed part time teachers and/or auxiliary staff, paid out of school funds, to compensate for the shortage of

staff. Several schools reported cases of unclaimed salaries due to delays in the deletion of names from the payroll voucher for teachers who had absconded, been transferred to other schools or left for other reasons.

The unanimous view of the teaching staff was that the Conditions of Service and other facilities for teachers were deplorable considering the cost of living and the workload.

3.2.4 POOR GUIDANCE ON COMMON PROBLEMS SOLUTION

The Inspectors/Supervisors should also evaluate, report on and give recommendations on issues such as administration, organisation, discipline, financial management, physical facilities and general academic performance; the objectives being to assist, inspire and develop.

The ASSL's observation of the general school settings have however unearthed a number of problems, highlighted below, where guidance from the Inspectors/Supervisors had not been forthcoming.

All the schools visited complained about inadequate teaching and learning materials. In particular, there were shortages of basic Textbooks, including core subjects like English Language and Mathematics. Lack of science laboratory and library facilities were also mentioned. Pupils were often unable to buy the prescribed textbooks.



Science Laboratory, Holy Rosary, Pujehun

There were frequent complaints from Principals and teachers regarding poor attitudes of pupils and parents; school fees paid late or not at all; little or no support from parents to buy textbooks; weakness on the part of the parents to monitor their children's performance in school; problems of indiscipline by the pupils; high dropout rate; etc.

To encourage girls to acquire secondary school education, the Government decided to pay the school fees for every girl child attending Junior Secondary School in the Eastern and Northern Regions of the country. However, interviews (e.g. at Ahmadiyya Secondary School in Kenema) on the payment of school fees revealed that the school fees subsidy for the girl child education had not been paid for the last three academic years.

Interviews and physical observation of the general school infrastructure revealed that such facilities were poor in almost all the schools visited. The most serious problems included: overcrowded classrooms, deplorable toilet facilities, lack of pure drinking water, dilapidated buildings and also poor repairs and maintenance of furniture and other equipment.



Partial view of classroom, Methodist Secondary School, Kenema.



Home Economics Class, Henry Fergusson JSS, Freetown



Toilets, Holy Rosary School, Pujehun



Class in a corridor, Henry Fergusson JSS, Freetown



Classroom, Holy Rosary School, Pujehun

In order to support the 6-3-3-4 system of education in the country, and to cope with overcrowding, many schools were operating a two-shift system. This, according to our interviews, reduced the contact hours in school and made it difficult to complete the syllabus on time.

BECE results were released by WAEC after the beginning of the academic year in September and pupils missed part of the first term waiting for results and for the admission process to be completed. Thus SSSI pupils paid school fees (Le75,000) for the whole academic year, but benefitted only for two and a half terms (Le62,500) in the first year, i.e. every SSSI pupil lost Le12,500.

The May/June WASSCE has been shifted to start in March for the past two years. Since some pupils may not attend classes when preparing for their exams, this means in effect that SSSIII pupils may miss out part of the second term. Thus in total during the three years of SSS the pupils attended school only six terms out of nine. In summary, out of the school fees paid for nine terms amounting to Le225,000 for each pupil, up to Le75,000 could have gone to paying for the terms when the pupils were not attending classes.

3.3 DEVOLUTION OF INSPECTION RESPONSIBILITIES

3.3.1 DEVOLUTION PROCESS NOT COMPLETED

According to the Statutory Instrument (See Chapter 2.1) the activities for Primary to Junior Secondary Schools and for school supervision, should have been devolved to the Councils between 2005 and 2007. At the time of the visits to the Education Districts, these activities had not yet been fully devolved. There was no evidence that any of the five Councils concerned had asked for more time in line with what is stipulated on page 1 of the Statutory Instrument. On the contrary, general dissatisfaction with the slow pace of devolution was expressed by Councillors as well as by Chief Administrators.

The current state of devolution of Basic Education to Local Councils was still unclear in that councils and District Education Offices differed on how far devolution had actually progressed.

There was also some confusion regarding who and what should be devolved, e.g. where 'devolved' supervisors are responsible for zones also including Senior Secondary Schools. The ASSL could not find any written plans, neither at the national nor at the district levels, for what, when and how inspection finally should be devolved and the Inspectorate reorganised.

According to interviews, more functions were expected to be devolved to Local Councils, e.g. approval and payment of teachers' salaries, payment of examination fees i.e. B.E.C.E and N.P.S.E, employment of teachers, promotion of teachers, etc, but the exact dates were not known.

It was further noted that there were functions that have been formally devolved, but still retained by the ministry e.g. the procurement of teaching and learning materials, Fees Subsidy, personnel and, in some cases, the distribution of text-books.

