Government of Sierra Leone

2023 and 2024 Annual Schools Censuses

Draft Report

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FOREWORD

ACKNOWLEDGE

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ASC	Annual School Census
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
BoG	Board of Governors
CAPI	Computer Application Personal Interface
CSV	Comma Separated Values
CTA	Community Teachers' Association
DD	Deputy Director
DSTI	Directorate of Science, Technology and Innovation
EDPs	Education Development Partners
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ESP	Education Sector Plan
EU-SESSiL	European Union – Support to Education Sector in Sierra Leone
FQSE	Free Quality School Education
FEPS	Free Education Project Secretariat
GB	Gigabyte
GER	Gross Enrolment Rate
GPI	Gross Parity Index
GPS	Global Positioning System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HQ	Head Quarters
HTC (P)	Higher Teachers' Certificate (Primary)
HTC (S)	Higher Teachers' Certificate (Secondary)
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IT	Information Technician
JSS	Junior Secondary School
M.Ed.	Master of Education
MBSSE	Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MTHE	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
NCRA	National Civil Registration Authority
OS	Operating System
PBF	Performance Based Financing
PhD. Ed.	Doctor of Philosophy in Education
PPD	Planning and Policy Directorate
PQTR	Pupil Qualified Teacher Ratio
PTR	Pupil Teacher Ratio
RR	Retention Rates
SRGBV	School Related Gender Based Violence
SSS	Senior Secondary School
Stats SL	Statistics Sierra Leone
TC	Teachers' Certificate
ToT	Training of Trainers
TSC	Teaching Service Commission
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2023 and 2024 ASCs covered all the schools that were in operation in all 16 districts across the country. A total of 13,456 schools that were initial identified as being in operation were visited and the required information collected. Subsequently, 423 of them were either found to be no longer in operation or found to be duplicated in the school list due to proprietors changing the name of their schools or relocating without informing the Ministry. Ultimately, data for analysis and reporting was obtained from a total of 13,033 schools.

Each school leader / head of school was responsible for the correct and accurate completion of his or her school's Annual School Census (ASC) Questionnaire. All schools, both public and private, completed the Questionnaire that was sent ahead. Enumerators were assigned to visit schools and transfer the data from the completed paper questionnaires to the digital forms on the SurveyCTO app for uploading to the ASC cloud server.

Training of Trainers (ToT) was conducted on the 15th and 16th of January 2024 in Freetown and was attended by the MBSSE Data Team; MBSSE District Statistical Clerks/ICT Officers; Statisticians from Statistics Sierra Leone (Stat-SL); Staff of National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA); and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) personnel working in education. During the training, the participants were able to review and finalise the ASC questionnaires. Supervisors were also trained on the general operations of the The 2023 and 2024 ASCs, saw the number of schools increased by 1.4%, from 12,854 to 13,033. Over this same period, the number of approved schools increased by 1.1%, from 10,477 to 10,592 schools, whilst public schools receiving financial and material support from the GoSL increased by 0.8%, from 7,955 to 8,020 schools. As the number of schools increases, more access is provided for learners which in turn leads to increase pupil enrolment. Pupil enrolment in 2024 increased by 116,058 pupils compared to 2023. Year on year enrolment increased from 3,345,818 to 3,461,876 which reported a 3% increase.

10,705 schools out of a total of 12,854 were public whilst the remaining 2,149 were private.

In 2024, 13,033 schools were enumerated of which 10,827 were public schools and 2,206 were owned by private providers.

Like in the preceding years, over half of the schools (7,470) were owned by missions/religious based organisations in the 2023/24 school year.

It is worth noting that even though the government is the biggest funder of education in terms of paying fee subsidy, paying examination fees, providing teaching and learning materials (TLMs), textbooks and other teaching and learning aide, yet it only owns 9% (1,193) of schools in the country. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of public and private schools approved for operation, increased by 1.1% across all levels. There was a 0.8% increase in schools supported by the GoSL between 2023 and 2024. The increase was from 7,955 schools in 2022/23 to 8,020 in the 2023/24 school year.

Data collected shows that in the 2023/24 school year, 80% of pre-primary and 91% of primary schools had functional SMCs. In addition, 87% of junior secondary and 89% of senior secondary schools reported having functional BoGs. These bodies play important roles in managing schools. At the secondary level, 61% of junior secondary and 65% of senior secondary schools reported that their BoG members have been trained on how to manage and run their schools. Also, 56% pre-primary and 64% primary reported that their SMCs members have been trained to manage and run their school. Most of the schools reported they have CTA (11,978) and have prepared an SDP (11,532) to guide their income and expenditure for the school year. Almost half of the schools reported that they have a Guidance Counsellor (6,007) to help the pupils to address their personal issues. Only a few schools (750) reported they have a dedicated health room

The pupil-classroom ratio gives a measure of class size. This provides an indication of whether classrooms were overcrowded or not. On average, the classroom size for all classrooms, permanent classrooms, and classrooms in good condition was 52, 56 and 79 per classroom respectively.

The sources of water reported were pipe (11.6%), borehole (23%), wells (19.8%), and river (1.3%). Unfortunately, 5,589 (42.9%) schools reported not having access to any source of water. Also, the results show that primary (47.2%) and pre-primary (38.8) are the most vulnerable schools without access to water. Most of the schools reported they have separate latrines for boys and girls, 72% of all schools across the levels. As the levels are ascended, the percentage of schools with separate latrines increases from 63% to 70% to 78%, and 85% of pre-primary, primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary schools, respectively. The ratio of pupils to good latrines is high in primary, junior and senior schools, but low in pre-primary schools. On average, there were 173 pupils per drop hole in SSS, 130 pupils per drop hole in JSS, and 146 pupils per drop hole in primary schools for good toilets.

The Ebola epidemic and COVID19 pandemic taught us the good habit of washing our hands to stay healthy. This seems to be forgotten, only a little over half of the schools (7,151 – 55%) reported they have functional hand washing facility in their schools.

One of the conditions for a school to be approve is for it to be fenced - only a quarter of all schools (25% - 3,290) were fenced.

Also in the School Approval Guidelines, is that for schools to be approved they should have a playing field or play area it is reported 70% (9,184) of the schools had a playing field or play area. For the safety of children with disability and inclusivity in schools, it is mandatory for schools to have ramps. The data shows that only 14% (1,830) of all schools had ramps. The results from this ASC still show a very low rate of schools with special cubicle for girls in their menstrual period the data report only 8% (830) of primary (369), junior secondary (291) and senior secondary (170) schools had the facility.

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The ideal Pupils to Textbook Ratio (PTxR) is 1:1 (**one textbook to one pupil**) but 1:2 (one textbook to two pupils) is globally acceptable. The PTxR of 2:1 for core English and Maths textbooks on average at all levels (Primary – 2:1, Junior Secondary – 2:1, Senior Secondary – 4:1) is acceptable for learning. Science and Social Studies core textbooks were found to be available on a ratio 3:1 which depicts an insufficiency of textbooks.

Only 5% of all schools (669) (primary (3%), junior secondary (11%) and senior secondary (17%) have functioning library. A well-equipped functional science laboratory for conducting experiments and practical work in the core science subjects can contribute to improving pass rates in these subjects. Only 3% of all schools (336) (primary (1%), junior secondary (5%) and senior secondary (13%) have functional science laboratory. The senor secondary level reported a little over a tenth of the SSS (13% - 144) have functional science lab.

73% of schools in the country had no access to electricity as opposed to 27% that had access to electricity. 61% of pre-primary schools, 83% primary schools, 64% of JSS and 50% of SSS did not have access to any source of electricity. The primary source of electricity was the grid which reported 19% of the 27% of electricity accessed by schools. It is clear from the report that most of the schools were in communities where they have access to mobile telephone network as 91% of the schools reported this. In terms of ICT pedagogy, a negligible 4% and 3% of schools reported they have computers and internet services respectively. With most of the schools located in communities where there is access to mobile telephone networks, it is easier for schools to access internet if the provision is made. The efforts of the MBSSE to expand the school feeding programme shows, 1,741,256 pupils in government assisted pre-primary and primary schools were benefitting from the school feeding programme reporting almost half of the pupils in these schools (49%).

Number of schools that reported incidence of SRGBV during the 2023/24 schools year were 123 across the school levels. Fewer schools (8) reported SGBV incidences in private schools compare to public schools (115). The incidences of SGBV cases were high in public schools, more especially the junior secondary. Except for Bombali District, all the districts have schools that reported an incidence of SRGBV at the primary school level which host children officially less than 12 years old. Falaba District only had one school reported an incidence, and Koinadugu and Bonthe Districts had two schools each. The highest number of reported schools were from Western Area Urban and Kenema District with 19 and 18 schools reporting the incidence respectively. Most of the reported incidence were referred to as "Bad Touch" with 82 schools reporting such cases. There 25 schools reported incidence of Penetration as 9 of those schools were primary schools. A total of 16 schools reported incidence of rape as 5 of those schools were primary schools. Schools in the junior secondary level report most each of the type of incidence perpetuated. A total of 2,852 schools reported they have redress mechanisms when SRGBV occurs of which 409 of them were private schools. Of the 123 schools that reported incidence of SRGBV when asked what type of response given to

the victims of SRGBV, 70 reported they counsel the victims, 66 reported they made the appropriate referrals and 46 said they observe and enquire from the victim. It is worth noting that some of the schools acted on at least one of the responses.

A total of 1,112 schools reported they have climate change/environmental clubs for which over half of these schools (562) were found in the primary school level. With these number of schools reporting having these clubs across all the levels, interventions can come in using them as pilot schools to spread awareness to other schools as climate change is real. The main two main threats the schools faced were air pollution and windstorm as 1,456 and 1,194 schools reported these threats respectively. Other threats include river/stream pollution, flooding, and littering. The two main causes of environmental threats were deforestation and poor waste management which 1,639 and 1,123 schools reported respectively. A given school might be affected by more than one cause of threat. Most of the schools that sought out redress mechanism reported they sought it from the local authority and MBSSE as 1,833 and 1,164 schools reported respectively. 69 schools reported they have sought for relocation.

The 2022/23 school year registered a total of 3,345,818 pupils in schools nationwide, while the 2023/24 school year enrolled 3,461,876 pupils in all schools across the country. The two enrolment totals reported a 3% increase between the two school years. Of the total pupils enrolled in schools across all levels in the 2022/23 school year, 1,631,492 (49%) were boys and 1,714,326 (51%) were girls; so also, for 2023/24 school year 1,684,809 were boys (49%) and 1,777,067 were girls (51%). This demonstrates that more girls were enrolled in school than boys both during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. The difference in enrolment between public schools and private in 2024 is massive (1,553,357/278,893) as it has been over the years. The distribution of pupils in government support schools during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years across all levels demonstrated there has been an increase in enrolment of 2.4% across all levels. The pre-primary level saw the biggest increase of 6% with enrolment increased from 55,408 in 2023 to 58,724 in 2024. Senior secondary level reported the least increment of 0.4% between the years.

The number of pupils enrolled in primary, junior, and senior secondary schools by sex during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years for each level enrolment decreases as the grade ascends except for the senior secondary level where we have more pupils in the SSS 3 grade than the SSS 1 and SSS 2 grade. There were many more pupils enrolled in Class 1 than in SSS3, which is characteristic of a system that is losing pupils between progressive grades. It worth noting that, there were more girls than boys at each grade level from Class 1 to SSS3. There was a significant drop in the number of pupils between Class 1 and Class 2, which can largely be attributed to the fact that many pupils start primary school before the age of 6 and repeat the class because of a shortage of pre-primary schools.

It is normal for the Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) to be greater than 100% since the numerator for a given level is the total enrolment of pupils in that level irrespective of age whether over or under. The enrolment of pupils in the primary and junior secondary levels were far greater than the school age for those two levels

during the 2022/23 year (146% and 105% respectively) and 2023/24 school year (148% and 107% respectively). The senior secondary level reported 96% and 98% respectively for the two years.

The primary retention rate (RR) was estimated as 43% which indicates that a little over two-fifths of the pupils entering primary were likely to reach the final grade. This low RR suggests that drop-out rate at the primary level and/or repetition rate were both quite high more so there were so many underage pupils entering class 1 and had to repeat the grade one or more times. Estimated at 74%, the junior secondary RR was significantly higher than that of the primary level. The RR for senior secondary level was abnormal at over 100%. The possible reason for this exceptionally high RR could be due to a very large number of pupils being allowed by policy to re-sit the WASSCE enrolled in SSS3 alongside regular pupils who were promoted from SSS2 to SSS3.

There were 35,969 pupils with disabilities across the four levels of education. Just 3% of the total pupils with disability were enrolled in pre-primary school, 59% were enrolled in primary school, 24% were enrolled in JSS, whilst 14% were enrolled in SSS. The majority were visually impaired children (9,999), followed by those with disabilities related to hearing (7,714), learning (6,856), speech (5,875) and physical impairments (4,774). There were few cases of pupils who were survivors of Kyphosis, Albinism and Dwarfism.

The highest number of pregnant schoolgirls (275) were enrolled in JSS3, representing 21.8% of the total number of pregnant pupils. The second highest number was at SSS2, where 254 pregnant schoolgirls represented 20.3% of all pregnant schoolgirls. At each school level, the highest numbers of pregnant girls were found in the last grades (class 6 for primary, JSS3 for junior secondary and SSS3 for senior secondary). This trend suggests that girls are more likely to become pregnant in the final grade of each level, potentially having an impact on their transition and completion rates. The average ages of pregnant girls were 15, 17 and 19 years for primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels respectively. Their minimum age across the levels were 11, 12 and 14 years for primary, junior and senior secondary respectively.

