

c d p r

HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN LEARNING IN PUNJAB'S SCHOOLS

KEY FINDINGS FROM A SCHOOL SURVEY



Oxford Policy
Management



IDEAS
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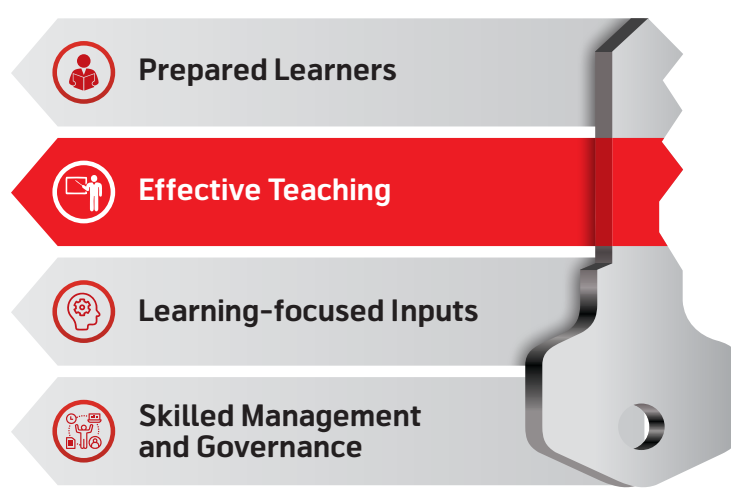
CONTEXT & FRAMEWORK

This note presents the key findings from a school survey in four districts of Punjab that was completed as part of a study* to evaluate the performance of the second phase of the Punjab Education Sector Programme (PESP2). PESP2 is a major programme to support the Government of Punjab in undertaking educational reform to

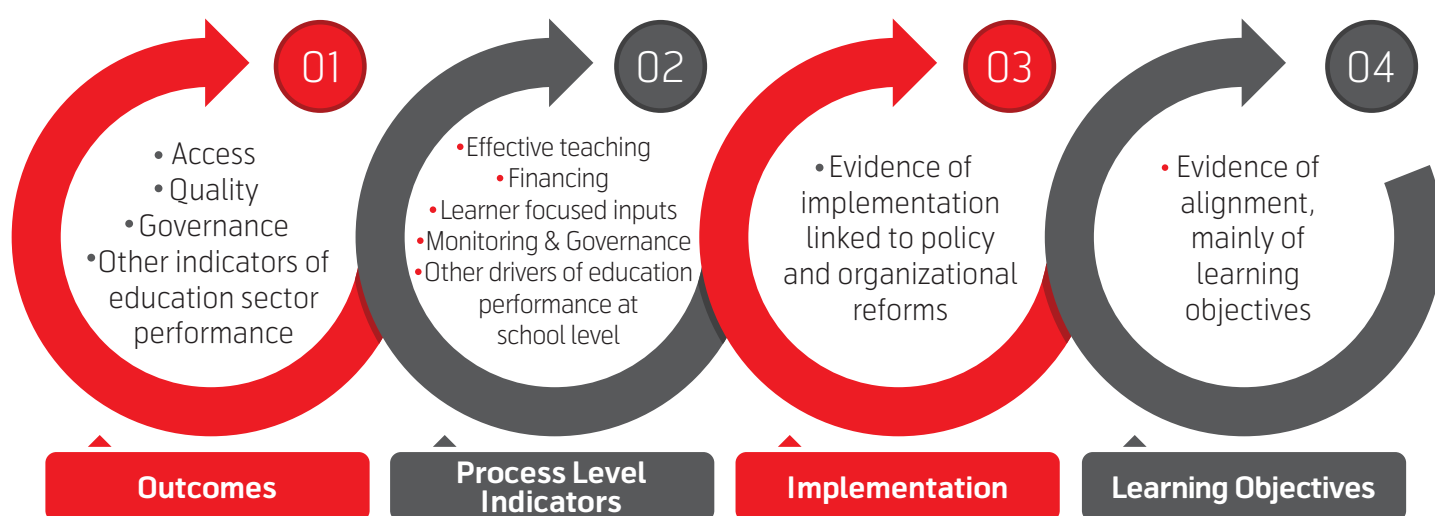
help more children stay in school longer and learn more. The GBP 420 million programme is funded by UK Aid and runs from 2012/13 to 2020/21. This survey is part of the evaluation exercise to assess how well the intended objectives of PESP2 have been achieved and what can be done to improve outcomes.

