BOTSWANA EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

PSLE

DIAGNOSTIC REPORT ON LEARNER PERFORMANCE

2021

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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 2021 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 2021 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. It is important that this report is read in conjunction with the 2021 question papers as specific reference is made to the tasks for the different syllabuses.

2.0 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 actually 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.

3.0 General Observations

The general performance of this year's candidates was slightly lower in comparison to that of the previous year in almost all the subjects but a lot more pronounced in Mathematics, Setswana and Social Studies. Unlike in the previous year where candidates accessed knowledge tasks with ease, this year performance at dimension level indicated that candidates had challenges even on tasks that required them to recall or remember some information for some of the syllabuses.The challenge was a lot more pronounced in Agriculture where a significant number of candidates were unable to reach the minimum level of performance required to attain the lowest grade in the knowledge dimension. The candidates continue to display serious weaknesses when expected to process the information and this was prevalent across almost all the syllabuses.

4.0   Overview of Learner Performance by Syllabus

This section summarizes the performance of learners in each dimension which is intended to give a hoilistic picture of candidate performance at syllabus level. It outlines the generic areas of good performance or weaknesses and also presents possible suggestions for improvement.

4.1 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.

4.1. 1 Setswana Component 1

The performance of candidates in this component was generally low in 2021 as compared to that of 2020. 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 areas that required identification of aspects relating to the appropriate use of capitalization, conjunctives, orthography, punctuation, sequencing of sentences, tense, report as well as cultural aspects which required them to identify relationships. This was indicated by the high P-values for the tasks under these topics which ranged between .60 and .80.

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 contextual meaning of different expressions, deducing meaning, making inferences and drawing conclusions based on a given text or situation where P-values ranged between .15 and .42.

In 2020, candidates were able to identify the poet's mood, use of poetic devices such as similes, personification and metaphor but this year most of them could not. The candidates were also challenged in tasks that required them to show an understanding of directions as well as interpretation of information presented in varying formats whilst in 2020 they handled such tasks with ease. This was indicated by the low P-values for the tasks under these topics which ranged between .34 and .40.

The difficulty in interacting with content was also evident in literary works especially the literature passage where they had to identify the theme, conflict, climax, character traits and main events that constitute the plot as these attributes required them to unravel the meaning of the text in order to be able to identify those literary aspects. Unlike in the previous year where outlining the plot and events in their causal sequence did not present any difficulty for them, candidates were challenged in these areas. In all these areas P- values ranged between .25 and .44 indicating that indeed the candidates were weak. This year, most of the candidates managed to identify the main character, setting and to give a reason why they dislike a particular character.

4.1.1.1 Suggestions for improvement

- ✓ Reading of texts for understanding requires emphasis on skills of reading such as skimming and scanning, reading in 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.

4.1.2 Setswana Component 2 –Composition & Letter Writing

Generally candidate's performance in this component this year, was slightly weaker than that of the previous year's cohort. Even though this year's candidates were slightly weaker in some areas, they displayed more or less the same strengths and weaknesses. It is worrisome to note that the same concerns that are raised yearly keep on recurring which could be an indication that the PE's report is not serving the intended purpose of informing the teaching and learning process.

At the commencement of the marking process, it was established that both the essay and letter writing topics were clear and accessible. Almost all candidates made an attempt to address the topics even though there were a few submissions of blank scripts. During the marking process some observations were made in relation to both composition and letter which, if taken into consideration during the teaching and learning processes, could assist the students in improving performance.

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.

All in all, the general performance of candidates in letter writing was far much better as compared to the performance in composition writing as has been observed across years.

4.1.2.1 Composition Writing

The composition for this year was titled **"Selô sa botlhôkwa se ke kileng ka se dirêlwa ke tsala ya me ke sa solofêla."** The essay topic required the candidate to create a story which would show what their friend did for them which came as a surprise. Candidates were expected to write the composition following the guidelines that were provided which are meant to focus the essay. It is very critical for candidates to identify the key terms of the topic so that they know where to focus. In composition writing, candidates are expected to showcase their communication, command of language and content management abilities. Observations made in relation to composition writing are outlined below:

4.1.2.1.1 Communication

Candidates are expected to display an understanding of the topic by providing information that is related to what the topic is all about. Under this section the candidates were expected to do the following:

- ✓ **State what their friend did specifically for them**

  Most of the candidates managed to state what their friend did which was meant specifically for them in the introductory paragraph which was indeed a positive development of setting the scene as expected. Unlike in the previous year, there was some re-surfacing of run-on sentences especially in the introduction.

- ✓ **Provide an in-depth explanation of the importance of their friend's gesture**

  Most candidates just mentioned the importance of what was done by their friend without elaborating on why they thought it was important which made them loose a mark. Candidates need to understand that when they state a main point in a composition especially in the body, they need to support it either by giving examples or in this situation by explaining why the gesture was indeed important. Supporting the main idea is very critical because it is a way of expanding the body of the composition leading to formation of proper coherent paragraphs.

- ✓ **Provide an explanation of why the gesture was unexpected**

  A lot of candidates could not explain why they did not expect such a gesture from a friend hence lost a mark for this criterion. As was mentioned in the previous year, it is very important for teachers to emphasize elaboration especially in the body of a composition as it is a critical skill in composition writing. The expectation is that candidates should be

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able to construct coherent paragraphs through expansion or elaboration of points. As in the previous years, elaboration continues to be a major challenge for most candidates and this is where most candidates lose marks. Candidates should be made aware that every main idea that they discuss within the body of the composition has to be elaborated on.

✓ **Creative writing**

Creativity continues to be a major challenge for the majority of candidates just like in the previous years. Candidates are expected to showcase some imaginary skills as well as skills to synthesize information to produce a coherent piece of writing. They are also expected to bring together the main attributes of the essay in order to produce a solid piece of writing that has coherence within and between paragraphs. This calls for usage of language in a skillful manner and thinking beyond the guidelines to ensure that the essay arouses the interest of the reader. Most candidates produced unexciting pieces of work where ideas are just put together without considering whether they are compatible. Therefore, they lost the mark because of lack of creativity.

4.1.2.1.2 Command of Language

Candidates are expected to display an understanding of the different components of the Setswana language and their appropriate usage. Under this section the following attributes are considered:

✓ **Capitalisation and Punctuation**

Generally most candidates continue to perform well in this area as in previous years. The only problem that seemed to recur year in and year out is the use of a conjunctive followed by a comma. There is need to understand that these two language components serve the same purpose hence should not be used at the same point. There are also instances where a comma was wrongly used.

