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Principles and general objectives of education

A major objective of the school system, as designed by the Education Reform Programme of 1987, is to make education more relevant to the socio-economic realities of the country, so that the Ghanaian children will be able to live a productive and meaningful life. One of the cardinal principles guiding the Reform Programme is the achievement of equity and quality in the education system. Since the reforms began, a number of special programmes have been introduced to deal with specific issues to enhance the teaching and learning process.

In the Report of the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms (2002) it is stated that the education system in Ghana should create well-balanced (intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, physically) individuals, with the requisite knowledge, skills, values and aptitudes for self-actualization and for the socio-economic and political transformation of the nation.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The **Education Act** of 1961 established the policy of free and compulsory primary and basic education for all school age children. This Act also made provision for the establishment of private schools to supplement the government's efforts, in order to dispose of enough schools to cater to the ever-growing demand for education—especially at the basic level.

In 1983, the Government enacted the **PNDC Law No. 42** to modify and reinforce the Education Act of 1961. The Government declared that “without the provision of basic education for our children to meet the challenges of this environment, we would only be turning them into misfits and denying ourselves the most essential resources for national development.”

Since Ghana's return to constitutional rule in January 1992, the government has set up institutions for the promotion of democratic rule and socio-economic advancement. The 1992 **Constitution** stipulates that: a) the State shall provide educational facilities at all levels in all the regions of Ghana, and shall, to the greatest extent as possible, make those facilities available to all citizens; b) the Government shall—within two years after Parliament first meets after the coming into force of the Constitution—draw up a programme for implementation within the following ten years for the provision of free compulsory and universal basic education; and c) the State shall, subject to the availability of resources, provide equal and balanced access to secondary and other appropriate pre-university or equivalent education with emphasis on science and technology; a free adult literacy programme; free vocational training, rehabilitation and resettlement of disabled persons; and lifelong education. Article 25 of the Constitution states that “All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full



realization of that right: a) basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all; b) secondary education in its different forms, including technical and vocational education, shall be made generally available and accessible to all by every appropriate means, and in particular, by the progressive introduction of free education; c) higher education shall be made equally accessible to all, on the basis of capacity, by every appropriate means, and in particular, by progressive introduction of free education; d) functional literacy shall be encouraged or intensified as far as possible; e) the development of a system of schools with adequate facilities at all levels shall be actively pursued.”

The **Local Government Act No. 462** of 1993 made provisions for the transfer of power from the central government to the sub-national institutions such as the District Assemblies.

The **Children’s Act No. 560** of 1998 enjoins the District Assemblies and other decentralized departments to facilitate the establishment of daycare centres and other early childhood care and development (ECCD) institutions.

The **Act of the Parliament No. 718** of 2006 established the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

The **National Accreditation Board Act No. 744** of 2007 provides for the establishment of the Board as an entity responsible for the accreditation of both public and private tertiary level institutions as regards the contents and standards of their programmes.

Since 1987, the education system is expected to provide nine years of compulsory basic formal education for every child from the age of 6 to 14 years. In 1996 the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) Programme was launched, a ten-year programme (1996–2005) designed to establish the policy framework, strategies and activities to achieve free and compulsory basic education for all children of school going age. In 2007/08, two years of kindergarten education have been added to free and compulsory basic education (age group 4 to 14 years).

Administration and management of the education system

The **Ministry of Education** (formerly the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports), responsible for the provision and management of education in Ghana, has various statutory bodies under it, including the Ghana Education Service, the Ghana Library Board, the Bureau of Ghana Languages, the Ghana Book Development Council, the National Commission for UNESCO, and the National Service Secretariat.

The **Ghana Education Service** (GES) has the responsibility of implementing pre-tertiary education policies formulated by the Ministry. It is headed by a Director-General, and is one of the most decentralized sectors of the government. Indeed, the management of education at divisional, regional and district levels has been strengthened by posting of highly qualified personnel to all managerial and administrative positions in the service. The **Curriculum Research and Development Division** (CRDD), a body under the GES, is responsible for developing,



implementing and evaluating the national curriculum. The **Non-Formal Education Division** (NFED) has an important sub-sectoral area of responsibility regarding education delivery.

The **Education Management Information System** (EMIS) project launched in 1997 on a pilot basis in 12 Districts (out of a total of 110) and three Regional Offices was to improve the collection, processing and analysis of educational data in order to make reliable information available for decision making at all levels of the education system. It was expanded to cover additional Districts and the remaining 7 Regional Offices. In March 2004, a Planning Unit was established at the GES. This new unit is responsible for addressing data inconsistencies in the system and organizing workshops for district and regional budget officers and their District and Regional Directors of Education.

Currently, ten **Regional** and 138 **District Education Offices** represent the Ministry in the local areas and are responsible for implementing the policies set at the central level. Directors of the District Offices report to the Regional Offices, and are responsible for school management, supervision, budgeting and data collection and analysis for each district.

Furthermore, in order to foster greater local community participation in decision-making, various bodies and committees have been established at local and district levels, including Parent-Teacher Associations, District Teacher Support Teams, School Management Committees and others, which coordinate their activities with the District.

