2023 PSLE

DIAGNOSTIC REPORT ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE

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1.0   Introduction

Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) is an examination not only aimed at measuring achievement, but it is also intended to provide diagnostic information meant to serve as feedback to the teaching and learning process. This report is a step towards providing teachers and other support structures in the education system with information that could assist in improving the future teaching and learning processes. The information was compiled using the learner performance outcomes for the 2023 examination. Therefore, this report is meant to holistically highlight strong areas as well as those that have been viewed to be problematic in the different subjects based on the performance of the 2023 candidates.

Suggestions for improvement have also been provided and it is expected that users of the report will read through and utilize the information for the benefit of the learners. This report must be read in conjunction with the 2023 question papers as specific reference is made to the tasks for the different syllabuses.

1.1   Scope & Purpose

PSLE is a diagnostic examination testing a total of seven (7) syllabuses consisting of nine (9) components. There are six (6) multiple choice components and three (3) constructed response components. To support the diagnostic nature of the examination, each syllabus is divided into content domains of learning called Dimensions. The table below outlines the Dimensions for the different subjects.

SUBJECT	DIMENSION 1	DIMENSION 2
Setswana	Knowledge & Understanding	Communication
English	Comprehension & Language Use	Communication
Mathematics	Computation	Application & Reasoning
Science	Knowledge & Understanding	Application
Social Studies	Knowledge & Understanding	Skills
Agriculture	Knowledge	Understanding
REME	Knowledge	Understanding

Therefore, the purpose of this report is to provide feedback on candidates' performance by highlighting their strengths and weaknesses across the different dimensions, going further into the actual topic areas where learners were challenged.

The report will focus on Multiple Choice components for Setswana, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Religious & Moral Education as well as the written components; Setswana 2, English 2, and Agriculture as in the previous year. The written components will provide observations made by Principal Examiners during marking. Hence providing schools with feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of learners in composition and letter writing for both Setswana and English as well as in Agriculture for this particular year.

1.2   General Observations

Generally, performance this year remained the same as that of the previous year in almost all the syllabuses. What was worth noting was that three syllabuses recorded a significant increase in one of the grades. These are Science, Social studies, and REME. On the other hand, as in the previous year, three syllabuses recorded a significant decline in one or more grades. There are Setswana, Mathematics, and Agriculture. Unlike in the previous year where there was a clear pattern indicating a decline in the Candidates' performance on the Knowledge Dimension across the different syllabuses, this year's performance in the Knowledge Dimension has improved. There is an indication that the basic underlying concepts and principles for the different syllabuses have been grasped by most of the candidates. The knowledge deficit is only reflected in Mathematics and Agriculture syllabuses.

1.3   Overview of Learner Performance by Syllabus

This section summarizes the performance of learners in each dimension, culminating in the provision of a holistic picture of candidate performance at the syllabus level. It outlines the generic areas of good performance or weaknesses and presents possible suggestions for improvement.

2.0   Setswana

The Setswana syllabus consists of two components which are component 1 and component 2. Setswana component 1 is composed of tasks that require candidates to display knowledge and understanding of the different concepts and attributes that make up the Setswana language. These include concepts such as punctuation, capitalization, orthography, tense, kinship terms, issues of courtesy & culture as well as the use of different parts of speech. The paper also assesses candidates on their understanding of a variety of texts being literary texts,

comprehension passages, reports, notices, directions and instructions. All these areas have been classified under the Knowledge & Understanding Dimension referred to as Dimension 1.

Setswana Component 2 on the other hand, requires the candidates to demonstrate communication skills through writing by combining the different language attributes to form meaningful wholes, applying what they learnt to demonstrate effective and appropriate communication. All these areas have been classified under the Communication Dimension referred to as Dimension 2.

2.1   Setswana Component 1

The performance of candidates in this component was generally low in 2023 as compared to that of 2022. There was a clear indication that the candidates had not acquired/learnt a number of concepts that constitute the Setswana language. Better performance was displayed in the following areas: report, orthography, tenses, conjunctive, and kinship. However, areas that required identification of aspects relating to the appropriate use of capitalization, punctuation, sequencing of sentences, translation, notices, culture, instructions, and directions, poetry, and Literature, as well as cultural aspects, were a challenge. This was indicated by the low P-values for many tasks under these topics which ranged between .12 and .48. Even in areas where P-values were on the upper scale a drop was still evident when compared to 2022.

Unlike in the previous year, this year the general understanding of the passages where candidates were required to identify specific information from the text was a major challenge let alone where they were expected to provide a bit of reasoning. The challenge became prominent in tasks that required them to determine the contextual meaning of different expressions, deduce meaning, make inferences, and draw conclusions based on a given text or situation where P- values ranged between .25 and .46.

Like 2022, candidates could not identify the poet's mood, interpret the stanza, and name the poetic devices used such as personification (used in 2022) and metaphor (used in 2023). This was indicated by the low P-values for the tasks under poetry ranging between .30 and .47.

The difficulty in interacting with content was also evident in literary works, especially the literature passage where they had to identify motivation, conflict, climax, theme, cause and effect as well as main events that constitute the plot. Like in the previous year where outlining the plot and events in their causal sequence presented difficulty for them, this year the challenge was prominent, and candidates were challenged in these areas. Out of 9 items in the literature, in 6 areas P- values ranged between .29 and .48 indicating that indeed the candidates were weak. Most of the candidates only managed to identify the main character, and setting and to give a reason why they dislike a particular character as indicated by a P-

value ranging from .51 to .81. A further breakdown of P-values according to the topics of study is presented in Table 1. The P-values are divided into 3 categories showing how the candidates were likely to answer the items under each topic category.

2.2 Suggestions for Improvement

✓ Learners should be given more practice on tasks demanding sequence of events and the application of grammatical conventions, orthography, and conjunctive.

✓ Reading texts for understanding requires emphasis on skills of reading such as skimming and scanning, reading between the lines, inferring, and making conclusions based on the content of the text.

✓ The teaching and learning process should provide learners with an opportunity to interact with different types of texts when teaching both comprehension, poetry, and literature to broaden their understanding of the different genres.

✓ Learners should be exposed to varied question types across the different levels of difficulty during class activities, tests, and internal examinations.

✓ Cultural practices need to be given some attention even though they form a small portion of the syllabus because they play a key role in moulding the behavior of the candidates for the future.

Table 1: P-Values for the Different Tasks: Knowledge & Understanding Dimension

The table below shows p-values for the different tasks about the topic areas.

Topic	P -values		
	low	average	Slightly high to high
Capitalization	.39, .45		
Punctuation	.26, .47	.51 .57	.61
Orthography	.26, .41	.55	.78
Conjunctivitis	.16, .43		.67 .86
Sequence	.12, .36, 47,		
Tenses			.77 .86
Report	.28		.69, .73
Notices	.43, .43, .44		
Kinship		.50	.73
Culture	.36		
Translation	.26, .35	.59	
Instructions & Directions	.30, 38, 47		
Comprehension Passage	.25,.28,.28,.34,.35,.46	.51	.61, 62, 62,63,.65, 66,82
Poetry	.30, .32, .47	.53	

| Literature Passage | .29, .30,.30, .36, .37,.48 | .51, .59 | .81 |

2.3   Comments on the Different areas with low P-values

- **Capitalization**

Under the topic of capitalization, two items were available to the candidates and the average P-values were rated to be in the low category. This implied that the topic was not performed well by the candidates. It also meant that the candidates found this section of the syllabus difficult.

- **Orthography**

Under orthography, there were items from low P-values to higher P-values. Candidates found the topic accessible.

- **Sequencing**

Candidates found the items under sequencing not accessible as the P-values were in the low category. A similar observation was noticed in the 2022 cohort. This shows that most candidates selected options where there was no coherence within the sentences. More emphasis must be placed on teaching the candidates about elements of coherence.

- **Report**

There is a noticeable improvement in P-values in this topic between the 2023 cohort and the 2022 cohort. Some items were rated at high P-values but that was the case in 2022.

- **Notices**

The items under this topic received low P-values meaning that candidates were finding them difficult.

- **Comprehension passage**

There is evidence that the candidates were accessing some of the items under this topic. This topic received more items compared to other topics. However, candidates did not do well in some items as shown by low P-value. There is a slight improvement in items rated at higher P-values in 2023 compared to 2022.

- **Poetry**

Compared to the 2022 cohort, the topic was not performed well by the 2023 cohort as shown by low p-values for items under this topic.

2.4   Setswana Component 2: Composition and Letter

Generally, the 2023 cohort seems to be weaker than the previous one. Regarding the difficulty level of the composition and letter, it was established that they were clear and accessible, and the expectation was that almost all pupils would be able to write without any problem. Although this year's letter writing was formal one, the topic was not beyond their level. However, it is worrisome to note that the same concerns that are raised year in and year out keep on recurring and for this year there has been a significant decline in performance on Communication, particularly on letter writing where they have been performing better in the previous years. In composition writing as in previous years candidates continue to get very low marks. This low performance in both dimensions is worrisome, because it could be an indication that the report sent to schools is not utilized to the fullest although it aims at giving educators feedback on students' performance and as a result assists students in improving the results.

