A decorative graphic consisting of two overlapping squares, one orange and one white, with rounded corners, set against a red background.

## **Bilingual education in Brunei: the evolution of the Brunei approach to bilingual education and the role of CfBT in promoting educational change**

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## Introduction

*The need for national or cultural identity [is] often seen as being opposed to those about the need for mutual intelligibility. But... it is perfectly possible to develop a situation in which intelligibility and identity happily co-exist. This situation is the familiar one of bilingualism – but a bilingualism where one of the languages within a speaker is a global language, providing access to the world community, and the other is a well-resourced regional language, providing access to the local community. The two functions can be seen as complementary, responding to different needs. And it is because the functions are so different that a world of linguistic diversity in principle continue[s] to exist in a world united by a common language.<sup>1</sup>*

This report describes the main findings from a research project that studied the role of CfBT Education Trust in supporting improved English language teaching and outcomes in Brunei Darussalam. A case study approach was used to explore the development of the bilingual education system in Brunei Darussalam and the Ministry of Education's (MoE) collaboration with CfBT in facilitating this since 1984. The study sought to document the various processes of change and improvement within the Bruneian education system, in particular those related to the teaching of English as an additional language in the bilingual system and the involvement of CfBT as an external education provider and change agent. The research adopted a multi-method case study approach that collected and analysed data from a cross-section of perspectives and a range of data sources. These included interviews with key stakeholders of the system (senior officers from the MoE, CfBT management and project leaders, English language teachers from both CfBT and Brunei, school senior management and students) and school visits. Documents related to CfBT's engagement in education initiatives, teaching and learning materials, Bruneian government policy, project reports, previous research, student attainment data and academic literature were also analysed to provide additional perspectives and a wider evidence base. The aims of the study were to:

- assemble a 'timeline' of the Bruneian education system and in parallel, of CfBT engagement in order to document the processes of educational change in English language teaching and learning that have taken place since 1984, as well as associations with changes in patterns of student attainment
- explore the perspectives of a mix of stakeholders and their views on the historical educational context of Brunei as well as educational policies related to English language teaching, the current context in relation to teaching, learning, student outcomes, collaboration with CfBT at various levels, and the strengths and challenges of the system
- investigate the role of CfBT in facilitating English language teaching in Brunei, and its engagement with classroom provision, teacher professional development, production of materials and the 'wider system'
- identify evidence of effective practice in English language teaching and areas for further development
- generate a series of recommendations and points to consider for the future in developing a framework for effective practice (that may also prove of value in settings outside of Brunei).

<sup>1</sup> Crystal (2003) p. 22



The report is structured as follows: Chapter 1 provides a brief overview of the **methodology** that was applied in this research, including the analytical procedures used in this study. Chapter 2 introduces the six **major themes** that emerged from the analysis. Following a summary of key findings, sections 2.1 to 2.6 discuss in detail the findings relating to each theme. Key ideas for **further development** and major **conclusions** of the study are outlined in Chapter 3.

The next chapter turns to the methods and procedures of data collection and analysis that were followed during this study.

## 1 Methodology

*This study sought to document the change and improvement processes related to bilingual education in Brunei and to identify and investigate features of effective practices that have helped to improve pupils' attainment in English, from the perspectives of key stakeholders in the education system. There was also a special focus on how collaborative initiatives between CfBT and the MoE affected these developments. The research adopted a case study approach focusing on the period starting from 1984, the point at which CfBT first came to Brunei, and seeking evidence of change, development and improvement since then. There is a stronger focus on changes and policy developments since 2000 and a particular interest in the factors that are associated with improvements in students' attainment since 2005.*

### 1.1 Data collection

The multi-method study involved qualitative analysis of Bruneian education policy documents, including government policies concerning the approach to bilingual education since 1984, as well as other policy documents describing the wider aims of education in Brunei in general, such as the developments associated with the *Sistem Pendidikan Negara Abad Ke-21* (the new National Curriculum known as SPN21), plans for which were drawn up by Brunei's MoE in 2005 and established in 2009. In addition, CfBT documents, such as education initiatives, teaching and learning materials and annual reports were analysed in depth. Longitudinal student attainment data collected in collaboration with the Bruneian government and CfBT were analysed to further assist our understanding of how policy developments may have influenced student outcomes over time, such as trends in O Level English and English-medium subject results across the years. It is not possible to make any firm causal claims about the impact of different policies and initiatives in the unique case study context of Brunei (only a randomised controlled trial approach, studying a specific intervention, would enable possible causal claims to be drawn). The reality of the Brunei education system, the evolution of policy and the role of CfBT across many years call for a different approach – a multi-method case study provides the best approach to investigate the processes of change and improvement and the interconnections between policy, practice and the role of a key external partner organisation involved in English language teaching. It provides a broad range of evidence to illuminate the topic and to identify features that have supported improvement in student results and features of good practice.

Initial document reviews started in early September 2012, which informed interview schedules and assisted in developing initial codes for analysis. Two weeks of fieldwork were conducted towards the end of the (Bruneian) academic year in November 2012. Fieldwork focused on collecting data concerning the perspectives of key stakeholders in the Brunei system. During the two weeks, visits to three primary schools and six secondary schools in different regions within Brunei were conducted (including one primary school in Brunei's Water Village or *Kampung Ayer*). In terms of gender, classroom size, location and socio-economic status of pupils, the schools form a broadly representative purposive sample of primary and secondary schools in Brunei.

### 1.2 Interviews

During the visits to secondary schools, interviews were held with principals, deputy principals, heads of departments, CfBT teachers, local English language teachers and local teachers of English-medium subjects. In addition, several focus group interviews were held with CfBT teachers and separately with students. As well as school-based interviews, further interviews were held with senior



officers from the MoE, CfBT management and project leaders. In primary schools, that, according to the terms of CfBT's agreement with the government, typically have only one CfBT teacher per school, interviews were held with the principal and the CfBT teacher working at that particular school. Below is an outline of the main focus of the interviews with each of the participants. Further details about the interview schedules can be found in Appendices 3–5.

- **Principals, deputy principals and heads of departments** were asked to reflect on their experience of working with CfBT and CfBT teachers, and how CfBT has supported improving student outcomes as well as teachers' professional development. Moreover, they were asked about their hopes and ideas for CfBT's future involvement in their school.
- **CfBT teachers** were asked to examine their perspectives, their practice, student motivation, engagement and outcomes. They were also asked to reflect on the extent to which CfBT has supported and shaped their approach to English language teaching through, for example, special interest groups, workshops and curriculum development. In addition they were asked to comment on how they see their role as a CfBT teacher within the wider context of the school within which they teach and their relationships with local, non-CfBT teachers.
- **Focus group interviews with students** were held, to investigate their experiences of the English language teaching they receive and their views of what they find helpful/not helpful, how engaging, motivating and/or useful they find the curriculum, teaching materials and approaches, and other relevant factors. This was to give insight into current practice and student experiences rather than the process of change.
- **The Deputy Permanent Secretary (DPS)** was asked, as a key government ministry representative, to comment on the government's aims and ambitions for the development of English in Bruneian schools as well as in the country as a whole. He was also asked about previous developments in English language teaching in Brunei. Finally he was asked to reflect on the government's long-standing relationship and cooperation with CfBT, how this relationship has evolved and what he envisaged future cooperation might look like.
- **CfBT management and CfBT project leaders** were asked to comment on how CfBT's involvement in Bruneian education and its relationship with the government have developed since 1984. Those who were in charge of designing and implementing specific projects such as Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Quality Improvement Learning Teams (QUILTS) were asked about the design and implementation of these programmes, how they are used to support teaching and learning, and their cooperation with the schools and teachers where these programmes are run. Many of the project leaders originally came to Brunei as CfBT teachers and as such they were also asked to reflect on their experience as teachers, how they perceive the ways that CfBT supports teachers and students, and how this support has evolved over time, as well as any projects they feel have been especially effective in promoting improvements in capacity and in student outcomes.

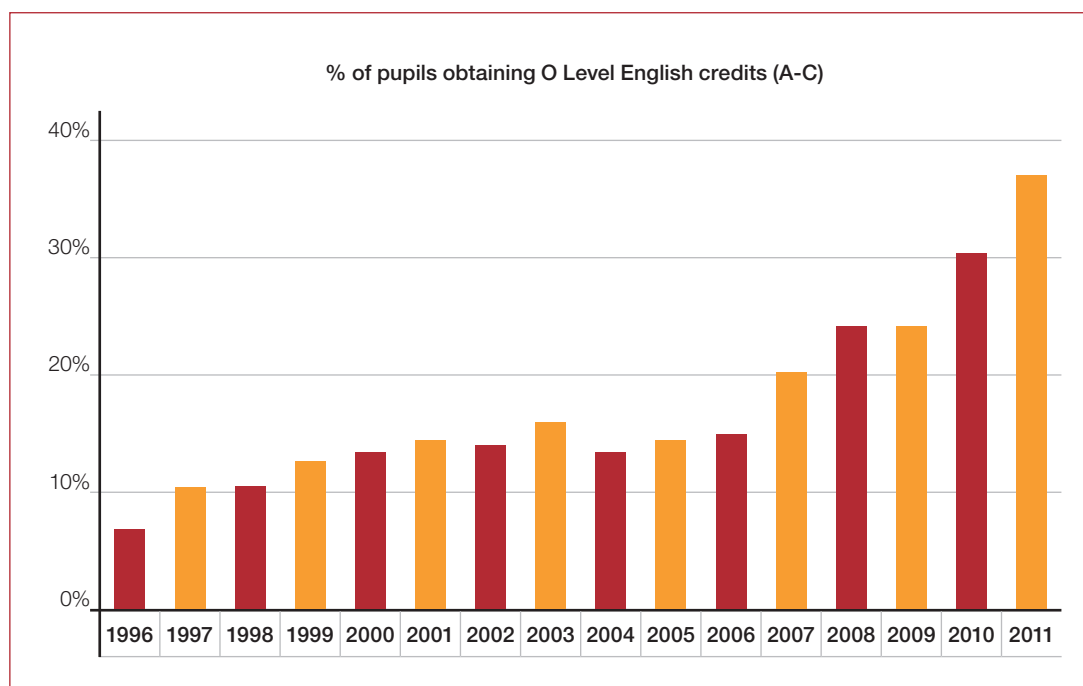
### 1.3 The O Level graph

Prior to fieldwork starting it was established from an analysis of attainment data that there had been a trend of increased attainment in English measured by students' O Level results. This was most evident from 2006 onwards. During the interviews, each of the participants, except primary teachers and students, was shown a graph showing this trend in improving O Level results and asked to



speculate on the possible factors that may have contributed towards this trend, particularly after 2006. The graph is shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** O Level English credits 1996–2011 (original graph reproduced from CfBT documentation and used during interviews)



#### 1.4 Observations

Owing to the time of year during which fieldwork took place it was not possible to conduct extensive classroom observations as it was near the end of term and so regular lessons were not operating. However, at the secondary schools visited it was possible to sit in on a number of lessons focusing on reading and writing in English as well as lessons focusing on oral skills and revision. It was also possible to observe one primary school session based on pupils' English project work, where a film developed through children's dramatic work was presented to parents and children. These informal observations proved to be valuable as they provided some insight into (CfBT) language teaching in action as well as allowing some assessment of student engagement.

Due to the time restrictions affecting the planned observations it was not possible to fully utilise observation schedules. However, protocols such as the International System for Teacher Observation and Feedback (ISTOF), which has been developed for a better understanding of the universality of teacher effectiveness,<sup>2</sup> as well as the Lesson Observation Form for Evaluating the Quality of Teaching<sup>3</sup> (QoT) provided the basis for extensive note-taking during the observations.

<sup>2</sup> Teddlie *et al.* (2006); Day *et al.* (2008)

<sup>3</sup> van de Grift (2007) p. 129





Use of the points for classroom observations from these protocols assisted in identifying some generic characteristics of teacher effectiveness in Bruneian English lessons. The data collected during the classroom sit-ins added to data collected during the interviews during which participants were asked to reflect on their own, as well as other teachers' practice, thereby allowing for triangulation.

The research team was also able to attend a Content and Language Integrated Learning Integrated Schemes of Work (CLIL-ISOW) workshop organised by CfBT for Bruneian English language teachers, during which further observations were made and extensive notes were taken.

### 1.5 Coding

Data analysis was carried out using primarily thematic analysis, with initial codes and themes having been developed based on the study's research aims and objectives as well as reviewing relevant literature on ESL.

Most participants gave permission for their interviews to be audio-taped. Some participants, however, did not wish to be recorded; in these cases extensive notes were taken which were then immediately processed digitally to ensure the details of the interviews were captured as accurately as possible. The other interviews were all transcribed – to help capture particular turns of phrase. Once transcription was complete each interview record was moved into an Excel coding template so that each segment of speech was in a single cell, each representing a different code. There was also space for those excerpts that did not fit the initial themes and codes. A number of segments of interview data fitted more than one theme, in which case it was possible for these segments to be placed in more than one cell. Once all interview data had been inserted into the coding sheet, each code category (including notes and transcript excerpts) was transferred to a new template so each code could be viewed from the different perspectives (interviewees) in one sheet. Categories that covered multiple keywords and subcategories were further colour-coded to separate out into original categories. Interview excerpts and categories were grouped by 'emerging theme' in smaller sections (e.g. 'assessment', 'special education needs' etc.). The main objective was to study CfBT-MoE initiatives and their evolving relationship over time; so in addition to the original themes an overriding theme of 'evolutionary paths' emerged. An example of the coding sheet can be found in the appendix.