The **West African Examination Council, Ghana National Office** conducts the terminal examinations for all pupils and students at the pre-tertiary levels of education. The examinations of the Council also serve as selection tests for progression from one level to the other in the country's educational structure up to the tertiary level, where the results of the Council's examinations are used for direct entry into tertiary institutions.

The main functions of the **Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training** (TVET), established by the Act No. 718 of 2006, are to: coordinate and oversee all aspects of TVET in the country; formulate national policies for skills development across the broad spectrum of pre-tertiary and tertiary education (formal, informal and non-formal); coordinate, harmonize and supervise the activities of private and public TVET providers, including the informal sector; and rationalize the TVET assessment and certification system. The Secretariat of the Council was set up in 2008.

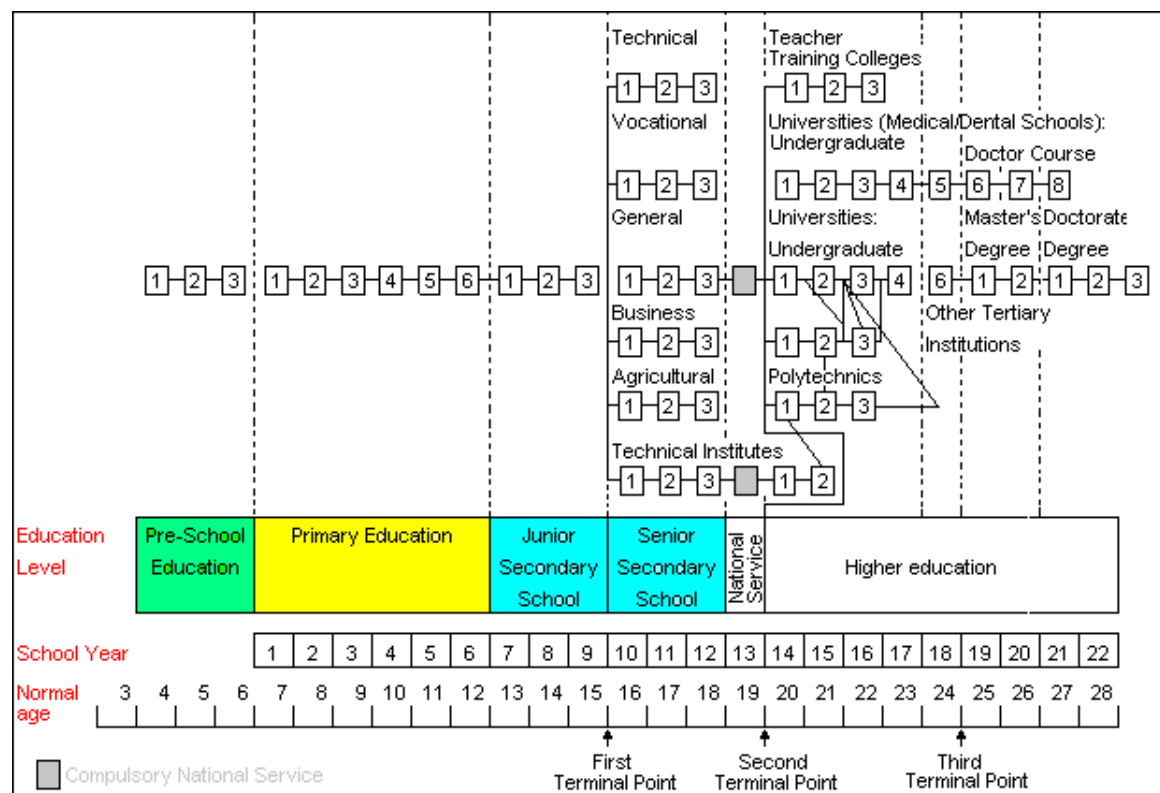
The mission of the **National Vocational Training Institute**, established in 1970 by the Parliamentarian Act No. 351, is to provide demand-driven employable skills and enhance the income generating capacities of basic and secondary school leavers, and such other persons through competency-based apprenticeship, master craftsmanship, testing and career development. The overall policy-making body for the Institute is the Board of Directors. The Government, through the **Ministry of Manpower, Youth and Employment** appoints members of the Board. The Board of Directors is advised on its policy-making matters by the National Apprenticeship

Council, the National Clerical Training Council, and the National Trade Testing Committee. These councils and committee are tripartite in composition and are made up of representatives of Government, the Ghana Employers' Association and the Ghana Trades Union Congress.

Before 2001, the focus of early childhood care and development (ECCD) had been on the cognitive development of the child. The Ministries of Education and Employment and Social Welfare have had joint responsibilities for early childhood facilities (crèches, daycare centres, nurseries, kindergartens) because of the welfare/care and educational needs of children. Furthermore, the Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC) was responsible for the welfare of all children. The responsibility for policy making in respect to children has shifted from the GNCC to the **Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC)** with the establishment of the Ministry in 2001.