What continues to be of major concern in both composition and letter writing is that candidates do not seem to understand the difference between stating and explaining as stipulated in the guidelines. Explaining requires more than just mentioning, it requires substantiation or expansion of the main points. Candidates continue to display a tendency of stating or mentioning a point/idea without any supporting statements. This usually leads to production of skeletal work which is not very informative. In some instances, candidates produced a list of different unsupported main points within a paragraph rather than a discussion of one point which is elaborated on.

Of concern also is the issue of formatting for both the essay and letter. Each form of writing has its peculiarities, and candidates need to adhere to the given format for each form. The issue of handwriting continues to be of major concern. Learners need to write neatly and legibly including the shaping of letters to try and differentiate capital letters and small letters.

All in all, the general performance of candidates in Communication continues to be low and this year, the decline in performance for letter writing exacerbated the problem.

2.4.1   Composition Writing

The candidates were expected to write about "BOTLHOKWA JWA GO TSAYA KAROLO MO METSHAMEKONG YA MO SEKOLONG" and they were expected to build their subject matter around the guidelines that were provided. The guidelines were to be used as a way of focusing the essay. The guidelines must be elaborated to show that there is a clear understanding of the process of essay writing. The candidates were also expected to showcase their communication and writing skills by using different aspects of the Setswana Language to sustain the interest of the reader. Some observations were made about essay writing as outlined below.

2.4.1.1 Confinement to the Guidelines

Most candidates still regard guidelines as questions to be responded to instead of using them as stipulated. This results in narrow presentations which are not informative enough to meet the required standard. Rather than presenting fully fledged expanded ideas, most candidates provided two or so sentences per guideline which defeats the expectations of essay writing.it is expected that the candidates beef up their points to display good communication skills and knowledge of the Setswana language.

2.4.1.2 Communication

Candidates were expected to display an understanding of the topic by providing information on the reasons and importance of the sporting code that they participated in. They were expected to display their communication skills.

The following are how the candidates were expected to address the guidelines

Elaboration of ideas:

> **Ke ne ka kgatlhêgêla motshameko wa kgwele ya dinao ka gore o nthusa go itshidila mmele. Ke kile ka bo ke tshabêlêlwa ke malwetse motlhofo mme fa e sale ke simolola go tshameka kgwele ya dinao ga ke tshabelelwe ke malwetse thata.**

NB:
the learner was expected to construct the topic sentence. In the example above, the topic sentence is, "ke ne ka kgatlhêgêla motshameko wa kgwele ya dinao ka gore o nthusa go itshidila mmele"

The second sentence which forms an elaboration supports the topic sentence thus, it is:

"Ke kile ka bo ke tshabelelwa ke malwetse motlhofo mme fa e sale ke tshameka kgwele ya dinao ga ke tshabelelwe ke malwetse thata".

Elaboration using examples:

> **Ke ne ka kgatlhêgêla motshameko wa kgwele ya dinao ka gore o tlisa maduo a a molemo mo botshelong jaaka go itshidila mmele, go ikgapha mo dilong tse di bosula le go dira botsalanô le batho ba bangwe.**

NB:

the topic sentence is "Ke ne ka kgatlhêgêla motshamekô wa kgwele ya dinao ka gore o tlisa maduô a molemo mo botshelong"

Examples

"jaaka go itshidila mmele, go ikgapha mo dilong tse di bosula le go dira botsalano le ba bangwe"

Observations

➤ Some of the candidates stated the main points and explained the reasons in a different paragraph. The candidates, instead of explaining the reasons digressed to talk about other things, and in the next paragraph they would then try to elaborate on the main idea.

➤ Some would start well with a topic sentence and then go on to state various reasons for preferring the sport code without expanding on any of the given reasons.

➤ Some of the candidates who tried to explain the reasons why they preferred the sporting code, just wrote a run-on sentence.

Candidates need to differentiate between stating/mentioning and explaining because explaining requires more than just mentioning. The main idea must be stated then followed by supporting points which serve to elaborate the main idea, thus why they prefer the sport code. The candidate needs to note that an explanation is done well if they start a paragraph with a topic sentence and then elaborate it with supporting sentences as shown above. Supporting the main idea is very significant because it's a way of expanding the body of the essay leading to formation of proper coherent paragraphs.

2.4.1.2.1 Mentions the name of the spot code in which they participate, in her/his school. Candidates were to name the sporting code they participated in at their school.

Observations

➢ Most of the candidates mentioned the sporting code that they participate in their school.

➢ Some of the candidates generally mentioned the sporting code that they participate in BUT NOT related to the sporting code in the school thus either participating in a home team or social clubs.

From the responses generally, it was clear that the candidates were able to interpret and address the guideline effectively.

2.4.1.2.2 Explain why they prefer the sporting code/what aroused their interest in that.

Candidates were to give a clear explanation of why they prefer that sport code.

Observations

➢ Quite a number of candidates managed to give a full explanation of why they preferred the sporting code. They were able to give reasons why chose that sporting code and elaborate on the idea/reasons.

2.4.1.2.3 Explains how this sport code is important to him/her.

This guideline requires the candidate to give a detailed explanation as to why his/her preferred sport code is of importance to him/her. They were required to at least give a full explanation of one importance. Even if the candidates could state many ways in which the sports code is important to them at least they were to pick one reason and fully explain the importance.

Example

> **Motshameko wa kgwele ya dinao o botlhôkwa fela thata mo go nna ka gore o nthusitse go dira botsalanô le bana ba dikolo di sele,go bona mafelo ka go farologana le go itshidila mmele.Botsalanô jo bo nthusitse fela thata ka nako ya fa re ipaakanyetsa ditlhatlhobo tsa rona. Ke ne ke nna ke ruta le bana bangwe ba re kopaneng kwa metshamekong ya dikolo tsa rona.**

<u>Observations</u>

- ➢ Few candidates were able to give a detailed explanation as to why his/her preferred sport code is of importance to him/her.
- ➢ Some candidate stated the importance without an elaboration hence they lost a mark.
- ➢ Majority of the candidates just stated the importance even going further to list them without making any attempt to at least pick one importance and explain it clearly.
- ➢ Some candidate mentioned the general importance of sport without specifically referring to themselves.

NB: As stated earlier, teachers must emphasize the difference between stating and explaining. The candidate's inability to explain calls for interventions to assist learners in acquiring the skills of how to elaborate.

2.4.1.2.4   Creativity

Show some creativity in their writing.

Many candidates are greatly challenged in creativity. Almost all candidatures lose a mark for creativity. This area requires candidates to showcase imaginary skills to synthesize information and present it in a way that flows. This involves weaving the main attributes of the essay together to produce a coherent piece of writing. They were also expected to bring together the main attributes of the essay to produce a solid piece of writing that has coherence within and across paragraphs. It calls for the usage of various sentences, varied vocabulary, and thinking beyond the guidelines to ensure that the essay arouses the interest of the reader and at the same time ensures that there is a flow of ideas. Creativity also entails skills use of language components such as figurative language, ideophones, interjectives, collective nouns, descriptive words, punctuation, use of rich diction/vocabulary for a particular effect. It also entails the ability to play around with Setswana words creating an exciting piece of work.

NB: There is an urgent need for teachers to instill this important skill on the learners. As they plan, they should priorities creative writing skills and give learners more practice.

2.4.1.3 Command of Language

This profile requires candidates to demonstrate an understanding of the different grammatical structures and their appropriate usage. Under this section the following attributes are
 considered.

2.4.1.3.1 Capitalization and Punctuation

Most of the candidates are doing well in capitalization and punctuation. However, they still have a shortfall of not punctuating the demonstrative. They also continue to use commas even where they are not supposed to pause some did not use a comma at all where they were supposed to use it.

2.4.1.3.2 Descriptive vocabulary

This requires candidates to use descriptive vocabulary, thus words and phrases or both as a way of enhancing the essay. These should be outstanding words/phrases that give vivid picture of what has been described. These should create a picture in the mind of the reader as if the reader can see what has been described.

Examples

Motshameko wa kgwele ya dinao o ratiwa ke matshwititshwiti a batho.

Nna ke tsaya karolo mo metshamekong e le mebedi fela e ke leng mmantswitswidi mo go yone.

Examples of language aspects that can be used as descriptive vocabulary.

Language aspects	Example
Collective nouns	**Matlakana a bana** **Boidiidi jwa batho** **Maphatšhaphatšha a metsi.**
Ideophones (maetsisi)	**Palakata! Tu! Thu! Pote! Thi! Phatsi!**
Assonance(poeletso medumo)	**Matsetseleko, magasisigasi, tshetlhatshetlha**

2.4.1.3.3 Figurative language

Candidates are required to use figurative language appropriately to produce an outstanding piece of writing. This involves the appropriate use of proverbs, idioms, and poetic aspects such as simile, personification, and metaphor.

