

Performance of the Government Schools in which the number of students relatively minimised



Report No.PER/A/SH/2018/01



National Audit Office

Performance Audit Division



Contents

	Description	Page No.
01.	Executive Summary	3
02.	Introduction	4
	2.1 Background	4
	2.2 Basic Information related to government schools in Sri Lanka	5
	2.3 Authority for Audit	8
	2.4 Reason for choosing the topic for audit	8
	2.5 Scope of Audit	8
	2.6 Audit Approach	9
	2.7 Audit Objectives and criteria	9
3.	Audit observations and detailed discussion	10
	3.1 Establishment of new schools	10
	3.2 Closure of schools	17
	3.3 Performance of schools which have less than 200 students	18
	3.4 Admittance of students to grade I	28
	3.5 Various projects implemented for the upliftment of schools	30
4.	Recommendations	37

Executive Summary

Since the commencement of missionary schools by the British, in addition to the missionary schools, Sinhala Buddhist School and Subsequently, Muslim and Hindu Schools came into existence. At present, schools have been administratively divided as National Schools and Provincial Schools and in addition, private schools and international schools have been added to that network. The foremost desire of the parents in Sri Lanka is to get a better school for their children.

The number of schools needs to be determined in terms of the population density of the country. As the students come to some schools for education outside their relevant areas in accordance with the popularity of schools; the number of school children in schools in the country has expanded as imbalance. Moreover, of the total number of schools amounting to Rs.10,194, the half of it, amounting to 5,161 schools have less than 200 students, the matter for which more attention needs to be paid. Reasons identified for the existence of schools which have lesser number of students include, parents do not like to send their children to small schools, teachers dislike to teach in small schools, the existence of more developed schools nearby, existence of isolated villages etc. In addition, other issues observed in audit include, since the commencement of new schools in contrary to the criteria introduced by the Ministry of Education, causing the closure of other schools situated nearby, even though related criteria to close the schools are in existence, action has not been taken to close those schools and allowed to be a closable condition, a tedious attempt has to be made by the principals and teachers of those schools to stop closing of such schools, it could not be expected to show improved examination results, under- utilization of a large extent of land areas and buildings, other physical and human resources, existence of excess teachers in certain schools, lack of modern physical resources etc. As such the government has to incur an extensive maintenance cost.

In order to minimise those issues, various physical resources have been given to schools through varied projects and “Nearest school is the best school” project which is a special project implemented recently to achieve this objective. The main objective of the preparation of this report is to discuss the reasons why the schools with lesser number of students come into existence comparatively and causes effected to uplift those schools. This report also discusses the opportunities available for parents to admit their children to a better school, as intended by them having being minimised the imbalance between schools, in developing such

schools and the capability of improving the quality of education of those schools. Development of schools in a manner that changes the view points of parents in respect of the admission of their children to schools, opening and closing of schools, integration, officers are responsible to adhere to the instruction manual in respect of school structures, monitoring the implementation of transfer orders, when teachers and principals are transferred to unpopular schools, Implementation of special programmes to improve the examination results of schools, since the examination result is a foremost criteria in the attraction of students. All schools need to keep an academic administrative report and it needs to be based on the allocation of funds for various projects recommended by this report.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

At the initial stage of the History in Sri Lanka, the Education System associated with the temple in the 18th and 19th centuries and the British missionary school system existed in Sri Lanka. Simultaneous to the missionary school system, Sinhala, Buddhist Schools had been subsequently commenced in religious countenance and Muslim and Hindu Schools had been commenced, led by Muslim and Tamil Leaders. Under the C.W.W.Kannangara Education policy, 54 Central Colleges had been added to this school network within the Island, outside the cities. By 1970, schools had been commenced associated with cities to meet the demand of urban schools as the Iriyagolla Education policy.

Due to the creation of many problems within the Sri Lanka school system improperly spread in terms of various religious, political and Social issues, the schools taken over by the government and schools not handed over to the government in urban areas had come to the top level with physical and human resources, and they have highly attracted by the parents. Children who could not admit those schools have been attracted to international schools since 1980 decade. The number of students request for popular schools are promptly increased and the main reason therefor is the shortage of physical and human resources in the schools situated beyond the city. Apart from that, the social vicinage, Improve the operation of school development societies resulting the building up of large amount of funds. Consequently, the physical resources of those schools have been largely increased and therefore the enthusiasm of parents has increased in admitting their children to those schools.

Under these circumstances, a large number of students coming from distance places to schools has been normalized. Therefore, it is observed that this had created many difficulties to school children.

As a remedy to this problem, the Government has implemented various projects from time to time and the objective of these projects is to develop physical and human resources of unpopular schools. Accordingly, “the nearest school is the best school” project had been implemented during the period 2016 - 2020.

2.2 Basic information relates to Government Schools in Sri Lanka

2.2.1 Annual Financial Provisions

More than 10 per cent of the government revenue of Sri Lanka is allocated for education and the particulars of capital and recurrent expenditure incurred during the past 4 years, according to the expenditure reports of the Ministry of Education are given below.

	2015	2016	2017	2018
	Rs.Mn	Rs.Mn	Rs.Mn	Rs.Mn
Recurrent	157,956	168,591	173,378	175,579
Capital	21,175	24,776	27,539	36,362
Government Income (Republican Account)	1,394,245	1,698,755	1,845,017	1,935,095
Percentage	12.8	11.4	10.9	10.9

Source – Financial Statements of the ministry of Education

2.2.2 Information on schools

According to the school census report – 2017, there were 10,194 government schools, 859 non-governmental schools, 265 International Schools, 80 Private Schools 26 special schools and 753 pirivenas in Sri Lanka in the year 2017 government schools consist of 9841 provincial schools and 353 National Schools. Of them, the number of schools which have less than 200 students amounted to 5,161. The net admission ratio of students between the ages of 5-14 had been 96.28 per cent whereas the proximate resting ratio of students from grade I to grade II had been 88.75 per cent. The number of schools temporary closed down by the year 2017 had been 93.