An example of a sentence showing incorrect use of the comma is given below:
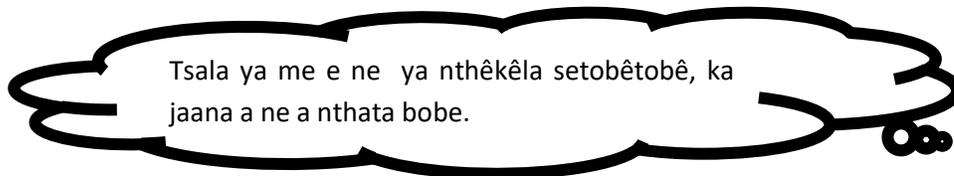
> Tsala ya me e ne ya nthêkêla setobêtobê, ka jaana a ne a nthata bobe.

An example of a sentence showing the correct use of the comma is given below:
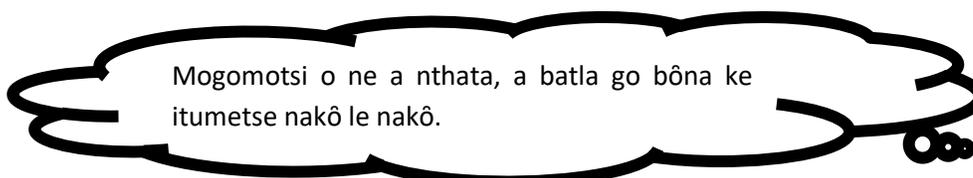
> Mogomotsi o ne a nthata, a batla go bôna ke itumetse nakô le nakô.

Candidates continue to disregard the use of other punctuation marks such as the exclamation mark. It is important to note that some of the punctuation marks are used to bring about a particular effect in essay writing.

- ✓ **Descriptive Vocabulary**

    Unlike in the previous year, this year the use of descriptive words and phrases was a challenge for most candidates. In a number of instances, there were used without taking the context into consideration. The candidates should be taught the importance of contextual meaning in communication. Words or phrases derive their meaning from the context, therefore it is important for the candidate to consider the meaning of every part of speech they use in a sentence. Examples of correct use of descriptive words or phrases is given below:
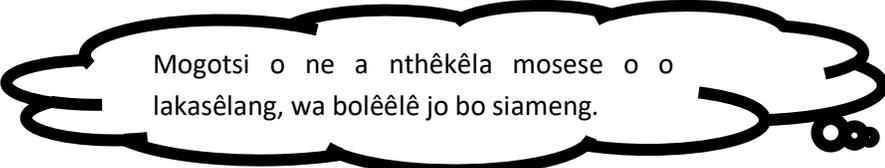
    > Mogotsi o ne a nthêkêla mosese o o lakasêlang, wa bolêêlê jo bo siameng.
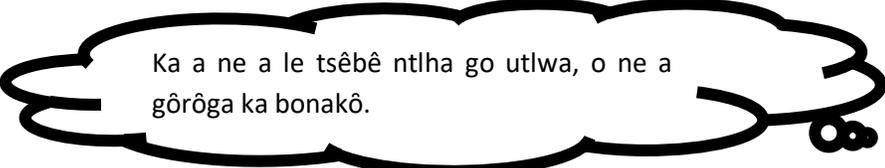
    > Ka a ne a le tsêbê ntlha go utlwa, o ne a gôrôga ka bonakô.

- ✓ **Figurative language**

    The use of figurative language remains a challenge for most of the candidates. Some of the candidates used figurative language in-appropriately hence lost some marks. Candidates should be encouraged to use different types of figurative language to make their writing a lot more interesting. What is worth noting is that figurative language is a very crucial aspect of essay writing as it enriches the ordinary language. A candidate who is able to use figurative language correctly usually produces an outstanding piece of writing. It is important to use different types of these language devices for example: proverbs, idioms, simile, metaphors and personification because such stylistic devices

are all meant to enrich the language. Learners should also be advised to avoid using abbreviated versions of proverbs.

Below is an example of a proverb used incorrectly:
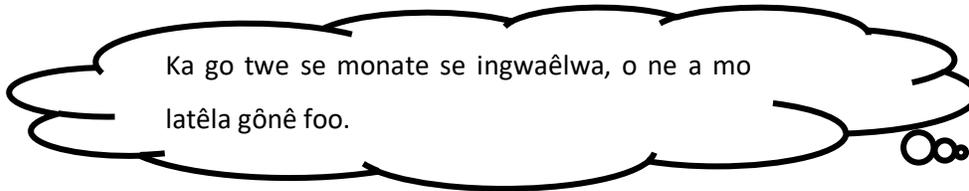
Ka go twe se monate se ingwaêlwa, o ne a mo latêla gônê foo.

✓ Below is an example of a proverb used correctly:
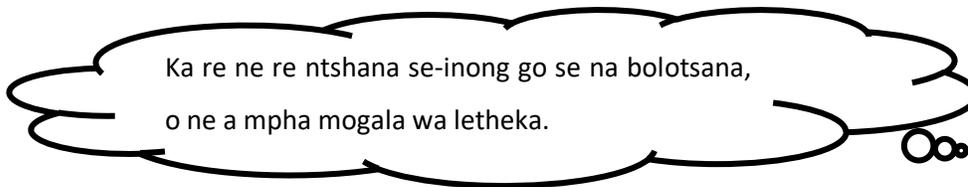
Ka re ne re ntshana se-inong go se na bolotsana, o ne a mpha mogala wa letheka.

✓ **Use of compound and complex sentences**

The use of complex sentence has improved however, that of the compound sentence continues to be a challenge. The use of multiple conjunctives in one sentence seems to be the major contributing factor towards the candidates' inability to construct compound sentences. Candidates are expected to use different types of sentences in their writing hence should be encouraged to use simple, compound and complex sentences.

A compound sentence has two independent clauses linked by a conjunctive. Below is an example of a compound sentence:
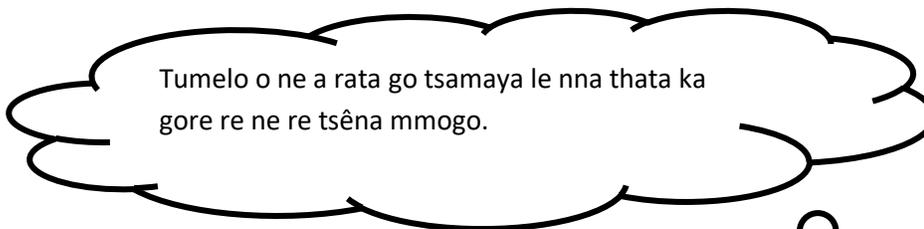
Tumelo o ne a rata go tsamaya le nna thata ka gore re ne re tsêna mmogo.

