



香港申訴專員公署
Office of The Ombudsman, Hong Kong



主動調查報告
Direct Investigation Report

政府對非華語學生的支援
Government's support for
non-Chinese speaking students

報告完成日期：2019年2月15日
Completion Date: 15 February 2019

報告公布日期：2019年2月19日
Announcement Date: 19 February 2019

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>		<i>Paragraph</i>
1	INTRODUCTION	
	<i>Background</i>	1.1 – 1.4
	<i>Scope of Investigation</i>	1.5
	<i>Process of Investigation</i>	1.6 – 1.7
2	SUPPORT AND RELEVANT MEASURES FOR NCS STUDENTS IN LEARNING CHINESE AND FOR CREATING INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT	2.1
	<i>Support for KGs</i>	2.2 – 2.11
	<i>Support for Primary and Secondary Schools</i>	2.12 – 2.25
	<i>EDB’s Response to Allegation about “Separate Classes for NCS and Chinese-speaking Students”</i>	2.26
3	SUPPORT FOR NCS CHILDREN APPLYING FOR KG PLACES	
	<i>KG Admission</i>	3.1 – 3.7
	<i>EDB’s Response to Allegation about “NCS Children Encountering Difficulties in Applying for KG Places”</i>	3.8 – 3.9
4	PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR NCS CHILDREN	4.1 – 4.3
	<i>Primary One Admission Arrangements for NCS Children</i>	4.4 – 4.11
	<i>EDB’s Response to Allegation that “Most NCS Children were Grouped Together and Allocated Places in around 30 Primary Schools”</i>	4.12 – 4.17

5	OUR COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	5.1
	<i>I. Support Measures for Primary and Secondary Schools should not just be on Funding, but Require Coordination of Various Sectors and Encourage School Participation</i>	5.2 – 5.3
	<i>II. The Additional Funding Mechanism for Admission of NCS Students Needs Review</i>	5.4 – 5.5
	<i>III. Inadequate Support for KG Admission</i>	5.6 – 5.8
	<i>IV. Discrepancy between Information about Schools on the List and the Actual Situation</i>	5.9 – 5.10
	<i>Recommendations</i>	5.11
	<i>Acknowledgements</i>	5.12

1

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

1.1 According to the *Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities*, published by the Census and Statistics Department in December 2017, the number of ethnic minority¹ residents aged 0 to 15 in Hong Kong had increased from 32,289 to 52,860 during the decade between 2006 and 2016, an increase of 64%. In 2016, there were totally 52,129 ethnic minority students studying full-time in Hong Kong and they were mainly at early childhood education to primary and secondary levels.

1.2 In general, Chinese is not the usual spoken language and mother tongue of ethnic minorities residing in Hong Kong. Given the increasing number of non-Chinese speaking (“NCS”) students², the Government has in recent years introduced enhancement measures to support NCS students in learning Chinese in early childhood education as well as in primary and secondary schools, and assist schools in creating an inclusive school environment so that NCS students can quickly adapt to the local education system, learn the Chinese language better and integrate into the society. Nevertheless, there have been criticisms that the Education Bureau (“EDB”) has not adequately catered for NCS students’ needs in learning Chinese. Concern groups also pointed out that due to lack of resources and experience, some schools even arranged separate classes for NCS students and Chinese-speaking students, making it difficult for the NCS students to integrate into the local language context of learning Chinese.

1.3 Meanwhile, there were media reports from time to time about the difficulties encountered by many NCS children when applying for enrolment in kindergartens (“KGs”) and choosing primary schools. They alleged that EDB had failed to provide

¹ According to the Definition of Terms in the *Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities* published by the Census and Statistics Department, “Ethnic Minorities” refer to persons of non-Chinese ethnicity.

² For the planning of education support measures, students whose spoken language at home is not Chinese are broadly categorised as non-Chinese speaking students.

sufficient information about choice of schools and allocation of places, or appropriate support for NCS children and their parents. Some concern groups also pointed out that under the Primary One Admission (“POA”) System, most of the NCS children were grouped together and allocated places in around 30 primary schools, which meant that they were in effect “segregated” in their learning at the school level. Such practice would affect NCS students’ integration with Chinese-speaking students and their performance in learning Chinese.

1.4 As many members of the public and stakeholders are becoming more concerned about the Government’s support for NCS children and students in learning Chinese, applying for enrolment in KGs and POA, this Office initiated a direct investigation on 9 May 2018, pursuant to section 7(1)(a)(ii) of The Ombudsman Ordinance, to identify any inadequacies of EDB’s support for NCS students with a view to making recommendations for improvement.

SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION

1.5 The scope of this direct investigation covers:

- (1) EDB’s support and relevant measures for NCS students in learning Chinese and for creating an inclusive school environment;
- (2) EDB’s support for NCS children in applying for enrolment in KGs;
- (3) the arrangements for NCS children in the allocation of Primary One places.

PROCESS OF INVESTIGATION

1.6 This Office has examined the information provided by EDB, and also made reference to comments on this issue from stakeholders, including organisations concerned about NCS students’ learning.

1.7 On 5 December 2018, we issued the draft of our investigation report to EDB for comments. This final report, incorporating the Bureau’s comments, was completed on 15 February 2019.

2

SUPPORT AND RELEVANT MEASURES FOR NCS STUDENTS IN LEARNING CHINESE AND FOR CREATING INCLUSIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

2.1 In order to strengthen the support for NCS students in learning Chinese in KGs and primary and secondary schools, EDB has introduced the following major support measures.

SUPPORT FOR KGs

Additional Subsidy and Professional Support

2.2 Since the 2017/18 school year, EDB has implemented the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme (“the KG Scheme”). Under the KG Scheme, inter alia, KGs joining the scheme and having admitted eight or more NCS students would be provided a subsidy at a rate of one KG teacher (which was around \$360,000 for the 2017/18 school year). The KGs can use the subsidy on recruitment of additional teachers and teaching assistants, or procurement of services to give manpower support for teachers, and providing teachers with professional training for them to formulate effective strategies for helping NCS students in learning Chinese. In the 2017/18

school year, a total of 748 KGs throughout the territory joined the KG Scheme, which represented around 97% of the eligible KGs. Among them, about 390 KGs had admitted NCS students and 149 of these KGs (about 38%) were granted the aforesaid subsidy.

