

**School Effectiveness at the Primary Stage:
A View of Kampala School Improvement Project**

Scholastica Tiguryera
Aga Khan Education Services, Uganda

*International Seminar on
Researches in School Effectiveness at Primary Stage
July 14-16, 1999*

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING
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SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AT PRIMARY STAGE: A VIEW OF KAMPALA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

- Scholastica Tiguryera

1.0 THE CONCEPT OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS

School effectiveness is conceptualised differently by different individuals depending on various factors. A review of some of these definitions will throw light on some of these factors.

Mortimore (1991a) has defined an effective school as one in which students progress further than might be expected from consideration of its intake. By contrast, in an ineffective school, students make less progress than expected given their characteristics at intake. A reflection on this definition may raise a question such as, "What about schools whose students' progress according to what is expected of them without necessarily adding extra value?"

Fullan (1995) conceives school effectiveness as "Producing the best possible learning outcomes given variable student characteristics and needs, changing resources, and a dynamic definition of what should be taught. The author of this paper agrees with Fullan and Mortimore in that there cannot be standardised effectiveness and outcomes for all the schools because each school is unique with unique students who have unique characteristics.

It can therefore be inferred that definitions of school effectiveness are dependent upon a variety of factors some of which have been identified by Sammons (1994) as sample of schools examined; choice of outcomes measures; adequate control for differences between schools in intakes to ensure that "like is compared with 'like'; methodology and time-scale.

Basing on studies, models and experiences some leading thinkers and educationists have come up with factors that make a school effective. Examples from two developed countries (Britain and America) are specified below:

2.0 WHAT FACTORS MAKE SOME BRITISH SCHOOLS EFFECTIVE?

Reynolds, D. et al (1996) present nine key factors associated with school effectiveness as identified below:

- * *Professional leadership*
- * *Shared vision and goals*
- * *An orderly, and attractive learning environment*
- * *High quality teaching and learning*
- * *High expectations*
- * *Positive reinforcement*
- * *Monitoring pupil progress and evaluating school performance*
- * *Pupil rights and responsibilities*
- * *Purposeful teaching*

3.0 AMERICAN NATIONAL PTA COMPONENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL

The American PTA concept of school effectiveness encompasses the following factors:

- * *Clear goals and objectives*
- * *Adequate and equitable funding and financial management*
- * *Academic programs that provide the opportunity for all students to develop academic and like skills.*
- * *Assessment programs that identify how instruction can be improved and learning can be increased.*
- * *Parent, family and community involvement in every facet of the education and development of children from birth to adulthood*
- * *Skilful teachers and staff*
- * *Students who are life-long learners and good citizens and*
- * *Support services that address the holistic needs of the students*

4.0 CONTEXT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN UGANDA

In the 1960s the educational system of Uganda was considered to be one of the best in East and Central Africa. From the second half of the 1960s to the mid 1980s, the once admired system drastically declined, due to civil wars, civil unrest and general instability which disrupted all aspects of Uganda's infrastructure including education.

Intellectual suffocation was perhaps one of the most devastating aspects of these difficult times. Books, professional journals, other educational reading materials and office/laboratory equipment became grossly inadequate. Education was devalued and suffered greatly (USAID - Education Decentralisation in Africa, 1996).

Primary schools did not escape the traumatic experiences. As part of the nationwide reforms embedded in the current government's (NRM) Ten Point Programme, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) commissioned the Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC, 1989) and the resultant Government White Paper (1992). These documents now provide the backbone of many reforms including those relating to the Primary Education Sector.

4.1 *Primary Education*

The general reform measures at the primary school level mainly addressed by Teacher Development and Management Systems (TDMS), are multi-dimensional and some of their objectives focus on teachers' and headteachers' training programmes; teachers' terms and conditions of service; community participation; instructional materials; examinations process; national assessment; and rehabilitating schools and teachers' colleges.