The devolved Inspectors/Supervisors were devolved on paper, but not in practice. The devolved personnel were not working at the Councils. This, according to the District Education Offices, was as a result of lack of infrastructure (office space) to accommodate devolved staff at the Council. As a consequence, Councils did not have much control over the devolved staff who were still paid by MEYS, reported to and took directives from the Ministry.

3.3.2 INSUFFICIENT CO-OPERATION BETWEEN MEYS AND COUNCILS

MEYS officials at the district level did not work closely with the Local Council Education Committees to support their activities and this was reflected in all Education Districts visited.

Cooperation between the ministry and the Local Councils has been lacking and been unsatisfactory in terms of documentation and activity plans. Also, the Councils were often not informed about the inspection activities carried out within their localities.

This means that the Council was also not involved in inspections for approval of new schools established within the district or city.

3.4 SUPERVISION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

3.4.1 CONTINUOUS SUPERVISION BY PRINCIPALS

During the course of the audit, series of interviews were held with Principals, Heads of Departments (HoDs), Teachers and pupils of the selected schools in order to assess the frequency and quality of supervision.

According to the interviews with Principals and the HoDs, continuous supervision was carried out by both. This covered: scheme of work, teachers' lesson notes, teachers' attendance, teaching methods, annual performance appraisal of teachers, conduct of the examinations, continuous assessment of pupils, examination of schools' financial records and social activities. This was also confirmed by the teachers and pupils.

However, as regards the Annual Performance Appraisal of teachers, it was noted that Annual Appraisal Forms provided by MEYS were in most cases not used by the school Principals.

3.4.2 DISSOLUTION OF THE BOARDS OF GOVERNORS

ASSL observed that the Ministry dissolved the terms of all School Boards in 2007. The previous Boards were no longer holding meetings; new Boards were appointed by the Minister, but have not yet held any Board meetings. Thus the Boards could not oversee the management of the schools or perform their supervisory roles (See Chapter 2.2.4). The Principals could not report to the Boards and the latter were not involved in the recruitment and promotion of teachers. During our visits to the schools, the principals referred us to the former Chairpersons who were still upholding close contacts with the schools, though not in a formal capacity.

The chairpersons of the former Board of Governors stated, during the interviews, that there had been no Board meetings because of the disagreement between the Missions and the Ministry. The Missions wanted to uphold the tradition of appointment of Heads of Churches/Missions to be Chairpersons of the Boards.

3.4.3 LITTLE SUPPORT FROM THE INSPECTORATE

It was observed that supervision of schools by the Principal received little or no support from the inspectorate. The Principals particularly mentioned the absence of inspection reports and that the Supervisors do not come often enough. According to several Principals the Supervisors also lacked the requisite qualifications.

Even when inspections were carried out, the outcome of such inspections was not formerly discussed with Principals, HoDs or Teachers in the form of reports, minutes from staff meetings, etc, as a way of improving the quality of teaching and learning.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

The general conclusion from the findings presented in the previous chapter is that inspection and supervision of secondary schools have not been efficient.

A consequence of this is that necessary steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning have not been taken, leading to continued poor performance of pupils at public examinations, especially WASSCE. MEYS' mission to provide quality education has still not been met.

In summary the answers to our four audit questions are that:

- 1) MEYS is not managing its inspection activities in an efficient way;
- 2) MEYS has not established and implemented adequate working methods;
- 3) Inspection of basic education has not been devolved to an extent that enables the Local Councils to take up their responsibilities, and;
- 4) The efficiency of supervision in the schools is hampered by a lack of support from the Inspectorate and by the dissolution of the Boards of Governors.

The inefficiency of the Inspectorate can be traced back to the poor planning and resource utilisation caused by a failure to define clear goals and objectives linked to MEYS' overall vision and mission.

The Inspectorate's poor performance has affected not only its own inspection/supervision activities, but also more importantly, its role in developing methods and guidelines for inspection/supervision to be carried out by Councils and Schools and Principals. Support for the devolution process has not been forthcoming and school Principals have received little help from the Inspectorate.

The Local Councils have not effectively taken over responsibility and assumed the functions that should have been devolved. Staff have indeed been 'formally' devolved to Council and the Council is also, together with the DD, co-signatory to all financial documents relating to devolved funds.

In spite of this, staff are still paid by the Central Government and located at the District Education Offices where they receive instructions from and report to the DD. In the absence of the Inspectors/Supervisors and without support from MEYS the Councils have not been able to build the capacity needed for assuming the full responsibility for inspection/supervision.

The lack of Guidelines and Policy Interpretations has also led to some confusion between Councils and District Education Offices on who is responsible for what. This, in conjunction with poor communication between the Council and the District Education Office, implies a risk for uncoordinated interventions or, even worse, that necessary actions are not taken at all.