2.3 To ensure the effective use of the subsidy, KGs granted the subsidy are required to submit a school plan for use of the subsidy and support measures to EDB at the beginning of a school year, and then a school report at the end of the school year summarising the implementation of the measures and assessing their effectiveness. Moreover, EDB would visit KGs that are granted the subsidy to understand how the support measures have worked, and make improvement recommendations as necessary. In the 2017/18 school year, EDB visited about 130 (87%) of the aforesaid 149 KGs that were granted the subsidy under the KG Scheme and had admitted NCS students. According to EDB, as it has gained an understanding of KGs' support for NCS students, its primary focus in the 2018/19 school year will be visiting those KGs that require greater support and better sharing of experience. It is expected that around 80 visits will be made during this school year.

2.4 During their visits, EDB staff would try to further probe the situation based on the school plan submitted by each KG and make recommendations on their support measures and use of resources. For instance, depending on the situation, EDB staff visiting the schools may make the following recommendations to teachers: to gradually reduce the use of English in supplementing their communication with NCS students; to require NCS students to answer their questions in Cantonese and assist and encourage those having difficulties in so doing; to mingle NCS students with Chinese-speaking students when streaming classes and groups to enable interaction among fellow students in learning Chinese; and to provide a rigorous language environment for learning Chinese. Regarding the use of resources, EDB staff visiting the schools would recommend that schools better utilise the additional subsidy. For examples, schools can add manpower to facilitate curriculum adaptation and adjust the teaching approach, use translation services to strengthen the communication with parents of NCS students, and organise inclusion activities. Schools are also encouraged to make good use of community resources. Moreover, EDB staff visiting the schools would also examine their overall planning in support services for NCS students, the progress of teachers' participation in professional training, etc. EDB noted that according to the reports from the KGs, nearly 90% of KGs considered that their NCS students had shown apparent progress in learning Chinese (especially in listening and speaking).

New Arrangement for Subsidy

2.5 In her 2018 Policy Address, the Chief Executive proposed a number of measures to enhance support for ethnic minorities. For instance, starting from the 2019/20 school year, to replace the flat-rate subsidy (**para. 2.2**), EDB will provide a five-tiered subsidy based on the intake of NCS students by KGs participating in the KG Scheme. The new arrangement for the subsidy will be as follows:

Table 1: New arrangement for subsidy to KGs participating in the KG Scheme starting from the 2019/20 school year

Intake of NCS students	Subsidy granted each year
1-4	\$50,000
5-7	at a rate of 0.5 KG teacher
8-15	at a rate of 1 KG teacher
16-30	at a rate of 1.5 KG teachers
31 or more	at a rate of 2 KG teachers

Other Support Services

2.6 Furthermore, all KGs, regardless of the number of NCS students admitted, can apply to EDB for participation in the School-based Professional Support (“SBPS”) services³. EDB would provide participating KGs with on-site support services to assist in school development and implementation of effective “learning and teaching” strategies, thereby developing a school-based curriculum catering for the children’s needs. Over the past four school years, an average of 39 KGs had received the SBPS services each year⁴. The support services provided by EDB included deploying staff

³ In July 2004, EDB set up the Education Development Fund with funding approved by the Legislative Council to provide a variety of professional support services for schools. The purpose of the SBPS services is to facilitate students’ learning through closely integrating teachers’ continuing professional development, school-based curriculum development and school development. Providers of the services include EDB’s relevant support sections and institutions subvented by the Education Development Fund. In line with the curriculum development every year, EDB provides schools with the SBPS services, including support for NCS students in learning Chinese. Schools can apply for specific support items according to their circumstances and students’ learning needs. Support service personnel would closely collaborate with teachers and principals to develop or fine-tune the school-based curriculum and produce appropriate “learning and teaching” materials, as well as enhance the professional knowledge and competence of participating teachers.

⁴ In the 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years, there were respectively 61, 34, 26 and 36 KGs receiving the SBPS services.

to visit KGs regularly, to design activities within the scope of support services (including taking care of the learning needs of NCS young children) jointly with teachers, and to conduct classroom observations and post-lesson discussions. EDB would formulate flexible modes of collaboration to suit the needs of individual KGs.

2.7 In the KG Education Curriculum Guide updated in 2017, EDB introduced the teaching principles and strategies for NCS young children in learning Chinese, and recommended relevant strategies on how the curriculum could accommodate different young children (including NCS young children). Moreover, EDB has produced a pamphlet “Knowing More about Children’s Learning” for parents in eight languages⁵, and also a short film series “Joyful and Balanced Development for Young Children Education” with subtitles in those eight languages for parent education. One of the short films is about “Building an Inclusive Culture”, which can be used by schools for presenting to parents the features and focus of their curriculum and enhancing home-school cooperation.

2.8 EDB also provides KG teachers with professional training programmes. All KG teachers teaching NCS students are eligible to attend. In the 2017/18 school year, EDB held three professional training programmes, with identical contents, for KG teachers on “Learning and Teaching for NCS Students”, which were attended by 135 school principals, vice principals, course leaders and teachers. The programmes covered the following topics: understanding the cultural backgrounds and characteristics of different students; analysing the features and difficulties of NCS students in learning Chinese; and introducing the theories and practice of teaching vernacular and standard Chinese. In the questionnaire survey conducted at the end of the programmes, participants agreed that the programmes were helpful to teachers in learning more about teaching methods and strategies, and how to address the difficulties encountered by NCS young children in learning Chinese.

2.9 Moreover, in the 2017/18 school year, EDB organised three training programmes on curriculum planning for KG education and taking care of children’s diversified learning needs. Each session of the programmes lasted for three hours, with a total of six sessions held for 1,120 participants, including KG principals and teachers. The sessions were in different formats including seminars, workshops and school sharing. The training programmes covered introduction of NCS students’ learning characteristics and needs; how to foster an inclusive school atmosphere; rationale, focus

⁵ The eight languages are Chinese, English, Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Tagalog, Thai and Urdu. EDB indicated that it was in the process of arranging for translation of the pamphlet and short film series into one more ethnic minority language: Punjabi (Indian).

and teaching strategies and support for teaching NCS students, etc. KGs with intake of NCS young children were invited to share their strategies in helping NCS students integrate into school life, learn Chinese and develop social and emotional skills. Participants made positive comments on programme objectives, contents and performance of the speakers, and agreed that the programmes were useful in enhancing their knowledge about NCS young children, so that they could adopt appropriate “learning and teaching” strategies for facilitating NCS young children in learning Chinese.