Structure and organization of the education system

Ghana: structure of the education system (2007)



Pre-school education

Pre-school education is not compulsory and normally caters to children in the age group 3-5. Nurseries are for children aged 3-4, while kindergartens cater to children between the ages of 4 and 6 years. There are also crèches for children up to 2 years old and daycare centres (age group 2-3 years). The age limits are not strictly observed as children of all ages could be found in any centre. Since 2007/08, two years of kindergarten education are considered as part of basic education.



Primary education

Primary education, or the second stage of basic education, lasts six years and is compulsory. Primary education is divided into two three-year cycles, e.g. lower and upper primary education. Children start attending school at the age of 6.

Secondary education

After the 2007 reform, general secondary education consists of: three years of junior high school education, completing basic compulsory education and leading to the Basic Education Certificate Examination; and four years of senior high school education. At the end of the senior secondary programme, students sit the Senior School Certificate Examination administered by the West African Examinations Council. Technical and vocational education usually lasts three years and is provided in technical secondary schools, technical institutions, vocational schools/training centres and other post-basic education training institutions.

Higher education

Tertiary and higher education is provided by polytechnics, teacher training colleges, non-university postsecondary and tertiary-level institutions and universities. Programmes leading to the award of a certificate or a diploma normally last between two and three years. Teacher training colleges offer a three-year diploma in education. Higher national diplomas awarded by polytechnics normally take three years to complete. At the university level, bachelor's degree programmes usually last four years (six to seven years in the case of medicine, surgery and dentistry). At the postgraduate level, the duration of programmes leading to a certificate or a diploma is between one and two years. Master's degree programmes last two to three years. Doctoral degree programmes require at least two years of study.

The school year consists of forty weeks at the primary and senior secondary levels, and of forty-five weeks at the junior secondary level. The academic year is divided into two semesters (August-December and January-May).

The educational process

As mentioned, the Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD), under the Ministry of Education, is responsible for developing, implementing and evaluating the national curriculum.

The curriculum reforms of 1987 were intended to address two essential issues: a) there were many important jobs to be done in Ghana for which no one was trained, and b) scientific and technological training was insufficient for Ghanians to make use of their country's resources. Educational reforms in Ghana have also been motivated by social, economic, political, cultural tendencies and practices, feedback from the evaluation of the curriculum, and shifts in educational trends. Thus, primary education is intended to lay the foundation for pupil inquiry and creativity, and to develop the pupil's ability to adapt constructively to a changing environment. The junior secondary school curriculum has been planned to provide pupils with basic pre-



technical, pre-vocational and scientific knowledge, and senior secondary education intends to reinforce the knowledge and skills acquired during basic education, while also providing opportunities to help students develop different talents and skills.

Furthermore, the education system has adopted the integrated subject-based approach of organizing the curriculum. In an integrated subject-based curriculum, important topics are selected and repeated at different levels within and across subjects. Some of the key topics identified are: democracy and human rights; environmental degradation; person to person communication; health and sanitation; belief systems; population and family life education; problem-solving and decision-making. Through the process of planned repetition within and across subjects, the syllabi are designed to strengthen understanding and the acquisition of knowledge. Furthermore, many subjects are combined into one (for instance, environmental studies at the primary level is a combination of science, agricultural science, life skills and social studies), as it is believed that integration is a more efficient way to transmit knowledge. The new curriculum targets high-level cognitive objectives, values and practical skills to give learners the ability to undertake scientific, critical and logical thinking and action.

In order to facilitate the learners' active participation, specific objectives of each unit in the syllabus are planned and arranged in such a way as to help the pupil acquire knowledge and understanding before moving on to analyze issues, apply the knowledge or acquire an associated affective or psychomotor skill. The teaching-learning activities are pupil-centred and involve role-playing, cooperative learning, non-directive teaching, discovering method, group participation, problem-solving and the project method.

Implementation of the new curriculum has been done mainly through teacher training. This involves a cascade approach whereby the CRDD prepares a team of trainers to guide and instruct a set of resource persons who are then responsible for the training of teachers in the field. CRDD staff are responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the whole training process.

Recently (2007), the pre-tertiary education curriculum has undergone significant revision with a view towards eliminating the weaknesses associated with the structure and content of earlier education reforms. Its main objective is to make pre-tertiary education responsive to the challenges of education in the Twenty-first century and to also ensure that all learners get maximum benefit from the system. The philosophy which guided the review is the creation of a well-balanced (intellectually, spiritually, emotionally and physically) individual who has the requisite knowledge, skills, values and aptitudes for self-actualization and for the socio-economic and political transformation of the nation. Therefore the curriculum has been structured to reflect the national development goals of poverty alleviation and wealth creation. The demands of other pressing socio-economic goals and the present and future educational needs of the country were also considered in the review. The current objectives of the pre-tertiary education curriculum are to:

- emphasize active learning rather than passive listening by students;
- emphasize intellectual competencies and skills rather than subject teaching;



- promote the development and application of minimum standards of learning in all curriculum;
- promote the inter-consecutiveness of the different levels of the education ladder;
- inculcate skills and aptitudes for lifelong learning;
- strengthen literacy and numeracy at the basic level;
- create a parallel structure for academic programmes at senior high school level;
- promote a shift to science, technical and vocational education and training;
- formalize apprenticeship training;
- encourage competency-based training;
- link education to the world of work.