Without guidelines from the Inspectorate on methods for Inspection/Supervision and without a Board of Governors to report to, the supervision carried out by the Principals has little impact. In this situation the Principals' power to enforce discipline, reward good performance or take other corrective steps that would secure completion of the syllabus and promote good results, is very limited.

The Inspectorate, the Local Councils and the Schools should together secure a high quality teaching and learning environment. WAEC also through the external examinations, measures how well it has succeeded in this. The role of WAEC in conducting external examinations is thus a key part of the quality control process. External examinations, which cannot be tampered with and which permit comparisons over time and between different schools, provide a good measure of the quality of education.

The amounts paid for the WASSCE alone amounted to far more than what the Government was able to allocate (excluding salaries) to the Inspectorate and to the Councils in the form of devolved funds for their inspection/supervision activities. There was thus an imbalance between the amounts paid for measuring effectiveness and what was available for detecting the causes of non effectiveness and taking corrective action.

The poorer the quality of teaching and learning, the poorer the results should be expected for BECE and WASSCE.

From what was observed during the audit of Inspection/Supervision it is therefore hardly surprising that the external examination results remained poor also in 2009. Out of the total of Le3,080,160,000, paid for WASSCE Fees by the Government, the sum of Le2,781,384,000 was for candidates whose credit passes were so few that they could not qualify for entry to any Tertiary Institution of learning in Sierra Leone.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Decisive steps to improve the quality of teaching and learning need to be taken to deal with the persistently poor performance of candidates at the WASSCE Examinations. The responsibilities of the Inspectorate, the Local Councils and the Schools for securing a high quality teaching and learning environment must be made clear, co-operation between the different levels improved and their performance more efficient.

MEYS should formulate clear policies, goals and objectives for the Inspectorate linked to the vision and mission of the Ministry as a whole. A Strategic Plan on how to reach these goals needs to be developed in order to secure a more efficient utilisation of resources.

The activities of the Inspectorate should focus on formulation and interpretation of policies; development of methods for inspection and supervision and issuing of guidelines to ensure correct implementation of rules and regulations.

The devolution process should be completed and Local Councils assume the full responsibility for devolved functions in line with Statutory Instrument No. 13.

Devolved staff should report only to the Council. MEYS should provide training, guidance, etc to promote capacity building and secure a swift transfer of responsibilities to the Councils. The role of the DD in this process should be that of Strategic Adviser, not that of Strategic Leader.

The responsibility for general oversight and monitoring of overall development in the education sector in Sierra Leone should remain with the Inspectorate. MEYS should strengthen the capacity of the Inspectorate accordingly.

MEYS should, in order to improve cooperation with the Councils, ensure that Acts and Regulations (e.g. LGA, the Education Act and the Statutory Instrument) are interpreted in the same way by all parties.

The Inspectorate should provide the school Principals with the necessary forms and guidelines required for carrying out efficient supervision.

MEYS should urgently resolve the outstanding problems that prevent the Boards of Governors from functioning.

MEYS should address the issue of reduced teaching/contact hours due to the two-shift system and the extension of the examination periods for BECE and WASSCE. Measures, including extracurricular activities (quizzes, competitions, etc) that could compensate for the time lost, should also be considered in order to complete the syllabus. Steps also need to be taken to solve the outstanding issue of unpaid salaries to teachers.

The Government should consider ways of obtaining more value for money for its payment of external Examination Fees. Ways for achieving this could include policy reviews, screening of eligible candidates and measures to correct obstacles to teaching and learning that have already been identified.

APPENDIX

SCHOOLS AND LOCAL COUNCILS VISITED DURING THE PERFORMANCE AUDIT OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AND SPORTS (MEYS)

SCHOOLS:

WESTERN RURAL

1. Peninsula Secondary School,	Waterloo
2. York Secondary School	York
3. Mountain Rural Secondary School	Regent

WESTERN URBAN

1. Annie Walsh Memorial Secondary School	Kissy Road
2. Henry Fergusson Junior Secondary School	Kennedy Street
3. Services Secondary School	Juba

KENEMA DISTRICT

1. Methodist Secondary School	Kenema
2. Holy Trinity Secondary School	Kenema
3. Ahmadiyya Nasir Secondary School	Kenema

PUJEHUN DISTRICT

1. St. Paul's Secondary School	Pujehun
2. Holy Rosary Secondary School	Pujehun
3. Gobaró Secondary School	Gobaró

BOMBALI DISTRICT

1. St. Joseph's Secondary School	Makeni
2. Makeni Comprehensive Secondary School	Makeni
3. Sierra Leone Muslim Brotherhood Secondary School	Makeni

LOCAL COUNCILS:

1. Western Rural Area District Council
2. Freetown City Council
3. Kenema City Council
4. Pujehun District Council
5. Makeni City Council



The Audit Service Sierra Leone

2nd Floor, Lotto Building
Tower Hill, Freetown
Sierra Leone

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