2.10 In addition, since the 2017/18 school year the Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (“SCOLAR”)⁶ has invited post-secondary colleges or tertiary institutions to devise and run professional development programmes in Chinese and English languages for KG teachers, and fully subsidised KG teachers to enrol in those programmes through the Language Fund⁷. The relevant Chinese programmes cover subjects on catering for students’ diversity, including teaching Chinese to NCS students. In the 2017/18 school year, there were around 250 teachers enrolled in 12 of those programmes. The questionnaire survey conducted by SCOLAR showed that more than 90% of the teachers who had taken part in these programmes agreed or highly agreed that “the programme can facilitate teachers in helping NCS students to develop Chinese proficiency”.

2.11 Meanwhile, supported by the Language Fund, SCOLAR collaborates with non-governmental organisations to launch district-based projects aiming at motivating NCS students in learning through such activities as games and creative arts. In the 2017/18 school year, there were around 80 activities held in different formats under those projects, including interest classes conducted in Chinese, visits and after-school fun activities related to language. Around 360 NCS students took part in those activities. EDB indicated that based on observation of the activities, questionnaires returned by parents and meetings with parents, the NCS students participating in those activities had developed greater interest and confidence in learning Chinese.

⁶ SCOLAR was established in 1996 to advise the Government on language education issues in general and on the use of the Language Fund. Its members are appointed by the Government and include representatives from the language education sector.

⁷ The Government established the Language Fund in 1994 to fund various programmes, projects, research, courses, training, publications and publicity activities directed towards enhancement in the use of the Chinese (including Putonghua) and English languages by the people of Hong Kong.

SUPPORT FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework

2.12 Since the 2014/15 school year, EDB has adopted a number of enhanced support measures. In particular, a funding of about \$200 million is earmarked every year to help public sector and Direct Subsidy Scheme (“DSS”) primary and secondary schools offering local curriculum to implement the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework (“Learning Framework”) and its relevant support measures, including creation of an inclusive school environment, enhancement of teacher training in teaching Chinese as a second language, and provision of professional support services for schools. The aim of implementing the Learning Framework and its relevant support measures is to help NCS students overcome their difficulties in learning Chinese as a second language.

Additional Funding and Relevant Support Measures

2.13 EDB has designed the Chinese Language Assessment Tool for NCS Students (“Assessment Tool”). The Assessment Tool covers the entry stage, Key Stage I (Primary One to Three), Key Stage II (Primary Four to Six), Key Stage III (Secondary One to Three) and Key Stage IV (Secondary Four to Six), each stage with assessment exemplars on listening, speaking, reading and writing, alongside the scripts and audio recordings, reference answers and marking schemes etc. for use by schools and teachers.

2.14 To assist schools in implementing the Learning Framework and creating an inclusive school environment, starting from the 2014/15 school year, all public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools offering local curriculum with an intake of ten or more NCS students are granted an additional funding ranging from \$0.8 million to \$1.5 million per year, depending on the number of NCS students admitted. The additional funding can be used for recruitment of extra teaching staff and ethnic minority assistants, procurement of teaching materials and organisation of inclusion activities. Teachers should set progressive learning targets, learning progress and expected learning outcomes for NCS students. Based on the academic performance and progress of NCS students under the Assessment Tool (**para. 2.13**) in conjunction with the Learning Framework, teachers can also refine the learning targets and teaching strategies, and adopt on a need basis diversified intensive modes in teaching Chinese to NCS students, such as pull-out learning, split-class/group learning and after-school support, with a view to facilitating their learning of Chinese and bridging over to mainstream Chinese Language classes.

2.15 Public sector or DSS primary and secondary schools offering local curriculum with an intake of less (i.e. one to nine) NCS students can also apply on a need basis for an additional funding of \$50,000 to provide after-school support measures in learning Chinese.

2.16 During the four school years between 2014/15 and 2017/18, the numbers of primary and secondary schools granted the above additional funding by EDB for implementation of the Learning Framework and creation of an inclusive school environment are as follows:

Table 2: Number of secondary schools granted additional funding by EDB

Number of NCS students	Amount of additional funding (\$m)	Number of secondary schools granted additional funding			
		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
1-9	0.05	33	49	87	106
10-25	0.80	36	41	48	56
26-50	0.95	11	13	19	16
51-75	1.10	4	7	6	7
76-90	1.25	1	0	1	2
91 or more	1.50	21	24	24	25
	Total:	106 (23%)*	134 (30%)*	185 (41%)*	212 (47%)*
	Total number of public sector and DSS secondary schools offering local curriculum in Hong Kong	455	453	453	452

* Figures in parentheses represent the percentage of secondary schools granted additional funding among all public sector and DSS secondary schools offering local curriculum in Hong Kong.

Table 3: Number of primary schools granted additional funding by EDB

Number of NCS students	Amount of additional funding (\$m)	Number of primary schools granted additional funding			
		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
1-9	0.05	25	34	92	107
10-25	0.80	49	57	61	63
26-50	0.95	18	21	21	22
51-75	1.10	6	6	7	8
76-90	1.25	3	2	4	2
91 or more	1.50	24	26	25	27
	Total:	125 (26%)~	146 (31%)~	210 (44%)~	229 (48%)~
	Total number of public sector and DSS primary schools offering local curriculum in Hong Kong	473	475	475	475

~ Figures in parentheses represent the percentage of primary schools granted additional funding among all public sector and DSS primary schools offering local curriculum in Hong Kong.

Following up on Implementation of Learning Framework and Relevant Support Measures

2.17 EDB has set up a dedicated team to scrutinise the annual plans on use of additional funding for the school year submitted every November by those primary and secondary schools granted an additional funding ranging from \$0.8 million to \$1.5 million for an intake of ten or more NCS students, and their annual reports regarding the funding of the previous school year, so as to understand how the schools utilise the additional funding towards implementation of the Learning Framework and relevant

support measures. Moreover, EDB would collect views through questionnaire surveys and interviews from stakeholders, including the principals of schools granted additional funding, teachers responsible for coordinating support measures for NCS students, Chinese Language subject teachers teaching NCS students, parents of NCS students, NCS students and non-governmental organisations providing relevant services for schools (if applicable), about the schools' implementation of the Learning Framework and relevant support measures (including the use of additional funding).