2.2.3 Information on teachers and students

In terms of curriculum teaches in schools and primary and secondary levels of schools and according to the National and Provincial Composition of schools 353 schools of the total number of schools amounting to Rs.10,194 in the year 2017 had been national schools. The total number of students and teachers in those schools amounted to 4,165,964 and 241,591 respectively. Accordingly, teacher-student ratio in Sri Lanka was 1:17. Nineteen per cent of the total number of students in schools learns in National schools which represent 3.5 per cent. Of the total number of schools, 40 per cent schools with 1 to 5 grades (category 3) and 16 per cent of the total number of students learns in these schools.

(a) Teacher – student ratio in terms of curriculum

The teacher-student ratio in the national schools and provincial schools ranged from 1:16 to 1:22 and 1:13 to 1:20 respectively as detailed below.

Grading	No.of Schools	No.of Students	No.of Teachers	Teacher- Student Ratio
<u>National Schools</u>				
A/Level – all subject streams (IAB)	323	785,060	36,656	1.21
A/Level – Commerce/ Arts up to O/Level	27 03	22,910 3,185	1,438 148	1.16 1.22
Total	353	811,164	38,242	1.22
<u>Provincial Schools</u>				
A/Level – all subject streams (IAB)	706	872,826	43,864	1.20
A/Level – Commerce/ Arts up to O/Level (category 2)	1,791 3,285	1,010,358 790,774	60,614 61,460	1.17 1.13
Up to Grade 5 (category 3)	4,059	680,838	37,411	1.18
Total	9,841	3,354,800	203,349	1.17
Grand Total	10,194	4,165,964	241,591	

Source: School census report – 2017 of the Ministry of Education

(b) Classification of schools in terms of number of students

Classification of schools in terms overall students in each school appears below. According, to the classification made in terms of number of students, the number of schools which have less than 200 students out of the total number of schools amounting to 10,194 in Sri Lanka had exceeded the number of schools which have more than 200 students; as per detailed below.

No.of students	No.of schools	Percentage
Between 1-50	1486	14.5
51-100	1560	15
101-150	1138	11.2
151-200	977	9.6
	-----	51
More than 200	5161	49
	5033	

Total	10,194	
	=====	

(c) Schools being minimised the number of students in terms of provinces

Schools which have less than 200 students spread over all 9 provinces ranging from 419 to 812 schools. Of the total 5,161 schools, many of them have been established in Central, Sabaragamuwa, Northern and North Western provinces respectively. Details appear below.

Province	No.of schools less than 200 students
Western	449
Sabaragamuwa	650
Northern	641
Eastern	545
Southern	536
Uva	495
North Central	419
North Western	614
Central	812
Total	-----
	<u>5161</u>

Source: School census report – 2017 of the Ministry of Education

2.3 Authority for Audit

This performance audit was carried out under my direction in pursuance of provisions in Article 154(1) of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka and sections 3(1)(d), 5(2) and 12(h) of the National Audit Act No.19 of 2018.

2.4 Reason for choosing the topic for audit

According to the report of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka for 2018, the literacy of Sri Lanka stands at 92.6 per cent and it is an advantageous background to improve the human capital. The free education policy of Sri Lanka contributes to this environment and the concept that every person should get equal opportunity in education is important in this aspect. Nevertheless, according to the classification of schools as popular which have become socially accredited and unpopular schools, larger number of unpopular schools have less than 200 students. Being 50.5 per cent of the total number of schools which have less than 200 students is a speciality. Under the target 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals 4, it is a fundamental objective that all male and female students need to be given free, equal and quality primary and secondary education in a manner enabling to gain effective learning results by the year 2030. Accordingly, there was a necessity to find out how far the equal and qualitative education is achieved by the schools which have less than 200 students.

2.5 Scope of Audit

I conducted my audit in accordance with International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAI 3000-3200). From 3 districts of Kurunegala, Badulla and Ratnapura which have many schools with less than 200 students, 10,488 and 100 had been selected for sample tests respectively. In addition, 61 schools which have less than 200 students have been selected from the Western Province, as it is a province in which excessive number of students learn. Adverse effects caused by factors that cannot be controlled by the responsible entities in the education field due to anomalies in the regional development, transport difficulties as well as imbalances in community structure had not been subjected to discuss in this audit.

2.6 Audit Approach

The following approaches have been taken into consideration herein.

- (a) Study of circulars and instructions issued in respect of schools.
- (b) Collection and analysis of data from schools selected for sample tests.
- (c) Information obtained from physical verification of schools.
- (d) Information obtained from principals and teachers.
- (e) Obtaining and analysis of overall information in respect of schools in Sri Lanka from the Ministry of Education, Zonal and Provincial Offices.
- (f) Study of project reports implemented for schools development.

2.7 Audit Objectives and Criteria

2.7.1 Audit objectives

The objective of this audit is to inquire into whether the students learn in the schools which have less than 200 students representing over 50 per cent of the total number of schools in Sri Lanka, get the benefit of free education at a required level, having being studied the performance levels of teachers and students and issues in respect of physical and human resources as there is a tendency of closing of those schools.

2.7.2 Audit Criteria

The following Laws, regulations and standards are taken into consideration in this audit.

- (a) Criteria stated in the paragraph 2 and 3 of instruction manual of the school structure committee.
- (b) Secondary school development National Programme for primary school network.
- (c) Determination of academic staff needs to be existed in a school.
- (d) Examination Results of scholarships, GCE (O/L), GCE (A/L)

3. Audit observations and detailed discussion

3.1 Establishment of new schools

3.1.1 Matters to be considered in the establishment of new schools

In terms of paragraph 2.1 of the instruction manual on school structures, the relevant recommendation to begin a new school needs to be given only in an essential opportunity therefor. Accordingly, the requirement of opening a new school may arise in the following situations.

(a) Distance for the school

- (i) Opportunities that children less than the age of 10 years live in the area have to go to a primary school by walking for more than 2 Km.
- (ii) Opportunities that students study in grades 6-11 live in the area have to go to a secondary school over 4 Km.
- (iii) Despite, primary and secondary schools exist within the above distances, at the following opportunities.
 - School age student population inhabit the relevant area more than the accommodation facilities available in the existing schools. (Need to be proved by a censuses)
 - Despite, there are schools within the prescribed distances, it is difficult to reach those schools due to existing natural barriers such as forests, rivers, ridges etc.