The 2007 revised pre-tertiary curriculum therefore puts greater emphasis on critical and scientific thinking as pre-conditions for developing the new type of Ghanaian who will become a problem-solver and be able to perform effectively in society. The revised curriculum emphasizes the acquisition of higher-level thinking skills (profile dimensions) involving the ability to analyze issues, make good quality judgments and generate solutions to problems in the classroom and in the society. This forms the basis for teaching-learning and assessment in schools, enabling the teacher to place emphasis on the various dimensions (i.e. knowledge and understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation).

Furthermore, the revised syllabuses emphasize participatory and problem-solving pedagogy and as much as possible, and it de-emphasizes didactic pedagogy and rote learning approaches. Under the participatory approach, teachers are encouraged to use a mix of teaching methods within a lesson to ensure that the needs and expectations of every child are met.

It is equally important to state that curriculum overload, especially at the basic level, has been reduced through subject integration, appropriate scoping and sequencing of content. Furthermore, the timetable has been enriched and made more flexible to cater for the varying interests of learners. All these measures are intended to generate interest for learning among pupils and students, and to enhance their involvement as well as guarantee their retention and completion rates.

The adoption of information and communication technology (ICT) at the pre-tertiary levels of education and the integration of morals and values across all subjects for positive attitude-building in the youth will enable them fit adequately into the society as well as the ever-growing global economy.

The standards on curriculum outlined, are not attained in a vacuum hence the training of teachers in the effective use of the revised syllabuses to enable them understand the philosophy and principles which underpin the review. The training is also aimed at equipping teachers with the skills that will enable them interpret and use the syllabuses accurately for effective teaching and learning for the benefit of all categories of children. In addition, child-friendly teaching and learning materials, manuals and teacher guides by the CRDD of the Ministry are being developed to assist teaching and learning. In terms of curricular time, 156 instructional periods per



year have been allocated to learning reading from grade 1 to 3 to enable learners to become more proficient in reading. (Ghana Education Service 2008).

Pre-primary education

Before 2002 pre-school education was not part of the formal system; it has been introduced as a result of a recommendation made by the President's Committee on Review of Education Reforms (October 2002). Two years of kindergarten education are now considered as part of basic education.

One of the main objectives of pre-primary education is the promotion of a healthy mind and body. For the realization of this objective, all children are expected to be fully immunized against the six-killer diseases, and mothers follow courses in nutrition, family planning, and life education. Efforts have been made to ensure that schools are safe and equipped with toys for psychomotor development; also, teachers are expected to organize activities such as role-plays, sports and games that strengthen both children's health and the process of socialization.

The curricular structure of kindergarten education is well defined to provide opportunities for the overall development of children through individual play and group activities. The six essential areas of learning experiences of kindergarten education are: language and literacy (language development), creative activities (drawing and writing), mathematics (number work), environmental studies, movement and drama (music and dance), and physical development (physical education). Children at the kindergarten are taught through activities with concrete objects, e.g. games and puzzles, to stimulate their hand-eye coordination and also to stimulate them to reflect their own activities. The medium of instruction is the Ghanaian language prominent in the area.

Early childhood development (ECD) programmes comprise daycare programmes based at centres or schools, in-home programmes (where caregivers go to the homes of children), nanny homes (where parents take children to homes of nannies), and after-school-homecare (where children who close earlier from their centres are sent until their parents pick them up after work). There are nurseries for children aged 3-4, daycare centres for the age group 2-3 years, and crèches that cater to children less than 2 years of age. Programmes are run by the Department of Social Welfare, the Ghana Education Service, and private proprietors and NGOs.

In order to ensure that nursery schools are properly run, the Government set up a National Nursery Teachers' Training Centre where certificated teachers who want to specialize in nursery education, and nursery attendants are trained. The pre-school or nursery teacher training course lasts three months, after which a certificate is awarded. The basic-level teacher training course lasts three years, after which a teacher certificate "A" is awarded to successful students.

Under the auspices of the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, the Ghana National Commission on Children, with the support of UNICEF conducted an inventory of all formal ECD centres to ascertain the number of children with access to these centres, the kind of structure being used, and the number and status of teachers and attendants at the centres. The policy document on ECCD which aims at



addressing the current problems of access and quality in ECD services has been reviewed, finalized and launched in August 2004. The policy provides a framework for the guidance of government and all stakeholders, specifically sector ministries, District Assemblies and its structures, communities, families, civil society including NGOs and the donor community in their effort to support the survival, protection and development of the children in their early years. The new approach to ECCD is to formulate comprehensive policies and programmes for children from birth to age 8, their parents and caregivers. This is with the aim of protecting the child's rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional, social and physical potential. This relatively new approach promotes and protects the rights of the young child to survival, growth and development.