2.18 Based on the annual reports submitted by schools between the 2014/15 and 2016/17 school years⁸ and the annual plans submitted for the 2017/18 school year, as well as the stakeholder questionnaire survey conducted in March 2018, around 90% of the relevant schools considered that there were improvements in the following areas after being granted additional funding:

- (1) **Enhancing the professional capacity of teachers in teaching Chinese to NCS students:** Measures included arranging teachers to attend relevant training programmes, classroom observations by peers, joint class preparation and/or professional exchange with other schools;
- (2) **Developing school-based teaching materials and school-based curriculum:** Including using the teaching resources from EDB as reference and fine-tuning as needed, developing school-based teaching materials based on the Learning Framework, and/or adopting the teaching materials produced by publishers, universities/post-secondary colleges;
- (3) **Adopting appropriate teaching modes:** Implementing diversified intensive modes in teaching Chinese according to the learning performance of NCS students in the Chinese Language subject and school circumstances;
- (4) **Enhancing NCS students' motivation, confidence and performance in learning:** Measures included adoption of different teaching strategies and activities, such as recitation and creative writing competitions; and

⁸ Schools are required to submit to EDB annual reports for the 2017/18 school year in November 2018. EDB is still collating the data of the 2017/18 school year.

- (5) **Creating an inclusive school environment:** Informing parents and other stakeholders of the support offered by schools for NCS students through diversified modes, raising the cultural sensitivity of teachers and students, and creating a multi-cultural environment within schools.

Support for Schools and Teachers

Providing “Learning and Teaching” Materials

2.19 Regarding teaching resources, EDB indicated that it has all along provided schools with “learning and teaching” reference materials on Chinese as a second language, including distribution to all schools and students in Hong Kong, in the form of textbooks, of the Chinese Language as a second language learning series covering the secondary and primary curriculum. The materials are also available on the EDB website with constant updates. Moreover, EDB has joined hands with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to develop a set of teaching materials for junior primary grades (i.e. Primary One to Three) targeting NCS students, which includes student textbooks, exercises and teaching reference materials for reference and use by teachers. The teaching materials have been successively uploaded on the EDB website, while the printed copies of Primary One teaching materials have been distributed to schools. It is anticipated that the entire set of teaching materials for junior primary grades will be completed by August 2019, with similar arrangements later extended to senior primary grades (i.e. Primary Four to Six).

2.20 In the stakeholder perception survey conducted in the 2016/17 school year, EDB collected views from a random sample of around 400 Chinese Language subject teachers who teach NCS students (representing around 25% of the teachers concerned). It was revealed that around 80% of the respondents expected assistance from EDB in developing a systematic series of textbooks/teaching materials in line with the Learning Framework. In this light and based on the experience of schools in implementing the Learning Framework, EDB commissioned the University of Hong Kong to collaborate with some primary schools to develop eight sets of textbooks suitable for Primary Three and Four in line with the second and third levels of the Learning Framework. The textbooks have been distributed to schools and NCS students in the 2017/18 school year, and are also available on the EDB website for reference by teachers.

Providing Professional Support

2.21 With regard to SBPS, all public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools can, on a need basis, apply to EDB for the SBPS services (**Note 3, para. 2.6**), regardless of their NCS student intake. During the past four school years, an average of 48 primary schools and 31 secondary schools received the SBPS services per year⁹. The services included: assisting primary and secondary schools, with reference to the Learning Framework and Assessment Tool, in developing or fine-tuning the school-based curriculum, and producing appropriate materials for “learning and teaching” and assessment.

2.22 Regarding support for teachers, EDB has organised from time to time professional development programmes for teachers to provide training opportunities for teachers of NCS students and assist schools in implementing the Learning Framework. During the four school years between 2014/15 and 2017/18, EDB had provided about 4,000 places for teachers, and a total of 349 primary schools and 285 secondary schools had sent teachers to attend those programmes (the total attendance was around 3,650).

2.23 Since the 2014/15 school year, EDB has implemented on a pilot basis the “Professional Enhancement Grant Scheme for Chinese Teachers (Teaching Chinese as a Second Language)” (“the PEG Scheme”), with grants provided by the Language Fund. Serving Chinese Language subject teachers in primary and secondary schools are encouraged to enrol in the recognised programmes specified¹⁰ to enhance their capability in teaching Chinese to NCS students. During the four school years between 2014/15 and 2017/18, a total of 68 serving Chinese Language subject teachers had been approved the grant. Among them, 24 had completed their programmes and received the reimbursement. The PEG Scheme will continue into the 2018/19 school year, so that more teachers can enrol in the specified programmes to enhance their performance in teaching NCS students.

⁹ In the 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 school years, 43, 58, 55 and 42 primary schools and 31, 34, 30 and 36 secondary schools respectively applied for the SBPS Services. Among them, 43, 55, 51 and 42 primary schools, and 31, 34, 30 and 28 secondary schools respectively were provided such services.

¹⁰ Recognised programmes under the PEG Scheme include: Master of Education (Teaching Chinese to Non-Chinese Speaking Students) offered by the University of Hong Kong; Master of Arts in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (with a Specialism in Teaching Chinese as a Second Language in Hong Kong Schools); and Master of Arts in Chinese Language and Literature (With a Specialism in Chinese Language Teaching for Teachers of Non-Chinese Speaking Students) offered by the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

Other Support Services

2.24 EDB has commissioned the University of Hong Kong to run Chinese Language Learning Support Centres to offer remedial programmes to NCS students after school hours and during holidays. These Centres also aim at developing related teaching resources, organising experience-sharing sessions for teachers and workshops for parents of NCS students to strengthen cooperation with those parents with a view to providing learning support for NCS students. In the 2017/18 school year, about 720 NCS students from primary and secondary schools participated in remedial programmes for NCS students, and there were about 710 and 80 participants in the experience-sharing sessions for teachers and the workshops for NCS parents respectively. Based on the results of relevant student assessments and surveys, most of the students participating in the remedial programmes have come to learn more words and phrases and also shown better performance in listening, speaking, reading and writing of the Chinese language. In general, most of the teachers who attended the experience-sharing sessions were satisfied with the arrangements. They agreed that the sessions had covered various aspects, and the teaching activities, experience and approaches introduced could help enhance their work in teaching and also their understanding of how to help NCS students in learning Chinese. On the other hand, most parents agreed that the themes of the workshops could cater for their needs and the information provided was very practical. They had learned the importance of their children's learning Chinese and ways to support their children in learning the language.