The 2023 ASC data shows that 90,073 teachers were enumerated, while the 2024 ASC reported 91,224 teachers were enumerated. In 2024, 78,325 teachers were found in public as compared to 12,889 found in private schools. There is a 1.5% increase in teacher teaching in government supported schools between the years 2022/23 and 2023/24. New teachers into the teaching profession dropped from 17,342 in 2023 to 13,405 in 2024. It is worth noting that 39% of all teachers in 2024 were paid by the Government of Sierra Leone. A quarter of all teachers (25%) enumerated in 2024 were untrained and majority of them did not have any post-secondary school certificate. In addition, only 64% of all teachers were qualified for the level they were teaching. Average pupil to Teacher ratio (PTR) was recorded at 37:1 and 38:1 for all school levels in 2023 and 2024 respectively. 2024 ASC recorded a pupil to qualified teacher ratio (PQTR) on average as 57:1.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

Correct and reliable information is a vital for effective decision making. Reliable information is essential for good quality monitoring and evaluation of all systems including education system. Information in the Annual School Census (ASC) has been, and continues to be used by educational planners, development partners, and policy analysts. It is also used by researchers to diagnose trends, strengths, weaknesses, gaps and needs of the education system. and in formulation of educational policies and plans. It informs the designing of development-partner assisted projects and sector-wide programmes.

In Sierra Leone, the main source of education statistics is the ASC carried out by the Directorate of Planning and Policy (DPP) at the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary School (MBSSE). The ASC has been conducted for over a decade. It enumerates all schools in the country that make themselves available for enumeration.

Like previous censuses, the 2022/2023 and 2023/24 ASCs exercise enumerates all basic and senior secondary schools, whether they are public or private, across the 16 districts (22 Local Council) in the country.

The use of digital technology for data collection for the last seven years has improved on the quality and swiftness of the data collection process and the credibility of the data produced.

Conducting the census is an involved process and requires full participation and involvement at all levels of the Sierra Leonean education system.

1.2 Objective of the School Census

Every child deserves an education, but this can only occur when nations make resources available equitably, fairly and promptly. The goal of the Annual School Census is to collect education data every year at the school level. The data collected through paper questionnaires and digital forms provides a snapshot of the Sierra Leonean education system and assists planners at all levels to target interventions.

The 2023 and 2024 ASCs collected data at all school levels which is strategic in ensuring that the goal for inclusive education and leaving no one behind is achieved in the country.

1.3 Scope of the Schools' Census

The census was carried out in pre-primary, primary, junior and senior secondary schools. The data collection started on the 2nd February 2024 and continued for a period of three consecutive weeks. All schools, regardless of type, participated in the census.

The data collection was done by trained enumerators that include unemployed graduates, university students and staff from various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) that work on data, statistics, accountability, transparency and system strengthening recruited in their district of residence. Paper questionnaires were sent to the schools two weeks before actual data collection started for the school authorities to complete them. During the data collection period, the enumerators went to the schools to record the data from the paper questionnaires into the digital form on the SurveyCTO app, verifying responses that are not clear with the school leaders.

1.4 Data Collection Tools

A full structured questionnaire each for different level was designed and used to collect data from the various school levels. At each level, the data collected included information on:

a. School profile: This included information such as EMIS number, school name, location, school contact, school ownership and if the school receives government support or not.

b. School infrastructure: this included availability of existing facilities in schools, such as classroom, library, source of drinking water, toiletries etc.

c. Instruction materials: This covered the textbooks available for each subject in each class; ICT facility for learning; availability of life skills-based HIV and sexuality education.

d. The students: This covered number of streams in the schools; enrolment and repeaters – including learners with disabilities and pregnant girls in schools.

e. School management and community participation: This included questions on the operational status of school management committees; functional Community Teacher Association and the frequency of meetings held to discuss school education status; existence of mother clubs etc.

f. Teaching and non-teaching staff: This included the number of teachers distributed by qualification (academic and professional) and responsibilities assigned in school; the subjects taught; and non-teaching staff in-post for various positions.

g. Vulnerability in schools: This included issues on climate change and the environment, and also Sexual Related and Gender-Based Violence that occur in the schools.

1.5 Coverage.

The 2023 and 2024 ASCs covered all the schools that were in operation in all 16 districts across the country. A total of 13,456 schools (Pre-Primary - 2167, Primary - 7798, Junior Secondary - 2374, and Senior Secondary -1117) that were initial identified as being in operation were visited and the required information collected. From these targeted schools 423 of them were either not in operation during the survey period or found to be duplicated in the school list used to enumerate the schools due to proprietors changing the name of their schools without informing the Ministry or they been relocated to other jurisdiction not closing the name of the school in their previous jurisdiction. Therefore, a total of 13,033 schools submitted as existing and these were the school that provided data for analysis and reporting.

Table 1-1 School Completion Status by District

District	School List (Target)	Final Submission	Completion Rate
Bo	1,121	1,088	97%
Bombali	823	806	98%
Bonthe	332	324	98%
Falaba	401	386	96%
Kailahun	595	583	98%
Kambia	611	607	99%
Karene	454	450	99%
Kenema	1,133	1,103	97%
Koinadugu	356	344	97%
Kono	917	914	99%
Moyamba	632	604	96%
Port Loko	939	916	98%
Pujehun	391	386	99%
Tonkolili	935	917	98%
Western Area Rural	1,845	1,684	91%
Western Area Urban	1,971	1,921	97%
Grand Total	**13,456**	**13,033**	**97%**

Table 1-1 above demonstrates the completion status of the data collection during the survey period across the districts. As mentioned earlier, the variation was due to closure of schools and schools found duplicated in the school master list either by change of name or relocation. However, 97% of the schools listed were enumerated. One key reason given for the disparity between listed and visited schools in Western Area Rural, was that many low-cost private schools had closed due to a decline in enrolment as parents took their children to nearby government-assisted schools in order to take advantage of the Free Quality School Education (FQSE).

2. FIELD METHODOLOGY

2.1 Data Collection Process

Each School Leader was responsible for the correct and accurate completion of his or her school's Annual School Census (ASC) Questionnaire. All schools, both public and private, completed the Questionnaire that was sent ahead. The enumerators were assigned to visit the schools and record the data on the filled paper questionnaires into the digital forms on the SurveyCTO app for upload to the ASC cloud server.

2.2 Recruitment and Training of Field Staff

Having a reliable, well trained and knowledgeable data collectors require training and good instructors. In ensuring this for the 2023 and 2024 ASCs, the MBSSE implemented a two-day training of

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the trainers at Hotel 5-10 in Freetown who then cascaded the training to the enumerators at district level for two days before data collection commenced.

2.2.1 Training of Trainers (ToT)

The ToT was conducted on the 15th and 16th of January 2024 in Freetown and was attended by the MBSSE Data Team; MBSSE District Statistical Clerks/ICT Officers; Statisticians from Statistics Sierra Leone (Stat-SL); Staff of National Civil Registration Authority (NCRA); and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) personnel working on education. During the training, the participants were able to review and finalise the ASC questionnaires. The Supervisors were also trained on the general operations of the National School Survey. The training received immense support from the Directorate of Planning and Policy (DPP), and the Directorate of School Quality Assurance and Resources Management (DSQARM).

Since both paper-based and electronic forms were deployed for the data collections, trainees were able to go through the paper-based questionnaire to familiarise with the questions and flow with the electronic forms. To cement the knowledge gained from the training, a simulation exercise was conducted to demonstrate actual data collection. The ToT attracted five (5) facilitators and seventy (70) participants from various MDAs across the districts.

Figure 2.2-1: Training of Trainer at Hotel 5-10 in Freetown

2.2.2 Training of Enumerators at District Level

Immediately after the ToT in Freetown, the trainings of enumerators were conducted at district level facilitated by participant from the ToT. The training of enumerators at the district were conducted on the 22nd and 23rd of January 2024. A total of 597 enumerators were recruited and trained across all districts

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nationwide. The distribution of enumeration was weighted according to the number of schools in the district. The recruited enumerators include unemployed graduates, university students and staff from various MDAs that work on data, statistics, accountability, transparency and system strengthening.

Figure 2.2-2: Training of Enumerators in Kailahun and Moyamba Districts

Kailahun District Training

Moyamba District Training

2.3 Team Organization (roles and responsibilities)

2.3.1 ASC Field Supervision Organogram

NATIONAL COORDINATOR [DIRECTOR OF PLANING AND POLICY]

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISORS [DDs in the Districts]

REGIONAL COORDINATOR - EAST
REGIONAL COORDINATOR - NORTH
REGIONAL COORDINATOR - NORTH-WEST
REGIONAL COORDINATOR SOUTH
REGIONAL COORDINATOR WEST

DISTRICT SUPERVISORS [KAILAHUN, KENEMA and KONO]
DISTRICT SUPERVISORS [BOMBALI, FALABA, KOINADUGU and TONKOLILI]
DISTRICT SUPERVISORS [KAMBIA, KARENA and PORT LOKO]
DISTRICT SUPERVISORS [BO, BONTHE, MOYAMBA and PUJEHUN
DISTRICT SUPERVISORS [WESTERN AREA URBAN and WESTERN AREA RURAL]

DISTRICT IT/STATISTICAL CLER
DISTRICT IT/STATISTICAL CLER
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DISTRICT IT/STATISTICAL CLER
DISTRICT IT/STATISTICAL CLERK

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2.3.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Field Supervisors

2.3.2.1 National Coordinator

- Served as the chief supervisor of the entire ASC process (administratively and technically).
- Received technical update from the Regional Coordinators on daily basis.
- Briefed by the DDs on administrative issues in their respective districts.
- Provides updates on the status of the ASC to MBSSE Management.

2.3.2.2 Deputy Directors in District Offices

- Were responsible for ASC administrative activities within their respective district.
- Facilitate the movement of materials and personnel within their respective district.
- Troubleshoot administrative bottle necks happening within their respective districts.
- Briefed the National Coordinator on the status of the ASC in their respective districts.

2.3.2.3 Regional Coordinators

- Coordinate all ASC technical activities within the region assigned.
- Engaged the District supervisor on daily basis on the status of the ASC performance in the respective district within the region.
- Provide daily update to the National Coordinator on the status of the ASC in their respective regions.

2.3.2.4 District Supervisors

- Responsible for all ASC technical activities in the district stationed.
- Vet questionnaires and give feedback from the Regional Coordinator the enumerators in the respective districts.
- Ensure all electronics ASC forms are uploaded to the 'mobssesl' server. Forms with errors should be verify and ensure completeness for uploading or discarding.
- Made frequent daily telephone calls to enumerators to know their position and status on the ASC data collection.
- Update the regional coordinator on daily basis the status of the ASC in their district.
- Gave frequent feedback to the enumerators on issues raised.
- Ensure the completeness of the census in terms of submissions and correctness.

2.3.2.5 District It/Statistical Clerks

- ICT assistance (tablet functioning, software uploading, uploading of data, and troubleshooting),
- Clustered and distribute paper questionnaires to the enumerators.

- Received completed paper questionnaires from the enumerators, vet them and submit them to the DD of the District.
- Supported the facilitation in trainings.

2.3.2.6 Third Party Monitoring

- Third party monitoring happened in two forms.
- There was technical monitoring from among the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ani-Corruption Commission (ACC), and Statistics Sierra Leone (Stat-SL). These personnel from CSOs and MDAs as stated above first received training during the ToT in Freetown that made them understood the questionnaires and the expected responses to question and the technical details in the field.
- They did random visits to schools, to support and validate the data collection process.
- The other part of monitoring was from the 22 local councils with a team of five (5) personnel from the education committee and M&E units.
- They performed technical monitoring and also ensured a smooth process in the field between the enumerators and the school.

2.4 Actual Data Collection and Data Management

MBSSE continue collecting data using CAPI technology. The same application (SurveyCTO collect) was used for the ASC data collection in 2021. To ensure the smooth running of the software used for data collection (SurveyCTO collect), only android Tablets were used.

The software design was in two segments – Main School Survey, Teacher Questionnaire. All surveys were designed in English. However, Krio language was intermittently used during survey administration. This was so because most of the respondents speak Krio.

The data were downloaded frequently to check for consistency and errors that might occur. To ease the cleaning process of the data and, conduct completion rate analysis, the data was downloaded into comma separated values (CSV) files and STATA format which kept track of all work done via it log and do file feature. Data cleaning and completion tracking were mainly undertaken by the core Data Team led by the Free Education Project Statistician. The core Data team supported the data management process throughout.

2.5 Quality Control Assurance

The 2023 and 2024 Annual School Censuses, continued to maintain quality in both tools and field work monitoring to ensure data quality. First, a questionnaire went through a series of testing and updating to ensure proper quality control and logics were put in place in the electronic questionnaire. The CAPI questionnaire included speed limit violations, automatic skip patterns, responses constraint that prevent the

form to accept data that is obviously incorrect, invalid or inconsistent, and further logic checks were set to manage workflow.