The Ghana Education Service reports that the number of kindergarten schools increased from 14,246 in 2006/07 to 15,449 in 2007/08 (of which 4,309 in the private sector). The reason is primarily the government's policy that each primary school should have a kindergarten attached to it. As such, many crèches and nurseries are also converting to kindergartens, partially because of the government policy, and partially also to take advantage of the capitation grant that is provided for kindergarten children. In 2007/08, the total enrolment was 1,262,264 children and the gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 89.9%. (Ghana Education Service, 2008).

Primary (basic) education

At the primary level, emphasis is on literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills. Children consolidate the knowledge and skills acquired at the kindergarten level, lay a foundation for inquiry, creativity and innovation, develop an understanding of how to lead a healthy life and achieve a healthy status. Good citizenship is also inculcated in children to enable them participate in national development and for them to develop the skills and aptitudes for assimilating new knowledge. The three-year junior high school education programme completes basic education and provides opportunity for students to discover their interests, abilities, aptitudes and other potentials and to acquire basic scientific and technical knowledge and skills that will enable them to prepare adequately for further academic work and acquisition of technical/vocational skills at the senior high level.

The operational guidelines for the implementation of the Basic Education Reform state that all schools, whether private or public, are expected to run a full forty-week school year. Under the Primary School Development Project, instructional time in basic schools was increased from four to five hours a day. Even then, due to a number of factors, the actual instructional time in Ghana in public basic schools was found to have averaged 450 hours a year. It has been observed that the actual teaching and learning time is often affected by weather conditions and by the unattractiveness of the school facilities. Many of the schools in the more deprived parts of the country have no proper school buildings, while a large number of school buildings have leaking roofs and other impediments.

Learning time and effectiveness are also affected by other factors such as poor teacher discipline; teachers' and pupils' attendance at markets on local market days during school hours; attendance of teachers during school hours at funerals and meetings called by circuit and district education officers and the Ghana National

Association of Teachers (GNAT) officials; and time taken off by teachers each month to collect their salaries. These problems were accentuated by an almost complete lack of school-level supervision by the head teacher in most public basic schools. These concerns have been addressed through the Primary School Development Project, with measures including policy and management changes and investments in physical infrastructure.

In order to make education more relevant to the socio-economic realities of the country, Ghanaian languages and practical agriculture have been introduced as core subjects at the basic and secondary levels of schooling, and science is being taught with an environmental approach. In addition, in order to expose the pupils to employable skills, each school at the basic education level offers one pre-vocational subject designed to familiarize pupils with, and give them practice in, use of simple hand tools. School curricula have also been diversified.

The weekly timetables for primary and junior secondary education (junior high school) before the 2007 review are presented below:

Primary education (regular programme): suggested weekly time allocation

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade					
	Lower primary			Upper primary		
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
English	10	10	10	10	10	10
Mathematics	10	10	10	10	10	10
National language	8	8	8	6	6	6
Environmental studies	6	6	6	5	5	5
Integrated sciences	–	–	–	5	5	5
Religious and moral education	4	4	4	3	3	3
Music and dance	3	3	3	3	3	3
Physical education	4	4	4	3	3	3
Total weekly periods	45	45	45	45	45	45

Source: Ghana Education Service, 2001. (Each teaching period lasts 30 minutes).

Junior secondary education (regular programme): suggested weekly time allocation

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each form		
	I	II	III
Mathematics	6	6	6
English	6	6	6
Science	4	4	4
National language and culture	4	4	4
Agricultural science	3	3	3
Pre-technical skills	3	3	3
Pre-vocational skills	3	3	3
Religious and moral education	3	3	3
Social studies	3	3	3
French (optional)	4	4	4
Life skills	2	2	2
Music and dance	2	2	2
Physical education	2	2	2
Total weekly periods	45	45	45

Source: Ghana Education Service, 2001. (Each teaching period lasts 30 minutes).

Following the 2007 curriculum review, the learning areas at the lower primary level are: Ghanaian language (dominant language of the area); English language skills; basic mathematical skills; natural science; music and dance, physical education, and creative arts comprising arts and crafts. At the upper primary, the learning areas are: Ghanaian language (dominant language of the area); English language skills; basic mathematical skills; integrated science; citizenship education; music and dance, physical education, and creative arts comprising arts and crafts. Music and dance, physical education, and creative arts (comprising arts and crafts) are taught practically and demonstratively. At the lower primary level the teaching of English and Ghanaian languages shall incorporate concepts of religious and moral education, science and hygiene, life skills, integrated science and citizenship education.

At the junior high school level, the teaching subjects are now the following: English language; mathematics; social studies; integrated science (including agricultural science); Ghanaian language; technical and vocational education and training (TVET); information and communication technology (ICT); French; guidance and counselling (offered to enable students choose the right programmes to suit their interest and skills).

The Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) certificate is awarded to successful pupils on completion of a three-year junior secondary school course. The examination covers a total of 31 subjects, 7 of which are compulsory for all candidates (English, social studies, religious and moral education, mathematics, general science, agriculture and pre-technical skills). In addition, candidates opt for one vocational skills subject out of twelve vocational subjects and one Ghanaian language and culture subject out of eleven languages. French is a compulsory subject for schools which have French tutors. The total number of subjects taken by each candidate for the examination therefore is either 9 or 10. Candidates are graded based on performance in the external examination (objective and written) and continuous



(internal) assessment marks provided by the schools. A nine-point scale is used in grading the candidates, with Grade 1 denoting the highest performance and Grade 9 the lowest. To qualify for consideration into senior secondary school a candidate should obtain at least an aggregate of 30 in six subjects. In addition, for every programme a candidate must at least obtain a minimum of Grade 5 in the appropriate subject areas.

Following the launching of the reforms, there has been a marked increase in basic education enrolments. The Ghana Education Service reports that in 2007/08 there were 17,315 primary schools (of which 4,068 in the private sector) with a total enrolment of 3,622,724 pupils. The gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 95.2% and the net enrolment ratio was estimated at 83.4%. In the same year, there were 9,507 junior high schools (of which 2,240 in the private sector) with a total enrolment of 1,224,964 students. The gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 78.8% and the net enrolment ratio was estimated at 53%. As regards special education, in 2007/08 the total enrolment in segregated special boarding schools was 5,092 students, mainly at the basic education level (3,498 students); about 1,000 students were enrolled in special classes. It is estimated that less than 1% of the population of children with special education needs receives any form of education. (Ghana Education Service, 2008).

Secondary education

Senior high school education is a four-year post-basic education programme and it is provided at senior high schools, technical and vocational institutes and also through apprenticeship schemes. It caters for the different aptitudes, abilities, interests and skills and provides students the opportunity to pursue academic education or technical/vocational/agriculture education.

At this level, a comprehensive academic education is provided for students with the principal objective of preparing them for further education and training in tertiary institutions. Senior high school education offers the following programmes: general (arts or science); technical and vocational; and agriculture.

The core subjects are: English language; mathematics; integrated science; social studies; ICT (general tools, word processing and spreadsheet packages, and Internet). In addition to the core subjects, students can choose any one of the following elective or optional programmes: agriculture, business (accounting or secretariat); technical, vocational (home economics or visual arts); general education (arts or science). For the technical or vocational or agriculture education stream the following broad elective areas shall be offered: building trades, business studies, electrical engineering, hospitality trades, mechanical engineering, and agriculture.

At the end of senior high school, students take the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination administered by the West African Examination Council, Ghana National Office. Four subjects are compulsory for all candidates (English, mathematics, integrated science, and social studies). In addition, every candidate must offer 3 or 4 elective subjects from one of the programmes (agriculture, business, technical, vocational, general arts, general science). Examination for school candidates is made up of two components, e.g. the continuous assessment and the



external examination. The continuous assessment forms 30% of the total assessment whilst the external assessment forms 70%. There are six grades in order of merit from A to F, Grade A being the highest and F the lowest. The first five grades (A to E) are passed grades; Grade F represents a failure.

The Ghana Education Service reports that in 2007/08 there were 700 senior high schools (of which 207 in the private sector) with a total enrolment of 454,681 students. The gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 32.2%.

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET), including agriculture education, is expected to provide employable skills through formal and informal apprenticeship, vocational, technical and agricultural institutes. The TVET system is mostly institution-based and fragmented under different ministries, agencies and the private sector, each developing and offering its programme under their parochial policies without any coordination. Linkages with industry in terms of input for curricula development are weak resulting in mismatches of supply and demand of skills. There is also the poor public perception of TVET affecting recruitment, funding and unsatisfactory quality of delivery due to inadequate instructor preparation and provision of instructional resources. To address these, Government in collaboration with industry has developed a TVET Policy Framework to guide policy makers and to sensitize the public on the Government's focus on a new vision for technical, agricultural and vocational education and training.

Pre-tertiary TVET shall be provided at the following levels: technical institutes, agricultural institutes, vocational institutes and apprenticeship institutions (formal and informal). It shall also be offered at the basic education level as elective subjects. Technical institutes shall produce craftsmen at intermediate and advanced levels as well as technician levels for the job market; graduates could continue their education at the polytechnic level to take higher courses. Vocational institutes shall offer courses which will lead to tradesman, artisan and master craft men levels for the job market; graduates could continue their education at technical institutes to take higher courses. There shall be two types of apprenticeship training by the National Apprenticeship Training Board: i) formal scheme, to be made up of classroom and on-the-job training; and ii) on-the-job training (informal) under traditional master crafts person.

All TVET institutions, both public and private, shall be registered and accredited by the Council for TVET in order to operate. The competency-based training (CBT) curriculum delivery methodology has been adopted for the TVET system. In this approach strong emphasis will be placed on students acquiring practical skills for employment. (Ghana Education Service, 2008). A National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has been developed, and the Council for TVET is expected to implement it. The NQF considers seven skills levels, from basic proficiency in a technical trade (artisan level) to the Bachelor of Technology (degree level).

The National Vocational Training Institute operates 38 vocational centres all over the country providing training opportunities the youth in some 28 skill areas. Centre training courses usually last four years leading to the award of Certificate II. During their training, trainees are eligible to sit Test Grades leading to a Foundation



Certificate (after two years of training) and Certificate I (after three years). In 2006, the total enrolment in the vocational centres under the Institute was estimated at 7,211 trainees.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

The Ghana Education Service (GES) has evolved various models of evaluating the performance of pupils and students at all educational levels in the country, as well as that of teachers and lecturers.

