



Education

In 2011/12 the approved public spending on education amounted to \$68.7 billion, representing 17.1 per cent of the total public expenditure.

The Government has extended free education in public sector schools from nine years to 12 years as from the 2008/09 school year. In addition, full subvention has been provided for full-time courses run by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) for Secondary 3 school leavers, giving senior secondary students an alternative free avenue to mainstream education.

There are three main types of local schools – government schools which are operated by the Government; aided schools which are fully subvented by the Government but run by voluntary bodies; and private schools, some of which receive financial assistance from the Government. Government and aided schools deliver a curriculum recommended by the Government. They offer free primary and secondary education.

Besides, there are 15 schools operated by the English Schools Foundation offering education to English-speaking children. There are also some international schools which offer non-local curricula and serve primarily non-Chinese speaking students and foreign nationals.

Kindergartens: Kindergarten education is offered to children in the 3-5 age group in private kindergartens which are run by voluntary organisations or private bodies. These kindergartens are registered with, and supervised by the Education Bureau (EDB). In September 2011, 157 400 pupils were enrolled in 946 kindergartens.

Existing government assistance to kindergartens includes rent, rates and government rent reimbursement to non-profit-making kindergartens, allocating purpose-built kindergarten premises in public housing estates, the remission of fees to needy parents through the Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme and provision of training programmes for teachers and principals. The Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, introduced in the 2007/08 school year, provides direct fee subsidy for parents to meet school fees for pre-primary education of their children and financial support for kindergarten teachers' professional upgrading.

In view of the curriculum reform and changes in learning and teaching culture, the EDB has implemented the revised 'Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum' since September 2007, providing the basic principles and direction for pre-school educators to develop their school-based programmes.

Primary Education: Primary schooling starts at the age of around six and there are 6 years of schooling at the primary level. There are three modes of operation in the primary schools, namely AM, PM and whole-day. Encouraged by the Government, most primary schools are adopting whole-day operation. All eligible children are, on application, allocated Primary 1 places in government and

aided primary schools through the Primary One Admission System. The system consists of the Discretionary Places (DP) stage and the Central Allocation (CA) stage. At the DP stage, parents can apply for admission to only one government or aided primary school of their preference, and admission is based on EDB's prescribed criteria. At the CA stage, P1 places are centrally allocated by EDB according to school net, parents' choice of schools, and random number. Chinese is the language of instruction in most schools with English taught as a second language.

In September 2011, 265 620 children were enrolled in 457 public sector primary schools.

Since the curriculum reform at the basic education level in the 2001/02 school year, there has been enhanced learning and teaching in classrooms. Students are now enjoying a wide range of learning activities and there are improvements in students' generic capabilities, values and attitudes. They are becoming independent learners. Schools continue to adapt the central curriculum to meet students' needs. By building on their strengths and experiences, schools can strengthen their curricula to help students better develop their lifelong learning capabilities and themselves as whole-persons.

Secondary Education: On completion of primary education, pupils are allocated subsidised Secondary 1 places through participation in the Secondary School Places Allocation System. The system consists of the Discretionary Places (DP) stage and the Central Allocation (CA) stage. At the DP stage, secondary schools may admit students in accordance with their admission criteria. At the CA stage, S1 places are allocated according to individual student's allocation band, parental choice of schools and random number.

In September 2011, 400 public sector secondary schools had a total student enrolment of 392 400.

The new academic structure has been implemented since September 2009 in Secondary 4. The new senior secondary curriculum provides a three-year course of study for students leading to one public examination at the end of Secondary 6 - the new Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination, which replaces the former Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) and Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE). Under the new system, all students can benefit from 6 years of secondary education (i.e. 3 years of junior secondary and 3 years of senior secondary education). This flexible, coherent and diversified senior secondary curriculum aims at catering for students' varied interests, needs and abilities, as well as nurturing students' whole-person development and lifelong learning capabilities. The first cohort of students under the new academic structure will graduate in 2012.