In addition, other data, such as notes from classroom sit-in observations, documents and research literature were coded following similar themes and categories. This allowed us to synthesise all the data to create a large, coherent dataset more valuable than the sum of its parts.



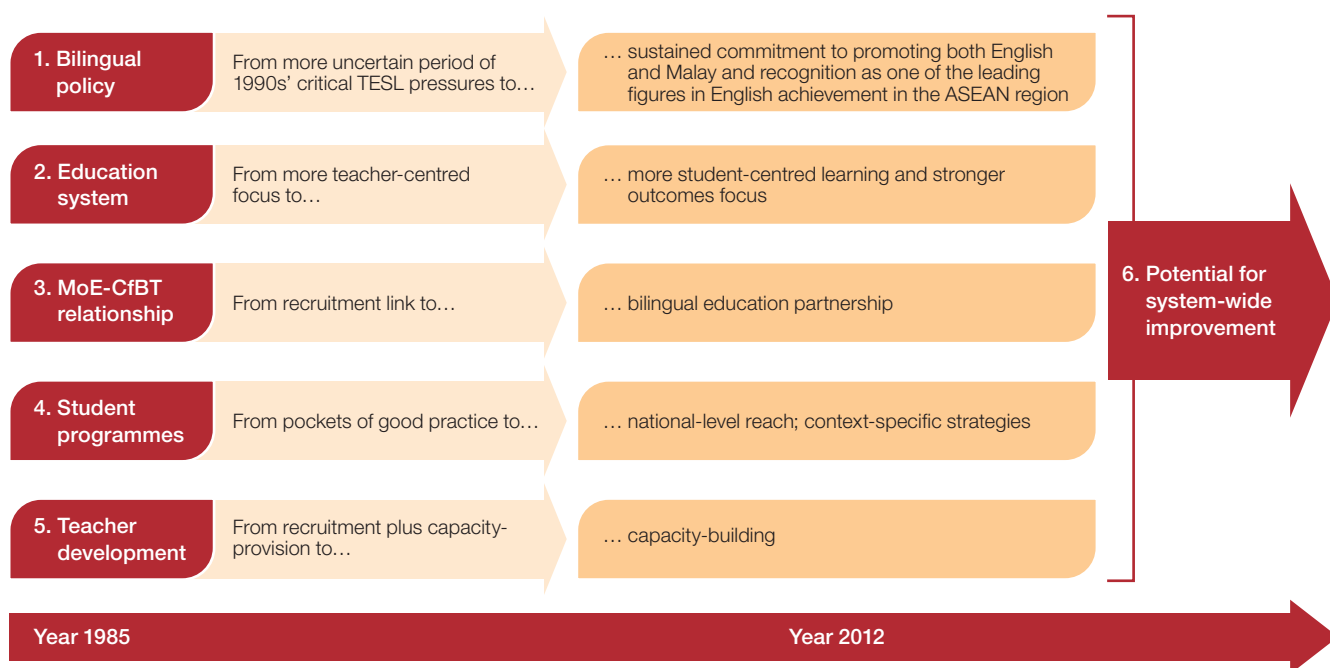
## 2 Key findings and analysis

*South East Asia is undergoing something of a language revolution – developing forms of bilingualism that include both English and the national languages. The acceptance of this type of bilingualism marks a significant political change... National languages and cultures are still being promoted, but increasingly with the acknowledgement that a country's development involves access to and involvement in global markets, and such involvement is improved by use of a common language, most usually English... Development of the role of language and national aspirations continues to be fascinating process in Southeast Asia in general and in Brunei in particular. This is an unfolding story and one that still has a long run ahead of it.<sup>4</sup>*

This chapter discusses the key findings of the study, which were derived from the analysis of documents, quantitative data and stakeholder interviews carried out during the project. In this initial section, we provide a brief overview of the main themes that emerged from the analysis. In the subsequent sections, 2.1–2.6, for each theme we intersperse the different perspectives with evidence from both documents collected during the study and relevant research literature, and offer points for discussion. Section 2.7 summarises some of the other contextual factors outside the main six themes.

Six themes or 'evolutionary paths', as termed here, emerged from our data analysis. Five of these 'paths' materialised from the coding structure applied to interview transcripts and other data sources, while the final theme reflects an effort to synthesise and establish links between the five original themes. These are illustrated in Figure 2.

**Figure 2:** The six evolutionary paths: a bird's eye view



<sup>4</sup> Jones (2003) p. 124-5.



The first five themes are based on the research questions and primary foci of the study. Several different perspectives were explored in our investigation including those of CfBT managers, project leaders and teachers, local senior and middle management teams and teachers in Bruneian schools, senior officers from the MoE in Brunei, the UK High Commissioner and a sample of students at different levels of schooling. The first two themes set the scene and analyse in detail Bruneian education policy and education system contexts.

- Theme 1 describes the historical underpinnings of Brunei's bilingual policy, particularly in the South East Asian context, and the perceptions and observations from the different perspectives relating to its current policy, including its perceived strengths and challenges, the multilingual milieu within schools and wider society.
- Theme 2 reflects the views and documentary analysis of the Bruneian education system, including the various forms of assessment, the implementation of different programmes and initiatives both at CfBT and local levels, for example SPN21, and provision within the system for different types of student, including those with special needs and of different language heritages.
- Theme 3 highlights the evolution of the relationship forged between Brunei's MoE and CfBT. The section charts the historic timeline of CfBT initiatives in parallel with those of the MoE. We also discuss the perceived change in the relationship dynamic over the years, the development of CfBT's role and activity, what has worked well and what could be further improved.
- Theme 4 looks at the range of programmes and interventions for English language learning (and to an extent, English-medium subjects) in Brunei, particularly those put in place between the MoE and CfBT. These primarily relate to initiatives designed to improve O Level attainment, key influences during the implementation of each programme and the use of data to inform next steps.
- Theme 5 describes (in a similar manner to theme 4) programmes and interventions for English language teaching in Brunei, including the provision of continuing professional development (CPD) for both Bruneian and CfBT teachers. We also explore the evolution of teaching practice at different levels, the general perception of the teaching profession and the challenges facing teacher training and education as a whole within the country. The final area looks at the different features of CfBT teachers and the relationship dynamics between Bruneian and CfBT teachers at different levels.
- Lastly, theme 6 explores some of the implications for system-wide improvement offered by Brunei's continued partnership with CfBT and the infrastructure that has been built thus far. We look at the initiatives and programmes already in place which are underpinned by the bilingual policy context of the country and how the collective range of interventions by CfBT and the MoE may continue to influence educational experiences at whole-school level and across the different stages of schooling.

Each theme will be discussed along with evidence-based key ideas for future development in the following sections. The first theme to be addressed pertains to the perceptions regarding Brunei's bilingual policy.

## 2.1 Bilingual education policy in Brunei: from dealing with external pressures to the view of 'being a generation ahead'

*We live during an era in which the pace and scope of change are unprecedented. Nowhere in the world is this observation more salient than in the rapidly developing nations of Southeast Asia. The same global change forces that are manifest in the USA, Europe, Australia, Canada, and Japan have an even greater impact in Southeast Asia... In the education sector, this is also the case. While policymakers and analysts frequently mention education as a key factor in Southeast Asia's recent economic success... this obscures the wide range of variation in educational development within the region... Moreover, it ignores the fact that some of the traditions and practices that figured in the region's educational achievement will impede further development unless they can change.*<sup>5</sup>

Brunei Darussalam is an ethno-linguistically diverse country on the north-western coast of Borneo.<sup>6</sup> The wealthy sultanate with a land mass of about 5,765 sq km borders the Malaysian state of Sarawak and the South China Sea.<sup>7</sup> Brunei is made up of two districts, Temburong in the east and Brunei-Muara in the west, where the capital, Bandar Seri Begawan, is situated. 'Darussalam' denotes 'Abode of Peace' and Brunei can certainly be described as tranquil and prosperous; the small but oil-rich state is able to fund a generous welfare system that furnishes citizens with free housing, education and medical care, without the need for income tax.<sup>8</sup> The World Bank estimates the population at 405,938,<sup>9</sup> with Malays forming about two thirds of the local population, followed by Chinese at 11 per cent.<sup>10</sup> About six per cent is comprised of indigenous peoples which form nine other ethno-linguistic groups: *Belait, Bisaya, Dusun, Kedayan, Murut, Tutong, Mukah, Iban and Penan*.<sup>11</sup> The remaining population generally consists of a mix of other nationalities, primarily from India and the Philippines working in the service sector, and of course the native English-speaking expatriate groups,<sup>12</sup> some of whom are employed by CfBT.

*Bahasa Melayu*, or Standard Malay, is the official language; English is viewed as the 'principal language of business'<sup>13</sup> and is one of the media of instruction in the education system. There is also a local version of Malay called Brunei Malay which is spoken by most of the population as a first or second language.<sup>14</sup> However, there are variations in Malay dialects. Four other varieties have been reported in different regions (in addition to 'Standard' and 'Brunei'): *Kedayan* (spoken by the group of that name), *Kampong Ayer* (or Water Village, of which more information is provided in section 2.2), 'bazaar Malay' and 'royal Malay' or 'palace speech'.<sup>15</sup> There are also different types of script: Malay may be written in either Jawi<sup>16</sup> or Roman script while the various Chinese languages and dialects use Chinese characters. Depending on the type of establishment, public signage may include combinations ranging from Malay in both scripts to all three varieties one after the other. It has been said that the languages used on public road signs, commercial and government premises all combine to shape the 'linguistic landscape of a given territory, region, or urban agglomeration'.<sup>17</sup> An awareness of this feature adds to our brief glimpse into Brunei's linguistic terrain and local culture.

<sup>5</sup> Hallinger (1998) p. 492

<sup>6</sup> Saxena (2008) p. 249

<sup>7</sup> Brunei Ministry of Home Affairs (2009) p. 9

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> World Bank Data Catalog (2013)

<sup>10</sup> Brunei Ministry of Home Affairs, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> Saxena, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Brunei Ministry of Home Affairs, *op. cit.*

<sup>13</sup> Brunei Ministry of Home Affairs, *op. cit.*

<sup>14</sup> Saxena, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> Martin (1992) in Jones (1997) p. 153

<sup>16</sup> 'Jawi is the Arabic-derived alphabet that was used to write Malay until the 19th century when the Roman script was introduced and gradually took over.'

(Coluzzi, 2012: p. 4)

<sup>17</sup> Landry and Bourhis (1997) p. 25



Brunei achieved full independence from Britain in 1984 but both countries continue to share a close relationship. Brunei also shares a close bond with Singapore: the Brunei dollar is 'pegged' with the Singapore dollar and both countries have had interchangeable currencies for over 40 years.<sup>18</sup> In November 2012, Brunei officially became the Chair of ASEAN (the Association of South East Asian Nations), taking over the chairmanship from Cambodia, the chair in 2012.<sup>19</sup>

Islam is the official and majority religion, but others are also practised such as Christianity and Buddhism.

*'The concept of the Malay Muslim Monarchy (Melayu Islam Beraja, MIB) forms the foundation of the social and political structure, and is practi[s]ed by His Majesty the Sultan and the Bruneian people.'*<sup>20</sup>

Islamic religious education has been a key feature of the education system but became compulsory on 1 January 2013 for all Muslim children born after 1 January 2006 and aged between seven and 15 years following the Compulsory Religious Education Order of 2012.<sup>21</sup> According to the order, parents who fail to register their children at religious school face a fine.<sup>22</sup> Religious studies take place in the afternoon so students attend secular school in the morning from about 7.30am to 12.30 and then religious school from around 1.30 to about 4 or 5pm (times appear to vary according to school year).<sup>23</sup> At one point in 2004, Brunei implemented an 'Integrated Education System' in 37 of its schools that incorporated religious education (and other subjects such as 'Extended Civics' for non-Muslims) into the regular school day,<sup>24</sup> hence parents needed to only send their children to one school that provided both secular and religious education.<sup>25</sup> However, this system was discontinued in December 2005.<sup>26</sup>

There appear to have been numerous changes applied to Bruneian education policy since the country's independence in 1984. Naturally, ministers have come and gone with educational frameworks introduced and revised soon after. Brunei's Strategic Plan for Education for example, was drafted by the MoE in 2005 and scheduled to be put in place between 2007 and 2011. This was followed by the near-simultaneous commissioning of the current National Education System for the 21st Century – SPN21.<sup>27</sup> The area of external examinations has shown strong consistency, with reliance on the O Level gold standard and a preference for the internationally recognised Cambridge brand. However, evidence of the impact of debates and developments in education has seen the introduction of School Based Assessment into the curriculum. In line with these new approaches to assessing student attainment, in 2008 the lower secondary examination previously taken in Year 9 was moved forward to Year 8 and replaced by a combination of formative and summative assessment and a national examination (the Student Progress Assessment or SPA, and Student Progress Examination or SPE).<sup>28</sup> Examinations at upper secondary have also undergone change; for instance, documents show that the IGCSE in English as a Second Language – an alternative to the O Level examination – was initially offered to a selection of students as early as 1999,<sup>29</sup> but was removed in 2003<sup>30</sup> and subsequently reintroduced in 2010.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Monetary Authority of Singapore (2011)

<sup>19</sup> RTB News (2012)

<sup>20</sup> Brunei Ministry of Home Affairs (2009) p. 8

<sup>21</sup> BruDirect (2013)

<sup>22</sup> Brunei Times (2012)

<sup>23</sup> Brunei Times (2013)

<sup>24</sup> Muhammad (2009) p. 163

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad (2005) p. 100

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad, *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Brunei MoE (2008) p. 4

<sup>28</sup> SEAMEO (2008)

<sup>29</sup> Nicol (2005/2004)

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> CfBT (2011)

One significant course of action appears unchanged, however: the Bruneian government's long-standing and firm commitment to its bilingual education policy since its launch in 1985<sup>32</sup> – the same year that marked CfBT's arrival in Brunei.<sup>33</sup> The 'Bilingual System of Education' or *Dwibahasa* policy saw English, in addition to being a stand-alone taught subject, becoming the main medium of instruction in Year 4 of primary school for mathematics, science and geography. The Malay language, previously the main medium of instruction throughout schooling, would act as the medium up to primary 3.<sup>34</sup> While different elements of the education system have been changed and in some cases abolished, this particular aspect – of teaching a proportion of subjects in English and others in Malay – has remained constant, and in recent years has intensified by widening its scope. In 2005, students from 15 schools began learning English at pre-school level with the introduction of a new initiative called the Implementation of English Project for Pre-School (EPPS).<sup>35</sup> From 2008 onwards, English was introduced as a medium of instruction even earlier in the schooling phase for mathematics and ICT, starting at lower primary level.<sup>36</sup> While the underlying details and dynamics of the relationship appear to have changed (which we explore in detail in section 2.3), one other important aspect of Brunei's bilingual education policy that has remained relatively constant is the MoE's collaboration with CfBT in matters concerning English language education. Even in the face of great external pressures, debate and relatively frequent changes in policy in surrounding countries in relation to English language education,<sup>37</sup> Brunei stayed committed to its bilingual education policy and in tandem, its relationship with CfBT which has strengthened and widened in scope from a key recruiter of high quality teachers to a capacity enhancer over recent years.