2.25 EDB also encouraged schools to organise summer bridging programmes of at least 60 hours for new NCS Primary One students and students proceeding to Primary Two to Four. Parents of NCS students are allowed to accompany their children to the classes to lend them support when they learn Chinese. In the 2017/18 school year, 1,390 NCS students and 150 parents of NCS students attended the summer bridging programmes. According to EDB, most participants agreed that the programmes could help arouse the parents' interest in the Chinese language and culture as well as enhancing their knowledge in the language. Besides, the programmes could help NCS students gain more knowledge in the Chinese language and arouse their interest in learning the Chinese culture. Through these summer bridging programmes, schools could assess students in various aspects to examine their learning situation. That should be very useful for continuously developing the school-based curriculum, fine-tuning the contents of programmes and following up on the students' learning in the future. In addition, the programmes can enable better understanding of other major community facilities in districts other than where the students and parents reside so as to help them integrate into the society.

EDB’S RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION ABOUT “SEPARATE CLASSES FOR NCS AND CHINESE-SPEAKING STUDENTS”

2.26 Some stakeholders noted that a secondary school (“School A”) had arranged separate classes for NCS students and Chinese-speaking students, contrary to the notion of an “inclusive school environment” advocated by EDB. In response, EDB stated that it has always encouraged schools to create an inclusive environment. Having conducted school visits, classroom observations and asked School A for information (including the school’s document on class streaming policy and class lists), EDB considered that there was no evidence or indication that the school had segregated students or violated the practice of inclusive school environment. School A had not allocated students to different classes by ethnicity or nationality and that NCS students and Chinese-speaking students studied together in the same classes or groups. Students are allocated to different classes/groups in School A in accordance with their ability and choices of interest, as in other secondary schools. Such arrangements fall within education professional support strategies and are in line with the requirements laid down in the relevant EDB circular¹¹. They are not contrary to the creation of an inclusive school environment.

¹¹ EDB Circular No.8/2014 sets out the uses of additional funding for schools. Schools can arrange additional staff to implement diversified intensive modes of learning Chinese (such as pull-out learning, split-class/group learning, etc.) based on the needs of students.

3

SUPPORT FOR NCS CHILDREN APPLYING FOR KG PLACES

KG ADMISSION

3.1 All KGs in Hong Kong are privately run and cater for students aged three to six. EDB encourages NCS students to enrol in local KGs with Chinese as the medium of instruction to facilitate their integration into the community and achieve proficiency in Chinese. Parents who want their children to enrol in KGs can contact their preferred schools direct and enquire about the admission procedures and other details.

3.2 Every year, EDB organises English briefing sessions for parents of NCS students. Simultaneous interpretation service would be provided on a need basis to help parents of NCS students understand the admission arrangements of KGs. For instance, KGs should provide application forms and admission guidelines in both Chinese and English, and arrange interpretation/translation service for applicants where necessary.

3.3 Besides, EDB issues circulars, letters, guidelines and publicity leaflets every year to remind KGs that they should provide in Chinese and English their enrolment application forms, as well as information on their admission mechanism and selection criteria. EDB would conduct investigations every year into KGs' admission arrangements for Nursery (K1) Classes to ensure compliance with its guidelines. For cases of suspected breaches, EDB would require rectification by the KG(s) concerned. Such investigations would be conducted before commencement of the admission procedures. For the 2017/18 school year, EDB conducted investigations in September 2017 into KG's admission arrangements for the next school year (2018/19). Results revealed that of the some 750 KGs participating in the KG Scheme, seven had provided neither interpretation service for the NCS children when needed, nor Chinese and

English versions of the basic information on their admission arrangements. EDB already asked the KGs concerned to improve. Their applications to join the KG Scheme in the next school year would be processed only after EDB has confirmed their compliance with all the requirements about admission arrangements.

3.4 With regard to information on KG admission, EDB has published the Profile of Kindergartens and Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres (“the KG Profile”) in both Chinese and English, which provides comprehensive information on KGs for parents’ reference in choosing schools. The KG Profile covers all KGs in Hong Kong (around 1,030 in total), with information on the number and academic qualifications of their principals and teachers, student sizes, teacher-student ratio, curriculum information, application fees, registration fees and information on enrolment application. Since 2018, a new section named “Support for NCS Students” has been added to the KG Profile for KGs to provide general information on the support they offer to NCS students. The KG Profile can be downloaded from the EDB website and accessed via smartphone mobile applications for parents’ easy reference. Printed copies of the KG Profile are placed at EDB’s Regional Education Offices, Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of the Home Affairs Department (“HAD”), HAD-subvented Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities, Maternal and Child Health Centres of the Department of Health, Integrated Family Service Centres of the Social Welfare Department as well as all public libraries for parents’ inspection.

3.5 Apart from preparing Chinese and English versions of the KG admission leaflets, posters, the application form for Registration Certificate for Kindergarten Admission and application guidelines, etc, EDB has also made arrangements to have them translated into seven major ethnic minority languages, namely, Bahasa Indonesia, Hindi, Nepali, Punjabi (Indian), Tagalog, Thai and Urdu. Admission information produced in these seven languages (both texts and videos) are available for viewing on EDB’s website.

3.6 EDB encourages KGs to arrange interpretation and translation services for applicants. For example, they can make good use of the interpretation and translation services provided by HAD-subvented Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents, or allow parents of NCS students to attend interviews accompanied by Chinese-speaking friends or relatives to facilitate communication.

3.7 Should individual NCS applicants encounter any difficulties during enrolment application, EDB would make referrals and help them to apply for placements

in KGs where places are still available.

EDB’S RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION ABOUT “NCS CHILDREN ENCOUNTERING DIFFICULTIES IN APPLYING FOR KG PLACES”

3.8 Some stakeholders indicated that many parents of NCS students had encountered difficulties when they applied for KG places for their children. They alleged that a lot of KGs provided only Chinese information on their websites. Important information such as school fees, school facilities, class structures and curriculum were all prepared in Chinese, making it impossible for parents of NCS students to obtain the necessary information. Furthermore, they could not find English enrolment application forms on the KGs’ websites, and a lot of parents of NCS students did not even know that KGs should provide English enrolment application forms and were, therefore, not aware that they could ask for an English version from the school. Nor did they know that they could request simultaneous interpretation service at admission interviews, while KGs usually would not take the initiative to provide such assistance. Consequently, NCS students stood a lower chance of being admitted because of the language barrier.