A complex sentence has one independent clause and one subordinate clause linked by a conjunctive. Below is an example of a complex sentence:
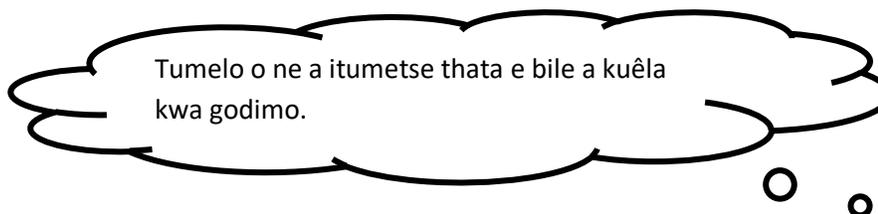
Tumelo o ne a itumetse thata e bile a kuêla kwa godimo.

4.1.2.1.3 Content Management

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

- ✓ **Coherence of ideas within a paragraph**

  There has been a slight improvement in paragraphing even though there are some candidates who still write run-on sentences to form paragraphs. What is worth noting is the fact that paragraphs have a format to be adhered to. The expectation is that each paragraph should have a topic sentence introducing the main idea. This should be followed by supporting sentences that are aimed at expanding the main idea. The candidates should be made aware that the body of a composition should consist of more than one paragraph. Even though there was some improvement in this area, a problem that is still prevalent is that of discussing several disjointed ideas in one paragraph hence introducing incoherence within paragraphs.

- ✓ **Introduction and conclusion**

  This year there seemed to be a slight decline in candidates'performance in introductions as reflected by the re-surfacing of run-on sentences. On the other hand, candidates continued presenting conclusions that showed a reflection on the subject matter or a summary of what was discussed in the body. However, there were a few candidates who attached their reflection or summary to the last paragraph of the body of the composition. The teachers should emphasize the importance of separating the conclusion from the body of the composition.

4.1.2.2 Letter Writing

Candidates were expected to write a letter to any of their parent informing them about issues that pertained at their new school that they disliked. They were expected to write an informal/friendly letter unlike in the previous year where they were required to write a formal letter. The expectation was that the letter format would be different. The format of the letter was indeed not a major challenge for most candidates. As mentioned earlier, the topic too did not pose any challenge in terms of its comprehension.

4.1.2.2.1 Content Management

This section focuses on the formatting of the address, the opening and closing salutations.

- The format of the address was not a major challenge for most candidates as they managed to present the single address according to the correct fomat. A few of those who lost the mark was a result of negligence where they used lower case instead of upper case for the address and punctuating where they were not supposed to use punctuation marks.
- The opening and closing salutation was also fairly done even though they were some candidates who addressed their parents using first names as if it is a friend. This showed disregard for the Setswana cultural expectations of resecting an elderly person which made them to lose a mark. Another challenge with both the opening and closing salutation was the incongruence between the two. Candidates should ensure that their opening and closing salutations are aligned.

4.1.2.2.2 Communication

Under this section the candidates are expected to show their understanding of the topic by:

- Stating the location of the school which almost all the candidates mentioned hence managed to get a mark.
- Explaining what they dislike about the school. Some candidates lost a mark because they did not elaborate but rather just listed things that they did not like at their school.
- Stating what could be done to improve those things that they dislike about their school. Majority of candidates managed to state what could be done to improve the situation hence got a mark.

4.1.2.2.3 Command of Language

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

- **Tense and correct register**

  There has been a significant improvement in the use of correct tense and register since 2019. Most candidates were able to use appropriate register, showing alertness to the fact that they were addressing their parents hence the need to show some respect and were able to get the allocated mark even though there were isolated cases of candidates who used words that were considered to be informal/incorrect register such as "bolelela & batla."

✓ **Spelling**

Some candidates still lose marks because of wrongly spelt words. There is need to advise them to proof-read/edit their work after writing to check for spelling mistakes. Some of the errors indicated that candidates did not go over their work after completion.

✓ **Orthography**

Candidates still have a problem of not knowing which words are written conjunctively and which ones are written disjunctively. There is need for candidates to be taught how to differentiate words through consideration of the utterance/pronunciation to establish how the word should be written. Particular attention should be devoted to the use of sounds: f/h/g, t/tl, th/tlh & le/lo.

✓ **Sentence opening**

There has been an improvement in the variation of sentence openings for years now. Candidates need to continue to be exposed to various sentence openings to eliminate monotony in their writing. They should also be taught to distinguish between [ke] as a subjectival concord and as 1st person singular because failure to do so is likely to affect candidates' ability to vary sentence openings. An example is given below:

> **Ke** kwala ke go itsese gore ke a go rata.
>
> **Ke** bone ba ba utswileng madi a moruti.
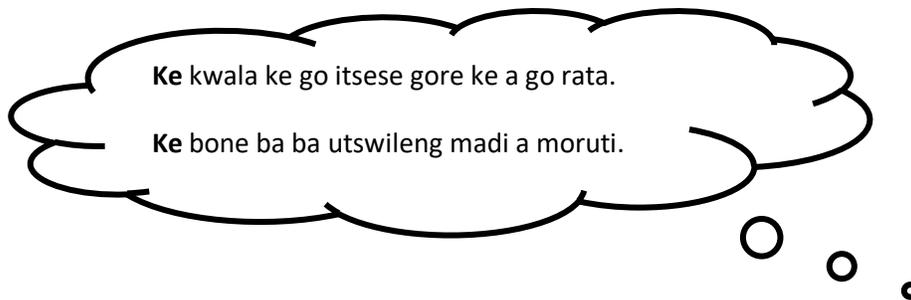
4.1.2.3 Suggestions for improvement

✓ As in the previous year, there has been an improvement in a number of areas but that should not be interpreted to imply mastery of those attributes, there is need to continue working on further improvement of those areas as practice makes perfect.

✓ The teaching and learning process should strive to address those areas that have been highlighted as candidates' weaknesses on the different aspects of both the composition and letter.

✓ Focusing on the issues highlighted in the report is likely to have a positive impact on the general performance of the learners.