*'We have moved a generation. I think that's the message... You need to have a longer-term perspective on this to really make an impact. If you're going to do one project one year and move on to another then that is going to be a problem. Learning the lessons together has been the message.'* (CfBT interviewee, 2012)

Thus while the Brunei government and MoE is the policy driver, CfBT has sought to support the main policy aims to promote English language learning and enhance the quality of English language learning experiences and teaching quality. An interesting parallel can be drawn with the Bilingual Education Project (BEP) in Spain. Although the context is quite different (historically, geographically and so on), an independent evaluation of the BEP found that two of the key 'societal' factors that 'may have had some role in contributing to the project's positive outcomes' were:<sup>38</sup>

- 'political will for this form of education, extending over 15 years and accommodating changes of government [and]
- a widely held view that English as global language is important for the international citizenship of the young people of Spain'.

<sup>32</sup> Saxena (2008)

<sup>33</sup> CfBT (2007)

<sup>34</sup> Saxena, *op. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

<sup>36</sup> Chan (2009)

<sup>37</sup> Examples include Indonesia's SBI scheme (British Council, 2010) and decision to scrap the teaching of English in primary schools and subsequent U-turn (Osman, 2012) and Malaysia's PPSMI that ran from 2003 to 2012 and has been replaced by the MBMMBI along with the introduction of English Literature as a compulsory subject in secondary schools (Malaysian MoE, 2012)

<sup>38</sup> Dobson, Murillo and Johnstone (2010) p. 145

### 2.1.1 Recognising English as a key competency in the 21st century

The 1990s saw increased interest and debate on the global spread of English and its impact on other, sometimes smaller indigenous languages in, for example, former colonial states. However, simple causal links, dubbed ‘anachronistic views of linguistic imperialism’ seem unhelpful here and it has to be noted that similar depletions in linguistic diversity have been recorded in places where English is less prevalent, such as Russia, China and Latin America, perhaps due to a ‘deep-rooted process of globalisation’ at work.<sup>39</sup> The late 1990s predicted the beginning of this millennium as being dominated by ‘internationalisation, global interdependence, and interconnectivity’.<sup>40</sup> Other factors that contribute to the spread of English have also been noted, including the aspiration to have a ‘voice’ in world affairs, as well as the benefits of multilingualism in drawing trade and new business. Mastering a global language such as English is widely regarded as a useful tool in enabling individuals and societies to achieve a wide range of ‘functionalist’ goals<sup>41</sup> and a sense of ‘future-proofing’. It has been argued that ‘small countries like Singapore and Brunei have little choice but to use English to plug into the international grid of business and finance’.<sup>42</sup> Thus, English is also seen to play a potential key role in narrowing the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ while local languages serve as a means to personify local identity.<sup>43</sup> In the case of Brunei, its various economic, political and educational relationships with the rest of the world necessitate the learning of the ‘global’ shared language which is English. Of particular importance are Brunei’s communications and close historical relationship with the UK and the Netherlands and specifically, Royal Dutch Shell, who are currently 50 per cent investors in the Brunei Shell Petroleum Company (BSP).<sup>44</sup> Within south east Asia itself, a charter signed in February 2009 by the ten member countries of ASEAN made English the official working language of the group.<sup>45</sup> Researchers have noted the seemingly privileged position of English within the ASEAN collective and continue to explore some of the implications of its role in the region as well as the impact of the increased teaching and learning of English within individual countries’ contexts. Brunei’s growing success in English language teaching and learning, reflected in improvements in English competencies, make it well placed for a leadership role in the ASEAN alliance. Research often asks important questions about the state and future of local languages in the region, some of which are already endangered, if not extinct. Language planning for minority languages spoken in Brunei appears to receive less official support,<sup>46</sup> certainly when compared with Malaysia and its Pupil’s Own Language (POL)<sup>47</sup> policy. Consequently, there is a fear of the demise of other languages rich in history and cultural heritage in Brunei, and in fact there is evidence that some languages are already extinct (*Dali*, *Lelak* and *Lemeting* in the Belait region).<sup>48</sup> Malaysia’s POL policy indicates that first languages or ‘mother tongues’ can be taught in national schools at the request of students’ parents and if at least 15 students are able to make up a ‘class’.<sup>49</sup> In east Malaysia, *Kadazandusun* has been taught as a POL in government schools since 1997<sup>50</sup> and in west Malaysia, the *Semai* language of the *Orang Asli* (literally meaning ‘indigenous peoples’) is taught at lower primary level.<sup>51</sup> This being said, POL-type policies do not ensure the survival of indigenous languages, as their continued existence also depends on their use in the home environment and may be profoundly affected by the dominance of other official languages in a particular setting.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, Brunei is a much smaller and less diverse country than Malaysia.

<sup>39</sup> Crystal (2003) p. 23

<sup>40</sup> Pakir (1999) p. 104

<sup>41</sup> Crystal, *op. cit.*, p. 24

<sup>42</sup> Pakir, *op. cit.*, p. 107

<sup>43</sup> Crystal, *op. cit.*, p. 24

<sup>44</sup> Shell (2012)

<sup>45</sup> Kirkpatrick (2012) p. 29

<sup>46</sup> Saxena, *op. cit.*, p. 249

<sup>47</sup> Omar (2003) p. 87

<sup>48</sup> Martin (1995) p. 31

<sup>49</sup> David, Cavallaro and Coluzzi (2009) p. 161

<sup>50</sup> Smith (2003)

<sup>51</sup> David, Cavallaro and Coluzzi, *op. cit.*

<sup>52</sup> David, Cavallaro and Coluzzi, *op. cit.*



There is of course an awareness of the complex nature of language planning and medium-of-instruction policies in particular. Researchers point to the overriding assumption that the aim of most medium-of-instruction policies is to allow students to acquire the language skills necessary for ‘successful subject content instruction, equal education opportunity, and future employment’.<sup>53</sup> Others talk of the emergence of English as a ‘glocal language’, that is, global and intelligible to the ‘international community’,<sup>54</sup> but still rooted in the local contexts of its users and the specific functions of the language.<sup>55</sup>

*‘English is no longer a form of development aid or even just a global commodity with one buyer and many sellers. It is now a rich and important global resource that many buyers and sellers want to trade in, and it is rapidly becoming a glocal language because of vast numbers of English-knowing bilinguals.’<sup>56</sup>*

The historical classification of a language may further illuminate how it is ‘treated’ in a particular country or context. During the post-independence years of the 1970s and 1980s, discussions took place among ELT experts on the ‘status of English and English language teaching’ in south east Asia, closely followed by what has been described as a ‘preoccupation’ with designating each country with one of two labels: English as a Foreign Language (EFL); or English as a Second Language (ESL). Definitions of these categories vary, but during the 1960s, two of those offered were as shown in the figure below:

**Figure 3:** Historical definitions of EFL and ESL

EFL	ESL
<p><b>For the purpose of absorbing the culture of another nation<sup>58</sup></b></p>	<p><b>For the purpose of having an alternative means of expressing one’s own culture<sup>59</sup></b></p>
<p>Taught at school or adult level solely for the purpose of giving students foreign language competence in order to read literature and technical works, understand film and radio and communicate ‘possibly with transient English or Americans’<sup>60</sup></p>	<p>English becomes a language of instruction in the schools and a lingua franca between speakers of divergent languages<sup>61</sup></p>

Interestingly, and with reference to each country’s individual historical (and colonial) journey and future language planning direction, Singapore and the Philippines were both classified ESL while Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand were designated EFL.<sup>62</sup> Malaysia, incidentally, has never quite accepted this EFL category and regards itself as ESL;<sup>63</sup> certainly some of its earlier educational policy pre-1980s appeared more closely aligned with the historical description of ESL above, but in recent times it has shown more correspondence with EFL amid continued tensions and ambivalence about the role of English and of Malay.

<sup>53</sup> Tollefson and Tsui (2004) p. 285

<sup>54</sup> Hoang Oanh (2012) p. 113

<sup>55</sup> Pakir (1999) p. 108

<sup>56</sup> *ibid.*, p. 112

<sup>57</sup> Shrestha (1983)

<sup>58</sup> Christophersen (1960) p. 131

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Marckwardt (1963) in Shrestha (1983) p. 46

<sup>61</sup> Marckwardt, *op. cit.*

<sup>62</sup> Omar (2003) p. 87

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.*





Post-independence Brunei was categorised as ESL<sup>64</sup> and this helped to plot the course of Brunei's language planning, in aligning some of its key bilingual education policy choices with those of Singapore and the Philippines. However, it has to be said that the boundaries between ESL and EFL are difficult to define and may be rather blurred; this type of dichotomy has been described as an 'oversimplification of sociolinguistic reality'.<sup>65</sup> Researchers were already suggesting that the ESL/EFL distinction did not actually reflect how English was being used around the world; a new initialism was proposed, to better represent how English is used at different levels within one country or context, EIAL: English as an International Auxiliary Language:

*'When Japanese talk with Filipinos they are using English as an international language. When Filipinos talk with other Filipinos using English, or Indians talk with other Indians using English, it is English as an auxiliary language. These two functional differences will make a difference in how English is taught in the different countries. In Thailand, Japan, Korea, and places like them, English as an international language will be stressed, but with some regard for English as an auxiliary language. In Hong Kong, the Philippines, Singapore and similar places, English will be taught as both an international and an auxiliary language. The functional use of English within a country will not affect the name but it will affect the teaching. The model for learning (has most to do with pronunciation) can be a local variety/standard or a foreign variety/standard, depending upon the teaching institution.'*<sup>66</sup>

### 2.1.2 Aims of Bruneian education policy

In the case of Brunei, the aims of the bilingual education policy have been described as 'ensuring the sovereignty of the Malay language, while at the same time recognising the importance of the English language. By means of the Education System of Negara Brunei Darussalam a high degree of proficiency in both languages should be achieved'.<sup>67</sup> Participant interviews with the different stakeholders also reflected the recognition of the great value placed on promoting the English language as an employment and further education enabler, reflecting its role as a key competency in the 21st century for all young Bruneians. Although the region remains 'sensitive' to imperialistic dynamics, the common tenor was that English should now be viewed as a 'literacy' and 'skill', enabling access to 'the outside' and for people from other countries to access Brunei and Bruneians, and hear what they have to say. It is thus seen as an essential global, political and economic tool. Crucially, English was not only perceived as a necessity for going abroad, but as another strong language that would help Brunei as an outward-looking country to develop and move forward. In the political sphere, the English language was conceptualised as a powerful 'instrument of learning', which is crucial for the country's ability to overcome its strong dependence on gas and oil production and achieve the move towards a knowledge-based economy.

It was also envisaged that Brunei's multilingual context creates a demand for English to become the lingua franca for young people, that is, their common language for the future. In this regard, a recent investigation of attitudes towards the English language within the 17–19 year old adolescent population found that, although participants were 'wary of some of the cultural associations of the English language which could put them in conflict with their religious beliefs and their own cultural heritage'..., 'they did not view the English language as a colonial relic, but rather as a modern necessity'... 'What emerged was much more of a movement towards the voluntary appropriation of English on their own terms... Participants were keenly aware of the need for English in their lives linking it with enhanced career prospects, modernity and inclusion at a global level'.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Abhakorn (2003) p. 78

<sup>65</sup> Powell (2009) p. 156

<sup>66</sup> Richards (1976) p. 53

<sup>67</sup> CfBT (2011) p. 16

<sup>68</sup> O'Hara-Davies (2011) p. 114-5

These changes in the perceived status of the English language also appear to have affected the relationship between Standard Malay and English. Where previously some might have seen a rivalry between the two languages, Bahasa Melayu and English are strongly and consistently officially promoted with equal status. A previous minister was reported to have remarked that 'Malay acts as the language of [people's] hearts while English is the language of their minds'. This is quite different from, for example, the more nationalist-branded rhetoric observed in Malaysia where English being used for science and mathematics has been perceived as a slight on the Malay language. In contrast, being able to switch fluently between English and Malay has become a defining element of Bruneian identity. Indeed, the opportunity of mastering two languages is perceived as one of the great strengths of the Bruneian education system, and is not without political implications. Mastery or bilingual competence is often interpreted as being able to undertake further studies at Universiti Brunei Darussalam or abroad. Success in both English and Malay thus has high stakes for young Bruneians in terms of acting as a gatekeeper to employment and higher education routes and prospects.