Special Education: Under the prevailing policy, subject to the assessment and recommendation of the

specialists/physicians and with parents' consent, children with severe or multiple disabilities are placed in special schools for more intensive support. Other children with special educational needs (SEN) are placed in ordinary schools. There are 60 aided special schools in the 2011/12 school year, including a hospital school (operating classes at 18 hospitals), providing places for children with visual impairment, hearing impairment, physical disability, emotional and behavioural difficulties and intellectual disability. These special schools are subvented by the Government and operated by non-governmental organisations involved in this work. Some are serving as resource centres to support ordinary schools in catering for students with SEN.

The EDB provides additional resources and professional support for public sector primary and secondary schools to cater for students with SEN. Schools are required to deploy the resources flexibly and adopt a Whole School Approach to provide appropriate school-based support services for these students. To build up teachers' professional capacity in catering for students with SEN, structured training courses are provided under a Teacher Professional Development Framework on Integrated Education put in place starting from the 2007/08 school year.

Language Policy: To facilitate effective learning, the Government has been promoting the use of the mother tongue, Chinese, as the principal medium of instruction for local schools. But both Chinese and English as the official languages in Hong Kong, the Government also invests heavily in training students to be biliterate (Chinese and English) and trilingual (Cantonese, Putonghua and English). Starting from the 2010/11 school year, the fine-tuned medium of instruction arrangements for secondary schools have been implemented at Secondary 1 level and will progress each year to a higher form at junior secondary levels to provide students with more opportunities to use English and enhance their English proficiency.

Information Technology (IT) in Education: The Government launched the first, second and third IT Education Strategies in 1998, 2004 and 2008 respectively. The first and second IT in Education Strategies focused on the enhancement of IT infrastructure and on empowering learning and teaching with IT. The third strategy entitled "Right Technology at the Right Time for the Right Task", aims at reducing the burden on teachers integrating IT into their core activities, from lesson planning to assessment of students, continuing to sharpen teachers' IT pedagogical skills, enhancing students' information literacy, generating a favourable IT environment at the school level, and equipping parents with the skills to guide their children to use the Internet safely to learn at home.

The Government has further committed itself to formulating new initiatives on the promotion of e-Learning in schools, including the development of e-Learning resources for the enhancement of learning and teaching. The implementation measures include strengthening and expediting the development of the Depository of Curriculum-based Learning and Teaching Resources in different subjects at both primary and junior secondary levels in the 2009/10 to 2012/13 school year, provision of one-off grant to schools for purchasing e-Learning resources in the 2010/11 school year, launch of the three-year Pilot Scheme on e-Learning in schools starting from 2011 and the promotion of awareness of health and copyright issues related to the use of digital resources and devices.

Teacher Preparation: The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd), under the aegis of the University Grants Committee (UGC), aims to upgrade the quality of

teacher education. It offers a range of sub-degree, degree and postgraduate programmes for pre-service and in-service teachers. In the 2011/12 academic year, there were about 3 600 full-time and 3 600 part-time students enrolling for UGC-funded programmes offered by HKIEd.

The Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU), the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), and the University of Hong Kong (HKU) also offer degree and postgraduate programmes for pre-service and in-service teachers. The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) offers degree programmes for pre-service teachers and Postgraduate Diploma in Education programmes for pre-service and in-service school teachers.

To cater to community demand, these institutes also offer short courses for in-service education practitioners from time to time upon requests from the EDB.

Post-secondary Education: In the 2011/12 academic year, there were 26 institutions offering self-financing locally accredited sub-degree, degree and top-up degree programmes providing around 32 600 student places.

The VTC, the City University of Hong Kong (CityU), the Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU), Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) and HKIEd also offer publicly-funded sub-degree programmes, providing some 7 400 student places in the 2011/12 academic year.

Higher Education: Hong Kong has 16 degree-awarding higher education institutions, eight of which are funded through the UGC. Seven of the eight are universities and the remaining one is a teacher training institution. The other eight degree-awarding tertiary institutions are not funded by the UGC. They are the publicly-funded HKAPA, the self-financing OUHK, Hong Kong Shue Yan University (HKSJU), Chu Hai College of Higher Education, Hang Seng Management College, Tung Wah College, Caritas Institute of Higher Education and Centennial College.

The eight UGC-funded institutions are CityU, HKBU, Lingnan University, CUHK, HKIEd, PolyU, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) and HKU. In the 2011/12 academic year, a total of 64 400 full-time students and 4 300 part-time students enrolled for publicly-funded undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

The OUHK offers degree, non-degree and postgraduate programmes principally through open access and distance education to working adults aged 17 and above. In the 2011/12 academic year, over 18 000 students – including about 6 600 students have enrolled in its face-to-face programmes.