Observations

A lot of candidates did not use figurative language and this year it was worse. A few who tried to use proverbs and idioms made errors of inappropriate usage.

NB: Teachers should infuse encourage figurative language in their lesson plans and teach it in a context, this will help learners to grasp them and use them appropriately in essay writing.

2.4.1.3.4 Compound and complex sentences

As in the previous year's candidates still have difficulty in using both compound and complex sentences in their writing.

Observations

➢ Some candidates write short simple sentences.
➢ Some use more than one conjunctive in a long sentence.
➢ Some use both conjunctive and a comma when attempting to construct a compound sentence.
➢ Some candidates tend to write run-on sentences which oblige them to use more than one conjunctive in a sentence.

2.4.1.4 Content Management

This aim of this section is to establish whether candidates have attained the skills of taking all the different aspects of composition writing and merging them to produce a congruent piece of writing. This focuses on the following.

2.4.1.4.1 Coherence of ideas within the paragraphs

It is very imperative to note that paragraphs should be constructed through adherence to the format. The expectation each paragraph should discuss one idea that has been mentioned thus it should have topic sentence and supporting ideas. The supporting sentence should not be divorced from the topic sentence.

Paragraph = Topic sentence + supporting sentences

> **Motshameka wa kgwele ya dinao o mosola fela thata mo go nna. O thusitse go ikgapha mo dilong tse di bosula jaaka go dirisa ditagi. Bangwe ba balekane ba me ba ke tsenang sekolo le bone ba tlhokela bagolo botho ka lebaka la ditagi. Ka jalo, motshameko o, a nthusitse gore ke bo ke se mo ditaging.**

> **Topic sentence = Motshameko wa kgwele ya dinao o mosola fela thata mo go nna.**
>
> **Supporting sentences = -Go ikgapha mo dilong tse di bosula**
>
>   **-Balekane ba me ba tlhokela bagolo botho ka lebaka la ditagi**
>
>   **-Motshameko o nthusitse gore ke bo ke se mo ditagi**

Observations

Problems relating to paragraphing are still there and they seem to have increased this year. More candidates struggled to construct paragraphs. They wrote paragraphs made of fragmented ideas that were not even linked. Run-on sentences appear to dominate most candidates' work.

2.4.1.4.2 Introduction and Conclusion

The introduction should be the first paragraph of the essay which sets the scene, and it should be more than one sentence and the conclusion also should be more than one sentence. The conclusion should be a summary or a reflection on certain aspects of the essay.

Observations

Generally, most of the candidates did well in the introduction. However, some candidates wrote run-on sentences as the introduction. Some candidates wrote statements that were not relevant to the topic. Most of the learners did well in the conclusion, however some had slips of bringing in new information in the conclusion which was not relevant to the topic.

NB:
During instructional delivery, emphasis should be made relating to the fact that an introduction should be a paragraph made up of more than one coherent sentence.

2.4.2 Letter Writing

Candidates were expected to write a letter to the Director in the Ministry of Education to express challenges resulting from undertaking a long trip to school. Unlike the previous year where they were tasked on the informal letter, this was year they had to write a formal letter. This was not supposed to pose a problem because the syllabus covers formal letters and candidates have been assessed on it in the previous years. Furthermore, the topic was appropriate to their level and easy for them to comprehend it because candidates are familiar with the school, and they take trips to their schools hence writing about the effects resulting from walking long distances to school and the solutions was not supposed to pose a problem. The format was also challenge to some candidates Below are some of the problems that need to be dealt with.

2.4.2.1 Content Management

(a)Address and date

Candidates were expected to write a well formatted address and date. The date must be in Setswana.

Observations:

Most candidates were able to write a well-formatted address and the date. However, there were candidates who did not get a mark for this criterion because of the errors that the committed ranging from punctuating their addresses, failure to use title cases and failure to include the Department in the recipient's address. The following are examples of incorrectly formatted addresses from candidates' responses:

Mookamedi wa Lephata la Thuto	Mookamedi
P O Box 4	Lephata la thuto
Gaborone	P o Box 4
	Gaborone
Mookamedi	
Lephata la Thuto	
Gaborone	
P O Box 4	

(b)Opening and closing salutations:

The opening salutations was supposed to be: Rra/Mma and a line was supposed to be skipped after the recipient's address.

Opening salutation

Candidates got the opening salutation right however there were some candidates who did not get it correct, because they wrote it as follow:

a) Rra/Mma   b) Mma/Rra

Closing salutation

The closing salutation was "**Ka boikokobetso**" The candidates were expected to write it as follows:

> Ka boikokobetso
> Lesego Tumediso

Errors that surfaced from candidates was as follows:

i)   Ke le   ii) Ka boikokobetso   iii) Ka boikokobetso
          Lesego Tumediso   Lesego   Lesego Tumediso

i)   Ka boikokobetso
       LESEGO TUMEDISO

➢ Some punctuated salutation with full stops

NB: Address and salutations are straightforward criteria that learners cannot miss, it is worrisome as some candidates did not do the correct format, hence losing a mark.

2.4.2.2 Communication

Under this profile, candidates are expected to demonstrate an understanding of the topic. They are expected to address the topic straightforwardly and communicatively which does not call for assumptions or speculations.

(c) mentioning the location of the school.

Candidates were expected to give clear evidence of where their school is located.

Observations

Most candidates clearly mentioned the location of the school and they managed to get a mark.

(d) Explaining the challenges resulting from undertaking a long trip to school.

Candidates were expected to provide information on the challenges resulting from undertaking the long trip and further give a full explanation of the challenges. Even if they stated several challenges at least one was to be fully elaborated using relevant ideas or examples.

EXAMPLES 1: explaining main idea with ideas/supporting points:

> **Mathata a a bakiwang ke go tsamaya mosepele o moleele go ya ko sekolong le go tsena thari. Se se dira gore re felele re siiwa ke dithutô tse di rutwang mo mosong. Go siiwa ke dithutô mo go bo go baka gore re se ka ra dira sentlê mo ditlhatlhobong.**

Ntlha ya botlhokwa:

Mathata a a bakiwang ke go tsamaya mosepele o moleele go ya sekolong ke go tsena thari

Katoloso ka mogopolo:

Se,se dira gore re felele re siiwa ke dithutô tse di rutwang mo mosong. Go siiwa ke dithutô mo,go baka gore re se ka ra dira sentlê mo ditlhatlhobong.

Example 2: explaining main idea with examples

> **Mathata a a bakiwang ke mosepele o moleele go ya sekolong ka gore re tsena kwa sekolong re lapile. Go lapa mo go baka mathata a farologanyeng jaaka go robala mo ntlwaneng ya borutêlô le le go tlhôka go reetsa fa morutabana a tsweletse a ruta**

Observations:

As in composition writing, even here candidates had shortfalls. They were able to come up with the challenges of undertaking the long trip but were unable to elaborate on them.

(**e)State ways of rectifying their problem/ give solutions to the challenges:**

Candidates were to state solutions to the challenges they encountered.

Observations:

Most candidates were able to come up with a solution related to the problems they mentioned in the previous paragraphs however, some came up with statements they perceived as a solution, yet they were not related to the problems they had previously elaborated. There were a few who could not come up with a solution just leaving the problem unanswered.

2.4.2.3 **Command of Language**

The candidates were expected to display knowledge of the different aspects of language such as tense, correct register, correct spelling appropriate orthography and variation of sentence openings.

2.4.2.3.1 Tense

There has been a significant improvement in the use of correct tense. The expectation was that candidates should be consistent in the use of tense, and they should use the correct tense agreeing with the topic. Almost all candidates used the correct tense although some candidates used future tense.

2.4.2.3.2 Register:

On the aspect of register, candidates are expected to use appropriate diction for the task, and it involves the use of Setswana throughout even in writing the names of subjects. The use of vulgar language is unacceptable.

Observations

Some candidates lost a mark on the register because of combining Setswana and English as exemplified below:

Ke nna kwa sekolong se sebotlana sa Tshwane Primary School.

The error here is the use of sekolo and school, sebotlana and primary in the same sentence.

The correct way of writing should be:

Ke tsena kwa sekolong se sebotlana sa Tshwane
Ke tsena kwa Tshwane Primary School

2.4.2.3.3 Spelling

A lot of candidates still lose marks because of wrongly spelled words. There is a need to advise them to proofread their work after writing to check for spelling mistakes. Some of the errors indicated that the candidate did not go over the work.

2.4.2.3.4 Orthography

Most candidates still have a problem of not knowing which words are written conjunctively and which ones are written disjunctively. There is a need for consideration of the utterance/pronunciation to establish how the word should be written. Particular attention should be devoted to the use of sounds: flh/g, tlh,th/tlh. Major emphasis should be on teaching the candidates the correct orthography as it has been evident that regional dialectal differences have an influence on the way candidates use vocabulary.