### **2.1.3 Comparing the bilingual policy in Brunei with other well-established bilingual systems**

The potential of popular comparisons with the bilingual policy contexts of Canada or Wales is rather questionable since there are at least two significant differences between the linguistic context of Brunei Darussalam and those in Canada or Wales. First of all, in Canada and Wales, pupils will encounter English more commonly in the wider society outside the classroom. However, in the current context of Brunei, the classroom will be the main site where many learners first encounter English, particularly those in lower socio-economic status (SES) groups and remote areas. Secondly, considering that the aim of teaching English in Pra (Reception) and primary is to prepare learners for English-medium teaching of mathematics and science in primary schools, it is noteworthy that, in contrast to the situation in Canada or Wales, the teachers of mathematics and science in Brunei will seldom be teaching in their native language. It is important to take these two contextual factors into account. This was not done in Malaysia, where the policy of teaching science and mathematics in English, introduced in 2003, has been reversed, and where these subjects are now once again taught in the main language of the child's school (Malay, Chinese or Tamil). The decision to reverse the policy appears to have been motivated by the serious decline in the achievement of Malaysian students in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) between 2003 and 2007.<sup>69</sup>

Among the well-established successful bilingual education systems, the closest parallel to the Bruneian situation may be that of Singapore, where the government has steadfastly pursued the goal of an 'English-knowing' bilingual nation, with a great degree of success. Like Brunei, Singapore in 1987, when the current educational policies began, was a country where there were very few speakers of English as a first language (L1). As in Brunei, the aims of education in Singapore include (b)iliteracy, numeracy and bilingualism. All students learn, and are taught in, English and a second language as determined by their ethnicity. Brunei educators have a strong interest in the success of the Singapore education system in international assessments and are keen to follow successful strategies, while recognising and wishing to avoid some of the well documented problems encountered in the high pressure context of schooling in Singapore with its over-emphasis on competitive examination success.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Mohammadpour (2012)

<sup>70</sup> Dimmock (2011)



Some of the issues that were identified early on in the Singaporean debate are:

*'whether slow learners are handicapped because the main medium of instruction is English and they are expected to also perform well in the second school language; whether those who come from homes where English is the predominant language (23 per cent of the Singaporean population) are advantaged, having come into the school system with more than basic language skills; and whether students are spending too much curriculum time and after-school hours polishing their language skills at the expense of content subjects, and failing to achieve their potential for learning'.<sup>71</sup>*

Some of the measures that have been taken to address the problems identified by one researcher are:<sup>72</sup>

- 'Perceived slow learners, who find it difficult to cope with both content instruction as well as language skills, are given generous assistance with support programmes offered after school hours. This group includes those who are disadvantaged in language skills, having come from non-school-language home environments, for example the dialects of Chinese (Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hainanese, etc.) or other languages such as Telegu or Malayalam'.<sup>73</sup>
- There is streaming for the non-English language in secondary school. This is an implicit recognition of the phenomenon that lower-ability students may not always be successful in developing advanced proficiency in the two languages. This has been observed in other contexts (for example, the Philippines<sup>74</sup>) where English-medium instruction is the norm.
- Special measures have been put in place for gifted Chinese/English learners, with the possibility of taking a higher-level examination at the end of secondary school.

While the Singapore education system appears often to be referred to in Brunei as the 'gold standard' of language attainment, there was increasing recognition among the interviewees in our study that the Singaporean education system has its own set of historical and current concerns,<sup>75</sup> such as the extent to which exams 'dominate the curriculum' and achievement gaps between particular groups, in comparison with Brunei's 'inclusive' education model that has among its guiding principles the well-being of the student and the strength of family ties. It also has to be noted that if the policy goal is high proficiency in two languages, comparing the education systems on the basis of achievement in the English language alone, rather than both languages, can result in a somewhat distorted picture.

<sup>71</sup> Pakir (2004) p. 121

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Pakir, *op. cit.*, p. 120

<sup>74</sup> Nical, Smolicz and Secombe (2004)

<sup>75</sup> This example alludes to issues surrounding native speaker identities and possible tensions with government policy. Before their closure in 1987 due to dwindling enrolment, Singapore's education system was made up of 'mother tongue' schools (in addition to English schools). Mother tongue languages are instead taught in all schools currently as individual subjects; these along with English are Singapore's 'official' languages (Dixon, 2005). Interestingly, Malay remains their 'national language' for mainly diplomatic reasons (Wee, 2011), confirming to surrounding nations that the country 'is still within the Malay world'. By law, the national anthem has to be sung in Malay, even though many question why, as English is seen as more widely used and understood within Singapore. Dr Toh Chin Chye (Deputy Prime Minister of Singapore between 1965 and 1968) felt that the national anthem would be more appropriate in Malay: 'the indigenous language of the region, as English is not native to this part of the world'. A Malay anthem would appeal to 'all races' and be easily understood. Certainly the language context in Singapore today is quite different to what it was in 1965 just after its split with Malaysia in 1963; Malay literacy among non-Malays is less prevalent and something seemingly minute like a national anthem's 'official' language may serve to magnify this detail.

#### **2.1.4 Optimising literacies in both languages to suit the linguistic context**

The question needs to be raised whether the ideal of mastery or 'balanced' literacy in both languages is an appropriate goal. For example, in Singapore, it is now widely acknowledged that most Singaporeans, while bilingual, are not equally literate in their two languages, and many now tend to be more proficient in English than in their mother tongue.<sup>76</sup> This replicates long-standing findings in Europe and elsewhere that even highly proficient bilinguals are – if measured with fine enough granularity – almost never equally balanced between the two literacies.

Since balanced biliteracy is difficult to achieve in practice and since predominantly English-medium education is likely to produce stronger literacy in English in the long term (seen by Brunei and other ASEAN countries as vital in preparing their young people for life in the global marketplace) efforts should be targeted at optimising English literacy and functional literacy in Standard Malay for the largest possible number of learners and the specific context of language use. Moreover, if the aim is to achieve cognitive academic language proficiency not only in English but also in Standard Malay, this needs to be supported appropriately by instruction and sufficient exposure to scripts: that is, (academic) reading input and writing output, including for example, reports and business letters. There may also be an argument for an advanced Malay stream for students who are capable of following it.

#### **2.1.5 Providing extra language support for those students who struggle**

While the Bruneian education system as it is currently proposed will endeavour to promote the language proficiency of all children, there will inevitably be some children who will need extra support. It was noted in the interviews that while the top 50 per cent of the student population may benefit greatly from learning two languages, more investigation is needed that inquires into who is not in the top 50 per cent and into issues around 'zero-linguals' or 'subtractive bilingualism'. A few teachers, for example, reported that in more remote geographical areas 'only 30 per cent of the cohort can master English, while the rest struggle'. A number of school principals and teachers noted considerable difficulties specifically among students who have to learn Standard Malay in addition to other languages (for example ethnic Chinese and indigenous peoples) compared with students whose home language is Malay. Some principals were worried about the maintenance of high language standards in Malay, which was seen to be plateauing or declining in a few cases; potential reasons were given as Malay being perceived as 'easy' and not needed for most subjects so that less effort is expended by students, along with more unfavourable reading habits in Malay compared to in English.

In some schools excellent support programmes for Malay and English have been put in place, such as writing competitions and night classes, and nationwide outreach programmes to strengthen parental support are being rolled out. In addition, exposure to English language through media outside the classroom has been increasing, which was also mentioned as a potentially crucial factor responsible for higher attainment. It was pointed out, however, that there is need to further facilitate engagement with English and, indeed, Standard Malay beyond the classroom, particularly in relation to more rural schools or schools in lower SES areas, in order to develop competence. Views were expressed from CfBT teachers observing students in such schools that there can be a reluctance to speak in English (and indeed Standard Malay) with friends as they feel they will be ridiculed or branded as 'showing off'.

Engagement with English language learning at home often may benefit from parental support, which may be harder to provide in more rural or lower SES areas where parents' knowledge and

<sup>76</sup> Wee (2011)



use of English may be rudimentary. Children of more educated parents in urban areas are likely to benefit from a home learning environment in which English may be used or encouraged some of the time. In order to address issues around parental support and literacy, materials for parents that do not require parents to speak English could be employed to support students in rural areas and schools where this may be viewed as a barrier to promoting successful bilingual competency. Other potentially effective measures to increase language exposure outside the classroom and support learners who struggle are greater availability of remedial English programmes with graded readers and age-appropriate topics in the school environment and in local English book libraries. In the current day and age, the use of digital devices is a meaningful complement or even replacement for paper books, including light readers for e-books in Malay and in English, affordable mobile phones, or laptops for interactive language learning software, particularly in rural areas where the next library might be a long way away. In addition, another strategy to provide extra support for students can be provided by better preparation of teachers for English-medium mathematics and science teaching (see below).

### **2.1.6 Supporting English proficiency development and subject learning through CLIL**

The recent policy change – abandoning the original Hugo Baetens Beardsmore model of starting bilingualism at Year 4<sup>77</sup> and instead turning core subjects, such as mathematics and science into English-medium subjects from Year 1 – was generally perceived as a positive development by principals and most teachers interviewed, because it was felt to reduce linguistic discontinuity in these subjects. Some secondary teachers also perceived changes towards higher English language proficiency among the most recent intake of secondary students, which might be attributable in part to intensifying English-medium instruction in primary school, and to wider English use in the media. Indeed, one of the factors associated with positive outcomes in the BEP in Spain also listed ‘an early start (sometimes at the age of three) into the bilingual system and substantial time for education in the additional language (40 per cent and above).<sup>78</sup>

An earlier onset of instruction in the second language also brings a new set of demands. A few respondents raised concerns that for some students an earlier start to English-medium instruction might compromise both learning the English language and learning the subject. However, others felt the earlier start had advantages. A few teachers interviewed felt that some of their students have great difficulties in understanding complex concepts if they adhered to English-only policies, and others were concerned that their students would not be able to develop the language skills required for a thorough grasp of the subject, but merely ‘get by’ with very limited knowledge of English, relying heavily on their understanding of key concepts, memorising facts and formulaic language for the exam papers.<sup>79</sup>

If children do not have a good grasp of the language in which teaching is delivered, it is harder for them to understand the concepts they are being taught. Further, if their academic language proficiency is compromised, they may have difficulty in thinking in complex ways at all. Research has demonstrated that if bilingual children do not have threshold literacy in one of their languages, this affects their ability to operate cognitively in an academic setting.<sup>80</sup> In a somewhat different linguistic setting, another researcher compared attainment in mathematics and proficiency in English of over 9,000 South African secondary school students, and found that higher scores in an English

<sup>77</sup> Baetens Beardsmore (1993)

<sup>78</sup> Dobson, Murillo and Johnstone (2010) p. 145

<sup>79</sup> Similar issues were observed in Malaysian English-medium texts (before the abolishment of the bilingual policy (PPSMI) in 2012. Malaysia is now introducing English Literature as a compulsory secondary school subject in an effort to provide more exposure to the English language and achieve ‘operational proficiency’ (Malaysian MoE, 2012)

<sup>80</sup> Cummins (2001)



proficiency test correlated with higher scores in an internationally-standardised mathematics test.<sup>81</sup> It is also interesting in this regard that when English-medium mathematics teaching was introduced in Malaysia, while teachers perceived their English language proficiency as adequate for the teaching of their subjects, they felt that they needed 'more preparation in overcoming students' difficulties in learning the subjects in English especially for students who are weak in English or mathematics/science or both'.<sup>82</sup> Since it appears that English-medium teachers of mathematics, science and ICT in Brunei are facing similar challenges, there is a good argument for a well-developed programme of teacher development which introduces them to the principles of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) for teaching grades from age Pra onwards.

CLIL is generally understood to be the use of a language which is not the dominant language of the surrounding community, generally by non-native speaker teachers, to teach content other than the language itself. There is some evidence that CLIL is better than language tuition alone in improving the proficiency of students with average (as opposed to higher than average) language learning aptitude.<sup>83</sup> There is also some evidence that CLIL learners perform better on subject tests than peers in both languages. For example, researchers found this to be the case with young CLIL learners of mathematics.<sup>84</sup> However, there is also an observation in several studies that CLIL may reduce active student participation in class.<sup>85</sup>

Some key characteristics of a CLIL lesson are:<sup>86</sup>

1. 'In CLIL programs typically less than 50 per cent of the curriculum is taught in the target language.'
2. '... students should be given the necessary interactional space to test their linguistic hypotheses while talking about subject content...'
3. '... teachers should pay selective but explicit attention to instances of linguistic error or difficulty.'
4. '... language mistakes are supposedly neither penalised nor corrected...'

Although English-medium subject teachers will usually be non-native speakers of English, they might in some cases be native English-speaking CfBT teachers. In order to address the latter case, it is worth considering adding to the initial briefing of these teachers a small 'toolkit' of Bahasa Melayu mathematics and science words and phrases. In the case of the non-native English-speaking subject specialists, professional development sessions or a set of materials that cover key concepts relating to English-medium instruction in general and in their specific subject would be highly desirable.

A number of interviewees expressed disagreement and uncertainty over the use of codeswitching and adhering to English-only classroom policies. In this regard, it was noted that some teachers tend to revert to Malay in certain 'high pressure' subjects (like science) and at certain levels in order to quicken the pace at which students develop a strong understanding of concepts and achieve good 'results'.