These reforms aim at improving pupils' mastery of literacy, numeracy and other basic life skills, improving school administration, management and accountability and reducing inequities in children's participation in primary schooling (Carasco, Munene, Kasente and Odada, 1996. The EPRC, 1989 and the Government White Paper, 1992).

Before Carasco et al conducted their study, their national view of school effectiveness entailed school culture, classroom teaching and learning process, pupil outcomes, children's conditions, parent/community participation and support from system (see Appendix I).

According to the findings of their study the state of primary education in Uganda still is in need of considerable improvement.

The reasons for this are many-fold and include: the lack of libraries in most schools (more than 80%); the lack of latrine posts for girls; a shortage of textbooks, where one might be shared between 40 to 55 pupils, depending on the subject and class/standard and lack of physically suitable classrooms. Carasco et al's study also revealed that the majority of the head teachers behaved in autocratic ways and held little regard for the feelings or well-being of staff or pupils and that about 71% of the schools never followed timetables. Many teachers are perceived to be demoralised because of the aforementioned conditions, the salary delays and inadequate remuneration of their services.

The variety of teaching methods used occupy teaching time as follows:

-	Questions and answers	-	90%
-	Lecturing	-	40%
-	Class recitation	-	38%
-	Pupil writing	-	25%
-	Individual work	-	20%
-	Marking pupils' work	-	15%

- Demonstration - 10%
- Group work - 7%
- Pupils questions - 7%

The methods used reflect on teacher preparation, inservice training, resource availability and use, plus the role of national/public examination (Carasco, et al 1996 and the GOU/UNCC, 1994).

Their study gave rise to another study on Teachers' Work Experience and Pupils' Schooling Experience as determinants of achievement in primary schools by Munene et al.

This study investigated the antecedents and consequences of the teachers' work environment as correlates of achievement in Ugandan primary schools. The work environment is understood as the perception and the reality of the conditions in which teachers work.

The antecedents of concern include **educational policies, parental and community support, children's conditions and school culture.**

The study concentrated on the context in which the primary teachers were operating, their perceived and actual experience of this context, and how those impinge on learning outcomes.

Thirty six primary schools from nine districts representing all regions in Uganda were sampled. Four schools from each district were selected. In each school, teachers assisted with the selection of six pupils representing a range from high, medium and low performers in P2, P4, and P6. Three boys and three girls represented each class.

All the selected 648 pupils were interviewed in Participatory Learning and Analysis (PLA) and also tested in literacy and numeracy. In each school, classroom observations were carried out in P2, P4 and P6, the target being three observations per each of the selected subjects (English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (SST)). A total of 417 observations were done.

According to the findings related to instructional materials, the situation varied from school to school. Generally, there were shortages in lower primary (P1 to P4).

The pupils reported that their parents did not cater for their basic needs, that they abused them, and that they overloaded them with domestic responsibilities. In many cases, pupils cited shortage of food and lack of basic requirements such as beddings and clothings.

At school, pupils went through various experiences, some of which affected their performances adversely. Adverse experiences included, amongst others, frequent beating, shortage of textbooks, lack of furniture, poor state of classrooms, and manual labour. The pupils also considered many of their teachers unfair, too demanding, unkind and uninterested in teaching.

From factor analysis the researchers identified three factors that summarise children's experience at school. Two factors relating to teachers were teacher irritability and teacher supportiveness. The third factor refers to victimisation of some pupils by fellow pupils.

The findings show that some of the schooling experiences correlated with pupils achievement on numeracy and literacy tests administered by the researchers and with overall school performance on Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). Both teacher irritability and pupil-pupil victimisation correlated negatively with PLE results and achievement tests. Teacher supportiveness correlated positively with literacy and the total score for literacy and numeracy.