(b) Establishment of new settlements

In the commencement of new settlements or colonies or model villages under certain projects such as Mahaweli Project, the number of families and school age students are increased. In accordance with such increase a new school can be opened.

(c) To present proposals for opening a new school

In the opening of a new school, proposals may be present in the following 2 forms.

- (i) According to a proposal presented by the planning division of the Zonal Education Office.
- (ii) According to a proposal presented by parents, Grama Niladhari or the external organization in the area.

(d) Action by the zonal Director of Education

In terms of (c) above, future action needs to be taken by the Zonal Director of Education, once such proposals are presented having being considered the relevant data and statistics on the following matters.

- (i) Non-availability of a such type of school within the relevant catchment area.
- (ii) Availability of a sufficient number of students within the relevant catchment area to open a new school.
- (iii) Non-availability of accommodation in the school/ schools existed within the catchment area in the specific educational level.
- (iv) Availability of a suitable and sufficient Land to build a new school.

3.1.2 Schools newly opened at a Divisional and zonal levels

National schools had not been opened in the year 2018 in Sri Lanka and 17 provincial schools were opened.

A sample check revealed that there were several schools commenced after 2000 which have the least number of students in the same education division, taken at Regional education division level and the number of students in those schools had ranged from 01 to 465 in 53 schools within 22 education zones. Four schools in Ampara/ Addalachchane zone, 5 schools in Mannar/ Madu zone, 04 schools in Trincomale/ Muthur zone, 05 schools in Nikaweratiya/ Wariyapola zone, 4 school in Nikaweratiya zone, 3 schools each in Ratnapura/ Eheliyagoda, Kuruwita, Ayagama and 3 schools in Balangoda zones had been opened and the number of students therein had been at a minimum level.

(a) Intention of a village level school

Observations relate to few school re-opened in the education zones of Nikaweratiya, Minuwangoda, Mathugama, Homagama and Bandarawela subjected to sample check are as follows.

- (i) The Uragoda Junior school closed down 14 years ago due to lack of students had been re-opened in the year 2016 with 20 students on a request of the people in the area and non-availability of a school around the villages. Sufficient building facilities and other physical resources were not available in this school. It was observed that the Katuwellapitiya Vidyalaya in which classes from grade I to II are conducted is situated at a distance of 4 Km. Currently, 57 students study in the Uragoda Junior School.
- (ii) The Dodampapitiya Primary School, about 3 Km far away in the distance from this school which was closed down several years ago had been re-opened in the year 2018 as well on a request of the people in the area and the number of students therein was 18.
- (iii) The field inspection observed that the parents in one village are reluctant to send their children to the school of other village and it had caused to reopen these two schools.

(b) Criteria need to be fulfilled in the opening of a new school

The Regie Ranathunga primary school had been opened in the year 2017 on a request made on the ground that there is no school within the Minuwangoda City limit with sufficient facilities to enter the students passed in grade 5 at the Regie Ranathunga Primary School opened in the year 2012.

- i. According to the distance from Regie Ranathunga primary school newly opened to the secondary schools determinants in the instruction Manual of school structures had not been fulfilled, as per details below.

School -----	Distance -----	No.of Students -----
President's College	500 m	2479
Burulapitiya M.V	01 Km	1300
Polwatta Rathnasara M.V.	01 ½ Km	1080
Nalanda Balaka M.V.	02 Km	3016
Nalanda Balika M.V.	02 Km	2744

- ii. According to the school structure Instruction Manual, the Zonal Director of Education should ensure that the improvement of the number of school age students within the area, more than the accommodation available in the existing schools in the opening of a new school.

In this case, the matters comprising the non-availability of this type of school in the area, availability of a required number of students to open a new school and non-availability of accommodation in the existing schools had not been considered.

- iii. However, according to the Letter No.WP/Mithra/Sela/02/12 of 09 August 2016 of the Zonal Director of Education, Minuwangoda, addressed to the Secretary to the Western Province Ministry of Education, there are 6 secondary schools around this new school and after commencement of this school, the number of students of these schools will be reduced. In the analysis of statistics during the period 2012 to 2016 it was revealed that as a result of opening the Regie Ranathunga Primary School in the year 2012, by disregarding the above criteria the number of students of the surrounding 6 primary schools had been reduced as follows. Accordingly, the number of students of the schools situated around it ranging the distance from 800 m to 4 Km had been within the range between 04 to 112 as per details below.

Name of School	Distance from Regie Ranathunga Primary School	No.of students				
		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Minu/ Weliya Sri Sugatha pala Junior School	800m	4	10	35	21	5
Minu/ Polwatta Sri Rathanasara M.V	1Km	112	110	123	101	84
Minu/ Yagodamulla Primary School	2 Km	17	35	24	36	24
Minu/ Kotugoda Rahula Primary School	4 Km	-	-	-	90	80
Minu/ Opath Gunanda Primary School	3.5 Km	12	26	16	25	19
Minu/ Galloluwa Roman Catholic Junior School	1.5 Km	23	9	11	11	20

- iv. On these reasons, since the President's College has the highest provable level within the zone which is the nearest school to the Regie Ranathunga primary school and it has sufficient space to put up new buildings he should have recommended that the putting up a 2 storied new building in the President's College and increase the number of classes for grade 6 students from 4 to 7. Nevertheless, this school had been established in the year 2017 as a new secondary school for students who passed the grade 5 scholarship examination on the approval of the Zonal Education Development Committee and the Advisory Committee.
- v. The Director had instructed the Director Administration that even though this secondary school has been commenced on the ground that the Regie Ranathunga Primary School is not a school with adequate facilities for students passed the 5th grade, in the admission of students for the new school, only the students who passed the scholarship examination should be admitted in considering the effect on the secondary schools situated around the zone and not to admit departed students to this new school.

vi. Even though, those criteria are determined with the objective of protecting other surrounding schools, students who failed in the scholarship examination from the Regie Ranathunga Primary School have go to an another school. It was therefore observed that the objective of opening a suitable new secondary school for the primary school could not be achieved. Similarly, when the primary section with 6 parallel classes is taken to the secondary section with 4 parallel classes, the compulsory admission cut-off marks need to be increased, even if all the students in the primary section have passed the scholarship examination and as such parents and children are find it difficult to search a new school again. When a new school is constructed, its buildings and other physical resources are fulfilled with modern technology and as such it can not be avoidable that students and parents attract them. However, it was observed that trying to achieve both construction of new schools and safe guarding the existing schools together, public resources are unknowingly become idle or under- utilized.