<sup>81</sup> Howie (2003)

<sup>82</sup> Idris et al. (2007) p. 101

<sup>83</sup> Mewald (2007)

<sup>84</sup> van de Craen, Ceuleers and Mondt (2007)

<sup>85</sup> Dalton-Puffer (2011)

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.*, p. 184



Codeswitching, as opposed to an English-only classroom policy, is a current and valued way of instruction teaching. For example, codeswitching is used to demarcate different kinds of discourse: to signal the transition between preparing for a lesson and the start of the lesson; to specify a particular addressee; to distinguish ‘doing a lesson’ from talking about it; to change footing or to make an aside; to distinguish the reading aloud of a text from talking about it; to distinguish classroom management utterances from talk related to lesson content, and so on. In describing a mathematics class carried out in Welsh, when the pupils had varying levels of proficiency in the language, Jones and Martin-Jones comment: ‘An important kind of codeswitching [...] is reiterating what has just been said in the other language; not usually word for word, but rephrased. [The teacher can also] provide the [L2 term] for an L1 utterance by a student. By reiterating what the learner had said, the teacher was signalling her acceptance of the response, but, at the same time, she was perhaps also addressing the students for whom Welsh was the preferred language’.<sup>87</sup>

Thus, some language functions in class may be better handled first in the students’ first language (L1), such as explaining a difficult concept, making explicit comparisons between the languages or managing discipline, and others in their second language (L2).<sup>88</sup> Accordingly, both Malay and English may well have their place in the classroom alongside each other. Given that the objective of the government is that all Bruneians should be able to switch effortlessly from Malay to English, observing integrated language use demonstrated in such codeswitching behaviours also provides the children with models of fluent bilingual speakers.

In CLIL contexts, learners may also have to be explicitly and carefully introduced to specialised terms, and more importantly to terms that are in use in informal settings, but have a special technical meaning in the context, so as to avoid the confusion of meanings. For example, the English word ‘similar’ means something different from its everyday meaning when one is describing the mathematical concept of ‘similar triangles’. Other key points for consideration are the ample use of diagrams, graphs, etc., especially in mathematics and science, as these can scaffold verbal meaning, and extending ‘wait time’, reflecting the need to wait longer for an answer than would be expected in the first language.

**A number of CLIL resources** that could be useful in the design of a context-appropriate professional development programme for teachers can be found in Appendix 2.

### **2.1.7 MoE-CfBT partnership and the bilingual education terrains of Brunei and south east Asia**

In this subsection an illustrative timeline (Figure 4) is shown that summarises key points in the evolution of the relationship between the MoE and CfBT in supporting English language teaching in Brunei. The perceived change in relationship is mapped against the increase in O Level results over time and the bilingual context in the wider south east Asia region. The timeline starts from 1996 (the starting point of O Level attainment data to which access was possible) but also ventures briefly into periods before Brunei’s independence in 1984. The main features to emphasise here are:

- CfBT’s historical relationships with other bilingual systems, including those of Germany in the 1960s and Malaysia in the late 1970s, the bilingual contexts in the south east Asia region over time and in contrast, the consistency applied to Brunei’s bilingual education policy [represented by the pink boxes]

<sup>87</sup> Jones and Martin-Jones (2004) p. 62

<sup>88</sup> Macaro (2001, 2009)



- the relationship between Brunei's MoE and CfBT over the same period, the key turning point of the relationship around 2006 and some of the current context [represented by the blue boxes]
- the change in O Level English attainment [represented by the line graph showing the percentage of good A-C credits over time].

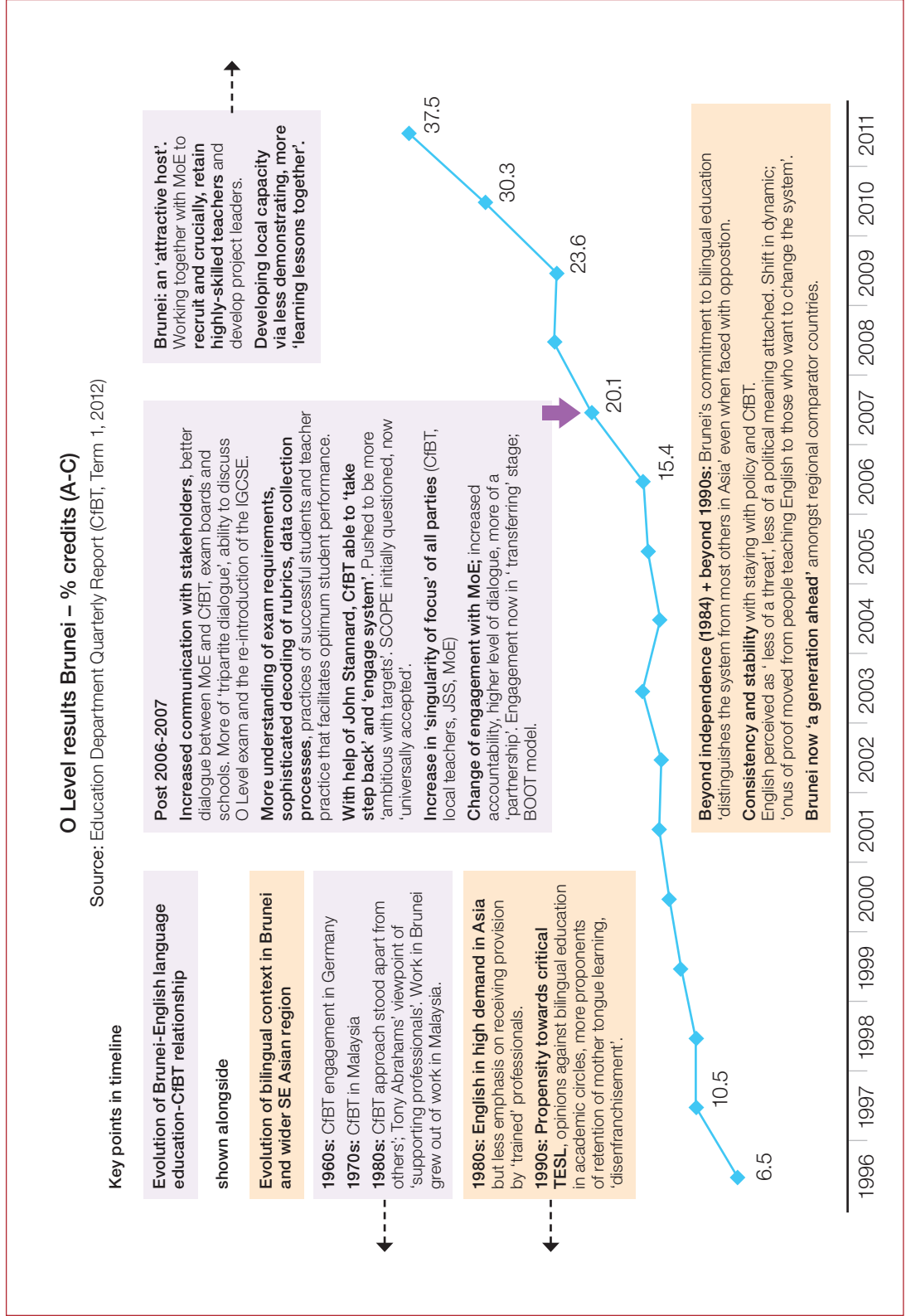
The point about consistency in policy even in the face of both external and internal challenges is illustrated by this quote from an interviewee:

*'I'm not for a moment saying there aren't a lot of problems with it. I think if you look at it over a 50 or 100 year [period], if we come back in 2080 that decision would have seemed to be a very astute one. And not changing from the O Level, again it's not completely an unambiguous good. But they do seem to have gone for a consistency and stability model, and said before changing it, 'We want to be absolutely sure that it's inappropriate', not 'Let's just try and see if it's better'. I think sticking with CfBT, you get how strong that policy commitment was.'*





**Figure 4:** Timeline of O Level English attainment juxtaposed with evolutionary paths of the MoE-CfBT relationship and regional bilingual context



**Figure 5:** Summary characteristics of bilingual context and MoE-CfBT relationship

Consistency	Towards proficiency	Collaboration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brunei's commitment towards bilingual education policy amidst early external pressures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to develop mastery of two languages; shift in perceived status of English as a key competency of the 21st century</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased awareness of the potential 'synergy' between English and Malay languages</li> </ul>

Another interviewee's views on English as literacy summed up the current context in Brunei and this section well:

*'I regard English as a literacy now. I believe, whenever we have arguments... about whether it's colonialism by another name... reading and writing aren't indigenous to most parts of the world. If you speak English, whatever your opinion is, you can say it to the world. If you're only speaking your own language, no one's listening to you. Even with the weakest people, English allows them to travel, read, change their world, access literature for change. My personal response is the onus of proof on changing used to be on the people teaching English. The dynamic... those who want to change it now have to prove it's not working. The system functions well enough. Malaysia and Indonesia, the two nearest comparator countries in terms of native language, they are still having that debate. Brunei is a generation ahead [of its neighbours].'*

**Figure 6:** Summary features of the bilingual policy context in Brunei

<p><b>Greater recognition of the need to increase English attainment:</b> Brunei maintained its strong commitment to bilingual education since 1984 – consistent policy context</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In early 2000s greater emphasis placed on raising English attainment due to globalisation, building on 20 years of bilingual education</li> <li>• English viewed as an essential tool, an international language and economic necessity                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider context of ICT, mass media and world wide web means English proficiency is becoming increasingly important to promote educational and employment opportunities                                     <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased pay for CfBT international teachers (2006) because it is recognised they can model and spread good practice</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>• Incremental reform, maintaining O Level as external benchmark but introducing IGCSE                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English teaching from a young age in Pra from 2005</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

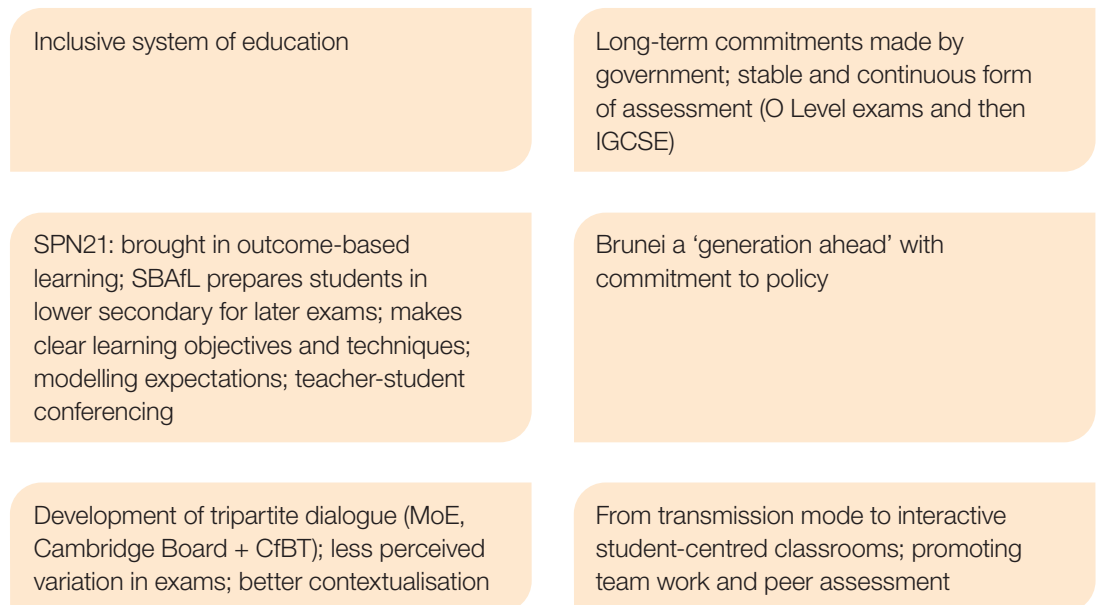


## 2.2 Perceptions of the Bruneian education system

There has been a growing international recognition of Brunei's educational success. This reflects the track record of support for and investment in English and the consistent policy commitment to bilingual education, enhancing the quality of education and increasing participation rates.

*'The Sultanate has one of the most highly educated populations in Asia, a fact recognised in the September 2009 Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) released by the World Economic Forum. In 2009 Brunei Darussalam moved up some seven places overall from its 2008 performance, with health and primary education, training and higher education singled out as outperforming pillars of the GCI of the Sultanate.'*<sup>89</sup>

**Figure 7:** Emerging features of Bruneian education system from a range of perspectives



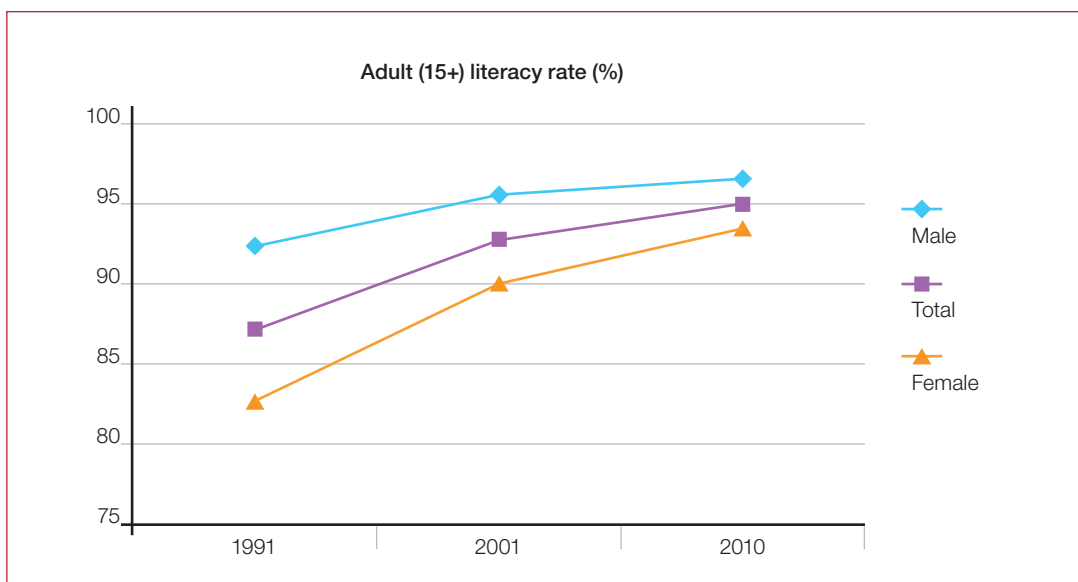
Adult literacy rates are estimated at over 90 per cent, with the number of students enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary levels of schooling rising from 91,992 in 1998 to 101,686 in 2012. This is against the backdrop of annual population growth falling from 2.82 per cent in 1990 down to 1.7 per cent in 2011 and birth rates reducing from 29 births per 1000 in 1990 to around 19 births in 2011.