2.4.2.3.5 Sentence opening

There has been a significant improvement in the verification of sentence openings. Candidates need to continue to be exposed to various sentence openings to eliminate monotony in their writing.

2.5   Conclusion

Centers are encouraged to take note of the comments on the different aspects stipulated in the report especially areas such as creativity and elaboration of guidelines which are critical in portraying the uniqueness of the communication skills of a candidate. They are also to revisit the format of formal letters and salutations because some candidates lost marks in these straightforward areas. Hopefully, effective utilization of the comments is likely to yield positive outcomes in the teaching and learning process.

3.0   Social Studies

Assessment of the Social Studies syllabus has been classified into two content domains of learning being; Knowledge & Understanding Dimension and Skills Dimension. This is assessed by 60 Multiple-Choice questions, of which 40 fall under the Knowledge & Understanding Dimension and 20 under the Skills Dimension. Performance in this syllabus remains almost like that of the previous year indicating that almost all the candidates **(99.84%)** met the minimum requirements for the award of a grade at the syllabus level. The performance reflects an insignificant increase across almost all the grades except Grade B where the increase is quite significant.

The Social Studies syllabus is aggregated into 5 modules: Economy, Governance, Society and Culture, the Physical Environment, and Our Past (Our History). These ideas are evaluated on two levels: knowledge and understanding as well as skills. It is assessed using 60 multiple-choice questions, of which 20 are on the latter and 40 are on the former. A summary of how the 2022 cohort performed in these 2 dimensions follows.

3.1   Dimension 1: Knowledge And Understanding

In this dimension, candidates must demonstrate that they have the necessary factual knowledge on topics like governance, economic activities in Botswana, issues of trade and tourism, natural resources, population, migration, etc. Most of these concepts are focused on Botswana. Forty items are used to assess this dimension. According to candidates' results in this dimension, the 2023 cohort showed a slight improvement in this domain. Out of 40 items, 21 knowledge items had low p-values ranging from .20 to .49 unlike in 2022 where the range

was .09 to .49. On the upper side of the scale 19 knowledge items had a p-value range of .51 to .87 and .51 to .86 in 2023 and 2022 respectively.

3.2   Dimension 2: Skills

There has been a slight performance decline in this dimension compared to the previous year. Twenty items are used to assess this dimension, and this involves applying content to new contexts and problems with the help of stimulus material. Candidates need to demonstrate their capacity for gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing facts to make wise decisions. They are given the chance to generate conclusions based on logical evidence and relevant information that may be extracted from images and maps. Pictures, diagrams, charts, and other visual stimuli are included in a non-exhaustive list of these.

The 2023 cohort displayed a slight performance decline in the skill dimension when compared to their predecessors. Out of 20 skill items, the P value range for 9 items ranged between .20 to -49 in the current year and between .11 to 49 in the previous year. On the upper scale, the p-value ranged between .54 to .90 in the previous year and .50 to .90 in the current year. Further breakdown of P-values according to the modules is presented in Table 2.

3.3   Suggestions for Improvement

✓ The decline in the knowledge domain can addressed by using the enhancement techniques are used to capacitate students to remember information.

✓ The significance and value of Social Studies should be made clear to students. When students are informed about the significance of Social Studies, they are more likely to value the subject matter because they will understand why it is necessary to study it and why it is crucial. This will enable learners to grasp the content easily because they will be relating. As a result of their ability to relate, learners will be able to understand the material. Consequently, the knowledge component and skill will receive a boost. The significance of social studies as a subject is briefly discussed in the following sections. Apart from showing learners the importance of studying Social Studies, teachers must evaluate their teaching strategies while providing lessons. They must apply learner-centered strategies rather than the lecture style. This will help students to become more engaged in their education. Below are a few instances:

✓ They need to task students to research, find information for themselves, and they as educators would have the role of clarifying.

✓ They need to make learning enjoyable by giving students the chance to apply themselves using the pertinent content, which will make it easier for them to remember the information taught.

- ✓ Teachers should provide students with first-hand information about the subjects being studied for instance allowing students to participate in outdoor activities and/or field trips.
- ✓ They should engage students in a variety of activities such as debates and role plays, peer evaluation, and self-evaluation to ensure that students take ownership of their education.
- ✓ In some topics, they can also use a variety of stakeholders. They could ask an outside expert to speak on a certain topic and perhaps do a demonstration.
- ✓

Table 2: P-Values for the different tasks: Knowledge & Understanding Dimension

Physical Environment			Society&Culture			Our past			Governance			Economy		
Item no	dim.	p-value	Item no	Dim	p-value	Item no	Dim	P-value	Item no	Dim	p-value	Item no	Dim	P-value
16	skill	.27	2	KU	.80	1	KU	.87	3	KU	.83	22	KU	.27
17	skill	.44	4	KU	.85	13	KU	.20	8	KU	.59	30	KU	.54
18	skill	.54	5	KU	.49	28	KU	.77	9	KU	.77	31	KU	.81
19	skill	.66	6	KU	.51	29	KU	.21	10	KU	.66	33	KU	.66
20	skill	.54	7	KU	.56	53	KU	.35	12	KU	.40	35	KU	.27
21	skill	.47	11	KU	.40	54	KU	.38	25	KU	.73	37	KU	.44
23	skill	.90	14	KU	.44				26	KU	.48	38	KU	.70
24	KU	.47	15	KU	.46				36	KU	44	39	KU	.67
32	KU	.49	27	KU	.72				59	skill	.20	40	skill	.64
44	KU	.47	34	KU	.64				60	skill	.41	41	skill	.55
46	KU	.49	45	skill	.74							42	skill	.20
47	KU	.32	52	KU	.38							43	KU	.43
51	KU	.33										48	KU	.43
												49	skill	.53
	skill	low								skill	low	50	skill	.50
		.27		.							.20	55	KU	.21
		high		skill	high						high	56	KU	.30
		.90			.74						.41	57	KU	.37
	KU	low		KU	low		KU	low		KU	low	58	KU	.46
		.33			.40			.21			.40			
		high			high			high			high		skill	low
		49			.85			87			.83			.20
													KU	high
														.81

4.0   English

The English syllabus consists of two components: Component 1 and Component 2. Component 1 is constituted by tasks from both content domains which assesses candidates' ability to comprehend the different language attributes and use language appropriately. Component 2 on the other hand, requires candidates to write extensively using a variety of techniques to communicate effectively as in a composition and letter.

This year's performance remains at the same level as that of last year as reflected by the insignificant differences across all grades. Almost all candidates **(98.44%)** met the requirements for the award of a grade as in the previous year at the syllabus level. Also, there has been a significant number of Candidates assigned a U in the Communication Dimension just like in the previous year. This could be indicative of the fact that even though the Candidates know the different language attributes, they have a challenge when they are expected to use those attributes for effective communication.

4.1   English Component 1

Component 1 in the English syllabus is paper 1, while component 2 is paper 2. Component 1 is named Comprehension & Language Use, while Component 2 is Communication. Component 1 is a multiple-choice paper while component 2 on the other hand is extensive writing i.e., letter and composition. This is where the candidates' communication skills are tested.

The performance of candidates in the 2023 examinations showed a lot of improvement when compared to that of the previous year. For instance, p-values for Dimension 1(Comprehension & Language Use) tasks ranged between 0.19 and 0.92, with the majority of them, i.e. 45 tasks, on the upper side of the scale in performance (i.e having p-values above 0.50) indicating that the candidates handled the Component quite well. Tasks in this dimension were mainly based on two passages used as stimuli. Over and above answering factual questions based on the passages, candidates also had to demonstrate a good understanding of the language by forming their own opinions about the characters in the stories and explaining events in their own words. These were generally handled well, indicating that candidates found them to be quite accessible. Over and above the comprehension skill, Dimension 1 also assesses candidates on the use of different aspects of the English language such as punctuation, dictionary use, sequencing sentences to make logical stories, different aspects of the language such as correct use of tense, adverbs, reported and direct speech, poetry skills and ability to show awareness of the difference between spoken and written language, etc. Overall, these were also handled extremely well. However, it again emerged that candidates struggled in

some areas. For instance, this year, just like in the previous year, candidates did not perform that well in questions that required them to show a bit of reasoning and thinking outside the box instead of just picking the answer directly from the source. This is evidenced by the fact that, according to the statistics, the lowest p-values were from high-order thinking questions such as:

- A poetry-based question asking candidates to deduce the mood of the poem scored a p-value of 0,35, meaning that only 35% of the candidates answered the question correctly.
- A passage-based question imploring candidates to deduce the meaning or message of different Characters in the passage. Only 33% of the candidates got it correct. This task wanted the candidates to consolidate views expressed by different characters in the first paragraph of the passage and come up with an opinion as to what they say/show.
- A task imploring deduction of word meaning as used in a sentence, which only 28% of the candidates got correct.
- A question asking candidates to pick the correct word (from a provided list) to complete a sentence. This question garnered correct answers from only 14% of the candidates.