Innovation for Poverty Action (IPA) a partner working in education supported the Ministry with 16 personnel that are well grounded in data and statistics to serve as supervisors in the 16 districts. The financial logistical support for these supervisors was provided by IPA. In previous years, one supervisor had to cover an entire district and the ratio of enumerator to supervisor was too much. With the additional personnel from IPA, more areas were covered, and more vetting was done in terms of data collection methods and quality of questionnaire completion.

The enumerators were required to visit assigned schools in the relevant communities. Supervisors were responsible for monitoring data collection by doing spot checks. Supervisors were also required to give daily updates of their district's progress via SMS to the Coordinators who also reported to the National Coordinator.

2.5.1 Spot and Back Checks

Coordinators and Supervisors were also responsible for quality control assurance by doing spot-check in some of the schools. Spot checks were done by sitting with interviewer and respondent to listen to the way the interview was done. Observations were made without interrupting the interview and after the interview the supervisor shared his or her findings with the enumerator and later with the entire team in his/her district in order to improve the quality of work.

2.5.2 Office Spot check

Based on the daily submission, the data management team at the MBSSE HQ, ran quality checks on the submitted data and provide daily and weekly report. The checks conducted included, completion rate, gps accuracy, miss matched responses and missing information. This helped to track the work progress as per the schedule and address any team that lagged the schedule.

2.6 Editing

Editing was done into two parts: Field editing and Office editing.

2.6.1 Field Editing

Field editing involved checking of the completion status, miss matched responses and missing information as received from SurveyCTO server. The task was mainly carried by Coordinators, Supervisors, District Statistical Clerks, and Third-Party Monitors. This was done to check whether all schools assigned were visited and interviewed as well as the paper questionnaire were collected. All errors that were discovered with the SurveyCTO in the tablet were discussed with the enumerators at the field.

2.6.2 Office Editing

Office editing was done after the completion of field work. It comprised of matching school names against the original database, this was done by supervisor and the district IT staff.

2.7 Challenges and Limitation

Variation in the school master and completed schools due to duplication and closure of schools unbeknown to the Ministry. Enumerators had to make several callbacks or had to transverse the districts to locate schools for enumeration before final find out these schools were either closed or were duplicates. This time spent on locating schools for enumeration delayed the process of data collection and even cause embarrassment to the Ministry in terms not knowing where to locate their schools.

Non-initiates of traditional secret societies in some districts found it very difficult to access some schools during the data collection period. Enumerators were assigned to clusters where the schools were located and it was unfortunate when these enumerators went to the schools, the communities cannot be accessed because of the initiations going on in these places causing delays in the data collection process.

Backchecking data submitted by enumerators was constraint as resources were limited to do wider coverage. The supervisors did few schools but were unable to do more as the terrains were challenging and schools were far apart.

Even though we have been printing instruction manuals and sending these manuals and the paper questionnaires well ahead of time to the schools for easy completion of the form, some school heads were still finding it difficult to complete the questionnaires and the enumerators had to sit with them to complete the forms causing the enumerators to spend more time in a given school than they supposed to have spent.

Even though we have been collecting data for the ASC for over a decade now, yet we are still facing private schools reluctant to complete the ASC form and some even refused to accommodate the enumerators. Though the Government of Sierra Leone is paying NPSE and BECE fees for their pupils taking these exams, yet they are making the claim that they are not receiving any direct benefit from the government. It has been explained to them that the data the ASC collects is to plan for the education sector including the private schools.

Since the data collected is administrative, some of the data were obtained from school registers, vouchers and other school documents. Some of the schools have seriously challenged with record keeping. Registers were either incomplete or not available and therefor the enumerators had to help them put their documents together.

2.8 Recommendation

Following the above challenges, we are recommending the following to the MBSSE.

1. The MBSSE District Education Offices (DEOs) should regularly update the school list during the SQAOs normal school visits searching for both existing and non-existing schools. Also, new schools registering should be probed further if they have any trace of existence before their current registration.

2. The DEOs should do due diligence in terms negotiating and reconciling with traditional leaders if their initiations do coincide with the ASC there should be a way for enumerators to be able to access the schools for enumeration.

3. More resources need to be put into the ASC to increase monitoring, supervision, and validation of the data. IPA supported the ministry with additional supervisor, and other Education Development Partners (EDP) should come onboard to support the monitoring and validation process.

4. Part of the SAQOs mandate is to routinely monitor the activities and progress of the schools, the SAQOs should once in a while during their routine visits engage this school authorities who have challenges in completing the ASC form and give them some partial training until they arrive in completing the form. As the Ministry wants to have the school authorities in the future complete the ASC forms themselves through the one tablet par school programme, special training by phase should be conducted for these school authorities or their proxy at least once every year.

5. Even though it has been explained to private schools on several occasion that the data collected from the ASC is to plan for the education sector of the country and will help the country compete with other countries in education and also the country to know her short falls, yet we still face with the issue of non-compliance from some private schools. Also, they know that both the private and public schools have to speak to any document that the country produces to showcase the education system of the country. Having said this, we recommend the Ministry as the supervising and regulatory body of these private schools stamp her authority on these private schools by having them comply with the whole process of the ASC whenever the activity is in progress.

The ASC budget should always make room for inflation and other unforeseen challenges that can occur afield. Sometimes it is the passion, braveness and commitment of the field workers that made us succeed in completing the entire exercise within limits and time.

3.0 ASC 2023 and 2024 FINDINGS

During the period 2023 to 2024, the number of schools increased by 1.4%, from 12,854 to 13,033. Over this same period, the number of approved schools increased by 1.1%, from 10,477 to 10,592 schools, whilst public schools receiving financial and material support from the GoSL increased by 0.8%, from 7,955 to 8,020 schools. As the number of schools increases, more access is provided to learners which in turn increase pupil enrolment. Pupil enrolment in 2024 increased by 116,058 pupils compared to 2023 and this is as a result to the Government commitment to increase access and quality. Year on year enrolment increased from 3,345,818 to 3,461,876 which reported a 3% increase.

3.1 The Schools

This section of the report will focus on the number of schools in Sierra Leone disaggregated by school level, school type, school ownership, approval status and other indicators. It will further highlight the adequacy of the infrastructure facilities as the plan of the Government is to increase access into all school levels by learners eligible for schooling, irrespective of where they are. The indicators presented in this chapter include the number of schools distributed by various dimensions; average school sizes for respective school levels; management of each level of education as well as geographical consideration, school infrastructure and the challenges in their use.

3.1.1 School Profile

This sub-section reports on the total number of schools enumerated during the 2023 and 2024 ASCs across the four levels of schooling mentioned in the 2004 Education Act as amended by the 2023 Basic and Senior Secondary Education Act. The schools are distributed by i) public and private ownership; ii) approval status; and iii) support type received.

Table 3-1 Distribution of Schools by Level, Ownership Type and Year

Level	2022/23			2023/24		
	Private	*Public*	*Total*	*Private*	*Public*	*Total*
Pre- Primary	753	1,300	2,053	771	1,316	2,087
Primary	794	6,685	7,479	815	6,760	7,575
Junior Secondary	396	1,862	2,258	403	1,886	2,289
Senior Secondary	206	858	1,064	217	865	1,082
Grand Total	**2,149**	**10,705**	**12,854**	**2,206**	**10,827**	**13,033**

Table 3-1 above depicts the distribution of total number of schools by ownership type for the school years 2022/23 and 2023/24. Out of a total of 12,854 schools in 2022/23, the majority were Public (10,705) while the remaining 2,149 schools were owned by private actors. In 2024, 13,033 schools were enumerated of which 10,827 were public schools and 2,206 were owned by private entities. In percentage terms, public schools grew by 1.1%, whilst private schools grew by 2.7%. It is also worth noting that between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 more private pre-primary and senior secondary schools were established than public schools of the same level. As always, the primary level has the highest number of schools.

Table 3-2 Distribution of Schools by Level and Ownership/Proprietorship (2023/24 year)

Label	Government	Mission/religious group	Community	Other	Private
Pre- Primary	105	876	276	59	771
Primary	987	4,847	782	144	815
Junior Secondary	70	1,178	510	128	403
Senior Secondary	31	569	204	61	217
Grand Total	**1,193**	**7,470**	**1,772**	**392**	**2,206**

In Sierra Leone, schools are either owned by the Government (central or local) or other non-state actor entities as indicated in Table 3-2 above. In the 2023/24 school year, over half of the schools were owned by missions/religious based organisations (7,470). However, even though the government is the biggest funder of education in terms of providing paying fee subsidy, teaching and learning materials (TLM), textbooks and other teaching and learning aide, yet it only owns 9% (1,193) of the schools in the country. Government ownership is greatest at the primary level at which it owns 13% of the schools and least at the senior secondary level at which it owns just 2.9%.

Table 3-3 Distribution of Approved Schools (Tier 1) by Level and Year

Level	2022/23	2023/24	% Increase
Pre- Primary	1,239	1,255	1.3%
Primary	6,335	6,401	1.0%
Junior Secondary	1,957	1,974	0.9%
Senior Secondary	946	962	1.7%
Grand Total	**10,477**	**10,592**	**1.1%**

Table 3-3 above shows the number of schools (public and private) which have been approved for operation (Tier 1 Approval) by MBSSE over the years across all levels. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of schools approved for operation inclusive of public and private increased by 1.1% across all levels (10,477 in 2023 to 10,592 in 2024). The greatest increase in percentage terms was at the pre-primary level but in terms of actual numbers, the primary level received more Tier 1 approvals between the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years than all other levels.

Table 3-4 Distribution of Government Supported Schools (Tier 2) by Level and Year

Level	2022/23	2023/24	% Increase
Pre- Primary	489	493	0.8%
Primary	5,361	5,410	0.9%
Junior Secondary	1,452	1,460	0.6%
Senior Secondary	653	657	0.6%
Grand Total	**7,955**	**8,020**	**0.8%**

Table 3-4 above shows the number of schools supported (Tier 2 Approval) by the Government of Sierra Leone. Schools that are receiving financial and/or material support from the GoSL are categorised as Government or Government-Assisted schools. Government schools are those constructed and wholly owned by either the central government or local councils while government-assisted schools are public schools owned by faith-based organisations, communities, or other institutions/organisations supported by the GoSL. The government supports schools through the payment of teacher salaries, payment of subsidies, provision of teaching and learning materials, etc. Please note that public schools that are not receiving either financial or material support from the government of Sierra Leone are categorised as non-supported schools.

There was 0.8% increase in schools supported by the GoSL between the periods 2023 and 2024 as seen in the table immediately above. The increase is from 7,955 schools during the 2022/23 school year to 8,020 schools during the 2023/24 school year. The biggest gain was at the primary level.

3.1.2 School Management and Governance
Effective school management and monitoring of the day-to-day activities of running the school are essential. If not properly done, it can affect the performance of the school and lead to poor learning outcomes. The School Management Committees (SMCs) and Board of Governors (BoG) together with the school leaders are responsible for managing and running schools, including all financial resources that come to the school, whether from the government or private sources. The performance of any school is a function of effective and efficient school management.

Table 3-5 Schools with School Management Committees (SMC)/ Board of Governors (BoG) (2023/24 year)

Level	Pre- Primary	Primary	Junior Secondary	Senior Secondary	Total
Number of Schools	1,671	6,897	1,989	961	**11,518**
% of Schools	**80%**	**91%**	**87%**	**89%**	**88%**

Table 3-5 above depicts the total number and share of schools that have functioning School Management Committees (SMC) and Board of Governors (BoG) by level. The results shows that 80% of pre-primary and 91% of primary schools have functional SMC in 2024. In addition, 87% of junior secondary and 89% of senior secondary schools reported having a functional BoG in schools. These structured plays an important role in managing schools in their localities.

Table 3-6 Training in Management and Governance (2023/24 year)

Level	Pre- Primary	Primary	Junior Secondary	Senior Secondary	Total
Number of Schools	928	4,399	1,219	620	**7,166**
% of Schools	**56%**	**64%**	**61%**	**65%**	**62%**

Table 3.6 above shows the total and share of schools whose SMC or BoG members have been trained in school management processes and procedures to enhance their knowledge and skills as at the 2023/24 school year. At the secondary level, 61% of junior secondary and 65% of senior secondary schools reported that their BoG members have been trained on how to manage and run their schools. Also, 56% pre-primary and 64% primary reported that their SMCs members have been trained to manage and run their school.

Table 3-7 Schools with Various Essential Learning Environment Facilities and Development/Improvement Plans (2023/24 year)

Level	Community Teacher Association	Guidance Counsellor	Health Delivery Room	School Development Plan
Pre- Primary	1,909	869	111	1,760
Primary	7,087	2,964	327	6,767
Junior Secondary	2,011	1,435	150	2,028
Senior Secondary	971	739	162	977
Grand Total	**11,978**	**6,007**	**750**	**11,532**

Table 3-7 above shows the distribution of various essential learning environment enhancement facilities and development/improvement plans across the various levels of schooling. Most of the schools reported that they have a CTA (11,978) and have prepared an SDP (11,532) to guide their income and expenditure for the school year. Almost half of the 13,033 schools reported they have a guidance counsellor (6,007) to help the pupils with their personal issues. Less than 1 in every 10XXX schools reported that they have a dedicated health delivery room (750).