The contexts of the Bruneian education system and underlying population indicators are illustrated in the following figures.

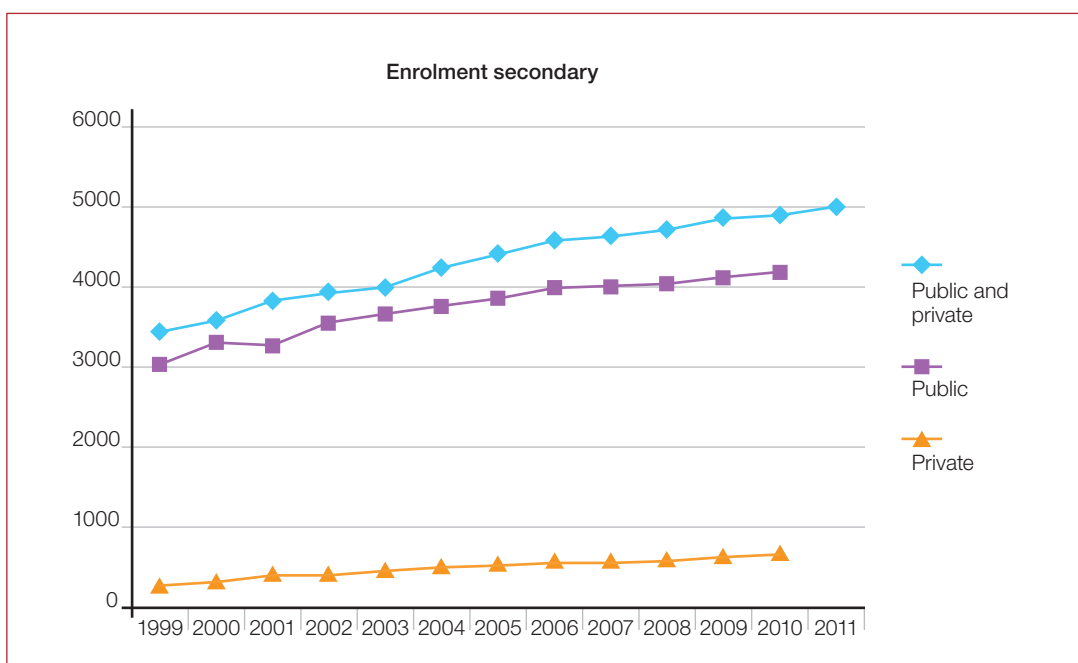
<sup>89</sup> Brunei Ministry of Home Affairs (2009) p. 152



**Figure 8:** Adult literacy rates<sup>90</sup> in Brunei 1991–2010 (Source: World Bank<sup>91</sup>)



**Figure 9:** Number of students enrolled at secondary level grouped by public and private institutions in Brunei 1999–2011 (Source: World Bank)



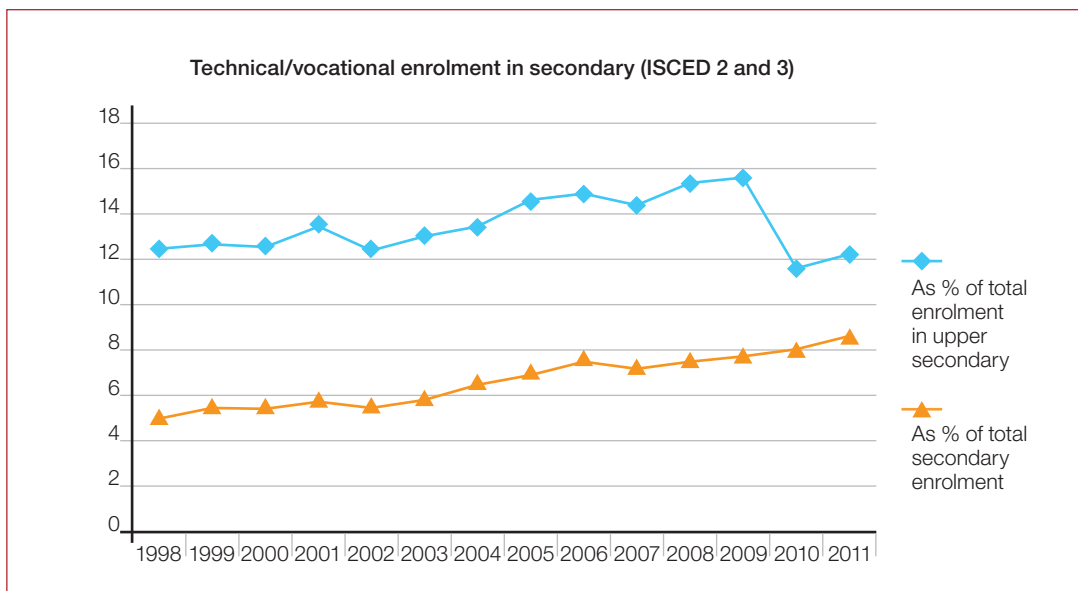
Adult literacy rates, along with enrolment in secondary school, have risen since the 1990s. The rising proportion of entries in the vocational segment at upper secondary and secondary levels can also be seen in Figure 10 below.

<sup>90</sup> Adult literacy rate calculated as 'the percentage of people aged 15 and above who can, with understanding, read and write a short, simple statement on their everyday life.' (World Bank, 2013)

<sup>91</sup> World Bank (2013) [online: <http://data.worldbank.org/country/brunei-darussalam>]

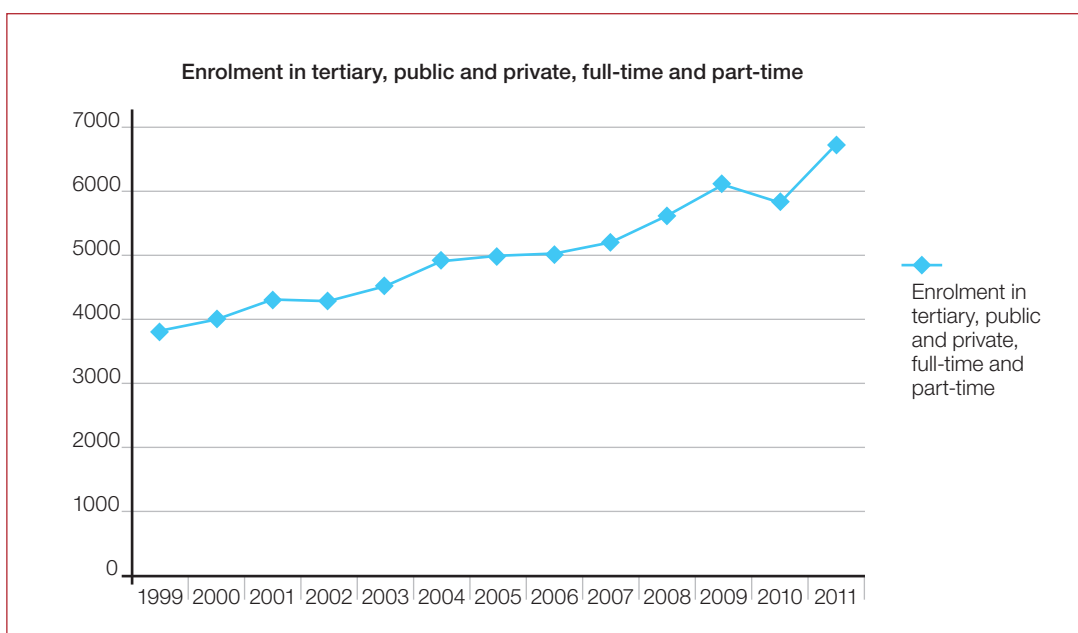


**Figure 10:** Rise in proportion of technical/vocational enrolment in Brunei 1998–2011 (Source: World Bank)



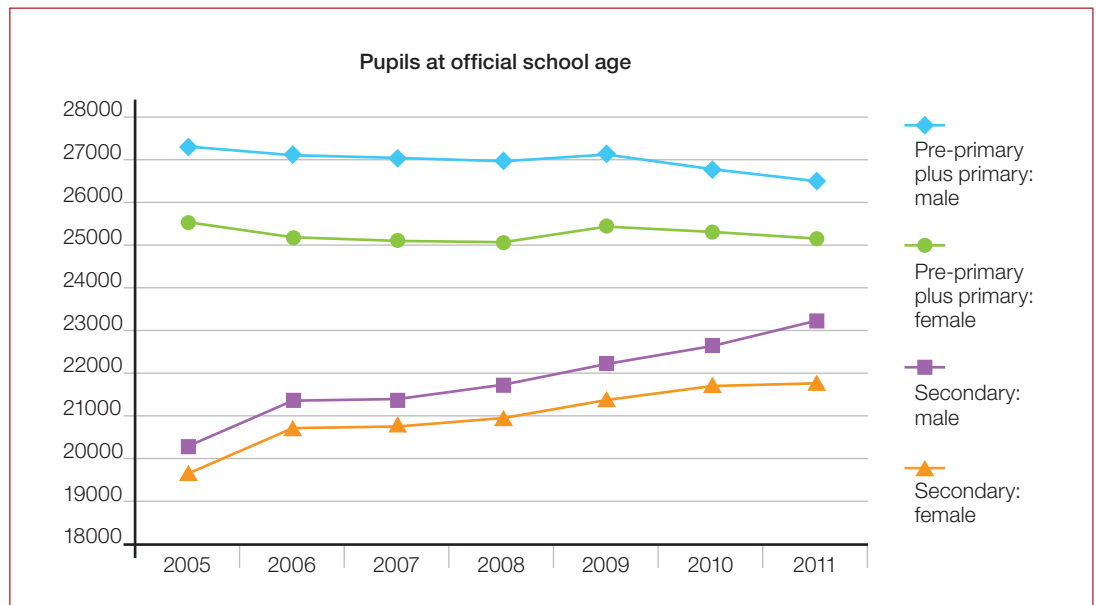
In line with the increase in entries to secondary school, a rise in tertiary education entries can also be seen in Figure 11, below. On the whole, these figures show a positive trend, indicating Brunei's continued commitment to education, the improvement of access, and educational options and attainment, ensuring greater retention success in the system.

**Figure 11:** Number of students enrolled in tertiary programmes in Brunei 1999–2011



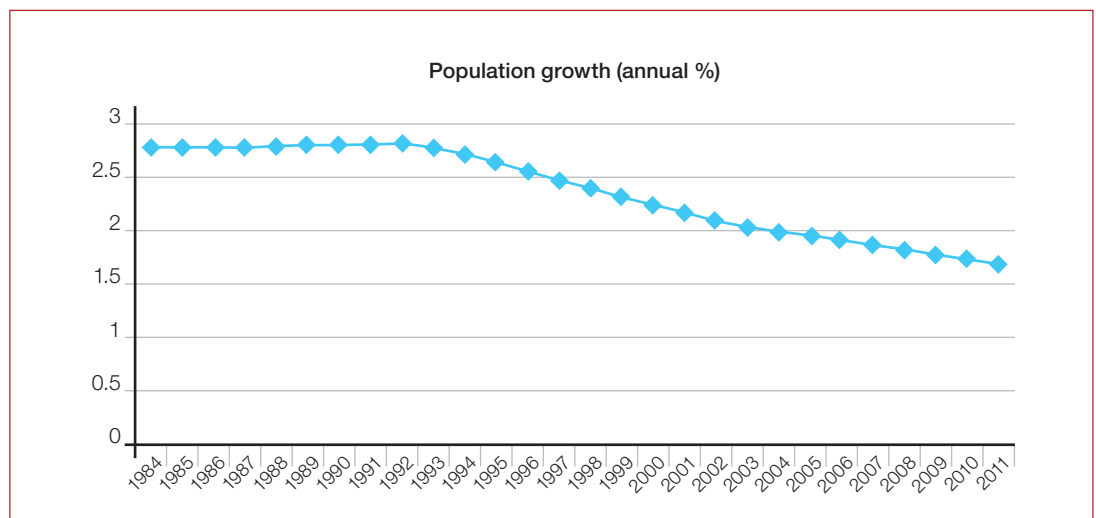


**Figure 12:** Number of students at official school age, pre-primary, primary and secondary levels grouped by gender 2005–2011 (Source: World Bank)



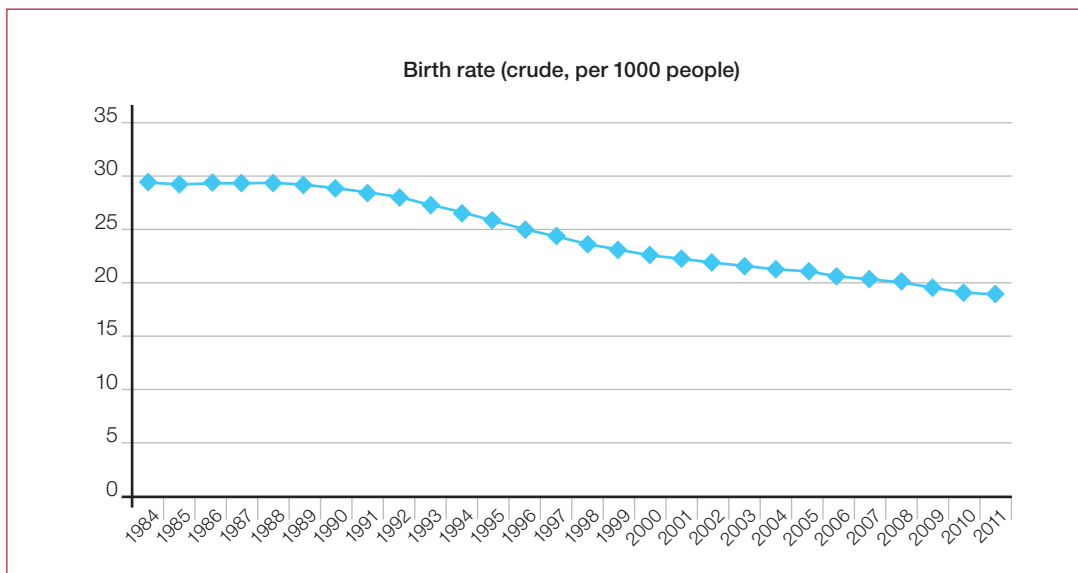
Interestingly, World Bank figures also indicate a gradual drop in the number of students of official school age at pre-primary and primary levels. This is shown next to the aforementioned rise in secondary level students in Figure 12. The slight drop in students at pre-primary and primary level combined may be related to the decrease in population growth and birth rate in Brunei (see Figure 13 and Figure 14 respectively). Population projections, however, indicate a steeper increase in population after 2015 (Figure 15) along with the proportion of females overtaking males in the same projected period (Figure 16).