4.2 Social Studies

The 2021 cohort was weak as compared to that of the previous year in both Dimensions 1 and 2. Unlike in the previous year where the candidates weaknesses were more pronounced in the Skills Dimension, this year some areas that required simple recall and understanding of information were a challenge to the candidates. The candidates continue to perform quite well where they were required to remember concepts in topic areas such as family, culture, migration, agriculture, mining and settlement patterns.

Within the Knowledge & Understanding Dimension as in the previous year, they still struggled on issues of historical nature such as issues relating to the colonial era and the origins of the different ethnic groups in Botswana. The candidates continue to display lack of knowledge on issues of governance such as identifying the roles of the different government ministries, human/individual rights, conflict resolutions and the use of referendum. They also lacked knowledge of the different economic activities taking place in different regions and zones of Botswana, issues of trade, tourism, conservation, energy and natural resources. This was reflected by low P-values on those tasks that emanated from those topic areas ranging between .10 and .40

The Skills Dimension proved to be a major challenge because candidates were expected to interpret scenarios, tables, charts, pictures and maps. These were tasks that required the candidate to apply what they had learnt in the different content areas. These being areas of population & environment especially, physical environment, the different climatic regions/zones and the different attributes under map-reading. In all these areas, the expectation was that the candidate had to showcase their interpretative, analytic and application skills to draw conclusions. The low performance in these areas could be an indication that the candidates had serious deficiencies when it comes to dealing with those tasks that require high order thinking skills.

To demonstrate high order thinking skills, the candidates were presented with scenarios to interpret, a table outlining characteristics of different climatic zones where they needed to relate the given information to the human activities found in that area and the type of clothing required for that climatic region. What was evident was that the candidates were unable to make logical connections for such tasks as expected and they ended up losing marks. Similarly where they were presented with a map to determine the distance, direction, location using lines of longitudes and latitude and calculation of time difference, the candidates lost marks because they lacked the necessary skills. Performance in these areas was quite low as evidenced by low P-values which ranged between .24 and .40 indicating that indeed the tasks were challenging to the candidates.

4.2.1.1 Suggestions for improvement

✓ Candidates should be accorded an opportunity to gain a clear understanding of the basic concepts in Social Studies to enable them to understand information presented in a variety of ways such as scenarios.

✓ Candidates should be exposed to the requirements that are similar to those of external examinations by including items that require high order skills during internal assessments at a school.

✓ Candidates should also be taught how to analyze and interrogate items especially stimulus ones in order to come up with a correct answer. They should be taught how to draw information from different sources.

✓ The interpretation of maps should be accorded a lot of practice and done in detail because it is a major skill across Social Science subjects.

4.3 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.

4.3.1 English Component 1

This year, dimensions for English have been re-configured, such that a dimension is a component on its own – that is paper 1 is Dimension 1 and has been renamed Comprehension & Language Use, while component 2 is Dimension 2 renamed 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 who sat for the 2021 examination was generally fair. For instance p-values for Dimension 1(Comprehension & Language Use) tasks ranged between 0.27 and 0.90, with majority of them on the upper side of the scale indicating they were handled quite well. Tasks in this dimension were mainly based on two passages used as stimulus. Over and above answering factual questions based on the passages, candidates also had to demonstrate good understanding of the language by forming their own opinion about the characters in the stories and explaining events in their own words. These were generally handled well. For instance the

p-values for the tasks that emanated from the two passages in the paper ranged from 0.32 to 0.85, 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 English language such as punctuation, dictionary use, sequencing sentences to make logical stories, correct use of tense, poetry skills and ability to show awareness of the difference between spoken and written language etc. On the whole these were handled well with a few exceptions.

However, it also emerged that candidates struggled in some areas. For instance this year they did not perform that well in questions that required them to show a bit of reasoning instead of just picking the answer directly from the source, for example questions like: What is the meaning of this word as used in the passage or what do you think..?. These are questions that require them to infer meanings of words from the way they are used i.e. contextual meanings or come up with their own opinions. Not many were handling these well. They also struggled with tasks based on the use of the dictionary. In fact both questions that were asked in relation to dictionary use were performed badly.

Items with the lowest p-values (0.25 – 0.40) as well as their topic areas are shown in the table below and these areas seems to be a challenge across years.

Item number	p-value	Topic Area
9	0.27	Dictionary use
10	0.37	Dictionary use
21	0.32	Passages: inferring word meanings
22	0.40	Passages: inferring word meanings
23	0.38	Reported speech
24	0.26	Reported speech

4.3.1.1 Suggestions for improvement

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

4.3.2 English Component 2 – Composition & Letter Writing

Generally candidates' performance this year was not much different from that of the previous year. There are areas that still need to be addressed by the instructional processes. It is worth stating that some of the weaknesses pointed out previously are still evident in the responses of the current candidature.   This could be an indication that some of the issues that were raised in the previous report were not taken into consideration during the teaching and learning process which then impacted on the learning outcomes. There is need to underscore the importance of putting into practice recommendations in this report as this will contribute towards an improved performance of learners.

At the beginning of the marking process, it was established that both the essay and letter writing topics were clear and accessible. The expectation therefore, was that almost all candidates would have something to write about within the bounds of their academic abilities. As per expectation, almost all candidates attempted to address the topics except those whose writing skills are extremely limited.   However, creativity continues to pose a major challenge in both the composition and letter writing tasks. It is therefore vital that candidates are guided on the skill of creative writing, especially the key one that demands building a story by substantiating and elaborating on ideas.

The other issue of concern is hand-writing. It is important for learners to write neatly and legibly, including the shaping of letters to try and differentiate capital letters and small letters. Candidates continue to produce writing which is not easily legible. Candidates have to be made aware of the fact that poor hand-writing impedes the comprehensiveness of a piece of work. Some candidates wrote in very small letters and others cluttered many words in a line as was observed with the previous year's cohort. The advice is to make the learners recognize the value of planning in advance as to what they are going to write about.

All in all, the general performance of candidates in letter writing was far much better as compared to the performance in composition writing as has been observed from previous years.

4.3.2.1 Composition Writing

The composition topic this year was "**_The day I got into trouble_**". Just like in the previous year, this year's topic was fairly accessible and candidates handled it with reasonable ease. For instance, most of the candidates were able to state when and where they got into trouble and how they felt about what happened. Only a few candidates who seem to have serious scarcity of active

vocabulary did not manage to access the topic and could not even articulate clearly how they got into trouble. The observations made in relation to composition writing are laid forth under each profile below:

4.3.2.1.1 Communication

In simple terms, communication could be understood as a two way process that involves encoding (creating messages you want to communicate with others) and decoding(interpretation of messages by the recipient). Therefore, under this section, candidates were expected to explicitly communicate to the reader about the given topic. This was guided by the following guidelines:

- ✓ **Stating when and where they got into trouble.**
  Most of the candidates clearly stated when and where they got into trouble hence setting the scene for the rest of the composition.