3.9 On the above comments, EDB responded by indicating that it had never received from parents of NCS students any views reflecting difficulties in finding KGs places for their children. In the two school years of 2016/17 and 2017/18, only one complaint was received about a KG’s failure to provide an English enrolment application form. EDB had conducted an investigation into the complaint by scrutinising the KG’s enrolment application form, and asking the school to respond to the complainant’s allegation. It was found that the school had complied with EDB’s guidelines and provided for NCS applicants its enrolment application form and Notes on Application in both Chinese and English. Besides, the documents had been uploaded to the KG’s website. EDB subsequently concluded that the complaint was unsubstantiated, and the complainant agreed that no further follow-up action was necessary.

4

PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR NCS CHILDREN

4.1 EDB's POA System is divided into the Discretionary Place Admission ("DPA") stage and the Central Allocation ("CA") stage.

4.2 During the DPA stage, all parents may apply to only one primary school which may be in or outside the school net in which they reside. In case an applicant child cannot secure a discretionary place, he/she can participate in the CA stage. The student's ethnicity is not a factor of consideration during the whole process.

4.3 The CA stage is divided into two parts: Part A "Unrestricted School Choices", and Part B "Restricted School Choices". Applicant children may indicate in the Application Form for Admission to Primary One ("APO Form") a maximum of three choices from any schools in any school net in Part A and a maximum of 30 schools in Part B in their school net. Basically school places at the CA stage are allocated based on the applicant children's choices, and the computer system would first process the school choices in Part A and then those in Part B. If an applicant child cannot secure a place among the schools in Part A and Part B due to excessive demand, the computer system would then allocate to the applicant child a place from a school in his/her home net where there are still places available in the school year according to the random number assigned to him/her.

PRIMARY ONE ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR NCS CHILDREN

Past Arrangements

4.4 In the 2003/04 school year or before, if NCS applicant children indicated in the APO Form that they “cannot use Chinese as a learning medium” when they applied for Primary One places, they would be provided with a specific list of primary schools in Part B of the CA stage. The list consisted of several primary schools that traditionally admitted a larger number of NCS students¹² (“Schools on the List”). At that time, the number of Schools on the List would be adjusted each year depending on the demand for places. Those schools were listed for NCS parents’ choices mainly because they were located in areas with more NCS families, and some of the schools were operated by organisations having connection with NCS people. As those schools had all along admitted more NCS students, so they had also accumulated more experience in supporting NCS students. In the 2003/04 school year, there were seven Schools on the List¹³. Subsequently, in the 2004/05 school year, EDB revised the aforesaid arrangements, allowing all NCS students to make their choices from the list of primary schools in their home net just as their Chinese-speaking fellow students do in Part B of the CA stage. In 2004, parents of some NCS children who were allocated a place in a mainstream primary school expressed their worries after the POA results were announced. Those parents hoped that their children could be admitted to primary schools that traditionally admitted a larger number of NCS students. To cater for their needs, EDB arranged for enrolment of those NCS children in those Schools on the List where places were still available.

4.5 Regarding POA arrangements for NCS children in the 2005/06 school year, EDB adopted the following measures after summing up the experience in 2004 and consulting various stakeholders:

- (1) same arrangements would be maintained for NCS and Chinese-speaking applicant children when they completed the APO Form for the DPA stage and Part A of the CA stage (**paras. 4.2 and 4.3**);

¹² EDB noted that the inclusion of the option “cannot use Chinese as a learning medium” in the APO Form aims to address the concern and needs of some of the NCS applicant children/parents so that those NCS children can better adapt to the local primary school life.

¹³ There were seven primary schools on the List compiled by EDB in the 2003/04 school year, namely Li Sing Tai Hang School, Sir Ellis Kadoorie (S) Primary School, Yaumati Kaifong Association School, Li Cheng Uk Government Primary School, Hong Kong Taoist Association Wun Tsuen School, Man Kiu Association Primary School and Islamic Primary School. In 2011, the eighth school, Islamic Dharwood Memorial Primary School, applied to EDB to be included on the List and was approved.

- (2) when completing the APO Form for Part B of the CA stage (**para. 4.3**), NCS applicant children may make their choices among the Schools on the List as well as the schools in their home net; and
- (3) in case NCS applicant children were not allocated a place according to their choices indicated in Part A and Part B of the APO Form during the CA stage (**para. 4.3**), the computer system would allocate a place to them from among the Schools on the List where places were still available. This practice was different from the cases for Chinese-speaking applicant children. Where a Chinese-speaking applicant child could not secure a Primary One place among the schools he/she chose in Part A and Part B of the CA stage, the computer system would allocate a place in a school in his/her home net according to his/her random number (**para. 4.3**).

4.6 The aforesaid POA arrangements for NCS applicant children were implemented during the nine school years between 2005/06 and 2013/14.

Current Arrangements

4.7 Since 2014, EDB has cancelled the arrangements cited in para. 4.5(3) above. During the CA stage, those NCS applicant children who have not been allocated a place from any primary schools they chose in Part A and Part B of the APO Form would be subject to the same arrangements as Chinese-speaking applicant children, i.e. the computer system would allocate an available school place from the schools in their home net according to the applicant children's random number (**para. 4.3**). Allocation would no longer be limited to places from the Schools on the List.

Information about Schools on the List and Its Purpose

4.8 EDB asserted that its policy is to encourage parents of NCS applicant children to choose schools with an immersed Chinese language environment which can help the applicant children become proficient in Chinese, and allow them to adapt to the local education system and integrate into the society as early as possible.