Items with the lowest p-values (below 0.40) as well as their topic areas are shown in the table below.

Item number	p-value	Topic Area
15	0.33	Passage: comprehension
26	0.39	Language Use: reported speech
31	0.28	Dictionary Use: word meanings
43	0.14	Language Use: sentence construction

4.1.1   Suggestions for Improvement

- ✓ Learners must be given more practice on tasks that require the use of high order thinking skills to refine their strength in this area.
- ✓ Learners must be provided with a variety of texts during class to develop comprehension skills.
- ✓ Learners must be encouraged to read for pleasure to cultivate exposure to the language
- ✓ Areas identified as problematic for learners must be given more practice.

✓

4.2   English Component 2

The English Component 2 assesses composition and writing. This year's candidates struggled a bit to deal with the demands of the guidelines and the marking key respectively. Another issue of concern is handwriting. Learners need to write neatly and legibly including the shaping of letters to try and differentiate capital letters and small letters effectively. As observed in previous years, candidates' performance in letter writing was far better as compared to the performance in composition.   Below is a sum up of how candidates performed on the questions:

4.2.1   Composition Writing

The composition topic this year was "*How a bad thing that happened to me turned out to be something good in the end*". Candidates were expected to address the topic in relation to the following guidelines:

a)   Where and when it happened

b)   What bad thing happened to you

c)   How the bad thing ended up being good

d)   How you felt in the end

This year's topic proved to be a challenge to many candidates particularly the   part where candidates had to talk about how a bad situation turned out positive/good. Most candidates were able to mention the bad incident part correctly but could not transit to the good part. Because of this, guideline C, which required candidates to explain how the bad thing ended up being good, was done poorly by most candidates. On the positive side, however, most candidates were able to clearly reveal how they felt in the end.

 That being the case, high achieving candidates handled all guidelines fairly well. A good number of them were able to address guideline c as per the demands of the laid criterion. The observations relating to composition writing are laid forth under each profile:

4.2.1.1 Profile 1: Communication

Communication could be understood as a two-way process that involves encoding and decoding. Therefore, under this section, candidates are expected to explicitly communicate to the reader about the given topic.

Candidates' responses were guided by the guidelines mentioned above and judged as per the following criteria:

4.2.1.1.1 Stating where and when the bad thing happened to them.

Most candidates did very well on this criterion by clearly stating where and when the bad thing happened. Most of them also managed to come up with a date and place.

4.2.1.1.2 Stating clearly the bad thing that happened to them.

Most candidates were able to state the bad thing that happened to them. On rare cases though, candidates stated the bad things they did instead, indicating that they did not decode the guideline properly. This should be addressed in class by emphasizing to candidates, the importance of taking time to read the tasks.

4.2.1.1.3 Stating how the bad thing turned out to be good in the end

Most candidates either failed to express themselves or did not understand the transitional phase of clearly demonstrating how the bad thing turned out to be good in the end. Nonetheless, though minimal, some high achieving candidates took the opportunity to showcase their creativity by portraying brilliantly how the bad thing turned into the good thing in the end.

4.2.1.1.4 Stating how they felt at the end

Most candidates did well on this criterion by clearly stating their feelings about what happened. For instance feelings such as relief, grateful, happy, guilty came out. There was a slight challenge though, where some candidates threw their feelings without relating them to the topic example "I was so happy after meeting my friend at the party" without really rounding the feeling towards how they felt at the end when the bad thing turned good". Generally, candidates did well on criterion 4.

4.2.1.1.5 Creativity and originality

The topic demanded a high level of creativity. Candidates were expected to coin their own stories which could be based on real-life experiences or just a work of fiction and sustain the attention of the reader. Unfortunately, only a few candidates managed to do that from the beginning to the end of their stories. Creativity remains the major challenge for most of the candidates in composition writing in that a lot of them continue to respond to guidelines as if they were just questions instead of using them as a prompt to jolt their line of thought. Most

candidates failed to expand and elaborate on their ideas. This is an indication of lack of resourcefulness which is also evident in the inappropriate use of adverbs and adjectives. In an attempt to fulfill the expectation of employing adverbs and adjectives in their writing to paint a vivid picture, some candidates employed these structures out of context (For example, "I met my beautiful friend at the party". This does not relate to how the bad thing turned bad. Descriptive vocabulary used in creativity must be related to the guidelines) . Therefore, more practice in the use of these is required. Guideline 3 which asked for transition from the bad thing to the good mainly contributed to candidates failing to deal with this criterion satisfactorily.

4.2.2   Profile 2: Command Of Language

Under this profile, candidates are expected to display an understanding of the different aspects/rules of English language and use them appropriately. Therefore, the following attributes were considered:

4.2.2.1   Correct use of Descriptive vocabulary

Descriptive Vocabulary- any part of speech that addresses the questions such as

Where, when, how- be it:

- Similes

- Metaphors

- Adjectives

- Adverbs

- phrases

It is worth noting that candidates know descriptive words but had a problem in contextualizing them. Correct usage and spelling were their main downfall. In some cases Figurative language was used haphazardly hence derailing the massage intended.

4.2.2.2   Capitalization *and Punctuation*

A considerable number of candidates showed an awareness of the implications of punctuation even though the use of a comma seemed to be a challenge to some.

However, the same cannot be reported about capitalization since some of the candidates seem to be challenged by differentiating between capital and small letters.   There is need for them to note that capitalization is required in the following instances:

- For the first word in a sentence: e.g. You can use my jacket if you are feeling cold.

- For the pronoun "I." e.g. Every night I call my mother before going to bed.

- For proper nouns: i.e. names of specific people, places, organizations, and sometimes things. E.g. Lebogang, Botswana, Gaborone, SADC ,

- For family relationships when used as proper nouns e.g. Are you happy with your gift Grandpa?

- For titles that come before names, e.g. Mrs, Mr, Doctor, Reverent

In some instances, candidates knew where capital letters are to be used but did not shape them appropriately and they looked like small letters. It would be helpful for emphasis to be placed on the mastery of shaping of letters during instruction. Such challenges have implications on their sentence openings which did not comply with the rule of starting a sentence with a capital letter.

4.2.2.3 Varied Sentences Openings

Candidates are expected to vary sentences when writing especially the opening sentences. A lot of candidates have mastered this except for a few who tend to use the same sentence opening over a number of sentences. This leads to monotonous pieces of work which affects the creativity aspect of writing. Candidates should be advised to not use the same sentence opening more than twice in their composition.

4.2.2.4 Profile 3: Content Management

In this section, candidates are expected to display an understanding of the critical aspects of composition writing and use them to produce a congruent piece of writing. This was assessed through:

4.2.2.4.1 Coherence and Fluency

There has been a significant decline in the use of run-on sentences even though a few candidates still grapple with punctuating the sentences. However, the main challenge is the candidates' inability to substantiate the main idea within a paragraph. This ends up introducing incoherence. In some instances, supporting sentences brought in new ideas, and this hampered fluency. More practice is needed to close this gap.

4.2.2.4.2   Introduction and Conclusion

A sizeable number of candidates displayed an improvement in composing introductions that set the scene of the composition. However, conclusions still pose a challenge as in some instances new ideas were brought in at the conclusion instead of reflecting on certain aspects of the composition or simply summarizing the general ideas in the composition.

4.2.3   Letter Writing

For this task, candidates were required to write a letter to their area Member of Parliament, inviting them to attend a fund-raising event. This was a formal letter and therefore the expectation was that it should reflect formality and constrain candidates to abide with the conventions of a formal letter.

In addition, it was not just a formal letter but an invitation, for which the exact venue, date and time should be provided. Some candidates struggled with the features of an invitation. They were not precise about the venue of the event, date and time. The following were the aspects that guided the letter writing:

4.2.3.1 Layout

Address and Date

Though a great improvement is evidenced in as far as the writer's address should be laid out, it is just a few candidates who wrote the sender's address as:

P O Box 110

Gaborone

05 November 2023

Instead of:

P O Box 110

Gaborone

5 November 2023

Recipient address

The recipient address should have four aspects. These are the position of the recipient, his or her office, the box number and where the post office is located. In this case, candidates were

expected to mention the office or constituency since they were addressing the Member of Parliament who is the leader of a constituency. Almost all candidates did not perform well in this area. Here are a few from a lot of addresses that were written incorrectly by candidates:

The Member of Parliament   Member of Parliament   The Parliament

Bobonong   Bobonong   Mabele Primary School

P O Box 3211   P O Box 3211   Private Bag 003

Bobonong   Bobonong   Orapa

Member of Parliament

P O Box 2011

Molepolole

The following are examples of the recipient addresses which were expected from candidates.