The survey assessed the extent to which four school-level ingredients for learning are present in schools in the selected districts, and the contribution of education policy and reform initiatives towards providing them. The conceptual framework underpinning the performance evaluation identifies these four key school-level ingredients for learning as:

4 KEY SCHOOL-LEVEL INGREDIENTS FOR LEARNING AS:



Data was collected from 200 government schools in four selected districts**. These four districts, except Rawalpindi, were chosen from 11 priority districts that were the focus of the PESP2 work in Punjab, by selecting two that had performed relatively well in improving indicators and two which had performed badly. The school survey was conducted at the school and classroom level to collect data on:



Within each school, the research team interviewed the head teacher, interviewed one Class 3 teacher, observed one Class 3 lesson, and collected information from school records.

* The study was conducted by Oxford Policy Management and the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives as part of the performance evaluation of PESP2. The school survey was implemented between September and November 2019 in four districts of Punjab: Bhakkar, Rahimyar Khan, Rawalpindi and Rajanpur.

** The four chosen districts were Bhakkar, Rahimyar Khan (performed well) and Rawalpindi, Rajanpur (performed badly)

1 ARE LEARNERS IN PUNJAB PREPARED & MOTIVATED TO LEARN?

Early Childhood Education (ECE) classrooms for 3-year-olds were set up in a playgroup-setting run by 'care-givers', to be followed by katchi class and grade 1. Key steps were taken to expand ECE

infrastructure and increase enrolment in the early grades. It was expected that by expanding infrastructure of dedicated ECE rooms and ensuring presence of dedicated ECE staff, ECE rooms

would be set up and used appropriately, schools would be equipped and staffed to handle pre-primary enrolment and children would be adequately prepared for school.

SURVEY FINDINGS

ECE classrooms not always fully set up or used for ECE purposes



- Head teachers in 51% sampled schools reported having ECE schools set up. Of these only 42% were being used for ECE
- Head teachers in poor performing districts reported significantly greater likelihood of having ECE rooms set up in their schools (73%) compared to well performing districts (29%)

- Across all 4 districts, 63% head teachers reported their schools lack adequate staff or facilities to support ECE enrollment
- Only 4.5% schools surveyed had utilized NSB funds to hire a care giver



Government schools not yet effective for ECE instruction or support enrolments

ECE improves child numeracy & literacy & prepares them for formal school.



- 77.5% head teachers believe ECE helps children recognize numbers and 88.2% found it familiarizes children with the school environment

- Around 50% teachers regard lack of community and parental engagement a constraint to teacher motivation in addition to unpreparedness of children to learn (30%)



Lack of community and parental engagement & cultural norms may challenge teacher motivation

Several elements can influence whether learners get to school, arrive prepared and be motivated to learn. Policies need to focus on, a) early childhood nutrition, stimulation and care to prevent malnutrition, improve language and motor development and long run cognitive and socio-emotional skills, b) remediation to youth prior to further education, to compensate for the loss of basic foundational skills in youth that may have left school, through bridging courses and accelerated, flexible programs, c) lowering entry barriers to school via lowering cost of schooling combined with other interventions such as school provided meals.

2 ARE TEACHING PRACTICES EFFECTIVE?

Key reforms related to teachers in Punjab between 2012 and 2016 included an

- expansion of the workforce through a recruitment drive
- a change in the recruitment rules through introduction of the National Testing Service
- introduction of higher minimum educational qualifications for teachers

In addition, a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program was introduced to ensure on-site capacity building support along with setting up a mentoring and support cadre of District Teacher Educators (DTEs). It was expected these reforms would result in more and better qualified and motivated

teachers, effective training and capacity building support for teachers, training in inclusive education approaches to address gender, disability, special needs, and social and economic disadvantage, reduced teacher absenteeism and effective delivery of curriculum.

SURVEY FINDINGS

1

More qualified teachers hired but teacher shortages still reported with many without specialised degrees

- Sharp decline in schools reporting less than 4 teachers between 2012 and 2018 in both 'poor performing' (from 72.6% to 30.2%) and 'well performing' districts (from 87.3% to 28%).
- 53% teachers not teaching subjects they specialized in.