**Figure 13:** Brunei annual population growth since independence 1984–2011 (Source: World Bank)

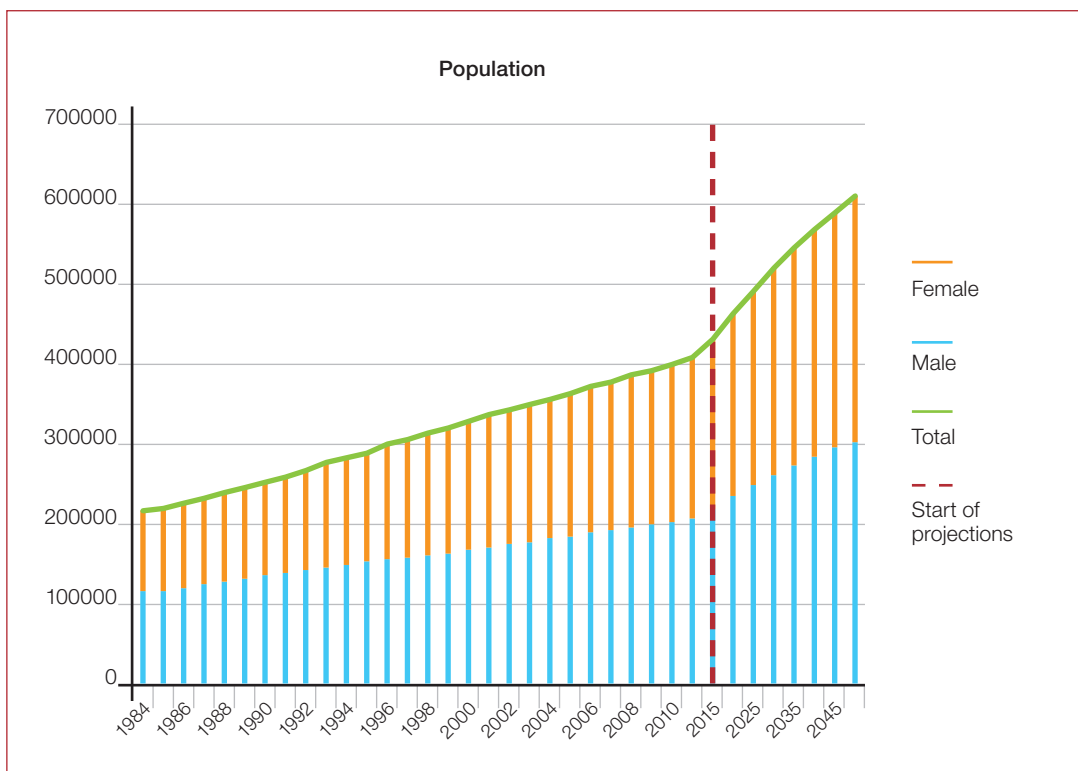




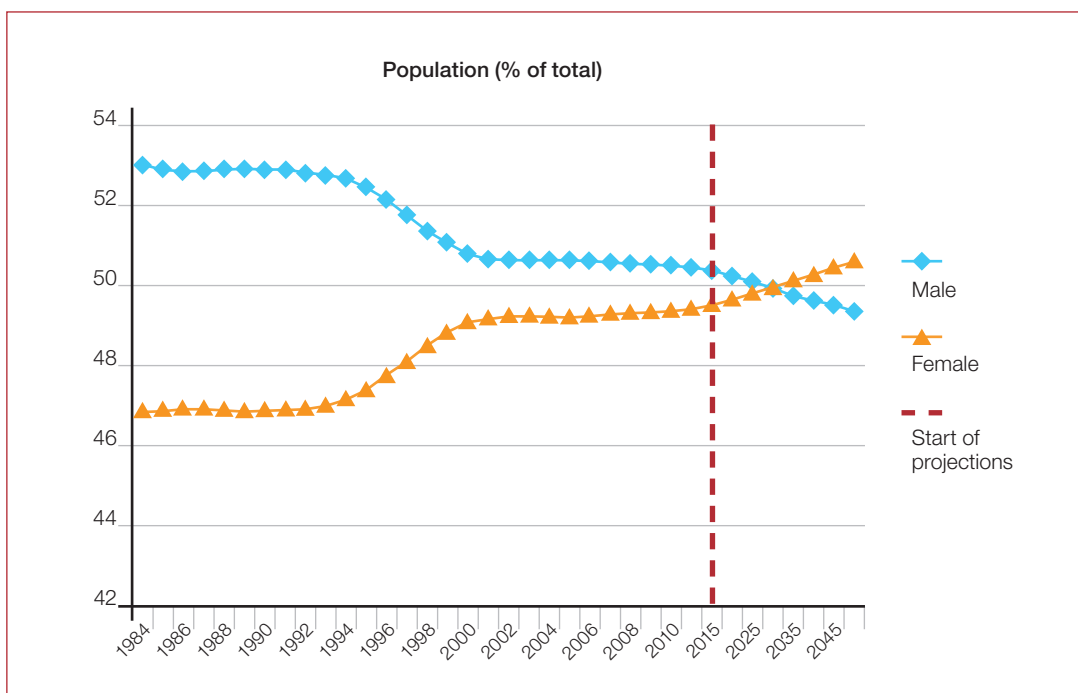
**Figure 14:** Brunei birth rate, estimated births per 1,000 people since independence 1984–2011  
(Source: World Bank)



**Figure 15:** Brunei raw population numbers since independence 1984–2011 and projections 2015–2055 (Source: World Bank)



**Figure 16:** Proportion of Brunei population by gender since independence 1984–2011 and estimated projections 2015–2055 (Source: World Bank)



## 2.2.1 Brunei education system: history and policy

The historic close relationship between Britain and Brunei is credited with shaping Brunei's education system.<sup>92</sup> In the early 1900s when Brunei faced 'outside aggression' from neighbouring states, the Sultanate sought protection from Britain and was designated a British Protected State. The British Resident stationed in Brunei at the time was said to have provided similar types of advice as that given to Malay rulers in what would later become Malaysia; this included affairs related to education.<sup>93</sup> The Residency period between 1906 and 1959 is recognised as a time when education provision for young people increased.<sup>94</sup>

*'In 1923, oil was discovered in Brunei and this was to transform the country from an economic backwater into a comparably wealthy state... It was Bruneians who initially came into contact with the oil workers who had the most pressing need to learn English. These included local officers who represented the government in negotiations as well as customs officers, clerks dealing with equipment and anyone else party to the myriad operations involved in setting up an industry.'*<sup>95</sup>

The historic role of expatriates in Brunei has also been noted in other research. Early economic development was seen to be dependent on foreign expertise. 'The most pressing need, if Bruneians were to replace expatriates, was education.'<sup>96</sup> The first vernacular school opened in 1912 and by

<sup>92</sup> Jones (2012) p. 177

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> Martin (2008) p. 211

<sup>95</sup> Jones, *op. cit.*, p. 178

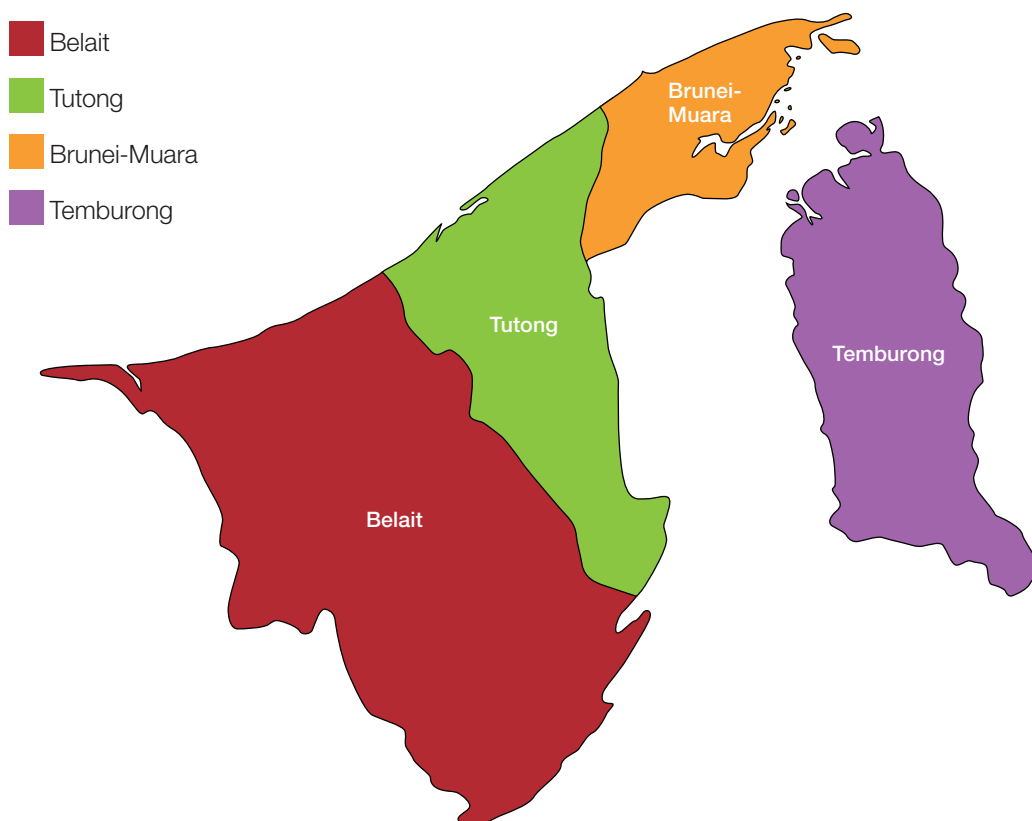
<sup>96</sup> Saunders (2002) p. 129





1929 there were four Malay schools. The first government English primary school was opened in 1951, followed by two secondary schools in 1953.<sup>97</sup> The system (as of 2012) has 258 schools spread over four administrative ‘zones’ or divisions:<sup>98</sup> Belait, Brunei-Muara, Temburong and Tutong.