3.1.3 Access to School Infrastructure Facilities

This sub-section of the report will provide information on the number and condition of classrooms (rooms used for instruction, excluding offices, staff rooms, and storage) and the type of construction. Furthermore, this section looks at the facilities in the schools and whether they are functional. The indicators presented in this chapter include the number of classrooms, pupil-classroom ratio, access to water, toilets and average classroom size, disaggregated by various dimensions and geographical location.

Table 3-8 Class Size (Pupil: Classroom Ratio) by Level and Classroom Type/Condition (2023/24 year)

Level	All Classrooms	Permanent Classrooms	Classrooms in Good Condition
Pre- Primary	33	37	46
Primary	52	56	84
Junior Secondary	56	59	80
Senior Secondary	60	63	78

Grand Total	**52**	**56**	**79**

All classrooms include makeshift, semi-permanent and permanent while permanent classrooms are neither makeshift nor semi-permanent. Good classrooms are defined as classrooms in a school that are not makeshift and do not need repairs. Table 3-8 above depicts the number of classrooms in good condition and the pupil: classroom ratio by classroom condition/type. The pupil-classroom ratio is referred to as the class size. It provides useful information for the Ministry on the status of classrooms in the country at the different levels of schooling, It also provides information on the likelihood of teachers in a school being faced by over-crowded classrooms.

From the table above, the pupil: classroom ratios for classrooms that are in good condition is high for all individual levels (pre-primary, primary, JSS and SSS). On average, the class size for all classrooms, permanent classrooms, and classrooms in good condition was 52, 56 and 79 per classroom respectively. These figures are not favourable for teaching/learning purposes. Small class sizes tend to be easier to manage and allow more effective teaching and learning.

Figure 3-1 Access to Water in Schools (2023/24 year)
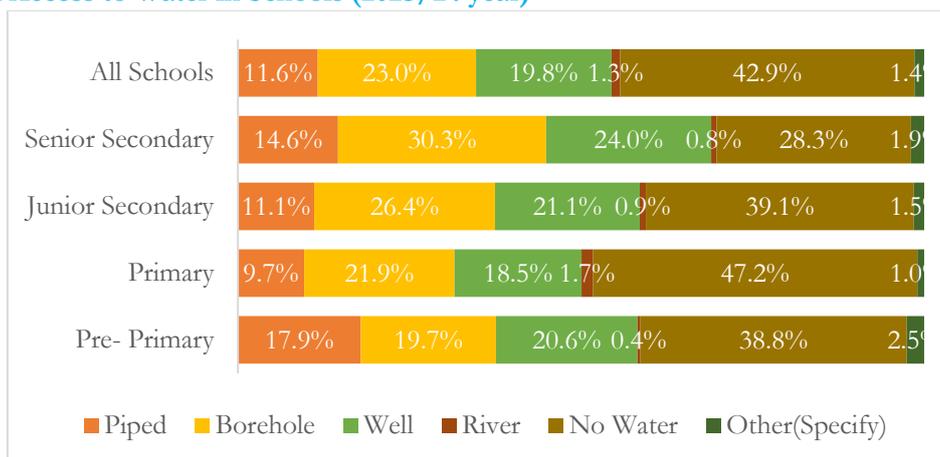
Figure 3-1 above shows the share of public schools with access to water by type of water source across the levels during the 2023/24 school year. From the chart above, in the 2023/24 school year, 54.4% of schools have access to potable water (that is pipe, borehole and well) during the school year. The sources of water reported were pipe (11.6%), borehole (23%), wells (19.8%), and river (1.3%). Unfortunately, 5,589 (42.9%) of the 13,033 schools reported not having access to any source of water. Also, the results show that primary (47.2%) and pre-primary (38.8) are the most vulnerable schools with regard to access to water.

Figure 3-2 Share of Schools with Separate Latrines for Boys and Girls (2023/24 year)
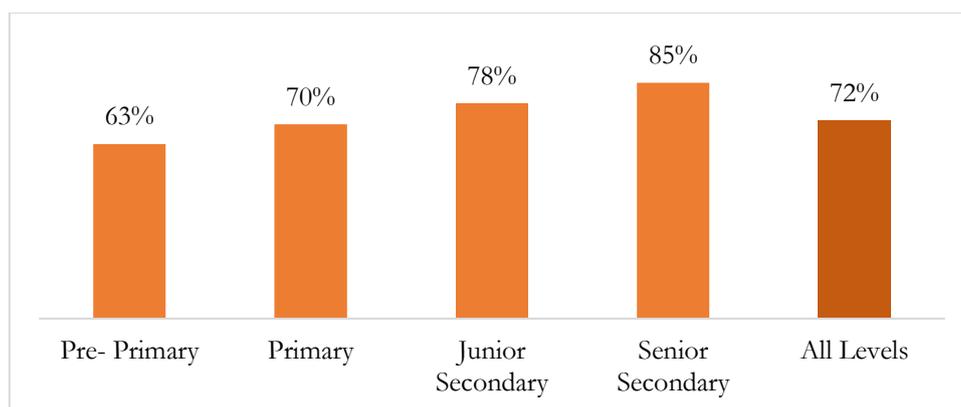
Figure 3-2 above details the share of schools with separate latrines for boys and girls for all levels during the 2023/24 school year. By policy, it is mandatory for school to have separate latrines for boys and girls and therefore 100% of all schools at all levels should comply. Most schools reported having separate latrines for boys and girls as the chart above shows. As the level progresses, the awareness increases as the chart presents 63%, 70%, 78%, and 85% of schools have separate latrines for boys and girls in the pre-primary, primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary levels respectively.

Table 3-9 Number of Latrines and Ratio of Usage (2023/24 year)

Level	Enrolment	Toilets (Drop Holes)			Toilet Ratio		
		Good	Fair	Bad	Good toilets	Good & Fair	Good, Fair & Bad
Pre- Primary	178,430	3,282	1,497	501	54	37	34
Primary	2,067,981	14,177	8,317	4,237	146	92	77
Junior Secondary	684,420	5,285	2,835	936	130	84	76
Senior Secondary	531,045	3,067	1,484	516	173	117	105
Grand Total	**3,461,876**	**25,811**	**14,133**	**6,190**	**134**	**87**	**75**

Table 3-9 above shows distribution of toilets by condition and toilet ratio across school levels for the 2023/24 school year. It is encouraging to note that there were more 'good' toilets than 'fair' and 'bad' toilets but there is high pupil to toilet ratio for good toilets combined at all levels of schooling. The ratio of pupils to good latrines is high in primary, junior and senior schools, but low in pre-primary schools. On average, there were 173 pupils per drop hole in SSS, 130 pupils per drop hole in JSS, and 146 pupils per drop hole in primary schools for good toilets.

However, these high usage ratios reduced as we included latrines in both fair and bad conditions. For latrines in good and fair condition, there were 87 pupils per drop hole on average: 92 pupils per drop hole in primary, 84 pupils per drop hole in JSS, 117 pupils per drop hole in SSS and 37 pupils per drop hole in pre-primary school. From the table above, there is urgent need to reduce the high pupil to toilet ratio and to provide pupils with a healthier teaching/learning environment.

Table 3-10 Distribution of Schools with Basic Facilities across the Levels (Hand Washing, Play Area, Fence, etc.) (2023/24)

16

Level	Hand Washing Facility	School Fenced	Playing Field	Ramp	Cubicle for girls in Menstruation
Pre- Primary	1,291	751	1,280	203	-
Primary	3,976	1,289	5,684	1,005	369
Junior Secondary	1,230	752	1,510	389	291
Senior Secondary	654	498	710	233	170
Grand Total	**7,151**	**3,290**	**9,184**	**1,830**	**830**
Share of Schools	**55%**	**25%**	**70%**	**14%**	**8%**

Table 3-10 above shows the distribution of some basic facilities found in schools at all levels during the 2023/24 school year. The availability of these basic facilities (hand washing facility, school perimeter fence, playing field, ramp, and cubicle for girls in menstruation) in schools can aide learning.

The Ebola epidemic and COVID19 pandemic taught us the good habit of washing our hands to stay healthy. However, it is seen on the table that a little over half of the schools (7,151 – 55%) reported they have functional hand washing facility in their schools.

It is an advantage for school approval purposes for a school to be fenced. The table immediately above shows only a quarter of all schools (25% - 3,290) were fenced in the 2023/24 school year.

Also in the School Approval Policy, is that for schools to be approved they should have a playing field or play area. The data reported 70% (9,184) of the schools had a playing field or play area.

For the safety of children with disability and inclusivity in schools, it is mandatory for schools to have ramps. As the data reports, only 14% (1,830) of all schools had ramps. This figure does not reflect well on inclusivity in schools.

The ASC has for the last decade has been reporting on the proportion of schools with menstruation cubicles for girls and has been calling for intervention in this area as it is key to the attendance of girls in schools. However, the results from this ASC still show a very low percentage of schools with this facility as the data report only 8% (830) of primary, junior secondary and senior secondary schools had the facility.

3.1.4 Access to Pedagogy and Learning Aid in Schools

In addition to the tuition fees paid by the GoSL to Government Assisted schools, the government also supports education through the provision of core subject textbooks at each level. The ideal Pupils to Textbook Ratio (PTxR) is 1:1 (one textbook to one pupil) but 1:2 (one textbook to two pupils) is globally acceptable.

Figure 3-3 Textbook Ratio at Various Levels of Schooling (2023/24)
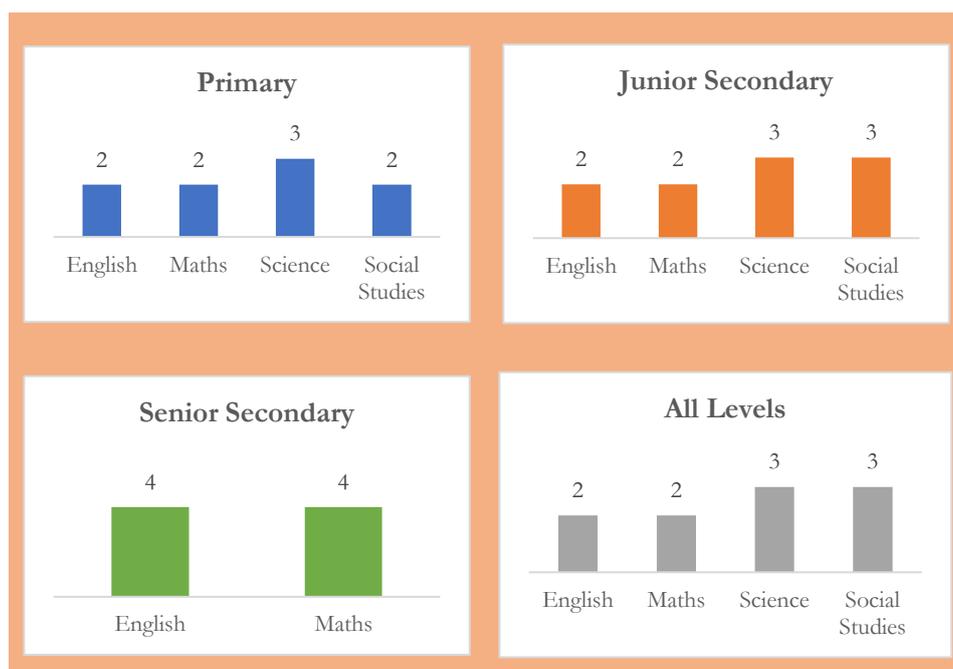
Figure 3-3 above shows the PTxR by level and core subjects. The PTxR of 2:1 for core English and Maths textbooks on average at all levels is acceptable for learning. Science and Social Studies core textbooks on average reported 3:1 which suggest that insufficient textbooks on the subject are available. Insufficient textbooks in English Language and Mathematics are available at the senior secondary level according to the data.

Table 3-11 Distribution and Share of Schools with Library and Science Lab by Level

Level	Library		Science Lab		All Schools
	Number	*Percent*	*Number*	*Percent*	
Primary	225	3%	72	1%	7,575
Junior Secondary	256	11%	120	5%	2,289
Senior Secondary	188	17%	144	13%	1,082
Grand Total	**669**	**5%**	**336**	**3%**	**10,946**

The availability of a functional school library enables access to required textbooks and learning materials so pupils can carry out research in a conducive environment, enhancing and improving learning outcomes. As illustrated in Table 3-11, only 5% of primary, junior and senior schools (669) have functioning library.

A well-equipped functional science laboratory for conducting experiments and practical work in the sciences can contribute to improving pass rates in these subjects. Table 3-11 shows just 3% of primary, junior and senior secondary schools (336) have functional science laboratory. The senor secondary level reported a little over a tenth of the SSS (13% - 144) have functional science lab.

3.1.5 Access to Electricity and ICT Pedagogy Facility
According to Perry Sadorsky in Information Communication Technology and Electricity Consumption in Emerging Economies, ICT and e-business can affect the demand for electricity primarily by the fact that

ICT requires electricity to operate, and the installation and operation of ICT increases the demand for electricity. This subsection therefore reports on access to electricity, computer and internet for pedagogy.