4.9 In the light of comments that the Schools on the List mechanism might cause some parents of NCS applicant children to limit their choices to the Schools on the List, in Annex III to the Notes on How to Complete the APO Form where information on the

Schools on the List are given, EDB remarked that:

“The Education Bureau encourages parents/guardians to choose schools with an immersed Chinese language environment to facilitate their applicant children to learn the Chinese language. Having due regard to the aforementioned, in case parents/guardians still consider that their children may have difficulties in an immersed Chinese language environment at this early stage, school traditionally admitting more NCS students are listed below (i.e. the Schools on the List) for reference, in addition to schools in the applicant children’s residing school net, when filling in Part B of the Choice of Schools Forms for Central Allocation (**Para. 4.4 and Note 13**)”

EDB stressed that the purpose of the above arrangement is to ensure that NCS students would enjoy equal opportunities of admission to public sector primary schools, while at the same time address the needs of stakeholders by retaining the Schools on the List mechanism. It can take care of those parents of NCS students who still have concerns, and allow them to choose, as they wish, the primary schools that have accumulated more experience in supporting NCS students (such as school-based support measures and teaching materials).

4.10 According to information from EDB, in the 2017/18 school year, NCS students represented 41% to 99% of the total numbers of students in the eight Schools on the List. In six other primary schools not on the List, NCS students represented 61% to 95% of the total numbers of students in those schools, and their percentages were higher than those in some of the Schools on the List. Nevertheless, EDB indicated that since around two-thirds of all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong have already admitted NCS students, it had no intention to revise the number of Schools on the List. EDB reiterated that its policy is to encourage NCS students to choose schools with an immersed Chinese language environment to facilitate their achieving proficiency in Chinese, and to avoid excessively grouping NCS students together in certain schools (**para. 4.8**). Adding schools currently with higher intake of NCS students to the List will run contrary to the above policy, and may also result in NCS students being excessively grouped together in certain schools.

4.11 To understand stakeholders’ opinions about the Schools on the List mechanism, EDB conducted a questionnaire survey in February 2018 on whether the List should be retained when processing the school selection procedures during the CA stage for parents of NCS applicant children participating in the POA in 2018. A total

of 245 questionnaires were issued to parents of NCS applicant children who had taken part in the procedures, with 179 questionnaires completed and returned. More than 80% of parents of NCS applicant children considered it necessary to retain the List. EDB stated that to take care of those parents of NCS children who still have concerns, it would, at this stage, retain the Schools on the List mechanism so that those parents can choose for their children, as they wish, the primary schools traditionally admitting more NCS students. However, EDB would consider reviewing at some opportune time whether or not to continue to retain the mechanism so as to cater for the needs of parents of NCS children in choosing schools, while conforming to the policy objective of facilitating integration of NCS students into the local education system to learn Chinese.

EDB’S RESPONSE TO ALLEGATION THAT “MOST NCS CHILDREN WERE GROUPED TOGETHER AND ALLOCATED PLACES IN AROUND 30 PRIMARY SCHOOLS”

4.12 Under the current POA arrangements, EDB’s computer system would process the applications of all applicant children (Chinese-speaking and NCS applicant children alike) by the same procedures, i.e. the computer system would assign a random number to each applicant child at the CA stage (**para. 4.3**), and then allocate a place according to the applicant child’s choices and random number.

4.13 EDB clarified that apart from the above allocation procedures, it had no other special arrangement such that NCS children were grouped together and allocated to certain primary schools.

4.14 Between the 2014/15 and 2017/18 school years, the allocation results of Primary One places for NCS children were as follows:

Table 4: Allocation results of Primary One places for NCS children

	School year	Number of NCS children participating in POA	Number of schools allocated NCS children in POA	Total number of schools participating in POA
(a)	2014/15	1,202	193	454
(b)	2015/16	1,199	191	455

(c)	2016/17	1,270	189	454
(d)	2017/18	1,370	232	454

4.15 In response to the allegation that “most NCS students were grouped together and allocated places in around 30 primary schools”, EDB indicated that according to the figures of the some 30 primary schools (including the eight Schools on the List) allocated the highest numbers of NCS students in POA of the 2017/18 school year, among the 1,370 NCS children participating in the POA that year (Item (d) of Table 4), there were 920 (67%) allocated to those some 30 schools, of which 893 NCS children (97%) were allocated places according to their choices, while only 27 (3%) were allocated places not according to their choices.

4.16 EDB explained that as certain districts have more NCS residents, the primary schools in those districts would generally admit more NCS students. Meanwhile, some parents might be influenced by other NCS parents in the same district and thus chose the primary schools admitting more NCS students. Furthermore, during the DPA stage of POA, some parents of NCS students might choose to send their younger children to the same schools of their siblings. Alternatively, after the results of the CA stage were released, they might directly apply to those primary schools admitting more NCS students for enrolment of their children, hence those students were not allocated to those schools through CA. As a result, some schools had a higher percentage of NCS students.

4.17 EDB pledged that it would continue its efforts in promoting parent education, encouraging parents (including parents of NCS children) to take into account their children’s interests and needs when indicating their choices of schools, and encouraging parents to send their NCS children to schools providing an immersed Chinese language environment to facilitate their learning of Chinese. To assist parents of NCS children in choosing public sector schools, all the information about school admission prepared by EDB comes with versions of major ethnic minority languages. Every year, EDB also holds briefing sessions dedicated for parents of NCS children, with simultaneous interpretation services provided on a need basis. Moreover, EDB would encourage schools to make arrangements for parents to visit their campuses, so that the parents can understand more about the schools available before indicating their choices of schools.

5

OUR COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 In the light of the continued increase of NCS students (**para. 1.1**), the Government has in recent years allocated more resources to support them, with a view to assisting their integration into the local school system and learning the Chinese language. In particular, a wide range of support services are provided for NCS students from early childhood education to the primary and secondary levels, which include providing additional funding for KGs and primary and secondary schools admitting NCS students, as well as implementation of the Learning Framework in primary and secondary schools. Regarding NCS children's application for enrolment in KGs and POA arrangements, EDB has also adopted a number of measures in recent years to provide more information and support. Implementation of the Learning Framework and other support measures has begun since the 2014/15 school year. It is necessary for EDB, the education sector and relevant stakeholders to accumulate experience and conduct review in a timely manner for further improvement. As regards EDB's current support measures, we list below four areas that the Bureau should pay attention to and make improvements.