The Member of Parliament   The Member of Parliament

Bobonong Constituency   Bobirwa Office

P O Box 3211   P O Box 3211

Bobonong   Bobonong

Opening and Closing salutations

The opening salutation should match with the closing salutation. It was partially achieved by candidates. Some candidates endorsed their signatures thereby veering off the convention of a formal letter. The table below shows the salutations which were incorrectly written by candidates and the proper ways of matching the opening and closing salutations.

INCORRECT	CORRECT
Dear Sir/Madam **Yours Sincerely**	**Dear Sir/Madam** **Yours faithfully**

Dear Mr John	Dear Mr John
Yours faithfully	Yours Sincerely

NB: some candidates lost marks in opening salutation by leaving out the word DEAR before Sir/Madam and also using capital F for faithfully instead small f in closing salutation.

4.2.3.2 Communication

This section demands candidates to display their understanding of the topic and communicate clearly to the recipient the message they aspire to hear. In extension, communication stresses that the message sent should be free from ambiguity which compromises the intention of the sender. Candidates were guided by the following guidelines to communicate the message:

4.2.3.2.1   Stating where and when the event will be held.

Most of the candidates managed to state the place and the date but were not precise with the time since this was an invitation. For example,

"The event will be held at Monang Primary School on the 12th of December 2023."

This leaves the invited person wondering when exactly he or she should come to the event.

However, for those who did well in this guideline, they wrote it as:

"The event will be held at Monang Primary School on the 12th of December 2023. The program will start at 1000 am."

4.2.3.2.2   Stating what activities will take place during the event.

In terms of stating the fundraising activities, most candidates did exceptionally well. It is just a few whose activities were not about raising funds. For example:

"We will be eating rice, chicken, and bread instead of we will be selling food in stalls"

4.2.3.2.3   Stating why they wanted the Member of Parliament to attend.

This guideline required candidates to explicitly give the reason for inviting the Member of Parliament to the event. For most of those who attempted, shallow reasons which in most cases mismatched with the purpose of the invitation were given. Example of the reason given

"I would like you to come and see how the standard ones are doing in our school."

This statement has nothing to do with fund raising but something like this would have been better:

I would like you to come so that you can help our school to achieve its goal of having a library OR

Our school really needs a library so that we can use it for our studies / research OR

It would really be great for our school to have a library as it will contribute to better results from us students.

4.2.3.2.4 Demonstrating the correct tone used in a formal letter.

This year's letter writing task being a formal letter, the expectation was that candidates should be careful in terms of which vocabulary to use. They were not supposed to be casual. The causality was evidenced by the use of the verb "want'. Want sounds more like they were commanding the Member of Parliament to respond as per their wish. The sentence below was captured from a candidate's work:

"I want you to attend this event because I want you to help us donate money to access our wants." Instead of

I   humbly request you to attend…..OR

 I kindly request you to attend OR

 I cordially invite you to this event

Still under the use of correct register, some candidates used figurative language which distorts the formality of such a letter. For example:

"At the fund-raising event there will be sweets "as sweet as honey"

Such examples highlight the gaps that need to be addressed when teaching about formal letter writing.

4.2.3.3 Command Of Language

4.2.3.3.1 Consistent use of the correct tense

 Candidates were expected to display mastery of different aspects of language such as spelling, tense, and variation of sentence structure. Even this year a number of candidates were found wanting in this area. Only the high flyers did well in terms of command of the English language.

4.2.3.3.2   Variation of Sentence Structure

Candidates are expected to vary sentences within the letter. The majority of the candidates are able to coin and use simple and compound sentences correctly but only a few did similarly well with complex sentences. Others lacked in the syntactic aspect of a correct and meaningful sentence. For example:

"I will be happy if you will agree to take part in this event."

This sounds like a complex sentence because of the use of the subordinate conjunction if, but it lacked the syntactic aspect of a correct sentence by the use of will as bolded above.

This is one area where candidates are generally challenged. Examples of sentence types are given below:

4.2.3.3.3   Simple Sentence

A simple sentence is a sentence that consists of just one independent clause. Example:

"The event will be held at our school on the 18th of October 2023."

4.2.3.3.4   Compound Sentence

Compound sentence refers to a sentence made up of two independent clauses (or complete sentences) connected to one another with a coordinating conjunction. Examples: and, however, For etc.

Here is an example of a compound sentence taken from one of the candidate's scripts:

Very important local artists like Vee Mampeezy and Charma Gal will be performing.

4.2.3.3.5   Complex Sentence

A complex sentence is made up of an independent clause and one or more dependent clauses connected to each by a subordinate conjunction. For example:

"I am inviting you to this event because your presence with help to pull a large crowd."

4.2.3.3.6   Spelling

Candidates showed some improvement in this area. Nevertheless, there were those who indicated that they still have not developed a culture of proof-reading their work after writing. This was indicated by silly mistakes that could have been corrected had the candidate gone over their work. For example, omission of letters in a word:

Saterda instead of *Saturday*

nd instead of *and*

4.2.3.3.7   Correct use of tense

Candidates were able to use the correct tense that was demanded by the topic area with a few exceptions. In this case the tense was fairly observed by the majority of candidates.

4.2.3.3.8   Correct use of conjunctions

Most candidates demonstrated that they knew conjunctions. The main challenge was their use. For instance, some would just pick any conjunction they remembered and use it to connect parts of sentences. This would often result in the derailing of the message. For example,

"I will be happy, but you are coming to donate money to our school"

4.3   Suggestions for Improvement

Candidates should be exposed to a lot of creative writing throughout the course of their learning to enhance their originality and writing skills as this is a skill that requires a lot of practice. A deliberate effort should also be made towards the development of a reading culture that would broaden candidates' vocabulary base. For instance, candidates should be encouraged to read for fun i.e. pick materials on topics that are of interest to them such as their favourite sport celebrities, music icons, movie stars e.t.c and read for general knowledge instead of reading only school materials. This would enhance their creativity and imaginary skills, which are likely to translate into improved expressions and descriptions as well as improved sentence structure.

5.0   Science

Science at Standard 7 is examined through 60 Multiple-choice questions. The items are divided into two sections called **dimensions.** These are Knowledge & Understanding (Dimension 1) and Application (Dimension 2). Forty (40) items are from the Knowledge & Understanding dimension while twenty (20) are from the Application dimension. Questions/items classified under Dimension 1, mostly require candidates to remember/recall scientific concepts and facts but also show a good understanding of the concepts and relationships. Dimension 2 on the other hand demands slightly more from the candidates in that they must display an ability to apply their knowledge & understanding of scientific concepts and facts to new situations, use information to identify patterns/trends, draw conclusions, and process and represent information in various forms.

In terms of general performance, nearly all the candidates (99.01%) met the minimum requirements for the award of a grade at the syllabus level. This year, performance at the syllabus level reflects an insignificant increase across almost all the grades except at Grade B where the increase is quite significant. There is an increase in the number of candidates who met the minimum requirement for the award of a grade in the Knowledge and Understanding Dimension as compared to last year.

In terms of Dimensions, candidates performed better in the Dimensions where they were expected to apply scientific concepts & principles while they were challenged when they were expected to display basic knowledge of those concepts and principles. This was evidenced by the increase in the number of candidates assigned U in Knowledge & Understanding. However, the Dimension recorded a decrease in the number of Candidates assigned U from **11.00% to 8.40%** this year.

5.1   Performance Of Candidates in the 2023 Examination

Statistical evidence for this year indicates that out of the 60 items in the question paper, just over half (34 items) were found easy to access by the candidates. This is indicated by their p-values, which ranged from .50(meaning the item/s were answered correctly by 50% of the candidates) to .86 (meaning the item/s that was/were answered correctly by 86% of the candidates). Out of these, nineteen (19) items were from the Knowledge & Understanding dimension, while eleven (11) were from the Application dimension. Compared to 2022, there is a very slight difference in the performance since last year there were 30 out 60 items at p-values of .50 and above and out of these, 20 were Knowledge & Understanding items and 10 Application items. On the overall then, it can be concluded that, the 2023 performance was basically the same as that of the previous year, with very minimal difference.