Figure 3-4 Access to Electricity in School (2023/24)
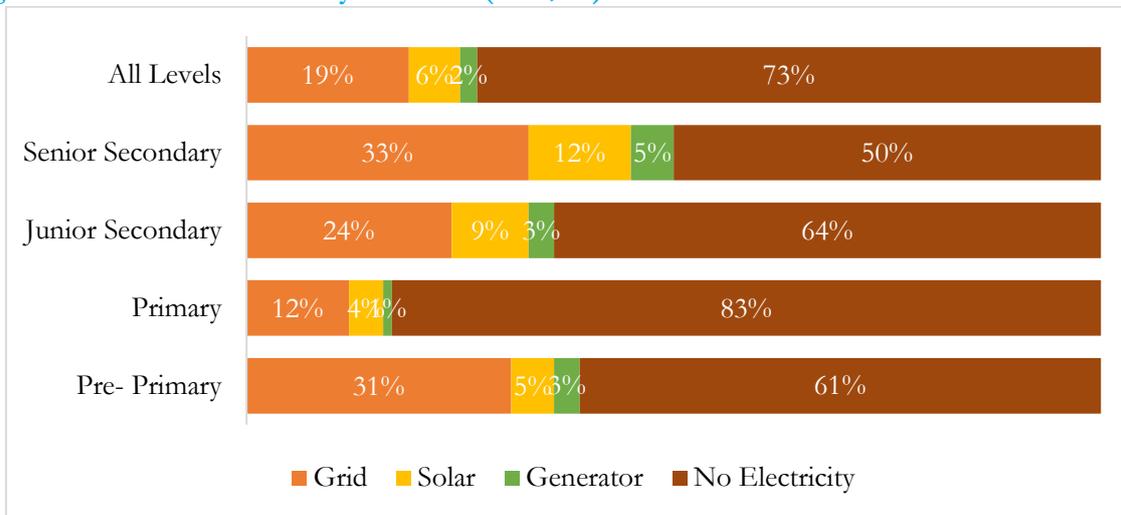
Figure 3-4 above depicts access to electricity in schools during the 2023/24 school year. Based on the chart above, 73% of schools in the country had no access to electricity. The data on the chart shows 61% of pre-primary schools, 83% primary schools, 64% of JSS and 50% of SSS did not have access to any source of electricity. The primary source of electricity was the grid which accounted for 19% of the 27% of electricity accessed by schools. ~~This is a clear demonstration of why most of the schools did not have access to electricity as majority of these schools were found in the rural area~~. Given the massive impact that technology and AI are likely to have on education over the next few years, it is imperative that funding is made available for the electrification of schools,

Figure 3-5 Share of Schools with Computer and Internet for Pedagogy, and Access to Mobile Network (2023/24)
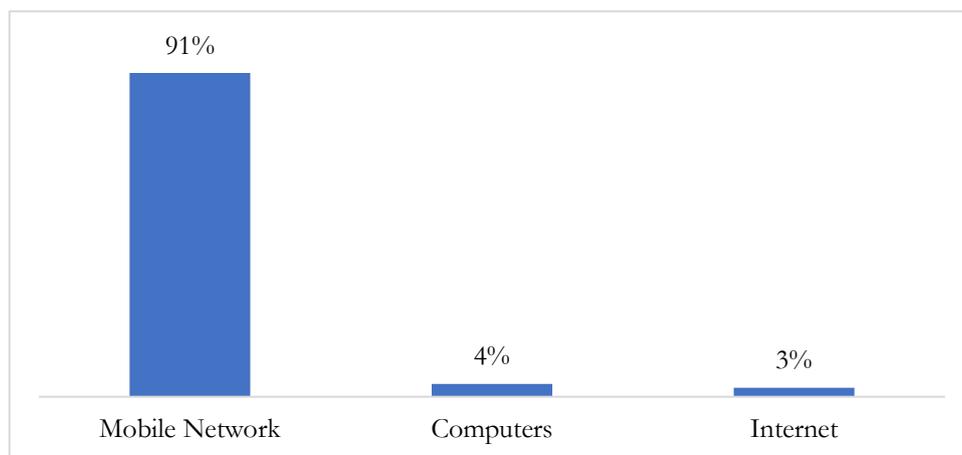
Figure 3-5 above illustrates the share of schools with computer and internet services for pedagogy, and access to mobile telephone networks in their communities during the 2023/24 school year. It is clear from

the chart that most of the schools were located in communities where they have access to mobile telephone network as 91% of the schools reported this. In terms of ICT pedagogy, a negligible 4% and 3% of schools reported they have computers and internet services respectively. With most of the schools located in communities where there is access to mobile telephone networks, it is easier for schools to access internet if the provision is made.

Table 3-12 Distribution of Schools with Computer and Internet for Pedagogy, and Access to Mobile Network (2023/24)

Level	Mobile Network	Computers	Internet
Pre- Primary	1,983	52	50
Primary	6,694	118	111
Junior Secondary	2,142	158	90
Senior Secondary	1,028	136	80
Grand Total	**11,847**	**464**	**331**

Table 3-12 depicts the distribution of schools with computer and internet services for pedagogy and access to mobile telephone network in their communities during the 2023/24 school year. The preceding chart is based on the above table.

3.1.6 School Feeding in Pre-Primary and Primary Levels

The ASC 2024 sought information on the number of beneficiaries in the school feeding programme implemented by the GoSL.

Table 3-13 Distribution of Government Assisted Pre-Primary and Primary Schools Benefiting from School Feeding Programme (2023/24)

| Level	Enrolment		
	Government Assisted Schools	*Benefitting from School feeding*	*% in Schools Benefitting from School Feeding*
Pre- Primary	58,724	20,006	34%
Primary	1,682,532	825,381	49%
Grand Total	**1,741,256**	**845,387**	**49%**

Table 3-13 shows the efforts of the MBSSE to expand the school feeding programme, with the 2024 ASC data, 845,387 of the 1,741,256 pupils in government assisted pre-primary and primary schools were benefitting from the school feeding programme reporting almost half of the pupils in these schools (49%). Available literature indicates that the school feeding programme contributes to the enrolment and retention of pupils in school.

3.1.7 Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) in Schools

Over the years, there have been reports of incidences of SGBV in schools, particularly affecting female pupils. This has had a negative impact on the system and contributed significantly to absenteeism, drop out and poor performance of affected girls in schools. Government and EDPs have carried out sensitisation and awareness-raising activities in an effort to eliminate such unacceptable practices.

Figure 3-6 Number of Schools Reporting SGBV Incidence (2023/24)
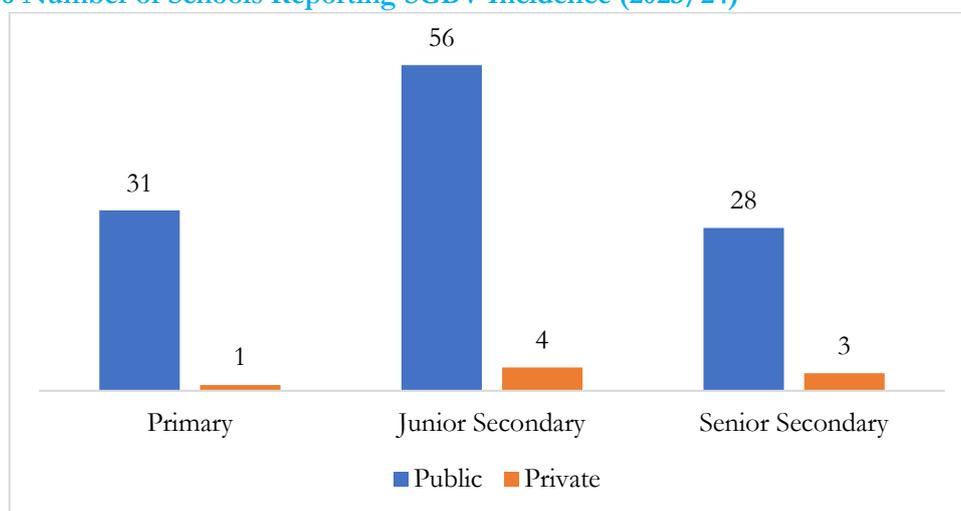
Figure 3.-6 above illustrates the number of schools reported incidence of SRGBV during the 2023/24 schools year. According to the graph, 123 schools reported incidences of SGBV cases across the school levels. Fewer schools (8) reported SGBV incidences in private schools compare to public schools (115). The reported incidences of SGBV cases were greatest in public schools, more especially the junior secondary. Given the stigma associated with incidences of SGVB, there is a possibility that incidences are under-reported and that actual cases are higher in number.

Table 3-14 Number of Schools Reporting Incidences of SGVB by School Level and Local Council (2023/24)

Level	Primary	Junior Secondary	Senior Secondary	Total
Bo	2	2	5	9
Bombali	-	2	2	4
Bonthe	1	1	-	2
Falaba	1	-	-	1
Kailahun	1	3	-	4
Kambia	3	4	2	9
Karene	1	2	1	4
Kenema	6	9	3	18
Koinadugu	1	1	-	2
Kono	3	5	2	10
Moyamba	2	5	2	9
Port Loko	3	3	1	7
Pujehun	3	2	1	6
Tonkolili	1	8	2	11
Western Area Rural	1	4	3	8
Western Area Urban	3	9	7	19

Grand Total	**32**	**60**	**31**	**123**

Table 3-14 indicates the number of schools reporting incidences of SGBV by school level and district. The data show that all districts at least have one school that reported an incidence of SRGBV. Except for Bombali District, all the districts have schools that reported an incidence of SRGBV at the primary school level which host children officially less than 12 years old. Falaba District only had one school reported an incidence, and Koinadugu and Bonthe Districts had two schools each. The highest number of reported schools were from Western Area Urban and Kenema District with 19 and 18 schools reporting incidences respectively.

Table 3-15 Number of Schools by Level and Type of SGBV Pupils Suffered in Schools (2023/24 year)

Level	Rape	Penetration	Oral Sex	Bad touch	Other
Primary	5	9	2	18	1
Junior Secondary	10	14	4	36	5
Senior Secondary	1	2	2	28	2
Grand Total	**16**	**25**	**8**	**82**	**8**

Table 3-15 above depicts the number of schools that report the various types of SRGBV happened in schools during the 2023/24 school year. According to the table, most of the reported incidence were referred to as "Bad Touch" with 82 schools reporting such cases. It is worth noting that 9 out of the 25 schools reported incidence of penetration were primary schools. Similarly, 5 of the 16 schools reporting incidences of rape were primary schools. This is a major concern. A strategy involving not just the MBSSE but also other MDAs, Local Councils, communities and partners needs to be put in plce to prevent this matter getting out of hand.

Figure 3-6 Number of Schools that have Redress Mechanism when SGBV Occurs (2023/24 year)
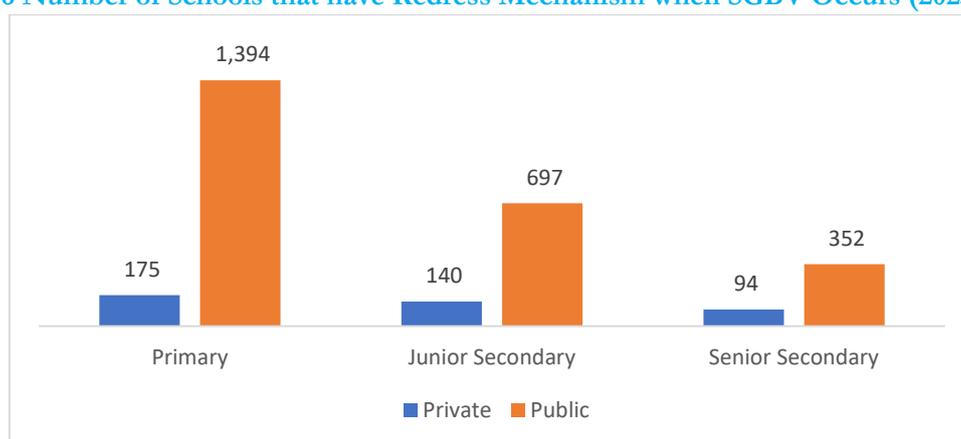
Figure 3-6 above illustrates distribution of schools in 2023/24 school year that reported they have redress mechanisms when SRGBV occurs. A total of 2,852 schools reported they have redress mechanisms when SRGBV occurs of which 409 of them were private schools.

Level	Observe and enquire from the Victim	Counsel the victim	Make appropriate referrals	Other
Primary	11	14	21	1
Junior Secondary	21	40	27	2
Senior Secondary	14	16	18	
Grand Total	**46**	**70**	**66**	**3**

Table 3-16 above explains the type of response school administrators give to victims of SRGBV during the 2023/24 school year. Of the 123 schools that reported incidence of SRGBV when asked what type of response given to the victims of SRGBV, 70 reported they counselled the victims, 66 reported they made the appropriate referrals and 46 said they observed the victim and made enquiries. It is worth noting that some of schools took more than one course of action. For example a school can observe the victim and make enquiries, counsel the victim, and then make the appropriate referral. At the same time it is disappointing to note that not all schools made referrals.

3.1.8 Status of Schools with regards to Climate and the Environment

This subsection of the report provides information on schools that have climate change/environmental clubs, type of environmental threat schools face, causes of environmental threats and how schools report these causes, as well as the redress mechanism they adopted during the 2023/24 school year.