- ✓ **Explanation of how they got into trouble.**
  Candidates were able to state how they got into trouble. However, the main challenge for some of them was to distinguish between danger and trouble. They also failed in substantiating the key idea, thus failing to put flesh on the main points to demonstrate their understanding of the topic.

- ✓ **Stating the results of their actions**
  Some of the candidates who ran short of active vocabulary only stated the results and failed to elaborate on their submissions. Nonetheless, high achieving candidates took the opportunity to showcase their creativity by portraying brilliantly what the trouble escalated into.

- ✓ **Stating how they felt at the end**
  As if it is a norm, most candidates are still struggling with the expansion of ideas. In this case, they stated their feelings without elaborating further. However, a number of high achieving candidates gave sound descriptions of how they felt at the end of the trouble.

- ✓ **Creativity and originality**
  The composition topic demanded a high level of creativity. Candidates were expected to coin their own stories which could be based on personal experiences or a work of fiction and sustain the attention of the reader. Unfortunately, only a few candidates managed

to do that. Creativity remains the major challenge for most of the candidates in composition writing in that a lot of them still continue to respond to guidelines as if they were just questions instead of using them as a guide in 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, candidates employed these structures out of context. Therefore more practice on the use of these is required.

4.3.2.1.2 Command of Language

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

- ✓ **Descriptive vocabulary should be used correctly**

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

  Where, when, how- be it:
  - ✓ **Similes**
  - ✓ **Metaphors**
  - ✓ **Adjectives**
  - ✓ **Adverbs**

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

- ✓ **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.

  There is therefore a need for teachers to reiterate instances in which a comma can be used. For example:
  - ✓ to separate words and word groups in a simple series of three or more items. e.g. sugar, milk and tea;

- ✓ to separate a statement from a question e.g. grandma is sleeping, isn't she?
- ✓ When starting a sentence with a dependent [clause](#). e.g. Because he was late for the lesson, Tom was asked to clean the classroom.

However, the same cannot be reported about capitalization since some of the candidates seem to be challenged by differentiation between capital and small letters. It is important for candidates to be aware of when to use capital or small letters within their writing instead of employing them haphazardly as was the case. There is need for them to note that capitalization is required in the following instances:

- ✓ For the first word in a sentence: e.g. Today it is very hot.
- ✓ For the pronoun "I." e.g. Last night I watched a football game.
- ✓ For **proper nouns**: i.e. names of specific people, places, organizations, and sometimes things. E.g. Botswana, Gaborone, SADC
- ✓ For **family relationships** when used as **proper nouns e.g**. Are you coming with us, Grandpa?
- ✓ For titles that come before names, e.g. Mrs, 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.

- ✓ **Varied sentence openings**

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

4.3.2.1.3 Content Management

In this section, candidates were 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:

✓ **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 within the paragraph. In some instances, supporting sentences brought in new ideas and this hampered fluency.

✓ **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 summarizing the general ideas in the composition.

4.3.2.2 Letter Writing

This year, candidates were asked to write a letter to either their father or mother telling them about an event in which they will be receiving a prize. This was an informal letter and therefore the expectation was that it should reflect informality and comply with all the conventions for informal letter writing. The topic was accessible as it was about them communicating with their father or mother in an informal or relaxed tone. It is impressing that most of the candidates did not miss the fact that the topic required them to write an informal letter. Even though candidates' performance showed an improvement, certain areas were amiss, especially the expansion of ideas. The following were the aspects that guided the letter writing:

4.3.2.2.1 Layout
This aspect was assessed by looking at the following:

✓ **Address and Date**

There is a great improvement in the layout of the address as per the convention. Candidates presented both the date and address correctly for the type of letter(informal) they were writing.

✓ **Opening and Closing salutations**

Some candidates had challenges with the opening and closing salutations. Under the opening salutation, it was evident that some learners did not differentiate between dear mother/father and dear parent. The instruction was for them to write to one of the two but

some opted to address "dear parent," others indicated titles e.g. "Dear mother Tshepo" as if they have two or more mothers and they were selecting this particular one to write to. Furthermore, some candidates wrote things like "Dear Thabo" - which does not give a distinction between one writing to a friend and to a parent and it shows a sign of disrespect. The expectation was that candidates should address the letter as either 'Dear Father or Dear Mother."

The closing salutation should always match with the opening salutation meaning that if a candidate had said "Dear Father," they should conclude with something like: Your daughter/ son so and so. There was still some who wrote 'yours faithfully or sincerely' in their closing salutations. There is need to place more practice on the format of the different letters during the teaching and learning process.

4.3.2.2.2 Communication

This section demanded that candidates display their understanding of the topic and communicate clearly to the readers guided by the following guidelines:

✓ **Stating where and when you were told about the prize.**
This guideline asked candidates to state when and where they were told about the fact that they were going to be receiving a prize. Most candidates did not pay attention to the last part of the guideline. They addressed it as if it required them to mention where and when the prize was going to be presented. It is therefore significant to mention that teachers should put emphasis on the importance of conceptualization of the guideline before writing.

✓ **Explain how the prize is going to be presented to them**.
A sizeable proportion of the candidature just mentioned how the prize was going to be presented but they lacked on the expansion and explicit description. They could have beefed up their answers by stating things like there was going to be an event at some place and a special guest would be presenting the prizes etc.

✓ **Explain how receiving the prize is important to you**
Most candidates struggled to clearly articulate the importance of the prize given to them. They briefly answered the guidelines without substantiating their main ideas. This section wanted candidates to state how receiving the prize was important to them and so

expected responses included the fact that it served as proof to them and their classmates that 'hard work pays' or that it presented an opportunity for them to make their families/school/teachers proud, or that it opened an opportunity for further education at a school they always wanted to go to etc. Responses like it is important because 'I like gifts' were some of the responses given which showed that candidates did not grasp the demand of the guideline.

✓ **Correct tone of an informal letter**
Under this guideline, candidates interpreted this letter correctly hence the correct tone for an informal letter was applied appropriately.

4.3.2.2.3 Command Of Language

Candidates were expected to display mastery of different aspects of language such as spelling, tense and variation of sentence structure. Majority of the candidates were found wanting in this area. Only the high flyers did well here.