2

Exposure to training improved but varied by district and type of training. Almost all teachers received CPD but not all received induction training

- Almost all teachers hired after 2016 reported attending CPD cluster training
- Only 75% teachers received induction training with only 64% teachers in districts like Rahimyar Khan.

3

Teachers reported being observed and provided with feedback on a regular basis by the DTE though frequency of receiving feedback was lower than observations

- Across all 4 districts, 97.7% teachers reported their classes were observed by a DTE during 2012 to 2016
- Overall, 85% teachers reported receiving monthly feedback from DTEs from all 4 districts
- In Bhakkar, just 69.2% teachers reported receiving any feedback.

4

Teachers found training more useful to develop confidence in Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) and pedagogy, but less so for learning inclusive education approaches addressing gender, disability, special needs, and social and economic disadvantage

63% teachers reported induction training covered SLOs very well.

5

Teachers were found engaged in teaching. Group work and activities in pairs was less common. Main activities included writing on the board and lecturing

- Teachers were found in class and teaching in 90% of the intervals observed
- Teachers were found, writing on the board during 15% and lecturing during 10% of observations
- On average, 90% students were actively engaged in activities that teachers expect them to engage in.

6

Teachers were confident in their ability to complete the curriculum though constraints were reported in some districts

- 86.9% of teachers in the 'poor performing' districts were able to complete the calendars fully more often than 80.4% in the 'well performing' districts
- 45.2% teachers cited an overly ambitious curricula as the primary reason for teacher's inability to complete them.
- Substantial differences were reported across districts regarding teachers' involvement (84% in Bhakkar vs. 6% in Rajanpur) in setting learning targets.

Effective teaching entails a wide range of elements that ensure the best outcomes for learners in the classrooms. These need to be based on the following areas a) making teaching training more effective via an individually targeted program with repeated follow-up coaching b) making student learning consistent with grade level by teaching at the student level via providing remedial lessons to lowest performers, reorganizing classes by ability, using technology to adapt lessons to individual student needs c) using monetary and non-monetary incentives to motivate teachers.

4 ARE HEAD TEACHERS BETTER EQUIPPED? FOR SKILLED MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE?

The Roadmap and stock take process, and district education authorities (DEAs) were introduced in Punjab as key governance reforms. NSB reforms and public-private partnerships for school management were enacted. The criteria for selection of primary school head teachers were changed from seniority level to educational

qualifications. The NSB reform also ensured that funds were directly transferred to the school's bank account, bypassing expenditure approval from the Auditor General's office, providing more fiscal autonomy to schools. Under the Public Sector Support Program (PSSP), it was proposed to hand over management and operations

of 10,000 struggling government schools to private actors. The objective of the reforms was to provide adequate motivation and skills to head teachers, ensure school accountability to their communities, and enable effective support from the district level while schools are using accurate and timely information to inform school decisions.

SURVEY FINDINGS

1 Few head teachers received induction training or QAED leadership training even though this was found useful where provided. Most had received CPD training but emphasis on critical skills required for effective school management was found weak.

Only 38% head teachers had received induction training. 42% head teachers reported they had received the QAED training. Only 6 out of 76 teachers found induction training not useful.

Head teachers were generally found to be motivated towards public service. However, up to half of head teachers report significant challenges related to pressure to meet targets and insufficient time and resources to achieve them, which may reflect demotivation.

A large percentage of head teachers (86%) noted having received support from DTEs between 2012 and 2016. 88.4% school heads reported interacting with AEOs since 2016 with a higher level of interaction amongst the 'well performing' districts (92.6%)

3 Several mechanisms to sanction non-performing teachers exist. However, not all of these mechanisms are viewed as the best means to hold teachers accountable nor do head teachers feel they always have the authority to use some of them.

Over three quarters of head teachers reported not having the authority to write a teacher's appraisal, in terms of how school heads reward their teachers, 81.5% of the school heads acknowledged their performance publicly as a tool to do so.

Majority head teachers received substantial support through DTEs and AEOs, but focused more on pedagogical skills than management.