Figure 3-7 Distribution of School with Climate Change/Environmental Club (2023/24)
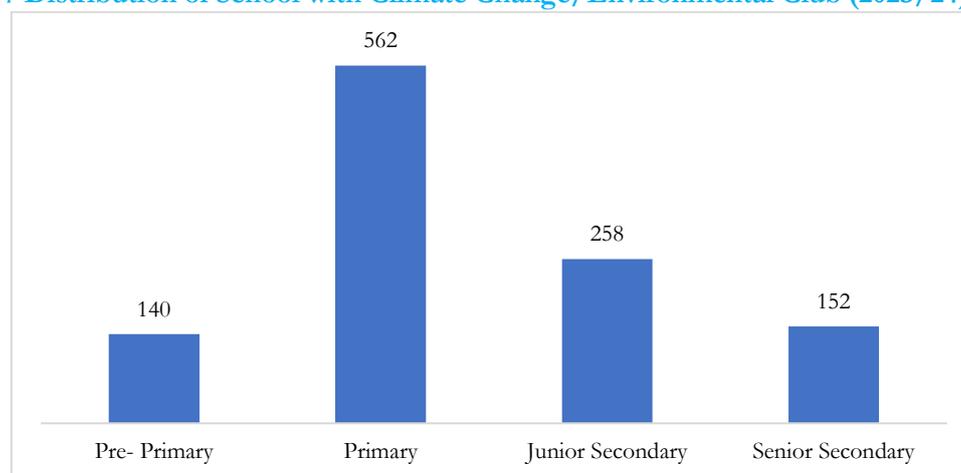
Figure 3-7 depicts the distribution of schools that have climate change/environmental clubs. A total of 1,112 schools reported they have climate change/environmental clubs for which over half of these schools

(562) were found in the primary school level. With these number of schools reporting having these clubs across all the levels, interventions can come in using them as pilot schools to spread awareness to other schools as climate change is real.

Table 3-17 Number of Schools Reporting Type of Environmental Threat Faced (2023/24)

| Level	Air Pollution	Pollution of stream/river	Flooding	Litter	Windstorm
Pre- Primary	223	56	53	96	125
Primary	746	236	158	240	697
Junior Secondary	316	80	73	130	248
Senior Secondary	171	42	35	87	124
Grand Total	**1,456**	**414**	**319**	**553**	**1,194**

Table 3-17 above shows the distribution of schools reporting various types of environmental threat they faced. The main two main threats the schools faced were air pollution and windstorm as 1,456 and 1,194 schools reported these threats respectively. Other threats include river/stream pollution, flooding, and littering.

Table 3-18 Number of Schools Reporting Various Environmental Threat Faced (2023/24)

Level	Deforestation	Poor Waste Management	Mining Activities	Indiscrete Construction	Other
Pre- Primary	185	195	78	39	30
Primary	958	537	238	122	94
Junior Secondary	330	245	97	73	37
Senior Secondary	166	146	50	42	14
Grand Total	**1,639**	**1,123**	**463**	**276**	**175**

Schools reported various causes of environmental threat to the schools as seen in Table 3-18 above. The two main causes of environmental threats were deforestation and poor waste management which 1,639 and 1,123 schools reported respectively. A given school might be affected by more than one cause of threat.

Table 3-19 Number of Schools that Adopted Redress Mechanism by Type (2023/24)

Level	Report to the Central Govt	Report to the Local Authority	Report to the MBSSE	Seek for relocation	Other
Pre- Primary	51	264	153	10	24
Primary	281	989	614	35	54
Junior Secondary	104	384	261	13	32
Senior Secondary	52	196	136	11	23
Grand Total	**488**	**1,833**	**1,164**	**69**	**133**

Table 2-19 above details the distribution of schools that have adopted redress mechanism based on the threat they were facing and from which source. Most of the schools that sought out redress mechanism reported they sought it from the local authority and MBSSE as 1,833 and 1,164 schools reported respectively. 69 schools reported they have sought for relocation.

3.2 The Pupils

This section of the report will provide information on the number of pupils enrolled at different school levels in Sierra Leone. The data is disaggregated by gender, school type and other key parameters. The indicators presented in this chapter include the total number of pupils distributed by enrolment rates and internal efficiency rates by level and gender; and enrolment in inclusive education.

3.2.1 Enrolment in Schools

In the 2022/23 school year, a total of 3,345,818 pupils were enrolled in schools nationwide, while the 2023/24 school year, 3,461,876 pupils were enrolled in all schools across the country. A 3% increase in total enrolment took place between the two school years.

Table 3-20 Distribution of Pupils Enrolment by Level, Year and Sex

Level	2022/23			2023/24		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Both*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Both*
Pre- Primary	81,681	88,447	170,128	85,708	92,722	178,430
Primary	981,779	1,023,116	2,004,895	1,013,475	1,054,506	2,067,981
Junior Secondary	317,972	338,031	656,003	331,372	353,048	684,420
Senior Secondary	250,060	264,732	514,792	254,254	276,791	531,045
Grand Total	**1,631,492**	**1,714,326**	**3,345,818**	**1,684,809**	**1,777,067**	**3,461,876**

Table 3-20 depicts the distribution of pupil enrolment during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years for all levels by sex. Of the total pupils enrolled in schools across all levels in the 2022/23 school year, 1,631,492 (49%) were boys and 1,714,326 (51%) were girls; so also, for 2023/24 school year 1,684,809 were boys (49%) and 1,777,067 were girls (51%). More girls were enrolled in school than boys both during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. The data is consistent in that it continues to show that most students at the primary level do not make it to the senior secondary level. There's more work to be done in increasing cohort completion and transition rates at all school levels.

Table 3-21 Distribution of Pupils Enrolment by Level, Ownership and Sex (2023/24 year)

Level	Public			Private		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Both*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Both*
Pre- Primary	60,594	65,990	126,584	25,114	26,732	51,846
Primary	951,613	987,934	1,939,547	61,862	66,572	128,434
Junior Secondary	307,838	325,469	633,307	23,534	27,579	51,113
Senior Secondary	233,312	250,233	483,545	20,942	26,558	47,500
Grand Total	**1,553,357**	**1,629,626**	**3,182,983**	**131,452**	**147,441**	**278,893**

As shown in Table 3-21 above, more pupils were enrolled in public schools than in private schools. The difference in enrolment between public schools and private in 2023/24 is a massive (3,182,983 – 278,893

i.e. 2,904,090). The proportion of girls enrolled in private schools across all levels compared to boys was far greater than those enrolled in public schools.

Table 3-22 Distribution of Pupils in Government Supported Schools (Tier 2) by Level and Year

Level	2022/23	2023/24	% Increase
Pre- Primary	55,408	58,724	*6.0%*
Primary	1,640,240	1,682,532	*2.6%*
Junior Secondary	534,830	550,497	*2.9%*
Senior Secondary	417,602	419,470	*0.4%*
Grand Total	**2,648,080**	**2,711,223**	***2.4%***

Table 3-4 above depicts the distribution of pupils in government supported schools during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years across all levels. Between the two years, there has been an increase in enrolment of 2.4% across all levels, partly due to an increase in the number of schools receiving government support. The pre-primary level saw the biggest increase of 6% with enrolment increased from 55,408 in 2023 to 58,724 in 2024. Senior secondary level reported the least increment of 0.4% between the years.

Figure 3-8 Grade Enrolment Pyramid by Sex and Year
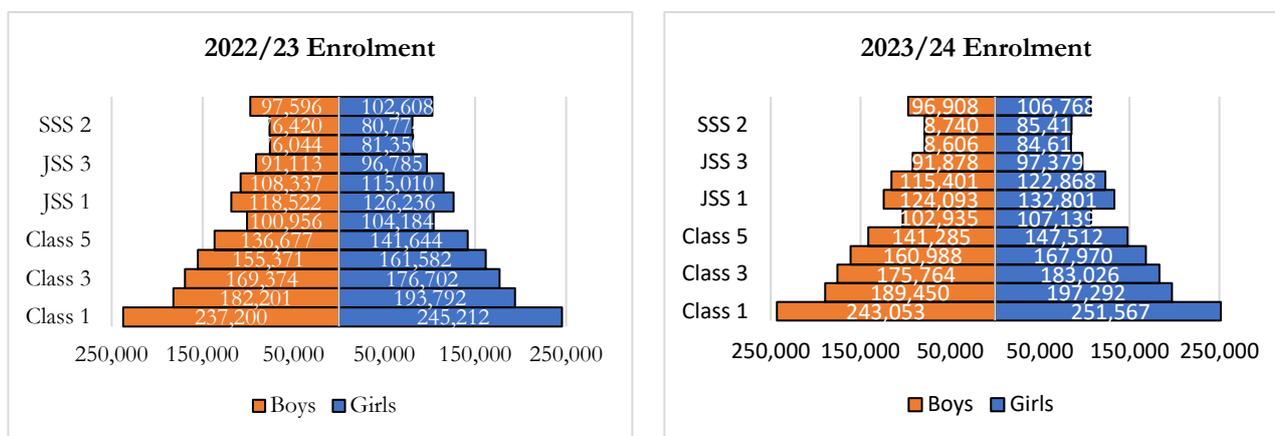
Figure 3.-8 above illustrates the number of pupils enrolled in primary, junior, and senior secondary schools by sex during the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. In both years, for each level enrolment decreases as the grade ascends except for the senior secondary level where we have more pupils in the SSS 3 grade than the SSS 1 and SSS 2 grade. ~~This is as a result of schools admitting more and more school leavers that need tertiary education requirement through the WASSCE system.~~ It also shows that there were many more pupils enrolled in Class 1 than in SSS3, which is characteristic of a system that is losing pupils between progressive grades and/or increasing P1/Class 1 intake rate.

In addition, there were more girls than boys at each grade level from Class 1 to SSS3. There was a significant drop in the number of pupils between Class 1 and Class 2, which can largely be attributed to the fact that

in many areas that have a shortage of pre-primary schools, pupils start primary school before the age of 6 and repeat the class until they reach 6 years of age. The establishment of new pre-primary schools and early childhood centres across the country should help address this situation.

3.2.2 Enrolment Rates

This sub-section of the report looks at enrolment rates and specifically focuses on the Gross Intake Rate (GIR) and Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) for each school level. Enrolment rates are computed as the total number of students enrolled as a percentage of the number of children/individuals supposed to be enrolled at a particular level or grade i.e. the population of individuals corresponding to the official age-range of the level of interest.. The United Nations Population age projections estimates were used as denominators to compute both the GIR and GER.

Figure 3-9 Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) by Level and Year
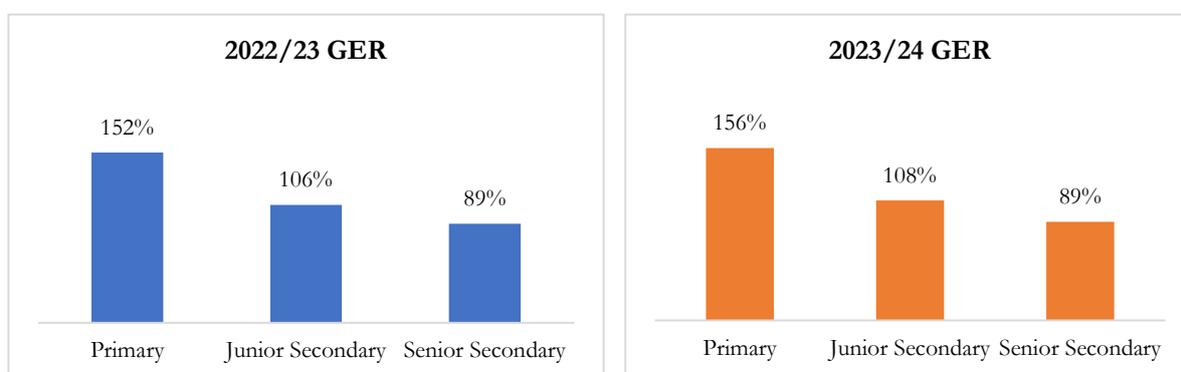
Figure 3-9 above and Table 3-23 below illustrate gross enrolment rates for pupils in primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. It is not unusual for the GER to be greater than 100% since the numerator for a given level is the total enrolment of pupils in that level irrespective of age whether over or under, and the denominator is the national population of the official school age for a given level in a given year. The chart above and the table below show that the number of pupils at the primary and junior secondary levels exceeded the school age population for those two levels in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. The number of pupils enrolled tends to be greater than the population of individuals corresponding to the age range of a level, when many individuals that are under-aged or over-aged for that level are enrolled. Excessive class repetition contributes significantly to this state of affairs. This all points to a very inefficient school system.

~~The data for the two years (2023 and 2024) show an increase in GER at all levels except the senior secondary which remains the same for both years.~~

Table 3-23 Gross Enrolment by Level and Sex (2023/24)

Level	2022/23		2023/24	
	Boys	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*
Primary	150%	154%	154%	157%

Junior Secondary	103%	108%	106%	111%
Senior Secondary	87%	90%	86%	92%

Table 3-24 Gross Intake Rate (GIR)

Level	2022/23			2023/24		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Both*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Both*
Primary	193%	203%	**198%**	194%	205%	**200%**
Junior Secondary	107%	116%	**112%**	111%	121%	**116%**
Senior Secondary	73%	81%	**77%**	74%	82%	**78%**

Table 3-24 shows new entrants to the first grade of each school level in the form of the gross intake rate. The GIR can exceed 100% if large numbers of over-aged and under-aged children are enrolled in the entry class. The high primary GIR of 198% in 2022/23 and 200% in the 2023/24 school year indicate that many children above and less than six years old were entering Class 1. This could be the effect of a children who were supposed to be in the pre-primary level, but who found themselves in Class 1, and/or were out of school at the age when they were supposed to have started primary school. The official school age for JSS entrants is 12 years. Given the incidences of under and over-age enrolment at the preceding primary level, it is certain that the GIRs of 112% and 116% for the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years respectively, for the level, were largely due to the many under-aged and over-aged children that came up from the primary level. Significantly contributing to the number of under-aged children entering JSS is the increasing practice of parents accelerating the movement of their children up the schooling ladder by clandestinely making them sit the end of primary schooling examination, the NPSE, when they are 10 years or younger and in Classes 4 or 5. The official school age for SSS entrants is 15 years old. The GIR of 77% and 78% in 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years for SSS was lower than for the preceding levels largely because many individuals do not continue formal schooling beyond basic education i.e. end of junior secondary school.