I. SUPPORT MEASURES FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS SHOULD NOT JUST BE ON FUNDING, BUT REQUIRE COORDINATION OF VARIOUS SECTORS AND ENCOURAGE SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

5.2 It has now been four school years since EDB's implementation of the Learning Framework in 2014/15. The effectiveness of implementing the Learning Framework hinges on the coordination of various sectors such as school administration,

teacher qualifications, and school-based “learning and teaching” resources development. Learning a language (especially becoming proficient in a second language) is not something that can be achieved overnight. Besides, the Government’s support measures also need time to take root. Therefore, EDB must closely monitor the implementation of various measures. Apart from funding, it must continuously sum up the experience in implementing those measures, and strive to improve and enhance the support measures, such as strengthening the support for school administration and teacher training.

5.3 Information showed that on average, 48 primary schools and 31 secondary schools each year received the SBPS services provided by EDB (**para. 2.21**). Over the past four school years, as for the PEG Scheme implemented by EDB in teacher training, merely 24 teachers, i.e. an average of six per year, completed the relevant professional programmes (**para. 2.23**). We consider that EDB should step up its efforts in encouraging those public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools which have admitted NCS students to participate in the SBPS services and the PEG Scheme, in order to further strengthen the support for schools in the areas of school administration and teacher training.

II. THE ADDITIONAL FUNDING MECHANISM FOR ADMISSION OF NCS STUDENTS NEEDS REVIEW

5.4 Under the current additional funding mechanism, public sector and DSS primary and secondary schools that offer local curriculum admitting ten or more NCS students are granted an additional funding ranging from \$0.8 million to \$1.5 million, while those admitting nine or less are granted \$50,000 only (**paras. 2.14 and 2.15**).

5.5 The above situation shows that the difference of only one NCS student (whether admitting nine or ten students) could mean a difference of 16 times in additional funding to primary and secondary schools (i.e. \$50,000 for admitting nine students and \$0.8 million for admitting ten students). We believe that EDB should consider increasing the funding allocated to primary and secondary schools admitting less than ten NCS students in order to encourage more primary and secondary schools to admit NCS students and enhance their teaching.

III. INADEQUATE SUPPORT FOR KG ADMISSION

5.6 While EDB has reminded KGs by such means as circulars and guidelines that they should provide enrolment application forms and other information in both Chinese and English (**paras. 3.2 and 3.3**), there have been media reports from time to time that parents of NCS children encountered communication problems due to the language barrier. Some stakeholders also indicated that a lot of KGs used only Chinese in their websites, making it impossible for parents of NCS children to access an English application form and other related information (**para. 3.8**).

5.7 We have looked at the websites of some KGs and found that many of them were all prepared in Chinese. Although some websites provided headings in both Chinese and English, the contents and details under the respective headings were in Chinese only. Furthermore, while the enrolment application form in bilingual format (Chinese and English) were available for downloading on some KGs' websites, the links to download the form were written in Chinese, rendering it difficult for parents of NCS children to find the enrolment application forms on those websites. While EDB claimed that it had never received from parents of NCS children any views reflecting difficulties in finding KG places for their children (**para. 3.9**), we consider that the Bureau should strengthen its communication with the stakeholders (including parents of NCS children and groups concerning about the learning of NCS students) in order to have a deeper understanding of the problems faced by parents of NCS children and applicant children. It should also take heed of the stakeholders' views and suggest KGs to adopt corresponding support measures (such as providing information in English on their websites) as far as practicable. If KGs need support, EDB should provide active assistance.

5.8 Meanwhile, in order to strengthen the support for parents of NCS children and applicants, this Office also considers that EDB should, apart from sending reminders to KGs, initiate more inspections and checks on whether KGs have implemented the measures it proposed (**para. 3.3**), including the provision of enrolment application forms and related information in English. Besides, EDB should step up further the publicity of KG admission information and encourage KGs to provide on their websites hyperlinks to EDB's website links to the KG Profile it compiled in Chinese and English (**para. 3.4**), the KG admission information prepared in seven major ethnic minority languages (**para. 3.5**), as well as such other information as translation/interpretation services available to parents of NCS children (**paras. 3.2 and 3.6**), so that they can readily access those pieces of information and services. For KGs in breach of the guidelines, EDB should advise them to make appropriate rectifications (**para. 3.3**).

IV. DISCREPANCY BETWEEN INFORMATION ABOUT SCHOOLS ON THE LIST AND THE ACTUAL SITUATION

5.9 We understand that EDB’s policy objective is the ultimate integration of NCS students into mainstream schools and their proficiency in the Chinese language. Nevertheless, the Schools on the List mechanism has been maintained as a contingency practice to cater for the needs of NCS students and their parents. For many years, the mechanism has been in use, and EDB would notify parents of NCS students in Annex III to the Notes on How to Complete the APO Form that the Schools on the List are “primary schools traditionally admitting more NCS students” (**para. 4.9**). In reality, however, many NCS students are now studying in schools outside the List. Some schools not on the List actually have admitted more NCS students than some Schools on the List (**para. 4.10**).

5.10 EDB has not revised the List for years since it was compiled. This may make it impossible for NCS children and their parents to get the picture of the actual situation and choose the primary schools that actually admit more NCS students. To be in keeping with EDB’s policy objective (**para. 4.8**), our view is that over the long term, EDB should consider abolishing the Schools on the List mechanism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5.11 Based on the above comments, The Ombudsman urges EDB:

Support for Primary and Secondary Schools Admitting NCS Students

- (1) to conduct prompt and regular reviews on the effectiveness of the Learning Framework, and strengthen the support for school administration and teacher training in order to enhance the effectiveness of NCS primary and secondary students in learning Chinese (**paras. 5.2 and 5.3**);
- (2) to review the additional funding mechanism and consider increasing the subsidies for primary and secondary schools that admit less than ten NCS students (**paras. 5.4 and 5.5**);

Support for NCS Children Applying for Enrolment in KGs

- (3) to strengthen the publicity of admission information and the communication with stakeholders in order to gain a deeper understanding of the problems encountered by NCS children and their parents in applying for KG admission, so that EDB can help KGs to provide appropriate support measures for these parents and children (**paras. 5.7 and 5.8**);
- (4) to actively inspect and check KGs' implementation of the measures promulgated by EDB, which include the availability of English enrolment application form and related information (**para. 5.8**);

Arrangements for Allocation of Primary One Places

- (5) to reconsider whether to retain, and ultimately abolish, the Schools on the List mechanism (**para. 5.10**).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

5.12 The Ombudsman thanks EDB for its full cooperation during the course of this investigation.

Office of The Ombudsman
Ref: OMB/DI/422
February 2019