Factor analysis revealed several descriptive characteristics of the teachers' work environment. These were work strain, professional dissatisfaction, work overload and welfare. Work overload involved teachers feeling of having too much work to do, probably due to the staff ceiling policy identified in Carasco et al (1996). The highest ranked problem was poor administration composed of an indifferent, dictatorial, sectarian and incompetent leadership.

The researchers identified three coping strategies the teachers used to deal with the environment. The strategies were apathy, helplessness, and recycling of notes. Apathy included neglecting work, deliberately not exerting oneself fully in teaching and learning only the pupils who were bright enough to follow. Helplessness described the teachers' inability to develop effective strategies to deal with the environment. Recycling notes related to teachers' unwillingness or inability to update their teaching notes.

One overarching conclusion is the finding that teachers in primary schools may be experiencing the psychological state known as burnout. Burnout is the painful realisation that one is no longer able to help people one is responsible for and who need one's help and that one has nothing more to give (Pines et al., 1981).

Burnout represents a depersonalisation of clients, a loss of caring, an attitude of cynicism towards them. It also represents a sense of apathy and loss of interest. The teachers and pupils reported among the teachers sufficient behaviour characteristic of burnout and the researchers observed some of those behaviours. Such behaviours, reported by the teachers themselves, included the teachers paying attention only to those bright enough to follow and deliberately not exerting themselves fully in teaching.

A second major conclusion is the finding that the schooling experience of pupils is important in determining their performance at school. In this study, schooling experience refers to children's interaction with their homes and with the schools in matters relating to learning and learning readiness.

Finally, the researchers reiterate the centrality of the teacher in the educational reform. That centrality was first pointed out in Carasco et al. (1996). The researchers therefore recommended that emphasis in the balance of reform should swing towards the TEACHER.

5.0 UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION VS PRIMARY SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN UGANDA

With effect from 1997 the government of Uganda basing on the White Paper (1992) embarked on UPE. The commencement of UPE in Uganda bred a multiplicity of related challenges which are a threat to the quality of education at large and school effectiveness in particular.

These challenges include lack of instructional materials, teacher-pupil ratio, large class sizes, teachers' salaries/remuneration, headteachers' leadership & managerial skills and minimal community partnership in education endeavours.

6.0 KAMPALA SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AT PRIMARY SCHOOL STAGE

Kampala School Improvement Project funded by Aga Khan Foundation and the European Community commenced in November 1994 with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools. So far the project has impacted 17 schools. Its purpose has been to enable headteachers and teachers to: promote active participation of children in their work; make learning interesting and exciting through the use of appropriate materials; develop a strong interest in books and reading; promote discussion, investigation, problem solving and communication; achieve high standards while making learning enjoyable.

K/SIP tries to achieve its objectives through on-the-job training for teachers; workshops for headteachers, teachers and parents; production of low-cost educational materials; seminars, lectures, conferences and establishment & use of Teachers' Resource Centres (TRCs).

With regard to school effectiveness and in relation to the already stated determinant factors of school effectiveness and the state of education in Uganda, K/SIP has achieved success in the areas stipulated below:

6.1 *High quality teaching and learning*

Through on-the-job training and simulations during workshops, the project staff has introduced active-resource-based teaching and learning in which pupils are actively involved in their lessons and provided with opportunity for talk and presentations, through collaborative group work, discussions, shared learning, games and guided research teachers and pupils have become more confident and developed a positive self image consequently performing more effectively.

6.2 *Positive reinforcement*

The K/SIP team has encouraged teachers to use positive reinforcement such as praise, appreciation of pupils' contributions, involving pupils in identifying their errors and correcting them; encouraging pupils to try again after failing some tasks; and use of such strategies as progress charts, stars and healthy group competitions. Through group dynamics pupils have more responsibilities such as group leaders, scribes, peace makers etc. All these make the pupils feel valued and are motivated to work even harder. Use of creative writing and self editing has enhanced the children's ability to provide positive criticism. Both pupils and teachers are now open-minded and very reflective in their thinking.