3.2.3 Internal Efficiency Rates

This sub-section of the report covers retention rates, gross completion rates and transition rates as indicators that measure efficiency in education. Efficiency in education refers to the extent to which resources are used to arrive at desired outcomes. In this instance, the indicators used to measure efficiency are the Gross Completion Rate (GCR), Transition Rate (TR) and Retention Rate (RR). Frequently, repetition and survival rates are also employed but they are not used in this instance. Notwithstanding, it should be noted that class repetition is commonly practised by schools and contributes greatly to inefficiency in the system.

Table 3-25 Gross Completion Rate (GCR)

Level	2022/23			2023/24		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Both*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Both*
Primary	92%	97%	**95%**	92%	98%	**95%**
Junior Secondary	88%	95%	**91%**	87%	94%	**90%**

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| Senior Secondary | 89% | 96% | **93%** | 86% | 98% | **92%** |

Table 3-25 shows the GCRs of the primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels by gender for both the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years. Note that the GCR is defined as enrolment minus repeaters in the last grade of each level, as a proportion of the age population for that grade. GCR is a proxy used to measure completion of a particular school level. A high GCR for a school level suggests a low incidence of dropping out. Note however that a large number of under-age and over-age individuals in the system will have an impact on the GCR/proxy completion rate. The GCR for both school years across all levels was above 90% showing a high completion rate.

It is pleasing to note that in both school years and at all school levels, the completion rates for girls were greater than those for boys. This is very encouraging as it suggests that the focus on girls enrolling and staying in formal education is yielding fruit.

Table 3-26 Transition Rate

Level	2023/24		
	Boys	*Girls*	*Both*
Primary-Junior Secondary	120%	125%	**123%**
Junior Secondary-Senior Secondary	85%	86%	**85%**

The rate at which pupils move from one level of education to a higher one is known as the Transition Rate (TR). Table 3-26 shows a high TR from one school level to another. The TR from primary schools to JSS was over 100%. The TR should not exceed 100% unless there are extraneous factors at play, such as pupils entering JSS1 who did not enter the last grade of primary, because they sat and passed the transition exam when in P4 or P5, and/or many repeaters of the NPSE who succeeded in passing the exam the second time round. Intake to a level cannot be more than completion from the preceding level unless intake is boosted by other means.

Table 3-27 Retention Rate (RR) - 2023/24

School Level	Boys	Girls	Both
Primary	42%	43%	*43%*
Junior Secondary	74%	73%	*74%*
Senior Secondary	123%	126%	*125%*

The proxy retention rate (RR) is calculated by finding the ratio of final grade enrolments to first grade enrolments at each level of schooling multiplied by 100. The result in Table 3-25 shows the RR by school level and gender during the 2023/24 school year. The primary RR was estimated as 43% which indicates that a little over two-fifths of the pupils entering primary were likely to reach the final grade. This low RR suggests that drop-out rate at the primary level and/or repetition rate were both quite high. A high repetition

rate at Class 1 is probable because the enrolment of a large number of underage pupils entering Class 1 who were compelled to repeat one or more times until they reached the official primary entry age. Estimated at 74%, the junior secondary RR was significantly higher than that of the primary level. The RR for senior secondary level was abnormal at over 100%. A likely reason for this exceptionally high RR is the enrolment of many individuals who are not genuine school students so that they can sit the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Note the very large difference between the SS2 enrolment in the 2022/23 school year and the SS3 enrolment in the 2023/24 school year as shown in Fig. 3-8. All students who enter SS3 sit the WASSCE. Given that repetition of WASSCE as a school student was stopped in the 2023/24 school year, the additional students in SS3 cannot be regarded as WASSCE repeaters unless principals are not abiding by the rules and regulations of the MBSSE.

3.2.4 Inclusive Enrolment

This sub-section looks at the enrolment of pupils with disabilities and pregnant schoolgirls; two groups that had been marginalised and restricted in opportunities to enrol in school previously but are now part of the four vulnerable groups mentioned in the Sierra Leone Inclusive Education Policy approved by Cabinet in 2021.
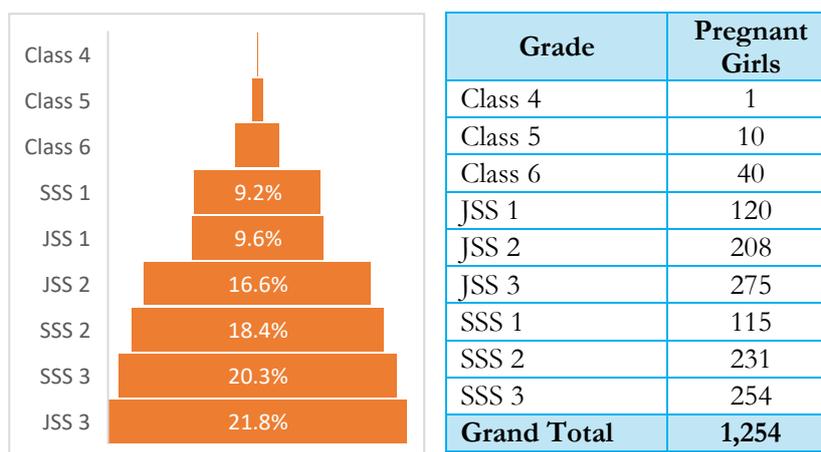
Table 3-28 2023/24 School Year Pupils with Disability

Disability Type	Sex	Pre-Primary	Primary	Junior Secondary	Senior Secondary	Grand Total
Visual	Boys	95	2,722	1,570	829	**5,216**
	Girls	105	2,350	1,605	723	**4,783**
Hearing	Boys	100	2,626	952	410	**4,088**
	Girls	104	2,279	843	400	**3,626**
Speech	Boys	167	2,277	508	237	**3,189**
	Girls	163	1,946	431	146	**2,686**
Physical	Boys	104	1,574	552	411	**2,641**
	Girls	79	1,290	430	334	**2,133**
Learning	Boys	106	1,844	741	670	**3,361**
	Girls	95	1,950	824	626	**3,495**
Kyphosis (Hunch)	Boys	4	60	26	6	**96**
	Girls	5	65	20	6	**96**
Albinism	Boys	8	92	31	16	**147**
	Girls	4	102	37	15	**158**
Dwarfism	Boys	7	78	32	16	**133**
	Girls	1	78	25	17	**121**
Pupils with Disability		**1,147 3%**	**21,333 59%**	**8,627 24%**	**4,862 14%**	**35,969**

The results in Table 3-27 reveal that there were 35,969 pupils with disabilities across the four levels of education. Just 3% of the total pupils with disability were enrolled in pre-primary school, 59% were enrolled in primary school, 24% were enrolled in JSS, whilst 14% were enrolled in SSS. The majority were visually impaired children (9,999), followed by those with disabilities related to hearing (7,714), learning (6,856),

speech (5,875) and physical impairments (4,774). There were few cases of pupils who had Kyphosis or Albinism or Dwarfism. There is a possibility that disabilities are under-reported and that many more children with disabilities are actually enrolled in school. Additionally, given the increasing numbers of children with disabilities entering school, and the fact that relatively few schools have even the most basic of facilities to make schools disability friendly, as reported earlier, is an issue of concern.

Figure 3-10 Distribution of Pregnant Girls in School (2023/24)

Grade	Pregnant Girls
Class 4	1
Class 5	10
Class 6	40
JSS 1	120
JSS 2	208
JSS 3	275
SSS 1	115
SSS 2	231
SSS 3	254
Grand Total	**1,254**

As shown in Figure 3-9, the highest number of pregnant schoolgirls (275) were enrolled in JSS3, representing 21.8% of the total number of pregnant pupils. The second highest number was at SSS2, where 254 pregnant schoolgirls represented 20.3% of all pregnant schoolgirls. Repeatedly over the years, the JSS 3 grade has been reporting the highest number of pregnant girls in schools which suggests that when girls reach puberty and are inexperienced in terms of sex and sexuality, they are more vulnerable. At each school level, the highest numbers of pregnant girls were found in the last grades (class 6 for primary, JSS3 for junior secondary and SSS3 for senior secondary). This observation suggests that girls are more likely to become pregnant in the final grade of each level, potentially having a negative impact on their future in formal education. It is also worth noting that slightly more pregnant girls are reported at the JSS than the SSS level. Should the numbers keep growing, serious consideration will need to be given to how the matter can be covered in school.

Figure 3-11 Mean and Minimum Ages of Pregnant Girls in School by Level (2023/24)
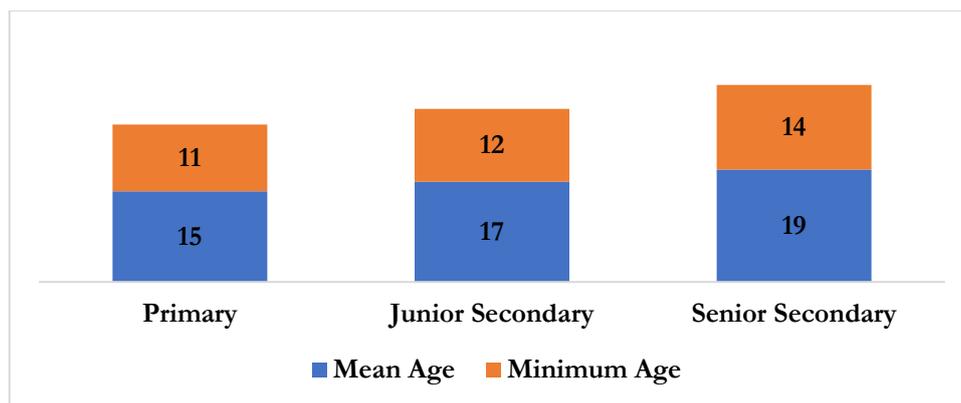
Figure 3-10 shows the average age and minimum age of pregnant girls who attended school in the 2023/24 school year by school level. The average ages of pregnant girls were 15, 17 and 19 years for primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels respectively. Their minimum age across the levels were 11, 12 and 14 years for primary, junior and senior secondary respectively. Interestingly, the mean ages of pregnant girls at the different levels are above the official ages for completion of each level, suggesting that over-age girls at each level may be the more likely to become pregnant at each level.

3.3 The Teachers

This section presents results on the number of teachers across all levels of school education. The focus is on equity in the usage of human resources, and levels of qualification in the context of the delivery of quality education.

The major responsibility of a teacher is to inspire, motivate, encourage, and educate learners. Learners can be of any age and from any background, but for the purpose of this report, teachers refer to those who educate children of school age i.e. between 3-18 years of age (in Sierra Leone there will be many under-aged and over-aged pupils).

In paragraphs that follow, we will discuss the distribution of teachers by their gender, salary source, if they are new to the profession and whether they are in public or private schools; qualification; and pupils to teacher ratio.

3.3.1 Teachers Distribution

The 2023 ASC data shows that 90,073 teachers were enumerated, while the 2024 ASC reported a total of 91,224 teachers in Sierra Leone schools. In 2024, 78,325 teachers were found in public as compared to 12,889 found in private schools. There is a 1.5% increase in teacher teaching in government supported schools between the years 2022/23 and 2023/24. New teachers entering the teaching profession dropped from 17,342 in 2023 to 13,405 in 2024. It is worth noting that 39% of all teachers in 2024 were paid by the Government of Sierra Leone. A quarter of all teachers (25%) enumerated in 2024 were untrained and majority of them did not have any post-secondary school certificate. In addition, only 64% of all teachers

were qualified for the level they were teaching. Average pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) was recorded at 37:1 and 38:1 for all school levels in 2023 and 2024 respectively. The 2024 ASC reported an average pupil to qualified teacher ratio (PQTR) of 57:1.

Table 3-29 Table 3-20 Distribution of Teachers by Level, Year and Gender

Level	2022/23			2023/24		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Pre- Primary	873	5,527	6,400	664	5,942	6,606
Primary	30,564	15,120	45,684	30,822	15,753	46,575
Junior Secondary	19,358	3,987	23,345	19,825	4,038	23,863
Senior Secondary	13,213	1,431	14,644	12,878	1,302	14,180
Grand Total	**64,008**	**26,065**	**90,073**	**64,189**	**27,035**	**91,224**

Table 3.29 above shows the distribution of teachers by level and gender for the school years 2022/23 and 2023/24. According to the table, the total number of teachers that were in schools in 2023 was 90,073 which increased to 91,224 in 2024. The ratio of male to female teachers in the profession was 1:2.5 and 1:2.4 in 2023 and 2024 respectively, indicating teaching to be a male dominant profession in Sierra Leone. Notwithstanding, it is worth noting whilst the number of male teachers increased by 181 between 2022/23 and 2023/24, the number of female teachers increased by 970, but for both years, only at the pre-primary level were there more female than male teachers.