At the basic and second cycle levels, there is a system of continuous assessments by which the actual classroom students' performance is assessed and computed at the end of every school term. The GES has also developed a teacher's self-appraisal instrument to measure the performance of serving teachers in basic schools.

Criterion referenced testing (CRT) is a test administered to 5% of primary grade 6 pupils in the country to assess the skills attained in English and mathematics at this level. The result is analyzed to give teachers the opportunity to carry out remedial exercises as well as make amends in cases of poor performance. Schools all over the country are randomly picked for this test. Results showed that pupils from public schools did not do as well as those in private schools. However, public schools have improved their performance in English and mathematics since the last test in 1997. The percentage of pupils scoring above the mastery levels of 60% in English and 55% in mathematics has also been improving over the seven-year period. Gender differences persist in mathematics, but there is no difference in performance in English.

The School Performance Appraisal Meeting (SPAM) is a meeting of teachers and the community to discuss school performance, set new performance targets and design strategies for attaining these targets.

A central implementation coordinating unit has been established within the GES to coordinate the implementation of the Strategic Plan in all the Regions and Districts and report on quarterly basis to stakeholders. Consultative panel meetings are also held twice a year between the Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service and development partners to evaluate programmes, assess the areas of co-operation and assistance and formulate plans for the achievement of these objectives.

The National Education Assessment (NEA) is an indicator of education quality at the basic level. The minimum level of competency on the test implies achieving a score of 35%. The level required to achieve proficiency is 55%. The table below outlines the scores for 2005 and 2007. For each year, the first column reports the mean score of the students that wrote the test. The second column reports the percentage of students that achieved minimum competency. The third column reports the percentage of students that achieved proficiency.

National Education Assessment Scores in 2005 and 2007

	2005			2007		
	Minimum			Minimum		
	Mean	Competency	Proficiency	Mean	Competency	Proficiency
P3 English	38.1	50.5	16.4	37.6	50.1	15.0
P3 Mathematics	36.6	47.2	18.6	35	42.6	14.6
P6 English	43.1	63.9	23.6	44.2	69.7	26.1
P6 Mathematics	34.4	42.7	9.8	35.7	46.2	10.8

Source: Ghana Education Service, 2008.

As shown in the table above, the mean score is just above the minimum competency level for grades 3 (P3) English, grade 3 (P3) mathematics, and grade 6 (P6) mathematics. The scores for grade 6 (P6) English are slightly better. Furthermore, between 2005 and 2007 there has been a decrease in the percentage of students achieving the minimum level of competency for P3 English and mathematics. The scores increased slightly for P6 English and P6 mathematics. These increases demonstrate an improvement in learning at the P6 level. However, overall the scores are still quite low. Usually, a country would hope that approximately 75% of children achieve the minimum level of competency but on average, the scores are well below that level. Furthermore, the percentage of students achieving proficiency is very low.

The fact that the scores decreased at the P3 level is most likely due to the significant increases in enrolment in recent years. This draws attention to the issue of ensuring that quality of education is maintained as access expands. The NEA results for 2007 indicate that at P6 level 26.1% pupils achieve proficiency in English and 10.8% in mathematics.

The School Education Assessment (SEA) is intended for school-level diagnostic use. Designed as a multiple choice and constructed response exam, the assessment measures how well students can complete core objectives within the subjects of mathematics and English. Results of the SEA at the school level are not intended for comparison across schools and regions based on the student achievement scores. Rather, the assessment results highlight the areas of the curriculum (English and mathematics) that need to be taught in-depth. The results provide this information by reflecting student performance on specific items, which are tied to core objectives in the curriculum. These results inform teachers and other educators at the school level where improvements in instructional delivery need to be made. Parents in each community can also be provided information through the SPAM by circuit supervisors on how their school performed on each of the assessments. The results of the SEA are meant to help teachers and school leaders improve the focus and content delivery in the classroom. The results are not intended to serve as an overall measure of student achievement. These results are distinctly different from the NEA, which



presents performance data comparable across districts and regions. (Ghana Education Service, 2008).

Teaching staff

The objectives of teacher education are to provide the teachers with a sound basis in the content of the courses they teach, sound professional skills that will enable them to guide and interest the children in the acquisition of learning and basic vocational skills, and foster their qualities of leadership. Leadership should create favourable conditions in which children learn with pleasure and ease. It should also enable them to integrate themselves within the community.

The pre-school or nursery teacher training course lasts three months, after which a certificate is awarded. The basic-level teacher training course lasts three years, after which a teacher certificate “A” is awarded to successful students. Teaching at the secondary level requires a diploma or a degree which is obtained after two to four years of training. Master’s and doctoral degree programmes are offered at the universities and take two to three years to complete. Holders of these degrees are generally employed at the tertiary-level institutions.