✓ **Variation of Sentence Structure**
Candidates were expected to vary sentences within the letter. Most candidates used simple and compound sentences while only a few used complex sentences in the letter. It would be helpful if candidates practised the use of all types of sentences in their daily speech and writing because this is one area where candidates were generally challenged. Examples of sentence types are given below:

Simple Sentence
A **simple sentence** is a **sentence** that consists of just one independent clause. A **simple sentence** has no dependent clause. (An independent clause, unlike a dependent clause can stand alone as a **sentence**.)
Example 1. 1

Mr Diteko bought a red car.

*Mr D*iteko" = subject, "bought" = verb

Compound Sentence

Compound sentence refers to a sentence made up of two independent clauses (or complete sentences) connected to one another with a **co-ordinating conjunction**. Coordinating conjunctions are easy to remember if you think of the words "FAN BOYS":

- **F**or
- **A**nd
- **N**or
- **B**ut
- **O**r
- **Y**et
- **S**o

Examples of **compound sentences** include the following:

1. *Naledi waited for the bus, **but** the bus did not come.*

2. *It was so hot, yet he kept his jacket on*

Complex Sentence

A **complex sentence** is made up of an independent clause and one or more **dependent clauses** connected to it. A dependent clause is similar to an independent clause, or complete sentence, but it lacks one of the elements that would make it a complete sentence.

Examples of **dependent clauses** include the following

- **because** Stacy and Resego arrived at the bus station before noon….

- **while** he waited at the train station…..

- **after** they left on the bus……

Dependent clauses such as those above **cannot** stand alone as sentences, but they can be added to an independent clause to form a complex sentence.

Dependent clauses begin with **subordinating conjunctions**. Below are some of the most common subordinating conjunctions:

- after
- although
- as
- because
- before
- even though
- if
- since
- though
- unless
- until
- when
- whenever
- whereas
- wherever
- while
- A complex sentence joins an independent clause with one or more dependent clauses.

Examples of **complex sentences**:

She took back the meat after she noticed it was rotten.

The visit to the museum was exciting, as I expected.

- ✓ **Spelling**
  Candidates showed some improvement in this area. Certainly there were those who indicated that they 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.

✓ **Correct use of tense**

Candidates were able to use the correct tense that was demanded by the topic area with a few exceptions.

✓ **Correct use of conjunctions**

Most candidates demonstrated that they had knowledge of conjunctions. The main challenge was on 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 derailing the message. An effort should be made therefore to get candidates to understand which conjunctions are used when and how.

Examples of conjunctions

Coordinating Conjunctions	Subordinating Conjunctions
•	•
• **F**or • **A**nd • **N**or • **B**ut • **O**r • **Y**et • **S**o	• After • although • as • because • before • even though • if • since • though • unless • until • when • whenever • whereas • wherever • while

4.3.2.3 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 which would broaden candidates' vocabulary base. For instance, candidates should be encouraged to read for fun i.e. pick materials on topics that interest them such as their favorite animals, sport celebrities, music icons, movie stars, etc. 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 an improvement on sentence structure.

4.4   Mathematics

In general, the paper was fairly accessible to the candidates in both Dimensions: Computation (D1) and Application and Reasoning (D2). There were some areas which seemed to have posed challenges for the candidates and those are the ones discussed in this section. This are areas where candidates demonstrated either lack of or inadequate understanding of Mathematical concepts.

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**,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15, 23,	16,17,18,19,20,21,22,58,59
Geometry	24,25,26,27,28,29,32,34,35,36,	30,31,37,38,39,40,41,42,43,44,45
Measures	33	
Statistics	50,51	47,48,49,57
Algebra	56	**52** 53,54,55
Problem Solving		46,60

4.4.1 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. An example is Question 7 of which they were to express cm^3 in millilitres.

Question 7
What is 100 cm^3 when expressed in millimetres (ml)?
A 100 ml

B 1000 ml

C 10 000 ml

 D 100 000 ml

In the example above candidates were expected to select Option A but the majority of them selected Option D. They probably thought 1cubic centimetre is equal to 100 milliilitres. They could have confused 1litre = 1000ml. Measurement is a crucial scientific but cross cutting skill that candidates need to acquire and continuously perfect as they progress from standard to standard. A standard 7 candidate should be able to identify and work with basic units of measurement that are appropriate for specific uses. The analysis showed that a number of candidates did not have sufficient conceptualisation of measurement, and could neither identify appropriate units. On average candidates did access a number of the items under this topic.

4.4.1.1 Suggestions for improvement

- ✓ Practice makes perfect. Learners who are given practice in basic operations daily have a greater chance of performing better than those who do not.
- ✓ Teachers should acknowledge that since Mathematics is an abstract subject, learners might find it difficult to understand, so great care should be taken 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.

4.4.2 Geometry

The item analysis showed 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). 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. Each of these skills is important i.e conceptual understanding and ability to read with comprehension.

4.4.2.1 Suggestions for improvement

- ✓ 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**.**

4.4.3 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.

Probability is one of the most misunderstood concepts by learners, both the definition of what probability means and the related calculations are very much misunderstood by most learners. A typical example of the low performance is shown in question 52 which was on probability.

Question 52

The probability that it rains on any day in a certain village $\frac{3}{10}$.

What is the probability that it does **not** rain in that village?

A $\frac{1}{10}$

B $\frac{1}{2}$

C $\frac{5}{10}$

D $\frac{7}{10}$

Candidates were expected to select Option D but the majority selected Option A. It must be acknowledged that probability is an abstract concept so the candidates could be confusing the principle that probability is between 0 and 1 as well as the over 10 from the stem. From the example it is evident that candidates lack basic understanding of important concept regarding probability.

4.4.3.1 Suggestions for improvement

- ✓ 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 to explain the formation of the patterns they construct.
- ✓ Learners need to develop the skill of translating words into number sentences which will assist them on 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.

4.4.4 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.

4.4.4.1 Suggestions for improvement

- ✓ 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 tasks that require an engagement of high-order thinking skills during school-based assessment.

4.5 Science

Science at Standard 7 is examined through 60 Multiple Choice questions only. This year the dimensions have been re- assigned into two dimensions instead of the usual three as in the past: The new dimensions are Knowledge & Understanding (D1) and Application (D2).In Dimension 1, candidates are required to remember/recall scientific concepts and facts whilst also showing a good understanding of the concepts and relationships. Dimension 2 on the other hand demands a lot more from the candidates in that they have to display an ability to apply their knowledge & understanding of scientific concepts and facts to new situations, use information to identify patterns/trends, draw conclusions, process and represent information in various forms.