Across all 4 districts, almost 8% head teachers hired before 2016 reported receiving support from the DTE. 76.4% head teachers reported induction training gave little or no emphasis to human resource management, 70% said no emphasis was given to skills for identifying and supporting children with special needs, 64.5% said little or no emphasis on training for spending the NSB. 76% head teachers report little or no emphasis on human resource management, 54% report little or no emphasis on financial management, 45% report little or no emphasis on leadership skills and making school improvement plans.

5 School councils are available in all schools and viewed as a useful tool for community mobilization by school heads. However, lack of community & parental engagement was commonly reported as a challenge by teachers.

Pre-DRC meetings have helped map school priorities through the School Development Plan, managing infrastructure, improving cleanliness, and supporting pedagogical skills.

7 Schools were found to be collecting timely and accurate data and using it to inform school-based decisions.

Proportion of sample schools with access to ranking data on performance indicators ranged from 91.8% in Bhakkar to 55.1% in Rajanpur.

3 ARE LEARNING-FOCUSED INPUTS IMPROVING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN PUNJAB'S SCHOOLS?

The Government of Punjab developed a strategy by streamlining curriculum, improving text books, introducing user-friendly teacher guides and improving assessments. Progress

against these was monitored regularly to provide incentives to relevant institutions to perform. Scripted, simple, and well-written lesson plans were developed for primary schoolteachers for each day

of the academic year which accounted for resource constraints that classrooms and teachers faced. It was expected that sufficient textbooks and other learning materials would become available and used effectively in classrooms.

SURVEY FINDINGS

01

Teacher guides are still not universally available and learning materials are not always effectively used

Across the four districts, 78.8% of the teachers received teacher guides in the past year and 90.1% found them useful. There was significant variation in receiving guides, 95.8% schools in Rajanpur reported receiving these guides in Rajanpur compared to only 56.8% in Bhakkar

Large majority of teachers report receiving Taleemi calendars for primary grades though not all are using the Calendars for lesson planning

02

92.5% schools reported receiving Taleemi calendars. Taleemi Calendars are being used to plan lessons in 76% of grade 1s, 83% of grade 2s, 90% of grade 3s and 4s, and in 92% of grade 5 that receive them

03

NSB funds are reported to be universally available but there have been delays in receiving them

Only 67.5% head teachers reported receiving NSB funds on time

Most NSB funds are being utilized for infrastructure repairs and meeting day-to-day running expenses of schools rather than for hiring more teachers or on efforts likely to improve teaching quality

04

NSB funds in sampled schools were being used mainly for infrastructure repairs (82%), furniture repairs (59%), and paying electricity bills (54%). A third of the head teachers reported an ease in hiring teachers

05

Overall, physical environment is broadly conducive to learning but there are some examples of corporal punishment and concerns about discipline and student engagement in non-learning activities

46.5% teachers reported that lack of discipline amongst their students was not a challenge to their teaching

Learning assessments were valued, however some teachers found Literacy and Numeracy Drive (LND) assessments to be stressful and not always value adding to children's learning

06

Across the 4 districts, 83.5% sampled teachers found LND tests to be useful

Inputs, including new technologies can increase learning if they aim to complement the teacher rather than substitute it. Technologies should be well-adapted to their setting to ensure they are implementable in their respective education system and will have a higher chance of boosting learning. School management and governance reforms should focus on teacher to learner interaction, including feedback to teachers and accountability by involving communities and parents.

Evidence suggests that schools displaying better management, governance, and leadership (e.g. with school heads helping teachers solve problems, set higher learning goals and supporting them in effective ways) reflect better learning outcomes. Management and governance therefore need to be built on the following principles a) building school leadership capacity to ensure school principals actively help teachers solve their problems and set prioritized learning goals b) clearly defining roles of actors and providing schools and communities with decision-making power by giving parents more influence over teachers and c) communities effectively engaged in school management improve student learning by increasing accountability through feedback loops across multiple stakeholders.