(c) **Consideration of the minimum land area to put up a new school**

After the proposal for commencement of a new school is justified the provincial Director of Education needs to satisfy whether a suitable land for the construction of the school is available. Even though it is stated in paragraph 2.2 (b). Of the instruction manual on school structures that a minimum land area of 2 acres is required for the commencement of a primary school, it was revealed in the examination of schools which have less than 200 students that certain school have been put up by contravening such rules and regulations e.g.out of 25 school from 104 school which have less than 200 students had been put up in the Nikaweratiya zone without specified land area.

(d) **Distance between schools**

Required instructions to open a new school are stated in paragraph 2.1 of the Instruction Manual on school structures and the distance between schools needs to be considered. It was observed that without being established the student population, schools had been commenced. It had caused to reduce the

number of students in the schools newly established/ reopened and in the surrounding schools as well. Distance to the nearest school from 13 schools which have the number of students between 22 to 146, subjected to physical verification has ranged from 500 m to 5 Km. Accordingly, schools have been commenced contrary to the above criteria, despite the performance of schools which have less than 200 students as a whole from the number of government schools remain at a minimum level.

3.1.3 Composition of the schools in the Northern and Eastern Provinces

Despite, the above criteria related to open a new school, the number of schools commenced after the year 2000, less than 200 students amounts to 373 of which, it was observed that 50 per cent had represented in Northern and Eastern Provinces as per details below.

It is observed that six schools commenced after 2000 which have less than 10 students had existed only in those 2 zones. According to its expansion, there was 01 school with 01 student, 01 school with 05 students, 01 school with 06 students, 02 schools with 08 students and 01 school with 09 students. Particulars by the year 2018 are as follows.

Province and District	Number of schools established after 2000 (students less than 200)					Total No.of schools
	Students 1-10	Students 11-50	Students 51-100	Students 101-150	Students 151-200	
<u>Eastern</u>						
Ampara	-	10	19	07	05	41
Batticaloa	02	10	06	06	06	30
Trincomalee	-	12	10	08	10	40
	----	----	----	----	----	----
Total	02	32	35	21	21	111
	====	====	====	====	====	====
<u>Northern</u>						
Vauniya	01	03	04	02	01	11
Mullativu	01	04	04	03	03	15
Mannar	02	13	09	04	03	31
Kilinochchi	-	-	03	03	02	08
Jaffna	-	02	04	03	02	11
	----	----	----	----	----	----
Total	04	22	24	15	11	76
	====	====	====	====	====	====
Total of 02 provinces	06	54	59	36	32	187
	====	====	====	====	====	====

Even though it might be assumed that this situation had arisen in taking action to develop expeditiously after the war effected by the East and the North, action had not been taken to regularise the relevant circulars as required.

3.2 Closure of schools

Action had been taken to close down certain schools during the past few years and a few observations made in that regard appear below.

3.2.1 Schools temporary closed down

(a) Lack of students and effect on other causes

Due to lack of students, atmosphere prevailed in the country and other reasons 93 schools had been temporary closed down during the period 2013 to 2017 and the statistics of the Ministry of Education observed that 101 schools had been closed only during the year 2018.

(b) Consideration on cost per student

The paragraph 3.2.6 of the Instruction Manual on school structures states that since the maintenance of a least number of students needs to incur a very high cost per student, it should be considered whether such a school is further maintained.

If the average number of students in a grade is less than 10 and if the students learn in that school can be referred to an another school/ schools, without breaching the distance condition, that school can be closed down. Even a small school in isolated villages and in areas with transport difficulties due to natural hindrents should not be closed. However, the schools which fulfilled the above criteria and can be closed had not been looked into whether they can be closed down in a manner enabling the students to get a better school.

3.2.2 Integration of schools or direction to a nearest school with more facilities

(a) Integration of schools

In terms of paragraph 3.2.1 of the Instructions Manual on school structures, if the average number of students in one class in any primary school is 10 or less than that, those schools should be integrated with another primary school or a

school with the primary section, situated within the distance of 2 Km from the dwellings of all students.

(b) Direction to an adjacent school with more facilities

In the examination of number of students in each class for 4 years at 4, 12 and 11 schools in Bandarawela, Ratnapura and Nikaweratiya education zones respectively, it was observed that one class had less than 10 students for several years. Similarly, it was also observed that there were other alternate schools near this school but the relevant authorities had not found out whether there was a possibility of referring those students to schools which have better learning opportunities.

(c) Maintenance of schools exterior to the requirements stated in the circular

The physical verification observed that schools are operated for the requirements of teachers, other parties and these schools can be closed after being verified whether there is a possibility of getting a better school for children. Bandarawela Kandearawa school, subjected to audit test check is a school which has 22 children and it had been established without an area needs to be available. Since this school is situated very close to the Bandarawela Madya Maha Vidyalaya these children could not go to that popular school.

3.3 Performance of schools less than 200 students

In the audit examination carried out in respect of school which have less than 200 students in the educational zones of Bandarawela, Nikaweratiya, Ratnapura, Homagama and Piliyandala, observations on the performance of those schools are as follows.

3.3.1 Being the least number of students

Particulars are as follows.

(a) Number of students being gradually decreased

- (i) The average number of students in 14 and 6 schools at Bandarawela and Ratnapura education zones respectively, which maintained only

primary section subjected to test check had ranged from 9 to 59 during the period 2014 to 2018. A tendency of being gradually decreased the number of students from 519 to 427 in those schools during the period 2014 to 2018 by 18 per cent.