With effect from 1988, admission to the teacher training colleges was for a three-year course, reserved for GCE O-level and SSSC holders. The curriculum at the teacher training colleges was also revised to reflect changes in the content and methods of basic education. Teacher training colleges now train teachers to teach groups of subjects to match the reform programme.

All trainee teachers, irrespective of their areas of specialization, study core subjects necessary for imparting relevant knowledge and skills in basic level schools. In Group I colleges, students study: science, mathematics, technical skills, agricultural science and physical education. In Group II, students study: English language, social studies, cultural studies, vocational skills, French, and Ghanaian languages. In-service training for all categories of teachers and supervisors has been intensified to meet the demands of the reforms. The thirty-eight initial teacher training colleges are grouped into two programmes. While Group I colleges offer science, mathematics, agricultural science, technical skills, social studies, English literature and vocational skills, Group II colleges offer life skills, social studies, English literature and vocational skills. Of the thirty-eight colleges, three colleges offer only Group I subjects, thirteen train teachers in Groups I and II subjects, and twenty-two offer only Group II subjects. One college has specialized in training physical education teachers, while another offers a French option.

For entry into Group I colleges the minimum requirements for the three-year certificate “A” course—for holders of senior secondary school examination certificates—are at least Grade E in: core English; core mathematics; either core life skills or core Ghanaian languages; and also in two elective subjects in science, agriculture or technical subjects. Entry into Group II colleges requires at least Grade E in: core English and core mathematics; either science or core agricultural science and environmental studies; and also in two electives in arts, vocational or business subjects.



Both the subject content and methodology are taught in all subjects to prepare the trainee teachers for their profession. Students are also supplied with the requisite textbooks and syllabi to make them conversant with these basic school materials before leaving the training college. The Guidance and Counselling Unit at the Ghana Education Service Headquarters, in collaboration with their officers in the schools, organizes seminars and lectures to help school leavers in the selection of their future career.

Recent innovations include continuous assessment as an integral part of the final examination. In order to eliminate subjectivity in the award of continuous assessment marks, the University of Cape Coast—which is the certifying authority—has adopted standardization of the marks before the final results are released. Another innovation is the integration of population and family life education into the curricula of schools and colleges. At the University College of Education, Winneba, a department—known as the Institute of Education Development and Extension—has been set up to promote distance education courses which give teacher training college tutors and primary school head teachers the opportunity to pursue degree courses. At the University of Cape Coast a department of primary education has been set up to promote the teaching of primary school methodology.

In order to improve on the pre-service training of the teacher, the Teacher Education Division of the Ghana Education Service collaborated with the Institute of Education of the University of Cape Coast and the University College of Education, Winneba, to update the existing curriculum to make it more methodology biased. Workshops were also organized for principals on school management and financial administration.

With regard to in-service training, a new concept in teacher education, the Whole School Development (WSD) programme was introduced. It is a school-based intervention programme to improve teaching and learning in basic schools. The programme includes courses in school administration, management and financial administration for heads of basic education schools, and courses in continuous assessment and guidance and counselling for heads and teachers. Orientation courses have also been organized in various subjects, as well as a course in reading skills in primary schools. The in-service training courses are organized nationwide and involve teachers at basic and senior secondary school levels. It is compulsory for all teachers to attend.

A workshop for principals of training colleges in school management and financial administration, and an orientation course for tutors in the new syllabi to be taught at the training colleges was also set up. Under the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), the British Government has been assisting the country in setting up in-service workshops for tutors in English language and literature, mathematics, science and technical skills.

Teachers' salaries are among the lowest, even in nominal terms, as there are fewer fringe benefits in teaching than in other professions with equivalent levels of education and training. The contrast becomes sharper as one ascends the higher steps of the professional ladder. Certificates, diplomas, degrees and equivalent qualifications also enhance progression within the profession through incremental



awards or promotions. Trained teachers tend not to accept posting to the rural areas. In an attempt to meet the challenge of shortage of qualified teachers in the rural areas and other disadvantaged areas, a sponsoring scheme has been developed, which took off in the 2000/01 academic year. According to the scheme, sponsored teachers are to be contracted to teach for three years in the district that sponsored them.

Recently, the Government implemented a policy of upgrading of pre-service certificate awarding colleges to diploma awarding colleges of education.

Teacher workload (1996)

Level and type of education	Number of hours per week devoted to classroom teaching	Number of hours per week devoted to other educational activities
Pre-primary education	20 hours	15 hours
Primary education	22 hours	20 hours
Junior secondary	25 hours	20 hours
Senior secondary	16 hours	27 hours
Technical/vocational	18 hours	27 hours
Teacher training	14 hours	30 hours

The Ghana Statistical Service reports that in 2006/07 the basic education teaching force comprised: 40,796 preschool teachers (of whom 33,762 were female); 105,257 primary school teachers (of whom 35,250 were female); and 67,005 junior secondary school teachers (of whom 15,482 were female). The average pupils-teacher ratio was 1:32 at the preschool and primary school levels, and 1:17 at the junior secondary level. According to the EMIS data for all schools, the proportion untrained teachers was estimated at 35.7% in 2007.

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For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/>