6.3 *High expectations*

knowing that determination is the mother of success and that a sense of direction is a guiding light in life, teachers have learnt to encourage pupils to aim high in their school endeavours. Building the confidence of the pupils has been the foundation of enhancing the pupils' high expectations. Teachers have also been encouraged to have high expectations of themselves so as to act as role models for the pupils.

6.4 *Professional leadership and shared vision*

The project has not designed an intensive programme for the headteachers but during the management and leadership workshops that have been conducted, the headteachers have formulated mission statements and started some work on school development plans (see Appendix II). The project staff have encouraged headteachers to formulate visions for their schools in collaboration with their staff and other relevant stakeholders and most importantly headteachers have been helped to realise that they are curriculum leaders. This has been manifested in their day-to-day monitoring of teachers and the non-teaching staff.

6.5 *A conducive learning and teaching environment*

Lack of teaching and learning resources was one of the major problems of the schools. Our immediate intervention was to introduce the production and use of locally available resources such as seeds, sticks, bottle-tops and any junk one would lay hands on. Every member of the school community including the headteachers has been sensitised to collect junk. Some schools that are financially able have developed a culture of buying teaching and learning resources more than before. There are a lot of interactive displays including pupils' work and different learning corners in the classrooms. There is also improved teacher-pupil relationship. Pupils as well as teachers feel they are more valued than before. This has created a more conducive and attractive learning/teaching environment.

6.6 *Monitoring pupils' progress and continuous assessment*

Continuous assessment has been introduced to all the project schools to enable the teachers assess the pupils and monitor their progress holistically as opposed to the common phenomenon of assessing only aspects of the cognitive domain through tests and examinations. New tools like observation diaries, work samples, error analysis, pupil-self evaluation schedules and parents questionnaires have been introduced. This has helped teachers and parents to learn more about their children's learning strengths and weaknesses.

6.7 Staff development culture and teacher empowerment

In all of the schools the project has been working with, the culture of continuous staff development has taken root. Termly programmes are drawn and sent to K/SIP labelled 'Follow-up programmes' (see Appendix III). Different schools identify their unique needs and workshop facilitators most of whom are teachers themselves. In some cases the schools identify external facilitators who at times include the SIP staff. Induction of the new teachers and students from Primary Teachers Colleges into the SIP philosophy is carried out by the headteachers, SIP Co-ordinators and the regular teachers. This has motivated the teachers and enhanced their confidence.

6.8 Team work and collegiality

Using the project staff as models, a culture of co-operative planning at departmental levels, class levels and stream levels has been established. This endeavour has played a key role in integration and progression of ideas especially where some themes are spiral. There is more team work than the isolationist atmosphere that existed before SIP's intervention. The pooling of ideas adds more value to one persons' ideas.

6.9 *Reading culture*

Considering the fact that reading is key to education and realising that the reading culture was almost non-existent in most primary schools the project staff had to devise a strategy of establishing it. This has been done through the establishment and use of class libraries, mobile library loan scheme and school-based teachers' resource centres (TRCs). There are eight school-based teachers' resource centres and one mother TRC at the Aga Khan Complex. Four of the school-based TRCs are school initiated.

The TRCs also house other resources such as activity cards, games, junk and are used as venues for workshops including those on production of locally available learning aids.

6.10 *Strategies for better implementation of UPE*

The K/SIP team in response to the prevailing educational challenges in Uganda wrote a paper on *Strategies for Better Implementation of UPE*. This paper was presented to the then Deputy Commissioner for Education (Inspectorate) on request. A number of strategies ranging from innovative strategies in the classroom such as use of group work and activity cards to parental/community involvement are imbedded in this paper. (A copy is available)

6.11 *Strategies for sustainability*

For purposes of sustaining the new ideas that have been introduced to schools some measures have been put in place. These measures among others, involve the empowerment programme where teachers have been encouraged to conduct workshops formulation of TRC committees at school level; institution of a SIP schools co-ordinating committee; writing of the TRC manual and K/SIP handbook; networking with all stakeholders; establishing a culture of collecting/making and using locally available resources and introducing unifying strategies such as classroom reviews.