- (ii) When analysing the data in respect of number of students in the schools which have primary and secondary sections and lesser number of students, it was observed that the number of students were being gradually decreased. The average number of students in the primary and secondary sections of 18 schools belong to Bandarawela and Ratnapura Education Zones subjected to audit test check in the year 2018 amounted to 32 and 33 respectively. The average teachers in the Bandarawela and Kandy Education zones amounted to 7 and 4 respectively.

(b) Conducting A/L classes though lesser number of students

Many school with less than 200 students have only primary and secondary sections but there were schools which conduct A/L classes as well. Particulars of few schools with less than 200 students conduct A/L classes in the education zones subjected to test check are as follows.

Name of School	Subject Streams	No.of Students	No.of Teachers
R/ Vidyadeepa M.V	Arts	31	2
R/ Sidhartha M.V	Arts	9	6
	Commerce	3	3
WP/Homagama/Deepangoda	Arts	36	07
Sri Medhananda M.V	Commerce	14	03



Students of many of these schools have not increased and had lesser number of students since several years, as observed. As students are so decreasing parents are not investigated to admit their children to that school newly.

3.3.2 Successfulness of examination results

Observations appear below.

(a) Consideration of examination results when admitting children

In selecting a school by the parents for their children, they consider about the examination results which is the main criteria which reflects the performance of the school. If it is a school which has only the primary section, the results of the scholarship examination of the past years and if it is a secondary school, GCE O/L and GCE A/L results are considered. This factor is mostly affected to admit their children to other distance school without being admitted to the nearest school. It is an important factor that the successfulness of scholarship examination results and the GCE O/L results are considered in admitting student to schools.

(b) Successfulness of examination results

-
- (i) According to the scholarship examination results of 14 schools selected on sample basis from Bandarawela, Rathnapura and Homagama Education Zones for the last 3 years, the number of student 4, 4 and 6 schools respectively ranged from 20 to 43, 8 to 32 and 34 to 180 respectively. The performance of obtaining cut-off marks in the scholarship examination of these schools during the past 3 years were between 2 and 3 representing the minimum numbers. The special features observed therein is that any students of 10 schools out of 14 subjected to audit had not passed the scholarship examination during the past 3 years.
 - (ii) The teacher-student ratio of the above schools which have only the primary section remains at a very good level as 1:4, 1:3 and 1:14 but the scholarship examination results had not been at a probable level. Of

the students sat for the scholarship examination cut-off mark limits had been exceeded only at a low percentage as 1.5, 2.2 and 1.2 per cents in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017.

- (iii) In the examination of performance of students, whose marks had not been exceeded 100 it was observed that out of the students presented to the scholarship examination in the Bandarawela, Ratnapura and Homagama education zones, 75 per cent, 94 per cent, 68 per cent in the year 2015 and 75 per cent, 92 per cent, 68 per cent in the year 2016 and 71 per cent, 68 per cent and 76 per cent in the year 2017 respectively had not exceeded even 100 marks limit.

(c) Success of the GCE(O/L) results

According to the GCE(O/L) examination results of the schools in Bandarawela, Ratnapura education zones which have less than 200 students, the number of students qualified for A/L in the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 were 29 per cent, 39 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. Even though, the passing percentage had gradually increased the passing percentage in Sri Lanka is 75 per cent and it was 72 per cent and 76 per cent in the Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces respectively.

- (d) Examination results of schools, less than 200 students and conduct A/L classes, subjected to sample test are as follows.

School	2016			2017			2018		
	No.of students presented	No.of students passed	Percentage	No.of students presented	No.of students passed	Percentage %	No.of students presented	No.of students passed	Percentage %
WP/Ho/Deepangoda Sri Medhananda M.V.									
Arts	4	-	0	6	3	50	4	3	75
Commerce	2	1	50	2	2	100	2	0	0
R/Vidyadeema M.V.									
Arts	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	4	66.7
R/Siddhartha M.V.									
Arts	4	2	50	2	1	50	3	2	66
Commerce	2	1	50	4	2	50	-	-	-
Science	1	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-

In 3 schools subjected to test check had taught A/L Arts and Commerce streams and the maximum number of students who were present at the examinations in 2016, 2017 and 2018 was 6. Even though, those schools had reached to the minimum passing performance level, non of the students had reached to the minimum performance level in 2 and 1 school in the year 2016 and 2018. Moreover, non of the students in those schools had been qualified for university admission during the selected 3 years.

3.3.3 Conducting Pre-schools

In order to increase the number of students in the schools which have the last number of students, pre-schools have been commenced and those schools had also been operated in class rooms in the school premises itself. One instance observed that teachers of the school had been used for those pre -schools as well. Even though, these pre-schools had been opened to increase the grade 1 students, there was no assurance that pre-school children will admit to that school itself and many students had admitted to other schools.



Name of School	No. of pre-school students			Admission to grade 1		
	2016	2017	2018	2017	2018	2019
BA/Kandearawa Vidyalaya	-	-	05	-	01	08
Boralesgamuwa Model 1 – Junior School	32	44	35	07	07	03

3.3.4 Opportunity to teach batch subjects

(a) **Non-availability of opportunities to select batch subjects in the secondary section in terms of students willingness.**

There were opportunities that in selecting optative subjects by the students, in the secondary section, there were no teachers to teach such subjects and they have to learn subjects for which teachers are available for those subjects and as a result, those students had gone to some other schools. Accordingly, it was observed that teachers to teach 13 subjects in 10 schools subjected to test check were not available as per details below.

<u>School</u>	<u>Subjects</u>
R/Yatawala Vidyalaya	Mathematics, Sports
R/Udunowa J/V	Technology, Easthetic subjects
R/Ellawala Paranagama Vidyalaya	Sinhala, Buddhism
Kelegama J/S	Science, Second Language
Othota Randeniyagama Vidyalaya	Arts, Dancing, Music, Drama
Ihalagama J/S	Mathematics
R/Dharmaraja Vidyalaya	Physical Fitness, Tamil
R/Kospelahinna Vidyalaya	Sinhala
NW/Randeniyawa J/S	Music
R/Galuthgama Vidyalaya	Science

(b) **Lack of teachers for primary section**

Due to non-availability of sufficient number of teachers for the classes of the following schools, it was observed that there were no teachers to cover the teaching function in 11 classes of 6 schools.