On the whole, candidates' performance this year was not that much different from that of the previous year. The p-values for the tasks in Dimension 1 ranged from 0.29 to 0.88, with more than half of the questions in this dimension (27 out of 40) having p-values of 0.5 and above. This indicated that 27 of the 40 Dimension 1 items were answered correctly by more than 50% of the

candidates, suggesting that Knowledge & Understanding tasks were found to be accessible by most candidates. The same cannot be said for Dimension 2 which consisted of 20 items and out of those, only 8 had p-values of 0.5 and above. This indicated that candidates were struggling when they were expected to showcase high order thinking skills. This same picture was observed in the previous year, suggesting that candidates have a serious challenge when they are required to use the learnt content in new situations.

On the whole, the candidates managed the recall and understanding tasks quite well while the application tasks were a major challenge. Most questions in the paper came from 2 content domains: Nature & the Universe 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.

Items with lowest p-values

Item number	p-value	Topic area
2	0.29	Matter & Energy
9	0.23	Nature & the Universe
14	0.40	Electricity & Magnetism
17	0.26	Nature & the Universe
18	0.34	Nature & the Universe
20	0.37	Matter & Energy
25	0.39	Nature & the Universe
27	0.30	Body Systems
32	0.30	Electricity & Magnetism
37	0.10	Science & Society
45	0.39	Electricity & Magnetism
49	0.37	Health & Society
54	0.33	Force & Motion

4.5.1.1 Suggestions fo 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 papers etc. individually, in pairs and in groups.
- ✓ Topics indicated above should be given more attention.

4.6 Religious and Moral Education

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

4.6.1 Knowledge Dimension

Knowledge Dimension had 31 items and 16 of these items were easily accessed by 60 percent and above of the whole population of candidates. Most of these easily accessed items were based on Christianity, Islam and African Tradition Religion.   Candidates' also easily accessed stimulus based items on the same Dimension; they interrogated the stimulus and managed to deduce correct responses.

4.6.1.1 Christianity

As mentioned earlier, candidates easily accessed items based on Christianity but failed to describe the Christian festivals such as Good Friday and Pentecost. These were simple items like ''which religious celebration marks the death of Jesus and which festival is associated with the Holy Spirit in Christianity? The only celebration that candidates seemed to know very well was Christmas which marks the birth of Jesus Christ. This shows that there is need for teachers to emphasize all the Christian festivals and their significance during the teaching and learning process.

Candidates also failed to identify the Fish symbol which is used by some Christian denominations. Candidates mostly know and associate only the Cross with Christianity. There is need for teachers to highlight to candidates all the different symbols used by the different denominations in Christianity.

Candidates also managed stimulus based items in Christianity from the Knowledge Dimension with ease. From given scenarios candidates were able to deduce Christian ethical code under discussion. This showed that they knew the ethical codes well. However, candidates failed to

deduce meaning from given bible verses. For example, from a given verse "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come," candidates failed to deduce that such a verse showed that the followers of Christianity regard Supreme Being as a father and as holy. This reflected that candidates were unable to comprehend and infer meaning from such bible verses.

4.6.1.2 Islam

Most candidates easily accessed items based on Islam. Majority of candidates had basic knowledge about the religion such as its founder and that the Supreme Being is referred to as Allah.

4.6.1.3 African Traditional Religion (ATR)

Candidates easily managed items based on ATR as they displayed basic knowledge of the proverbs, idioms, myths and rituals practised in ATR. They displayed knowledge of the meaning of the proverbs such as "monna thotse o a nama" and its implications to the family, both positives and negatives.

4.6.1.4 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 failure to identify the symbols, the festivals and practices in these religions.

4.6.1.5 Moral issues

 Morality items on the Knowledge Dimension were easily accessed. Most candidates were able to describe the 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.

4.6.2 Understanding Dimension

4.6.2.1 Religions

The Understanding Dimension had 29 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.

4.6.2.2 Moral Issues

The candidates failed to explain the moral concepts well. Most of the items on Morality were stimulus based and the candidates failed to interpret and infer conclusions. For example, using the scenario " Zonzo and Larona have been arguing for a long time. Larona did not give Zonzo a chance to talk," candidates were asked "which of the following skills does Larona need to improve?" The candidates failed this item because they could not deduce from the scenario that Larona needs to learn listening skills.

4.6.2.3 Suggestions for improvement

- ✓ Teachers should emphasize all the Christian festivals, when they are celebrated and their significance.
- ✓ There is need for teachers to highlight to candidates all the different symbols used by the different denominations in Christianity.
- ✓ Emphasis should be placed on morality concepts. A glossary of these concepts together with their alternatives should be given to candidates. This would help improve their understanding of these concepts.
- ✓ Teachers should strive to teach moral concepts using scenarios to make them more authentic. This is likely to enhance candidates understanding of the concepts. If concepts are mastered then the candidates would be able to interpret the given scenarios and infer relevant conclusions.
- ✓ 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.

4.7   Agriculture

Generally, this year's candidates displayed a similar performance when compared to the previous cohort of 2020. Unlike in the previous year, the 2021 cohort had a challenge in accessing some

of the tasks in the Knowledge Dimension. The Agriculture paper has to sections as outlined below.

Section A which has a total of 20 marks was satisfactorily accessed by most candidates. Most of the items in this section required candidates to supply short responses and they did well.

Section B has a total of 40 marks. All the items in this section are stimulus based. Some items required candidates to give short responses while other items required candidates to write long responses. Similarly, as observed in section A, candidates managed well those items that required short responses but faced a serious challenge in attempting items that required long responses.

In addition, some items in Section B had follow up items. Follow up items required candidates to provide evidence to support their given responses and majority of the candidates failed such sequenced items. They failed to give evidence in support of their responses. The evidence required is usually embedded in the stimulus material; therefore, this is an indication that the candidates failed to interrogate the stimulus in addressing follow up questions. This is an essential skill that they need to acquire during the teaching and learning process.

Generally, the majority of candidates continue to be challenged by those tasks that require high order thinking skills. Most of these high order thinking skills items were stimulus based and majority of candidates failed to interrogate the stimulus in order to infer correct responses.

4.7.1 Section A

Question 1

Majority of the candidates accessed maximum marks for the item. They were able to name the tool and stated its use well.

Question 2

The item was well performed by the majority of the candidates. They were able to list field crops grown in Botswana.

Question 3

The item was well performed by the majority of the candidates. They were able to give breeds of goats but only a few candidates confused the breeds of goats and sheep.