The staff have also embarked on project-focused researches which are also expected to contribute towards modification of their approaches as well sustainability of the successful interventions.

Strategies for sustainability cont'...

Community partnership in Enhancing Universal Primary Education in Kampala is the most satisfying endeavour in K/SIP activities because most beneficiaries and other stakeholders have taken ownership of the project operations. There is mutual partnership between one national reform programme and K/SIP. This programme - Teacher Development and Management System (TDMS) - aims at, among others, certifying all the untrained teachers who are serving; updating headteachers with modern leadership and managerial skills and enriching the teaching/learning process through refresher courses for teachers. The most prominent aspect of this partnership is the collaborative establishment and sustainability of divisional Teachers' Resource Centres.

(For discussing this paper and for offering me valuable and constructive ideas to enrich it, I am deeply indebted to Dorothy Aanyu, Edith Buhazi and Flavia Bakundana).

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MENGO PRIMARY SCHOOL



FOUNDED IN 1897

P.O. Box 14107,
Telephone: 270154,
MENGO - Kampala

Date ..9th..February..1998.

MISSION STATEMENT.

We aim to raise standards and the quality of the pupils' learning through improving the quality of teaching, classroom organisation and management by the use of appropriate resources in the Schools' Resource Centre, other instructional materials within and outside the school community.

We will focus on group work activities and practical approach to both teaching and learning.

We will carry on continuous assessment for each individual child, throughout the school.

We will continue producing job creators rather than job seekers, through vocationalisation training using the available resources in our school i.e Carpentry, Tailoring, Knitting, Cookery and Animal husbandry.

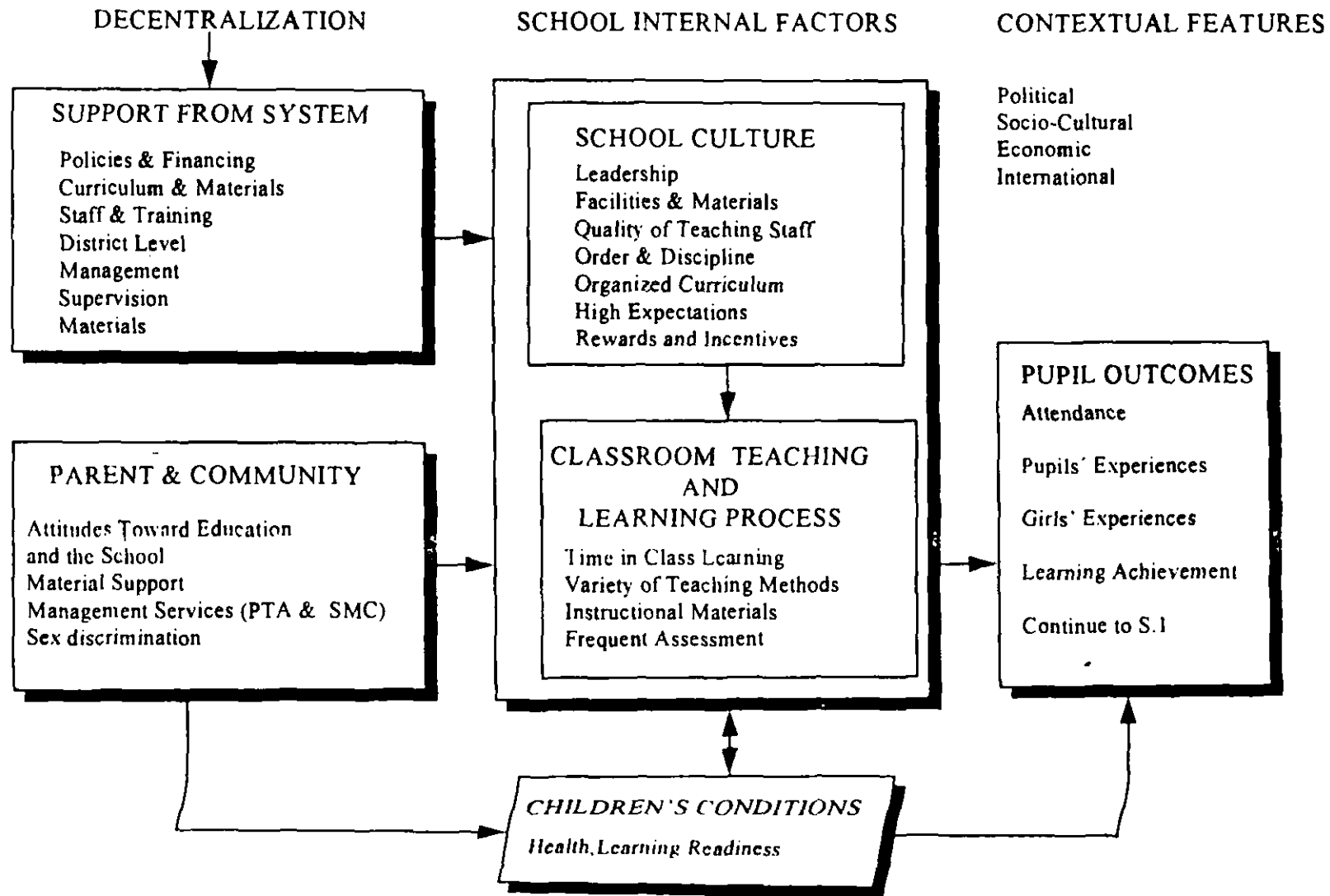
We continue counselling pupils and teachers by inviting counsellors from different organisations for instance House of Good Hope, Mirembe Counselling Unit etc.