The HKAPA offers academic programmes from Diploma to Master Degree level in Dance, Drama, Film and Television, Music, Theatre and Entertainment Arts as well as Chinese Traditional Theatre. Every year, the Academy enrolls about 750 students for its full time programmes and around 800 students for the junior programmes.

Adult Education: The EDB implements the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses to provide financial assistance to adult learners attending evening secondary courses at designated centres. Adult education courses are also provided by the VTC, the various universities and private institutes.

Education for Newly Arrived Children (NAC): The EDB provides a school placement service for newly-arrived children, including those children from the Mainland, returnee children, and newly-arrived non-Chinese speaking children. Students may attend a six-month full-time Initiation Programme that helps them integrate into the community and education system before their admission to local schools. For those newly-arrived

students who enter public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) directly, EDB provides schools with a School-based Support Scheme Grant for them. EDB also provides subsidies for non-governmental organisations to run a 60-hour Induction Programme which covers personal development, social adaptation as well as basic learning skills for these students.

Education for Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) Children:

The Government has in place various support measures to enhance the learning and teaching of NCS students which include inter alia, providing onsite focused support and annual grant to 20 primary and 10 secondary schools designated in the 2011/12 school year, providing a supplementary guide to the Chinese Language curriculum alongside a series of curriculum resources, operating Summer Bridging Programme and Chinese Language Learning Support Centres, implementing the Project of After-school Extended Chinese Learning to reinforce the learning of the Chinese Language of NCS students studying in non-designated schools. To address the aspirations of NCS students for higher education, the UGC-funded institutions have, starting from 2008, provided further flexibility for acceptance of alternative Chinese Language qualification(s) including GCSE (Chinese) for application under specified circumstances under the Joint University Programmes Admissions System.

NCS parents have been informed of the local education system and the educational support services available to NCS students.

Vocational Education: The VTC advises the Government on measures to ensure a comprehensive system of vocational education and training suited to the development and manpower needs of Hong Kong. Vocational education and training services are provided at the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education (IVE), the Hong Kong Design Institute (HKDI), the School of Business and Information Systems (SBI), the Youth College (YC), the Hospitality Industry Training & Development Centre (HITDC), Chinese Cuisine Training Institute (CCTI), Maritime Services Training Institute

(MSTI), the Institute of Professional Education and Knowledge (PEAK) and Pro-Act Training and Development Centres. The VTC also institutes, develops and operates various schemes for training operatives, craftsmen, technicians and technologists (including the Apprenticeship Scheme) to sustain and improve industry, commerce and services.

IVE offers courses at higher technician, technician and craft levels leading to the awards of higher diploma, higher certificate, diploma and certificate etc. In order to meet the development needs of the creative industries, the VTC established HKDI in 2007 to bring together the design and related courses of the academic departments of IVE with a view to fostering cross fertilisation and synergy. YC offers various programmes for Secondary 3 and Secondary 5 school leavers. To align with the new senior secondary academic structure, YC introduced a credit-based programme, namely Diploma in Vocational Education, in 2009/10 school year for school leavers at or above Secondary 3 level. The education and training provided by these VTC institutions aims to lay a foundation for the students' continued personal and professional development and to prepare them for employment and/or further education. In the 2011/12 academic year, the VTC has offered about 40 400 full-time and 28 200 part-time student places through its member institutions.

Furthermore, in order to support the provision of a seamless higher education for young people in Hong Kong, the VTC has collaborated with a number of overseas and local universities to offer top-up degree programmes in various study areas to its Higher Diploma graduates. These programmes are administered by the School for Higher and Professional Education (SHAPE), a member institution of VTC.

Qualifications Framework (QF): The QF launched in 2008 provides a transparent and accessible platform to promote lifelong learning and hence enhancing the competitiveness of the workforce in Hong Kong. The QF is a seven-level hierarchy that orders and supports the qualifications of academic, vocational and continuing education sectors, and is underpinned by a robust quality assurance mechanism. All qualifications recognised under the QF are quality-assured.