Question 4

Majority of the candidates were not able to access the two marks as they failed to describe the process of weathering in relation to the diagram given. They described weathering in general terms hence scoring only one mark. This is a clear indication that they failed to follow the instruction given that they should use the diagram to answer question 4. It's worth noting that candidates should be encouraged to read instructions before attempting to respond to items.

Question 5

    (a) The item was fairly attempted however some candidates gave the name of the parasite instead of the type. This shows that candidates did not read the item with understanding.

    (b) The item was well performed by majority of candidates. They knew very well how to control internal parasites.

Question 6

The item was well performed as most candidates correctly named two diseases that affect cattle.

Question 7

    (a) The item was well performed by majority of the candidates. They were able to study the two pictures and deduce a correct response for the item.

    (b) The item was fairly performed. Some candidates lost a mark because of using negative statement like, the chicken will not be eaten by predators. This negative responding does not communicate the relevant response well. Candidates should have responded that "they are protected from predators" instead of "they will not be eaten by predators."

Question 8

    (a) Most candidates performed well in this item. They correctly named the type of farming described.

    (b) The item was fairly performed by candidates. Most candidates gave responses on how the farmer benefits from the type of farming instead of the advantages of mixed farming.

Question 9

The item was fairly attempted. Most candidates gave "lack of sunlight'' as a reason for seeds failing to germinate. This shows that candidates do not know the factors needed for seeds to geminate. Seeds require only moisture and air to geminate whereas sunlight is needed by plants to photosynthesize.

Question 10

The item was fairly attempted. Candidates managed to give one reason for carrying out the management activity. Most candidates explained the process of drying instead of giving reasons for drying maize and they lost marks. This is an indication that candidates do not read questions with understanding.

4.7.2 Section B

Question 11

 (a) The item was well performed. Most candidates named the types of soil shown. They were able to easily identify the types of soil by observing the arrangement of soil particles.

 (b) The item was fairly attempted. The candidates failed to identify the soil that is good for plant growth by using the arrangement of the soil particles.

 (c) The item was fairly done. This is follow up question to (b) and those candidates who did not manage to get a score in (b) could not get a score in (c).

Question 12

 (a) Majority of candidates performed well on this item. They named the management activity well.

 (b) The item was fairly attempted as most candidates accessed only one mark. They gave responses to how the management activity would affect the goat instead of how it benefits the farmer. They gave responses like "the animal will grow fat" and "they will stop mating". Another popular response was "to reduce breeding". This is wrong and teachers need to emphasize to leaners that castration does not reduce breeding but controls or eliminates breeding. This item also clearly indicates that candidates did not read with understanding. They just rushed over the item and gave wrong responses.

 (c) Majority of candidates accessed only one mark. They managed to name the tool used for castration. Some candidates gave rubber band in their response. Teachers need to make it clear to learners that rubber ring is used for castration, not rubber band.

Question 13

(a) Majority of candidates accessed maximum marks on this item. They were able to state the factor that the farmer did not consider when selecting a garden site. The candidates understood the stimulus well and were able to deduce a correct response.

(b) The item was well done, most candidates accessed maximum marks. They knew very well the disadvantages of growing crops on a steep slope.

(c) The item was well attempted. Some candidates gave a factor but failed to explain it fully.

Question 14

(a) Most candidates performed well in this item as they were able to correctly name the management activity shown in the picture. A few lost a mark due to wrong wording as they wrote stalking. The correct response is staking but unfortunately candidates who wrote stalking lost marks as this gives a totally different meaning.

(b) The item was fairly attempted. Most candidates gave general benefits of staking and were not specific to the plant, which was what the item required. For example, they gave responses like "it makes it easier to harvest," and this is a benefit to the farmer but not to the plant. When addressing benefits of the management activities emphasis should be clearly made that these activities do benefit both the plant and the farmer differently.

(c) This item was well attempted. Candidates gave examples of vegetables that need to be staked.

Question 15

(a) The item was fairly attempted. Some candidates failed to sort the information into production and financial record as they placed all the information in one box.

(b) The item was well done. A few who lost a mark gave ''making profit'' as a benefit to Mrs Maku.

(c) The item was fairly attempted and some candidates gave government programs as responses instead of how the government helps farmers.

Question 16

    (a) Majority of the candidates got the item correct. Candidates were able to name the type of fertilizer.

    (b) The item was fairly attempted. Some candidates gave materials like wood and manure as materials used in making compost and they lost marks.

    (c) It was well performed. Candidates gave the other type of fertilizer.

Question 17

    (a) Majority of the candidates got the item correct. They were able to name the type of biotechnology.

    (b) The item was poorly performed. Most candidates were not able to describe the biotechnology used in the stimulus.

    (c) Most candidates performed well. Emphasis should be made to candidates that some foods like fish are preserved by freezing them not just refrigeration.

Question 18

    (a) Majority of the candidates accessed the mark by accurately naming the activity carried out on the calf.

    (b) The item was fairly attempted as most candidates managed to mention at least two points of how disbudding benefits a farmer.

    (c) Majority of candidates accessed a mark by stating the tool used for carrying out disbudding. A few candidates lost a mark by naming the tool as dehorner and hot iron.

4.7.2.1 Suggestions for improvement

✓ Teachers should encourage candidates to read instructions before attempting to respond to items.

✓ There is need to highlight to candidates that responding to items using negatives is not allowed. Candidates should respond positively to items.

✓ Learners should be encouraged to read questions and understand them before giving responses. Some responses do show that candidates did not read for understanding, they rushed through the item and gave wrong responses as highlighted in items 10, 12(b) and 14 (a).

✓ Teachers need to emphasize the different benefits of management practices in farming. These management practices would benefit the farmer, the soil, the crops and the animals differently.

5.0 Conclusion

✓ What is evident across syllabuses is that the teaching and learning process is focused more on lower cognitive demands at the detriment of the higher cognitive demands. This is likely to encourage rote learning of concepts at the expense of skills development for the learners. Lower cognitive demands in every syllabus should be used as a foundational stage for the development of higher thinking skills which are key to any 21st century learner.

✓ There is a recognizable improvement in some of the syllabuses such as English and Mathematics but there is still room for improvement.

✓ Schools should ensure that preparation for Standard Seven learners for PSLE is all rounded in terms of coverage of the content and skill areas.

✓ It is hoped that all the relevant structures will make full use of this report in planning interventions for 2022.

✓ Utilization of the report is likely to improve the quality and relevance of the interventions and ultimately impact on the teaching and learning outcomes.