Continue promoting moral and ethical values in our School for the proper upbringing of each individual child.

Compiled by

Mr. *David Sewagudde* James,
HEADMASTER
14107

WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO PRIMARY SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS ?



RANGARHIA HIGH PRIMARY SCHOOL ACTION PLAN FOR TERM LL1 1998:PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITIES.

<u>DATE:</u>	<u>ACTIVITIES:</u>	<u>FACILITATORS:</u>	<u>TI</u>
		NIEPA DC D10425	
15th Sept'98 to 21st Sept'98	-Improving on the environment. -Planting grass on the bare land. -Working on the school fence. -Library work. -Arranging and cleaning classrooms plus furniture.	All teachers	
22nd Sept'98 to 25th Sept'98	-Counselling and guidance. -Preparation for parents general meeting starts.	Ms. Katende (disciplinary committee)	
28th Sept'98	-Material making session for mathematics.	Mr. Masiko Mr. Tushabe	3:20 - 4:30
18th Oct'98	-Parents general meeting	Mr. Okuna Mr. Bekiita	
26th Oct'98	-Questioning techniques in mathematics	Mr. Mugerwa (Kibuli TTC)	3:20 4:30
2nd Nov'98	-Family Life Education P.5 - 7 Briefing for PLE	Ms. Kezabba Ms. Kabazzi	3:20 4:30
3rd -4th'Nov	- P.L.E		
9th Nov'98	+Preparation for sports day starts.	House Marshals	3:20 4:30
17th Nov'98	-Setting exams	Mr. Tushabe	3:20 4:30
30th Nov'98	-Classroom Review	HM/TRS	2:30 4:00
12th Dec'98	-Sports day	Mr. Iga All trs.	9:00 4:00

N.B:

Venue for meetings shall be staffroom.

Compiled By: _____

CC

HEADMASTER,
SIP COORDINATOR
PROJECT ASSISTANT (SCHOOL)

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