<u>School</u>	<u>Grade for which there were no teacher</u>
R/Kaluwawala Thenna Vidyalaya	2
R/Galukagama Vidyalaya	5
Ihalagama J/S	5
BA/Kumarathenna Vidyalaya	1,2,3,4,5
R/Muruththerruwakanda Vidyalaya	3
R/Helakanda Vidyalaya	2,3

It was also observed that parents dislike to enter their children to those school due to lack of teachers in the primary section appropriately and dearth of teachers as a result of getting change of station transfers anyhow. There were occasions that non-availability of teachers for teaching each class of the above schools and vacancies of teachers existed during the entire year due to getting change of station transfers by teachers.

3.3.5 Schools with grades without a single students

Particulars of classes in which no students were available in 4, 12 and 11 schools in the Bandarawela, Ratnapura and Nikaweratiya Education zones in 3 years of 2016, 2017, 2018 respectively. Accordingly, even though any student was not available in 37 schools in the year 2018 in 26 schools in the year 2017 and in 26 classes in the year 2016, the teacher in charge of the class had drawn monthly salaries during the whole year without being taught.

3.3.6 Teacher-student ratio

Test check carried out in respect of 15, 20 and 3 schools in Ratnapura, Bandarawela and Homagama education zones, the teacher-students ratio had been between 1:3-1:14, 1:1-1:12 and 1:2-1:11 respectively and the number of schools in which teacher-students ratio was less than 1:10 were 12, 17 and 2. The average teacher-student ratio in Sri Lanka is 1:17. There were no shortage of teachers in many schools less than 200 students subjected to audit test check. Even though, there were excess teachers, the teaching results were not successful.

3.3.7 Environmental Reasons

Environmental effects, significant to each area have also caused to decrease the number of students in schools. E.g. areas with earth quake risk, schools subject to cause floods, schools may become risky due to special projects, like Uma oya.

School	Risk	No.of students
R/Pahalagama Bauddha School	Flooded three times a year	92
R/Mudunkotuwa East Vidyalaya	Flood	113
BA/Makulella Vidyalaya	Buildings damaged due to Uma Oya project	100

3.3.8 Academic Staff

(a) Exchange of teachers

The number of academic staff needs to be existed in a school had been determined by Circular No.01/2016 of 07 January 2016. Audit had observed that there were instances that the relevant staff not available and excess staff in certain schools which have less than 200 students and shortages and excesses had not been balanced by exchanging teachers between schools.

(b) Excess and shortage of teachers

(i) According to the sample check carried out on 6, 31 and 4 schools in Ratnapura, Bandarawela and Homagama Education Divisions, the academic staff needs to be available in terms of number of students in each school has been examined. Shortages of teachers in 3 schools in the Ratnapura Education zone with primary section and in 6 schools in the Bandarawela Education zone and excess teachers in 19 and 04 schools in the Bandarawela and Homagama Education Zones were observed.

- (ii) Moreover, it was revealed that there are schools which have teachers more than the teachers need to be available in such schools and they do not engage in teaching functions and many of them belong to their native villages as observed by the physical verification. The relevant authorities had not taken action to direct those excess teachers to schools with shortages of teachers.

3.3.9 Utilization of physical resources of the schools which have less than 200 students

Particulars appear below.

(a) Shortage of modern physical resources

Parents of children consider the availability of physical resources, beautiful maintenance of schools, sufficient accommodation facilities, sufficient building facilities in admitting their children to schools. Shortage of modern physical resources in those schools were observed and it had also caused to decrease the students of those schools.

e.g. Non-availability of libraries separated class rooms, laboratories, computer facilities etc. can be cited.

(b) Land use of schools with lesser number of students

Even though, the number of students is less, it was observed that the extent of land is spread over a large area belongs to the school. Accordingly, the number of students of 16 schools subjected to test check ranged from 10 to 144 and the extent of land area of those schools had ranged approximately from 02 to 07 acres as per particulars below.

<u>Name of School</u>	<u>No.of students</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Land area</u>	
			<u>Rood</u>	<u>Perches</u>
Bandarawela Zone				
Baduludena Vidyalaya	10	05		
Moraketiya Vidyalaya	41	05		
Ilukpelessa Vidyalaya	14	04		
Horadorowwa Sri Ginarathana Vidyalaya	33	05		
Weaeliya Vidyalaya	20	03		
Kumarathenna Vidyalaya	22	03		
Nilwala Vidyalaya	25	05	01	13
Mudunkotuwa west Vidyalaya	32	02	-	-
Nugadanda Bhadrawathi Vidyalaya	24	02	-	-
Gadakagama Vidyalaya	41	05	-	-
Sri Bodhi Vidyalaya	31	02	02	29
Wickramakanda Vidyalaya	08	02	-	-
Kalathuwawa Vidyalaya	18	02	-	-
Paladeniya Vidyalaya	46	04	02	0.8
Helakanda Vidyalaya	16	03	-	-
WP/JA/Rahula M.V.	144	07		



3.3.10 School for imprisoned students

The Wataraka Suneetha Vidyalaya is a school established for imprisoned young culprits which has less than 200 students and conducts only grades 9, 10 and 11. Since students in terms of specific age groups do not enter for those grades and young culprits with various education levels and ages between 16-25 years admit to this school. Fifty one imprisoned students learn in this school and therefore it is a special school. Even though certain training is required to the teachers of this school, without such a special training, teachers teach in this school. Appropriate action had not been taken to provide education to all those offenders who are in the learning age and imprisoned by getting data on them from all prisons being made relevant parties aware.

3.3.11 Comments of the principals and teachers on the reasons for decreasing the number of students less than 200

At the physical verifications carried out in respect of schools less than 200 students, information was obtained, having been discussed with principals and teachers about the reasons for decreasing students. According to such comments reasons include; sending students to urban schools due to transport facilities, non-development of modern physical resource in village schools, increase of primary section in urban schools, shortage of teachers, rejection of teachers by parents who rest in the same school for a long period without being transferred, unsuccessful examination results, natural environmental issues etc. among them.