Below are items with p-values of .50 and above

Item number	p-value	Dimension	Module/ Content Domain
2	0.88	Application	Nature & the Universe
3	0.54	Knowledge& Understanding	Nature & the Universe
4	0.84	Knowledge & Understanding	Nature & the Universe
5	0.58	Knowledge & Understanding	Matter & Energy
6	0.60	Application	Nature & the Universe
10	0.55	Application	Matter & Energy
11	0.54	Knowledge & Understanding	Force & Motion
16	0.57	Knowledge & Understanding	Electricity & Magnetism
18	0.54	Application	Force & Motion
19	0.54	Knowledge & Understanding	Body Systems
20	0.52	Knowledge & Understanding	Sexual Reproductive Health
21	0.53	Knowledge & Understanding	Science & Society
22	0.63	Knowledge & Understanding	Nature & the Universe
24	.57	Application	Nature & the Universe
25	.73	Knowledge & Understanding	Nature & the Universe
35	.52	Knowledge & Understanding	Matter & Energy
37	.66	Knowledge & Understanding	Matter & Energy
38	.68	Knowledge & Understanding	Force & Motion
40	.57	Knowledge & Understanding	Electricity & Magnetism
41	.68	Application	Electricity & Magnetism
42	.51	Knowledge & Understanding	Electricity & Magnetism
44	.63	Application	Health & Safety
45	.50	Knowledge & Understanding	Sexual Reproductive Health
47	.86	Application	Sexual Reproductive Health
49	.71	Knowledge & Understanding	Science & Society
51	.52	Knowledge & Understanding	Nature &the Universe
52	.56	Knowledge & Understanding	Nature & the Universe
53	.62	Knowledge & Understanding	Nature & the Universe
54	.78	Application	Nature & the Universe
55	.60	Application	Force & Motion
57	.66	Knowledge & Understanding	Health & Safety
58	.52	Knowledge & Understanding	Health & Safety

| 59 | .58 | Application | Body Systems |
| 60 | .95 | Knowledge & Understanding | Body Systems |

The general performance once again suggests that Knowledge & Understanding tasks were found to be more accessible by most candidates than Application ones. For the Application items, which are twenty (20) in the whole paper, only ten (10) had p-values ranging from 0.50 and more. This indicates that candidates continue to struggle when it comes to handling tasks that demand high order thinking skills, further suggesting that candidates have a challenge when it comes to using the learnt content in new situations or finding solutions.

This year, most of the items in the paper came from 3 content domains: Nature & the Universe, Electricity & Magnetism as well as Matter & Energy, which are the most extensive in content in the syllabus. The table below shows the tasks which were a challenge for the candidates as reflected by the low p-values.

5.2   Items with Lowest P-values

Item number	p-value	Dimension	Module/Content Domain
1	0.14	Knowledge & Understanding	Electricity & Magnetism
7	0.19	Knowledge & Understanding	Matter & Energy
8	0.34	Knowledge & Understanding	Matter & Energy
12	0.14	Application	Electricity & Magnetism
13	0.27	Knowledge & Understanding	Electricity & Magnetism
23	0.19	Knowledge & Understanding	Nature & the Universe
26	0.19	Knowledge & Understanding	Nature & the Universe
30	0.14	Knowledge & Understanding	Matter & Energy
35	0.17	Application	Matter & Energy
39	0.30	Knowledge & Understanding	Electricity & Magnetism
46	0.19	Knowledge & Understanding	Sexual Reproductive Health

The table above supports the conclusion that candidates continue to grapple with concepts from modules like Matter & Energy, Electricity & Magnetism as well as Nature & the Universe. Some of the questions that candidates did badly on include:

Q1. Which of the following substances is a magnetic material?

    A. Aluminium

    B. Carbon

    C. Nickel

    D. Zinc

Only 14% of the candidates were able to correctly say the answer is **C.** The majority went for answer **A,** which shows a total lack knowledge

Q7. This was a stimulus-based question where candidates were given a list of properties of a metal rod and asked to pick from a combination, those properties that are common to all metals.

The properties were:

i)It is attracted by magnets,

ii)it conducts electricity and

iii)it bends without breaking.

The answer was combination: Conducts electricity and bends without breaking(ii & iii)

  Answer:**C** (19%) many went to answer A(49%), combination (i) &(ii)

Q12. An electric appliance as a plastic body,

Which safety device is not required for the appliance?

    A. Fuse

    B. Earth wire

    C. Trip switch

    D. Insulated cables

Answer: **B** but most went for answer **D** (42%). In this question it was clear candidates were probably just guessing because the distribution was all over.

 Q30 Which of the following gases is a compound?

    A. Helium

    B. Nitrogen

    C. Oxygen

    D. Steam

   Answer: **D,** but the majority (39%) went for answer B.

5.3   Suggestions for improvement

✓   More attention should be dedicated to practical aspects of the syllabus.

✓   More opportunity must be presented for learners to practice tasks that require the use of high order thinking skills. Learners should be given opportunities to create, investigate, and present position etc. individually, in pairs and in groups.

✓   Topics indicated above should be given more attention.

6.0   Religious and Moral Education

The general performance of the 2021 cohort was better than the performance of the 2020 cohort. Most candidates easily accessed items from both Dimensions, Knowledge and Understanding.

6.1   Knowledge Dimension

This year the Knowledge Dimension had 29 items. Out of these, 24 items were easily accessed by 50 percent and above of the candidature. which is a good result since these are just recall items. Most of the items found easy to access were those based on Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion.

6.1.1   Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion

Candidates continue to do well on items based on Christianity, struggling only with a few. For instance almost 70% of them could not correctly pick a ritual performed at puberty stage from a given list of rituals neither could they successfully pick the correct answer when asked to name a ritual described in a scenario whereby a woman is asked to remove her black clothes six months after her husband's passing and she is given some traditional medicine and the clothes burnt. Most said the answer was 'Mourning' instead of 'Cleansing'.   This answer showed that they were not paying attention to the details in the stimulus.

Generally, items based on Islam were also handled well. The majority of candidates had basic knowledge about the religion such as its pillars and could correctly match the religion to its

place of worship, including some of its leaders. However, they were unable to pick the correct crime punishable by stoning in Islam from a given list.

Items based on ATR also did not seem to be much of a problem for candidates. They displayed basic knowledge of the proverbs, idioms, myths and rituals practiced in ATR.

6.1.2 Hinduism, Sikhism, Baha'i Faith and Buddhism

Candidates failed to access items based on other religions like Sikhism, Buddhism and Baha'i Faith. This is an issue of concern, and it could be an indication that during the teaching and learning process, more emphasis is put on Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam at the expense of other religions. This was reflected in the candidate's inability to identify the sacred objects of worship, religious symbols and their use, the festivals and practices in these religions.

6.1.3 Moral issues

Morality items on the Knowledge Dimension were twenty -nine (29) and they were easily accessed. Only seven (7) items seemed to have been a challenge as they were each gotten correct by less than 50% of the total candidature. Most candidates were able to describe moral concepts and values such as autonomy, orphan, child abandonment, morality, sharing etc. The only challenge candidates faced was when they were expected to interpret or comprehend these concepts from a given scenario.

6.2 Understanding Dimension

6.2.1 Religions

The Understanding Dimension had 31 items. Items based on Christianity, Islam and African Tradition Religion were easily accessed by candidates while those from Hinduism, Buddhism posed a major challenge to them.

6.2.2 Morality Items

This year twenty-seven items were exploring morality issues. Out of these, nineteen (19) fell under the Understanding Dimension. Statistics show that these items were handled relatively well by candidates, except seven (7) were answered correctly by 50% and more candidates.

The items that were a challenge were all demanding more than just recall of information from candidates. issues like: moral value promoted by giving to the needy(14), Effects of separating

children after the death of their parents(32) and Life skills needed by a child who is always put down as being useless(56).

The lowest performed items are shown on the table below.

Religious Items			Morality Items		
Question	p-value	Level	Question	p-value	Level
5	.46	Understanding	14	.23	Understanding
7	.23	Knowledge	19	.25	Understanding
8	.19	Understanding	20	.40	Understanding
11	.22	Understanding	32	.43	Understanding
15	.37	Understanding	53	.48	Understanding
24	.43	Knowledge	56	.25	Understanding
26	.49	Knowledge	57	.44	Understanding
32	.43	Understanding			
53	.48	Understanding			
56	.25	Understanding			
57	.44	Understanding			

6.3   Suggestions for improvement

- ✓ There is need for teachers to highlight to candidates all the different symbols used by the different denominations in Christianity.
- ✓ Teachers should strive to invite people from the different religions to give talks on their religions just to include some authenticity and interest
- ✓ Teachers should give more attention to other religions as they do to Christianity,

Islam and African Traditional Religion. More class exercises should be given on Hinduism, Sikhism, Baha'i Faith and Buddhism.

✓ Learners should be encouraged to read questions and understand them before giving responses.

7.0   Mathematics

In this section, those areas where candidates demonstrated either lack of or inadequate understanding in Mathematics will be addressed.

Table showing the classification of items by Dimension

	DIMENSION 1 COMPUTATION	DIMENSION 2 APPLICATION AND REASONING
NUMBER AND OPERATIONS	1,2,3,4,5,6,**7**,8,10,11,12,13,141516,17,18,59	20,21,22,23,24
GEOMETRY	25,26,27,28,29,30,58	31,32
MEASURES	33.34,43,44,52	19,35,36,37,38,39,40,41
ALGEBRA	49	53,54,55,56
STATISTICS	51,57	47,48,50,60
PROBLEM SOLVING		45,46

In general, the paper was fairly accessible to the candidates in both Dimensions 1 and 2 which is Computation (D1) and Application and Reasoning (D2). The following were some areas where the paper seemed to have posed challenges.