CONCLUSIONS

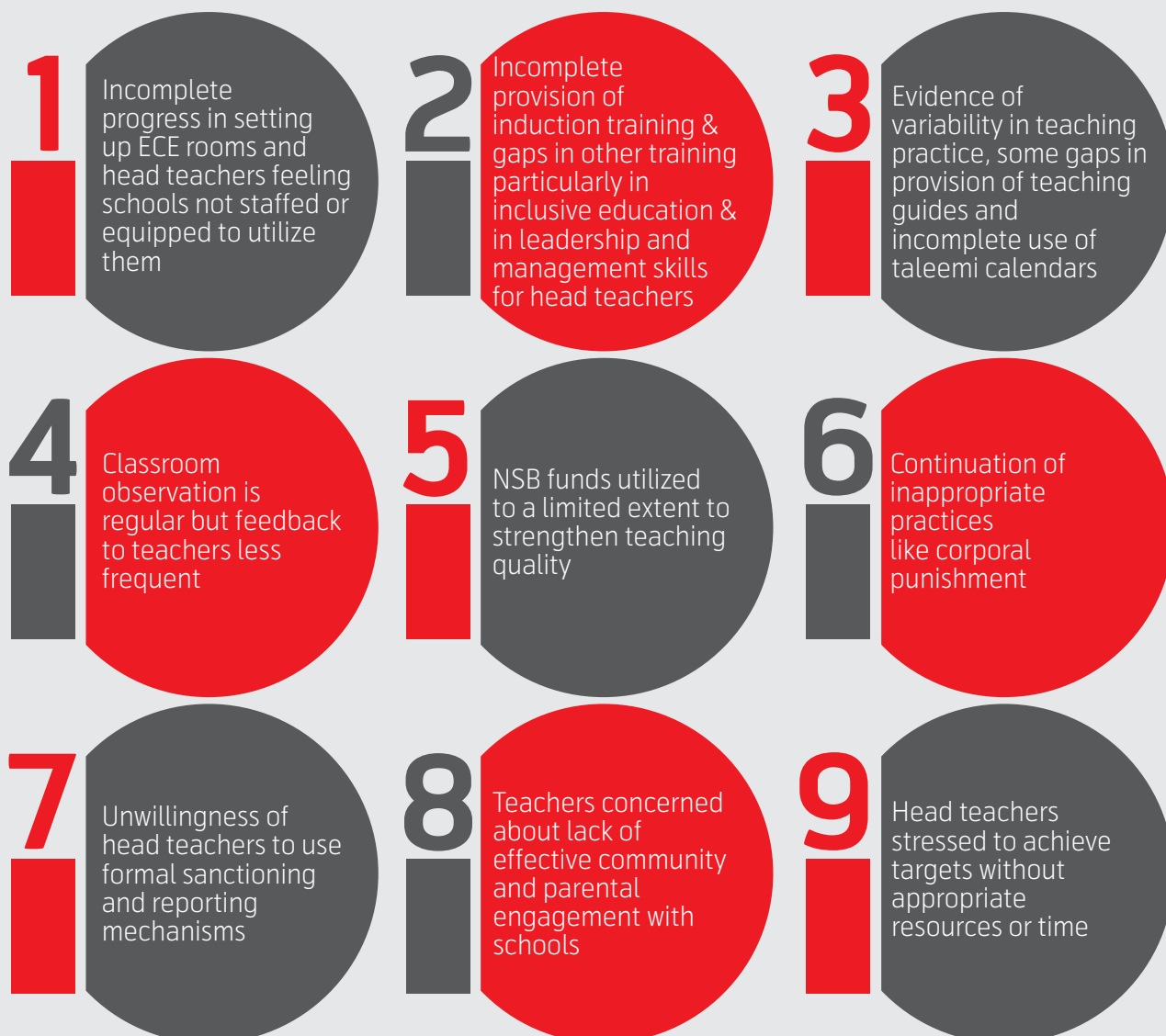
SUCCESSSES

Overall findings suggest several key reforms have been achieved, in particular:

- Flow (and use) of information and target setting
- Provision of support through AEOs and regular classroom observation
- Provision and use of funds through the NSB
- Functioning of school councils and pre-District Review Committee (DRC) meetings
- Provision of teachers and learning inputs

CHALLENGES

However, challenges remain. Implementation of some key reforms was found to be incomplete at the school level and at times inconsistent across districts, especially in the following domains:



**This evaluation of PESP2, being implemented by the
Government of Punjab,
is being carried out by OPM under
e-Pact, in partnership with IDEAS and CDPR.**

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