3.4 Admission to students for grade 1

Parents are more interested about the popularity of schools in admitting their children to grade 1 and they consider the location and performance of the school.

3.4.1 Graduation of School

(a) Schools with only primary section

The number of students, admitted to the grade 1 in the year 2017 in terms of type of schools are as follows. Out of the total number of students admitted to grade 1 in the year 2017, 40 per cent was for schools which have only primary section.

Type of School	No.of students admitted to grade 1			
	National Schools	Provincial Schools	Total No.of schools	Percentage %
1 AB	25,583	27,702	47,285	14.7
1 C	938	68,477	69,415	21.5
Type 2	8	74,703	74,711	23.2
Type 3	<u>0</u>	<u>130,724</u>	<u>130,724</u>	40.6
Total	<u>26,529</u>	<u>295,606</u>	<u>322,135</u>	

The progress of admitting students to grade 1 in the schools with only primary section subjected to sample check in the years 2017 and 2018 in 15 schools had ranged from 2 to 17. The total number of students in those schools was at a minimum range from 06 to 65.

Name of School	Total number of students	Admission to grade 1	
		2017	2018
BA/Weerakongama Vidyalaya	26	06	06
BA/Piyarapandowa Vidyalaya	65	07	11
BA/Kalupahana M.V.	29	05	03
BA/Kumarathenna Vidyalaya	10	03	03
BA/Kosgama Vidyalaya	23	06	04
BARanwanguhawa Vidyalaya	23	02	02
BA/Amhol Tamil Vidyalaya	21	05	05
BA/Kandearawa Rahula Vidyalaya	22	-	02
BA/ Gowussa Vidyalaya	29	03	08
BA/ Haputale West Tamil Vidyalaya	25	05	05
BA/ Maladola Vidyalaya	06	01	-
R/Pahalagama Boddha Vidyalaya	48	6	17
R/Western Mudunkotuwa Vidyalaya	06	-	-
NI/Thaggamuwa Primary Vidyalaya	25	06	03
NI/Malwana Primary Vidyalaya	35	09	06

There was a lesser number of students in those school and as such the admission to grade 1 is also decreased. It is therefore observed that those schools are facing a threat of closing down in future.

3.4.2 Schools to which even one student had not been admitted to grade 1

(a) Request made for schools

As revealed in the examination of schools in Bandarawela and Ratnapura Zones subjected to test check from the schools which have less than 200 students for which applications for admissions have been received from less than 10 students, 608 students in the primary section were available in the year 2018 in 30 schools which have less than 200 students. The number of applications received in the year 2019 for grade 1 was 89. Accordingly, the number of students of these schools being gradually decreased.

(b) Augmentation of schools for which students are not admitted

The statistics established that the number of schools for which non of the students had admitted grade 1 in the years 2017, 2016 and 2015 amounted to 433, 331 and 405 respectively.

3.5 Various projects being implemented to uplift schools

3.5.1 1000 schools project implemented during the period 2012-2016

This project has been commenced with the objective of the establishment of highly developed 1000 schools island wide, enabling to achieve the expectations of parents in admitting their children to better schools. Objectives are as follows.

Prospective objectives from the development of 1000 secondary schools include,

- i. Quantitative, constructive and qualitative development of education by secondary schools being fostered by a few primary schools.
- ii. Convert into a fully completed school by providing required physical and human resources to that school.
- iii. Recognition and planning of development devices in collaboration with primary schools.
- iv. Creation of citizen with human qualitative by converting in to eminent education centres.

- v. Reduction of student drain to popular schools in towns.
- vi. Establishment of equal fairness of education all over the country.
- vii. Increase the number of students who learn the subjects of Science, Mathematics, Commerce and Technology streams at GCE (A/L)
- viii. Reconstruction of at least 3 schools of IAB type at each Divisional Secretarial area.
- ix. Direction the students with high knowledge in the fields of Science/ Mathematics/ Technology/ Commerce/ Arts/ Eastetic etc. to the job market.
- x. Expansion of Information Technology Education and Language capacity building to the village level.
- xi. Putting up attractive child friendly primary schools around the secondary school.

The following weaknesses were observed in this project implemented during the period 2012 to 2016 in respect of schools subjected to sample check.

(a) Compliance with Ministry circulars

Various circulars giving instructions in respect of the implementation of various projects are issued by the Ministry of Education. Due to lack of proper supervision, certain schools violate those circulars in certain occasions. According, to the Circular No.2011/32 of 24 November 2011, of the Ministry of Education the Secondary school development National Programme for primary school network had been implemented to achieve the following objectives.

- (i) Provision of equal and high level primary and secondary education opportunities to all children in a manner, establishing free education and compulsory education and the optimum utilization of resources.
- (ii) Establishment and widening educational admission opportunities to learn all subject streams related to secondary education opportunities.

- (iii) Upliftment of learning attainment level of students through community skills and practical learning skills promotion.
- (iv) Improvement of foster primary school network as a medieval programmes.
- (v) Minimisation of unnecessary and artificial competition to town schools.

This programme has been implemented under the following 3 stages.

- (i) Schools existed with grades 1 – 13 or 1- 11 up to the year 2011 (IAB/IC/2 types) but gradually quittance of the primary section, as students were not admitted since 2012 and planned to convert into secondary schools.
- (ii) Schools with grades 6-13 (IAB/IC) but not conducted primary classes.
- (iii) Schools existed with Grades 1-11 or 1-13 up to the year 2011 (IAB/IC/2 types) but the removal of all 1-5 primary grades at once in the year 2012 itself and planned to convert in to a secondary school being registered under the provincial councils, as a separate primary school.

Even though, instructions had been given to maintain schools under the above 3 categories, such circular instructions had been implemented only for the year of issue the circular. This circular intends to develop primary section of the schools separately and the schools with secondary section separately but the anticipated objectives of this programme had not been achieved since the relevant instructions had not been followed by those schools and not subjected to proper supervision. Particulars appear below.