Table 3-30 Teachers Distribution by Public-Private Schools, Gender and Level (2023/24)

Level	Private			Public		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Pre- Primary	205	2,427	2,632	459	3,515	3,974
Primary	3,141	2,056	5,197	27,681	13,697	41,378
Junior Secondary	2,518	519	3,037	17,307	3,519	20,826
Senior Secondary	1,815	218	2,033	11,063	1,084	12,147
Grand Total	**7,679**	**5,220**	**12,899**	**56,510**	**21,815**	**78,325**

Table 3.30 above shows the distribution of teachers in all public and private schools by gender in the 2023/24 school year. According to the table, public schools were the major employers of teachers with a total of 78,325 as compared to a total of 12,899 teachers in private schools. In both private and public pre-primary schools there were more female than the male teachers, meaning that the pre-primary level is female dominant.

Table 3-31 Distribution of Teachers in Government Supported Schools (Tier 2) by Level and Year

Level	2022/23	2023/24	% Increase
Pre- Primary	1,688	1,688	*0.0%*
Primary	34,465	35,402	*2.7%*
Junior Secondary	17,422	17,760	*1.9%*
Senior Secondary	10,668	10,329	*-3.2%*
Grand Total	**64,243**	**65,179**	*1.5%*

Table 3.31 above shows the distribution of teachers in government supported schools (that is, public schools that receive government support in one form or another) at all levels in 2022/23 and 2023/24. With reference to the table, there is a 1.5% increase in the number of teachers in government supported schools between 2022/23 and 2023/24. The increase in the number of teachers at these schools is primarily due to more primary and junior secondary public schools qualifying for government support and more teachers being employed as enrolment expands in government supported schools. The drop in the number of teachers at the senior secondary level is unexpected but could be due to teachers retiring and yet to be replaced as well as secondary schools which haven't fully separated into autonomous junior and senior secondary entities, sharing teachers.

Table 3-32 Distribution of New Teachers by Level, Year and Gender

Level	2022/23			2023/24		
	Male	*Female*	*Total*	*Male*	*Female*	*Total*
Pre- Primary	215	1,469	1,684	133	988	1,121
Primary	5,307	2,942	8,249	4,186	2,191	6,377
Junior Secondary	3,618	927	4,545	3,143	585	3,728
Senior Secondary	2,548	316	2,864	1,985	194	2,179
Grand Total	**11,688**	**5,654**	**17,342**	**9,447**	**3,958**	**13,405**

Table 3.3-2 above shows the number of teachers who entered the teaching profession for the first-time in the 2022/23 and 2023/24 school years by gender at all levels. From the table, the new teachers entering the profession for the first time at all levels dropped from 17,342 in 2022/23 to 13,405 in 2023/24. The table shows that more men than women continue to enter the profession. This is a concern that should lead to action on the recruitment of more female teachers given that the number of girls enrolled in school exceed the number of boys.

Table 3-33 Distribution of Teachers by Salary Source and Level (2023/24)

Level	Government	Households (families, communities, individual)	Private institution (firms, religious bodies, NGO)	Volunteer	% of Government Paid
Pre- Primary	1,186	922	2,531	1,967	*18%*
Primary	19,210	5,598	5,991	15,776	*41%*
Junior Secondary	9,361	2,345	3,748	8,409	*39%*
Senior Secondary	6,142	1,196	2,488	4,354	*43%*
Grand Total	**35,899**	**10,061**	**14,758**	**30,506**	*39%*

Table 3-33 above depicts the distribution of teachers by their source of salary. The data collected for the 2023/24 ASC shows that at 35,899 i.e. 39%, the government was the major employer of teachers. A third of all teachers (30,506/91,224) enumerated in 2024 were volunteers as seen in the table above. With the

exception of the pre-primary level, the government was the main employer at all levels. It is worth noting that although the government does not own the majority of schools it is the main employer of teachers.

3.3.2 Qualification and Qualified Teachers

A qualified teacher is defined as a teacher who has at least the minimum academic teaching qualifications required for teaching subjects at the relevant level of schooling. According to the Teaching Service Commission (TSC) standards, the minimum qualification for registration as a professional teacher is a teaching certificate. Any qualification other than this cannot qualify a person for registration, and this is supported by the 2004 Education Act. The acceptable qualifications for teaching registration are the Teachers Certificate (TC), Higher Teachers' Certificate (HTC), Bachelor of Science in Education (B.Sc. Ed.), Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.), Master of Education (M.Ed.), PhD in Education and a degree in other fields plus a post graduate diploma in education (PGDE). The TC and HTC primary are the minimum requirement for both pre-primary and primary level, HTC secondary is the minimum requirement for the junior secondary level and Bachelor's degree in education is the minimum for the senior secondary level. Currently there is no scale for Master in Education for teachers in classroom but it is an additional advantage.

Table 3-34 Distribution of Teachers by Teaching Qualification (2023/24)

| Level	Un-trained	TC	HTC (Prim.)	HTC (Sec.)	B. Ed	Post grad. Dip. Ed	M. Ed /PhD	% of Un-trained
Pre- Primary	2,473	2,852	935	226	84	29	7	*37%*
Primary	14,045	21,273	8,497	1,904	641	159	56	*30%*
Junior Secondary	4,559	1,654	1,494	12,017	3,543	350	246	*19%*
Senior Secondary	1,969	379	401	5,493	5,216	404	318	*14%*
Grand Total	**23,046**	**26,158**	**11,327**	**19,640**	**9,484**	**942**	**627**	***25%***

Table 3-34 above shows the classification of teachers by their qualification and the level taught. In addition, the table depicts the percentage of untrained teachers for each level of schooling. The analysis show a quarter of the teachers (25%) enumerated in the 2024 ASC were untrained as educators. A majority of the trained teachers enumerated were TC holder (26,158), followed by HTC Secondary holder (19,640). The least employed teachers were graduates and postgraduate teachers. That TC and HTC (Primary) teachers are to be found teaching in senior secondary schools is worth noting. It appears that some junior and senior secondary schools struggle to find teachers appropriately qualified for the teaching of some subjects.

Table 3-35 Distribution of Untrained Teachers by Academic Qualification (2023/24)

Level	Incomplete BECE	BECE (passed 4+)	WASSCE (Certificate. + credits)	Diploma/ Certificate.	Any Bachelor	Any Masters /PHD
Pre- Primary	236	232	1,773	218	14	
Primary	490	1,153	11,368	899	184	7
Junior Secondary	84	98	3,231	701	433	12
Senior Secondary			825	335	718	35
Grand Total	**810**	**1,483**	**17,197**	**2,153**	**1,349**	**54**

Table 3.28 above shows the distribution of untrained teachers based on their academic qualification during the 2023/24 school year. It is worth noting that some of the untrained teachers do have qualifications on subject specific teaching, especially those that were graduates and postgraduates. In general, there were 23,046 untrained teachers for which 1,403 were graduates and postgraduate teachers (1,349 and 54 respectively). Over four-fifths of the untrained teachers, 19,490, did not have post-secondary school certificate, this includes incomplete BECE, BECE with pass, and WASSCE. Another 2,153 untrained teachers have post-secondary certificates but were not graduates. The fact that there are 4,238 untrained teachers who do not have post-secondary certificate teaching in secondary schools, causes questions about the quality of teaching taking place in some secondary schools and may partly explain the poor performance of some secondary schools at BECE and WASSCE.

Figure 3-12 Share of Teachers Qualified to Teach their Level (2023/24)
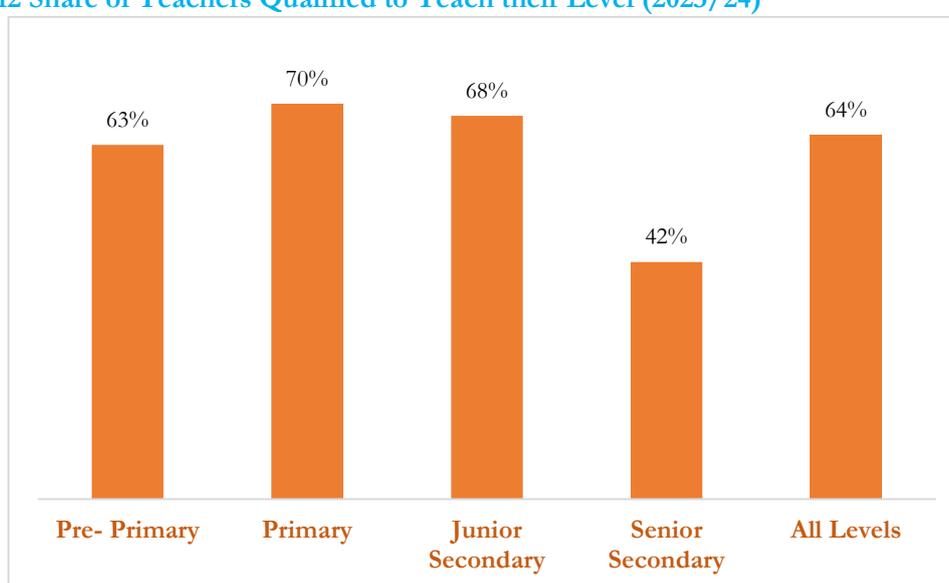
Please note that teacher with TC and HTC primary are only qualified to teach at the primary level, teachers with HTC secondary are qualified to teach at the junior secondary level and teachers with Bachelor education are qualified to teacher senior secondary level but can teach at a lower level. Figure 3-12 above illustrates the share of teachers that were qualified to teach the level they were teaching. Almost two-third of all teachers in the various levels (64%) were qualified to teach the level they were teaching. The fact that less than 50% of those teaching at the senior secondary level are qualified to do so is an issue of major concern and is likely to be a significant contributor to the underperformance of many senior secondary schools at WASSCE.

3.3.3 Ratio of Pupils to Teachers

This sub-section describes the Pupils to Teacher Ratio (PTR) and Pupils to Qualified Teacher Ratio (PQTRs) in schools across the country. The pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) is the average number of pupils per teacher at a specific level of education while the pupil to qualified teacher ratio is the average number of

pupils per qualified teacher at a specific level of education. It is normal to see differences between the two ratios with the PQTR usually much higher than the PTR.

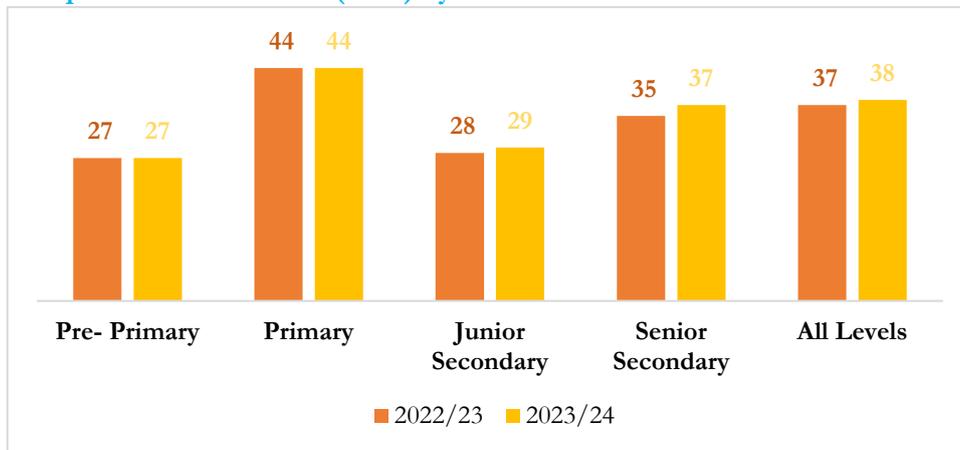**Figure 3-13 Pupils to Teacher Ratio (PTR) by Year**

Figure 3-13 above shows the pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) across all levels for the school years of 2022/23 and 2023/24. Each bar represents a level of schooling with the different school years shown in different colours. Between the two school years, there was little change in terms of the average PTR for all levels of schooling. The pre-primary and the primary levels both reported the same PTR for the two years, while there was a difference of one for both secondary school levels between the two school years with the 2023/24 school year having the higher PTRs. Note that the average PTR can present a slightly misleading picture of the actual state of affairs as many schools have PTRs that are significantly higher than the average.

Figure 3-14 Pupils to Qualified Teacher Ratio (PQTR) – 2023/24

Figure 3-14 above shows the pupil to qualified teacher ratio (PQTR) for the 2023/24 school year at all levels. Please note that PQTR can be obtained by dividing the number of pupils at a level by the number teachers qualified to teach at that level. PQTRs tend to be much higher than the PTRs across all levels of schooling. The 2023/24 overall PQTR was 57:1 while the corresponding PTR was 38:1. The average PQTR

for the pre-primary level was 41:1, for the primary level it was 62:1, for the junior secondary it was 41:1 and 87:1 for the senior secondary. The extremely high PQTR of 87:1 for the senior secondary level is worrying as is the 62:1 for the primary level. For learning outcomes to be improved, it is imperative that urgent action is taken to reduce these high PQTRs. The fact that high PQTRs are being reported annually and that little appears to change, is even more of a concern. In conclusion, having only qualified teachers in classrooms is a desirable goal that will never be realised without necessary action.