7.1   Algebra

Good understanding of mathematical functions, patterns and algebraic expressions is critical to doing mathematics. Not only should candidates be able to identify patterns and functions, but they should also be able to formulate equations that represent real contexts.
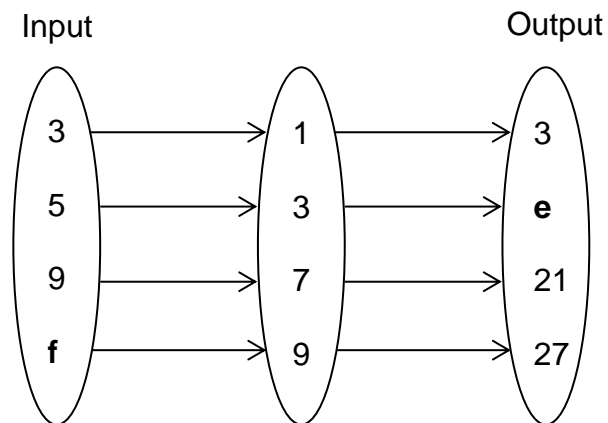
7.1.1   Question 53 (Interior angles)

Candidates showed lack of knowledge on directed numbers. They failed to compute [2y+(-y)]. They added the variable without considering the signs [-ve or +ve].

53. What is the sum of the angles of the triangle below in terms of x and y?
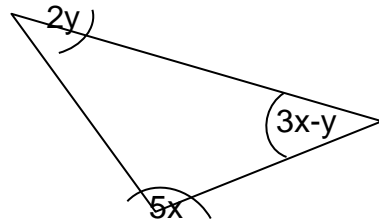
A   8x + 3y

B   8x – 3y

C   8x + y

D   8x – y

The diagram below shows a mapping of numbers. Use it to answer question 55.

Input   Output

55.   Which numbers are represented by **e** and **f**?

A   **e** = 6 and **f** = 7

B   **e** = 7 and **f** = 15

C   **e** = 8 and **f** = 12

D   **e** = 9 and **f** = 11

Candidates failed to establish the pattern.

7.1.2 Proposed interventions

- Teachers should set practical and written problems on probability in different ways. One way would be to do practical activities on probability with counters, beads etc, while asking questions related to probability. In this way learners will be able to see the results themselves.
- Learners should be taught how to generate their own patterns practically and explain how the formation of the patterns they construct.
- Learners need to develop the skill of translating words into number sentences which will assist them in how to tackle word problems
- Learners should be taught the language of probability.
- Learners should be able to describe the pattern, identify the rule and predict the next number in a sequence.
- Learners should be taught to build number patterns from small numbers with different operations and then progress to large numbers. More exposure to number patterns to identify and complete the needed sequence.

7.2 Measures

Question 19 (LENGTH)

**19.** A 120 metre rope is cut into $\dfrac{3}{4}$ metre lengths.

How many metre lengths will be cut from the rope?

A   160

B   90

C   44

D   10

Candidates had problems in dividing a whole number by a fraction. This is shown by them not being able to relate the word CUT INTO to the operation ($\div$) or they failed to find the reciprocal of ¾ which is 4/3 then multiply by the whole number.

Question 36 (AREA)

36. Calculate the area of the shape shown below.

5 cm

2 cm

3 cm

3 cm

10 cm

2 cm

3 cm
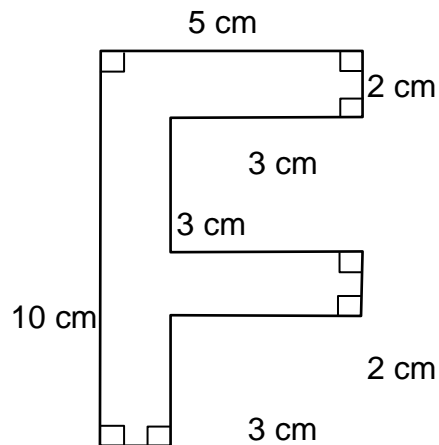
A   28

B   32

C   34

D   36

Candidates interpreted the question as of calculating the perimeter than area. Those who opted for A as the answer just added the given measurements, whilst those who had D as their answer had calculated the correct perimeter of the figure.

Question 37 (PERIMETER)

37. Calculate the perimeter of the shape shown below.

2 cm

6 cm

8 cm

1 cm
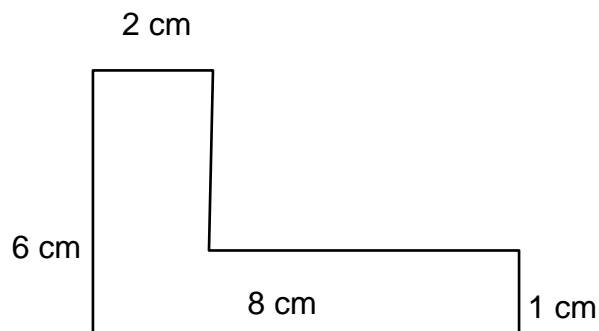
A   18

B   23

C   28

D   31

Candidates in this question instead calculated the area since its not complicated, they divided the area into two parts and calculated the area of the dimension 6 by 2 and 6 by 1 to have their answer as 18.

Question 39 (TIME DIFFERENCE)

39. The time in Brazil is 7 hours behind the time in Seychelles.
What will be the time in Seychelles when it is 8:30 pm in Brazil?

    A   3:30 pm
    B   1:30 pm
    C   3:30 am
    D   2:30 pm

Candidates failed to correctly interpret the time difference. They did not realise that they needed to add instead of subtract and failed to notice it was pm.

7.3 Geometry

This is an important skill that needs to be developed early. Beyond interacting with and handling concrete objects to learn about their environment, learners also need to develop ability to conceptualise and visualise aspects of 2-D figures represented on flat surfaces. The analysis shows that learners were noticeably deficient in solving problems that required one to mentally visualise possible changes that could be effected on figures. Question 34 which was about enlargement using a scale factor is a typical example of that as the candidates either lacked understanding of the underlying concept(conceptual understanding) or did not understand what the question required(problem of reading with comprehension). Each of these skills is important i.e conceptual understanding and ability to read with comprehension.

Proposed interventions

-   Demonstrations should be performed for learners to be able to internalize viewing an object from different positions.
-   Teachers should use visual aids
-   Learners should be provided with many diagrams in which they can identify shapes within shapes.
-   Spatial awareness of learners can be enhanced by using practical activities.

7.4   Numbers And Operations

Numbers and operations constitute an integral component of Mathematics. The content knowledge and skills that characterise these areas determine the extent to which learners will make success of their experiences in Mathematics. Candidates displayed some inadequacies in the basic knowledge and competencies that are required to achieve success in numbers and operations.

21. Which law of operation is shown below?

$2 \times (5 + 6) = (2 \times 5) + (2 \times 6)$

A	Associative
B	Commutative
C	Distributive
D	Identity element

Candidates cannot differentiate between three the laws of operation, i.e between Distributive, Associative and Commutative. With commutative the confusion may have been brought about by the brackets in $2 \times (5 + 6)$ and the three elements, and failed to notice that there are two operations in $2 \times (5 + 6)$.

Proposed interventions

- Practice makes perfect. Learners who are given practice in basic operations daily have a greater chance of performing better than those who so not
- Teachers should acknowledge that since Mathematics is an abstract subject, learners might find it difficult to understand, so great care should be taken therefore to teach Mathematics with concrete objects.
- There is need to train learners in basic counting in multiples. This skill is powerful for early understanding (internalization) of basic operations such as addition and multiplication.
- Teachers need to spend more time on area and volume/capacity examples with learners and teach them conversions. More practical examples will enhance the learning process e.g using concrete objects and thus showing the relationship between the instruments and units.
- Teachers should hang conversion formulae on the classroom walls to keep reminding learners of how to do different calculations.
- Learners should be encouraged to bring containers that are used daily at home so that the lessons become real.

Problem solving

Application of different techniques in solving problems is a critical skill not only for learning mathematics in school but more so in daily experiences throughout life. Basic concepts, such as fractions and percentages and their computations, need focused practice in the daily experiences in the teaching and learning situation.

Proposed interventions

- Problem solving skills should be context based to enable learners to do some calculations to show integration of the concepts and the real-life application thereof.
- The context must be relevant to the learner's daily experiences and later, be extended in order to stretch their own thinking skills and capabilities.

Skills learnt in earlier grades should be revised from time to time. These skills are essential to solve many questions. Teachers need to concentrate on those areas that are posing a challenge to learners like geometry to enhance other skills learned by learners.

Teachers should ensure that they expose learners to assessments that integrate all the modules. Learners must also be exposed to higher-order questions in class and in school-based assessment tasks.