- i. As observed at the physical verification, the following schools are cited for schools by which students taken to grade 1 had been stopped but again admitted the students to grade 1.

School	Class being conducted	Year of close down	Year of re-open
NI/U.B.Wanninayake M.M.V.	1-5	2013	2017
NI/Hulogedara Primary School	1-11	2013	2016
NI/Bamunugama M.V.	1-11	2012	2016

- ii. Ten schools belong to 3 education zones by which students admitted to the secondary section were stopped but again taken to the secondary section. The grade 6 of those schools were removed but re-opened again after a few years as per detail below.

School	No.of students in 2018	Year from which grade 6 was removed	Year of re-open
Nikaweratiya			
Naramana Walagamba Vidyalaya	-	2013	2016
Thambilipola Junior School	-	2013	2016
Homagama			
Siyambagoda Dharmapala Vidyalaya	201	2014	2016
Pelagama Siri Parakum Vidyalaya	112	2014	2015
Olaboduwa Zoysa M.V.	155	2012	2016
Hanwella			
Akurawila M.V.	165	2013	2016
WP/HO/Olaboduwa zoysa M.V.	155	2012	2016
BA/Goutala Vidyalaya	95	2013	2016
BA/Dowa Vidyalaya	176	2012	2017
BA/Dulgalla Ashoka Vidyalaya	67	2012	2017

- iii. Similarly, examples for schools by which primary section/ secondary section had been closed down in term of the circular are as follows.

School	Section	Year of close down
Piyarapathdowa Vidyalaya	Secondary Section	2016
R/Erapola Sri Mahinda Vidyalaya	Primary Section	2012
MN/ Weliya Sri Sugathapala J/S	Secondary Section	2014

(b) Non-utilisation of buildings

Even though, Mahindodaya laboratories had been put up for the teaching of Technology subject stream of GCE (A/L) it was observed at a test check that there was a school with less than 200 students did not teach Technology stream but technology laboratories had been put up in that school as well. Deepangoda Vidyalaya subjected to test check was such a school and it was therefore observed that the expenditure incurred for putting up the laboratory and equipment purchased therefor had become fruitless.



(c) The physical verification observed that the Homagama Mahinda Rajapaksa Vidyalaya opened in Homagama zone as a remedy in dragging students to urban popular schools is operated very successfully.

3.5.2 The nearest school is the best school project (2016-2020)

(a) Financial information and operated school

The mission of this project is to procreate efficient citizens pertinent to international tendencies by a modern approach and modified in education and

direction to efficient and high quality in a manner that satisfied by the parties. The estimated cost of this project amounted to Rs.64,930 million and the duration was 2016 to 2020 and the expenditure incurred by 31 December 2018 amounted to Rs.31,234.77 million. There were 14 proposed activities under this project and the number of schools in which this programme was implemented amounted to 9345.

- (b) Proposed activities under “the best school is the nearest school programme” are as follows.

Description -----	No.of Schools -----
Class rooms with modern facilities	448
Construction of primary Education Resources Centres (Single or 2 storied buildings)	1021
Junior secondary laboratories	303
Construction of aesthetic units (Students to become sincere citizens for sustainable development)	67
Small and grand scale repairs	6497
Teachers quarters, principals quarters	366
Laboratories Teachers	1401
Technological buildings	328
Development of estate schools	720
Construction of canteen, fulfilment of nutritious requirements	163
Sports complex-creation of a healthy generation	64
Dental Health Units-resolving ocular health problems	137
Sanitary facilities	3892
Water supply facilities – As a basic need	1145
Electricity Supply - Modern	3935

- (c) **Provisions made being identified the requirement**

This project had made provisions under various programmes for the development of schools. However, it was observed that in most cases provisions had been given only for one purpose relating to each zone. Without finding the requirement of each school appropriately the same resource had

been given to schools belong to one zone. Even that, the number of students in schools had not been considered.

e.g. Provision given for lavatory systems – schools in Ratnapura Zone.

Zone	Name of School	No.of Students	Amount spent
Ratnapura 1	Dharmaraja Vidyalaya	133	78,609
	Kospelewinna Vidyalaya	67	933,735
	Headfield Tamil Vidyalaya	14	436,735
	Tamil Primary School	189	797,590
Ratnapura 2	Eththota Vidyalaya	47	933,735
	Amunuthenna Junior School	76	933,735
	Dehenakanda Vidyalaya	15	72,622
	Amunuthenna Tamil School	197	933,735
Eheliyagoda	Iddamalgoda Senior School	82	299,096
	Sirisamanpura Vidyalaya	55	717,831
	Nugadanda Bhadrawathi Vidyalaya	23	726,222
Kuruvita	Mahawatta Kanda Vidyalaya	74	797,362
	Paladeniya Vidyalaya	47	933,735
	Lassakanda Vidyalaya	51	701,505
	Pussella Tamil School	45	933,735
Pelmadulla	Peralanda Vidyalaya	68	726,222
	Poththakanda Vidyalaya	14	726,222
	Sri Bodhi Vidyalaya	32	797,590
	Udukula Vidyalaya	14	933,735
	Sri Ananda Vidyalaya	92	797,590
	Pragnaratna Vidyalaya	54	797,590
	Rilhena Tamil School	68	797,590
	Palugampola Tamil School	40	872,675
Denawaka Tamil School	34	933,735	

A stringent requirement of drinking water facilities is needed to 73 schools belong to Mathugama Education Zone, but action had not been taken to fulfil this requirement through this project.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Revision of the instructions manual on school structures, under the supervision of Education administrative scholars periodically.
- 4.2 Development of schools in a manner that changes the attitudes of parents in respect of schools in admitting their children.
- 4.3 Commencement, closing and monitoring of schools in accordance with the instructions manual on school structures.
- 4.4 Supervision of the implementation of transfer orders, when teachers and principals are transferred to non-popular schools.
- 4.5 Implementation of special programmes to improve the examination results of schools, since the examination result is a foremost criteria in the attraction of students.
- 4.6 All schools need to keep an academic administrative report and it needs to be based on the allocation of funds for various projects.

W.P.C.Wickramaratne
Auditor General