**Figure 17:** Brunei’s four administrative districts (*daerah-daerah*)<sup>99</sup>



The British High Commissioner to Brunei described Bruneian society as ‘an intriguing model of modernity and tradition’. Certainly, this can be seen with the mix of household and environmental contexts even within one district: the Brunei-Muara district houses the (urban) capital of Bandar Seri Begawan and also *Kampong Ayer* (or Water Village), described by some as the ‘spiritual home’ of the country.<sup>100</sup>

*‘Built at a defensive location, Kampong Ayer comprises houses built on stilts in the Brunei River... The settlement is divided into many different wards that are interconnected by wooden walkways... Although no longer the sultanate’s centre of gravity, Kampong Ayer looks set to survive for many years to come. It is promoted nowadays as a tourist destination. Problems include regular conflagrations, which can destroy whole wards; in the past, savage epidemics took a fearsome toll of life.’<sup>100</sup>*

<sup>97</sup> Martin, *op. cit.*

<sup>98</sup> Brown and Derus (2013) p. 42

<sup>99</sup> Wikipedia – Districts of Brunei (2013)

<sup>100</sup> Horton (2004) p. 708

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.*



Although the population in this sector has waxed and waned over the years, there is continued resistance towards moving inland. In 2001, the number of residents in Kampong Ayer was documented to be 27,285.<sup>102</sup> Other estimates put the population at around 39,000.<sup>103</sup> Across Brunei, there are 165 government schools, 87 private schools and 10 other. Of the government-run institutions, 119 are primary, 35 are secondary, seven are vocational/technical and four are tertiary.<sup>104</sup> The Ministry of Religious Affairs manages eight schools. In 2007 it was reported that Kampong Ayer housed nine primary, one secondary and nine religious schools.<sup>105</sup>

**Figure 18:** Proportion of urban and rural population in Brunei since independence 1984–2011  
(Source: World Bank)

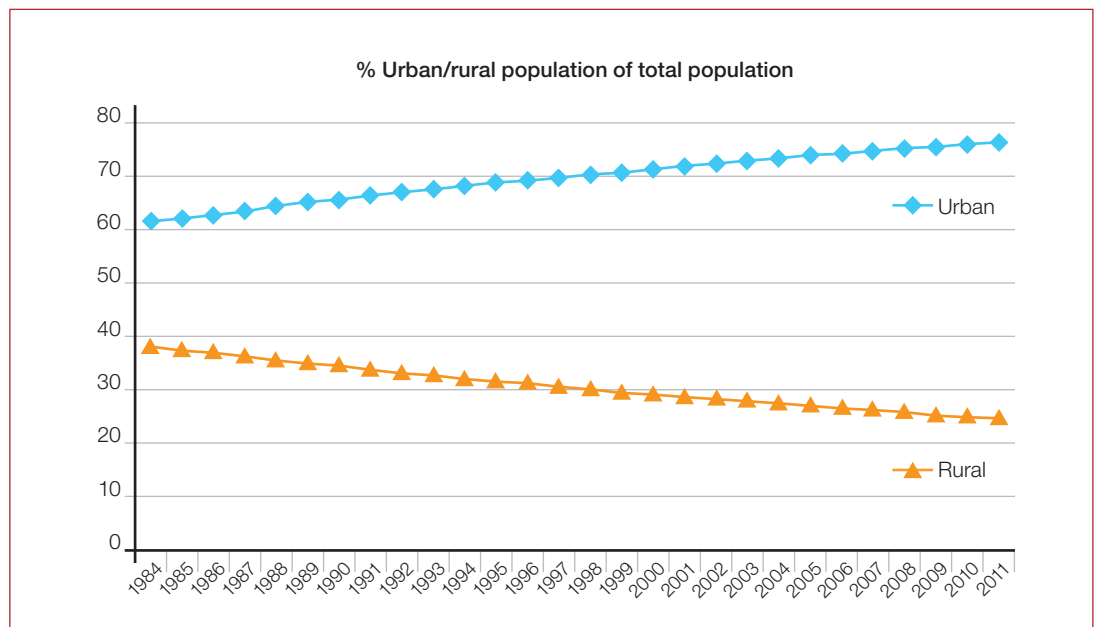


Figure 18 shows the reduction in the proportion of Brunei’s rural population since 1984. A recent article on how Brunei might increase its rate of food production and diversify its economy confirmed that:

*‘[T]he majority of Brunei’s land surface is taken up by tropical rainforest and there is only limited land suitable for growing crops. Also, there are few workers available to till the soil: recent years have seen large numbers of people moving out of rural areas – nearly 80 per cent of Brunei’s population now lives in urban centres.’<sup>106</sup>*

The particular challenges of English language learning encountered in some of the more remote areas of the country were noted by several interviewees. On the one hand, the prospect of the increase in urban population may offer some forms of educational advantage to students who may have otherwise faced these challenges living in rural locations. However, this also presents other questions about the potential impact of this observed ‘rural flight’, such as the possible impact on the change in lifestyle of a proportion of the Bruneian population, and the economic consequences the country faces as a result.

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>103</sup> Wikipedia – Kampong Ayer (2013)

<sup>104</sup> Brunei MoE (2012) p. 195

<sup>105</sup> Brunei Department of Information, Prime Minister’s Office – Brunei Darussalam Newsletter, 2007

<sup>106</sup> Cooke (2012)



Detailed changes in the Bruneian education system over time (compiled from documents, research literature and interviews) can be viewed in Appendix 1; some aspects are highlighted here.

As discussed in section 2.1, the bilingual system of education was established in Brunei in 1985. In 2007, a Compulsory Education Order was passed under the Constitution making the first nine years of school mandatory (six years in primary and three in lower secondary).<sup>107</sup> Free education for citizens was also instituted by the government in 2006 for the first twelve years (one year of pre-primary or Pra, six in primary and five in secondary).<sup>108</sup>

In 2005, the MoE put forward its Strategic Plan covering the five years from 2007 to 2011, making a 'case for change to upgrade the quality of teaching and learning in schools'.<sup>109</sup> Around the same time, a National Education System Review Committee had been formed with a directive to 'review and make improvements to the current system'.<sup>110</sup> The more 'finely-tuned' result of the erstwhile Strategic Plan was named the 'National Education System for the 21st Century' (or *Sistem Pendidikan Negara Abad Ke 21*, SPN21).<sup>111</sup>

Running in parallel with SPN21 is Brunei's National Vision or *Wawasan 2035* which aims for the country to be 'recognised everywhere for the accomplishments of its well-educated and highly skilled people; the quality of life [and] the dynamic, sustainable economy'.<sup>112</sup> Strategic planning for the country's future also aims to take into account certain 'emerging social and economic facts':

- Oil and gas resources, while contributing to Brunei's economic growth, are apparently unable to keep pace with population growth.
- The public sector, currently employing the majority of Brunei's citizens, is no longer able to 'adequately absorb the growing numbers of young people wishing to enter the workforce each year'.
- A widening gap is emerging between young people's expectations and capabilities and the employment opportunities being created.
- The oil and gas sector that makes up about 50 per cent of the economy and over 90 per cent of export earnings is reportedly employing less than three per cent of the workforce.
- The local business community is seen to be 'weak' and 'unable to create the employment opportunities now required'.<sup>113</sup>

In an effort to align the aims of Vision 2035 with the MoE strategic plan for education, eight education-related strategies were outlined:<sup>114</sup>

1. Investment in early childhood education
2. Adoption of international best practices in teaching and learning

<sup>107</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

<sup>108</sup> Brown and Derus (2013) p. 42

<sup>109</sup> Brunei MoE, *op. cit.*, p. 4

<sup>110</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> The Brunei Economic Development Board (BEDB), The Prime Minister's Office (2008)

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> Brunei MoE, *op. cit.*, p. 5



3. Pursuing 'first class' secondary and tertiary education including vocational schools
4. Strengthening of competency in information and communication technology (ICT) at student, teacher and educational administrative levels
5. Promoting lifelong learning and access to higher education
6. Promoting research, development and innovation in 'government-funded institutions and through *public-private and international partnerships*'
7. Adoption of 'cost-effective methods' of educating people via the use of technology
8. Improvement of educational institution management

### **2.2.3 SPN21**

SPN21 has several objectives, stated in various forms. Amongst other elements, the plan aims to construct and shape educational experiences that take into account: whole-person and holistic development, equipping learners with the skills necessary to 'meet the manpower requirements of the country' in the fields of science, mathematics and technology, dealing with the emergence of the 'knowledge economy' and the moving towards more school-based assessment, away from 'terminal examinations'.<sup>115</sup>

Documentation explaining the rationale and features of SPN21 for UNESCO states that the new strategy:<sup>116</sup>

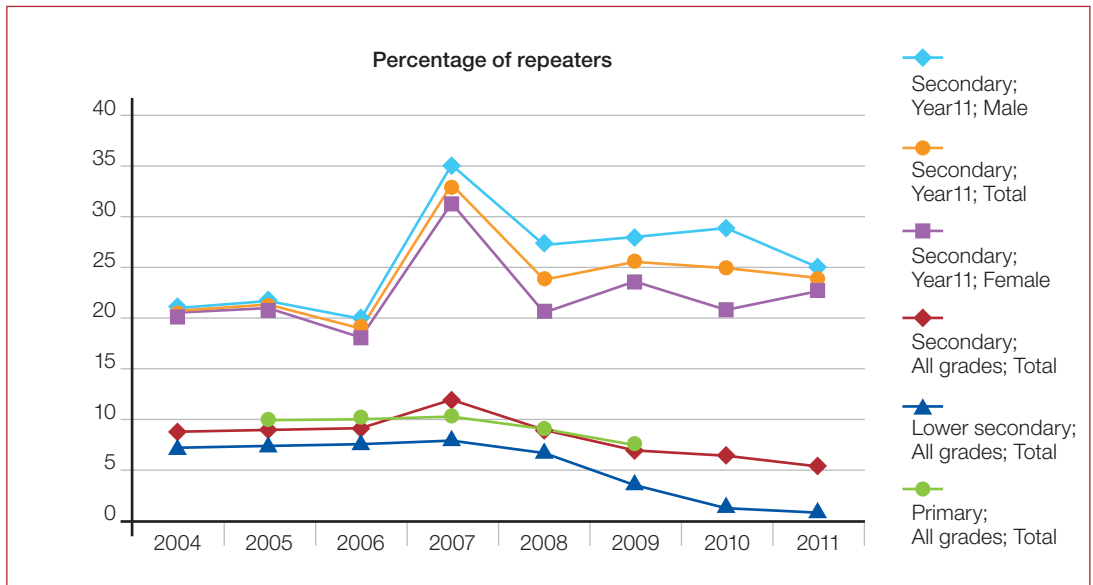
- places greater emphasis on 'character-building'
- removes retention from Year 1 to 10 and 11, except for students with less than 85 per cent attendance (see Figure 19 for data on the decreasing number of repeaters over time since the implementation of SPN21)
- provides opportunities for high-performing students to sit for their O Level exams in four years (instead of the usual five) (see Figure 20 for numbers of entries in the final year of secondary education over time, along with estimated cohort sizes)
- provides more opportunities for technical and vocational education at tertiary level
- provides specialised programmes both for students with Special Needs and those classified as Gifted and Talented.

<sup>115</sup> SEAMEO (2008) p. 2

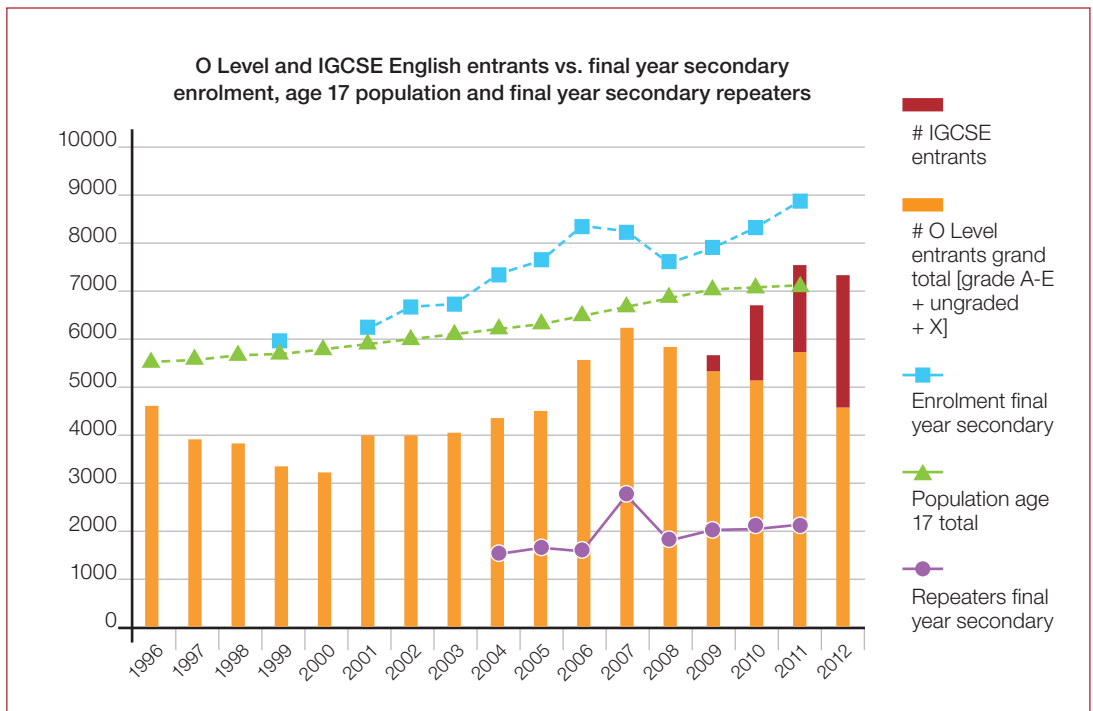
<sup>116</sup> MoE Brunei (UNESCO) (nd)



**Figure 19:** Proportion of repeaters at secondary, lower secondary and primary levels 2004–2011 (Source: World Bank)



**Figure 20:** Numbers of O Level English and IGCSE ESL entrants compared with selected populations (Source: CfBT) and number of repeaters in Year 11 [all in Brunei] (Source: World Bank)



An approximation of the number of students in the 'full' cohort per year in the final year of secondary school is shown in Figure 20. The two dotted lines at the top of the chart give an indication of cohort size using World Bank figures of school-age population and enrolment in the final year of secondary school over time. The bar graph shows the number of entrants for the O Level English and IGCSE English as a Second Language exam over a similar period. The final line graph shows the number of students indicated to be repeating their final year of secondary school per year. This was included so as to estimate the proportion of repeaters that may be included in final-year secondary enrolment figures. We should say here that the 'population at age 17' figures were used as a very rough approximation to the population of young people that could potentially be enrolled in the final year of secondary school. We appreciate that the introduction of the Express programme as part of SPN21 in 2010 affects this approximation to a small degree as in addition to students in Year 11, high-performing Year 10 students can be entered for the O Level exam. One can see however that the number of entries in the O Level exam is mostly in line with the rise in entries to the final year of secondary school. This reflects the twin successes of increased participation and increased attainment levels, reflecting both rising expectations, improved quality of teaching, and strategies to increase the numbers of students achieving a high level of competency in English (measured by success at O Level or, more recently, at IGCSE).

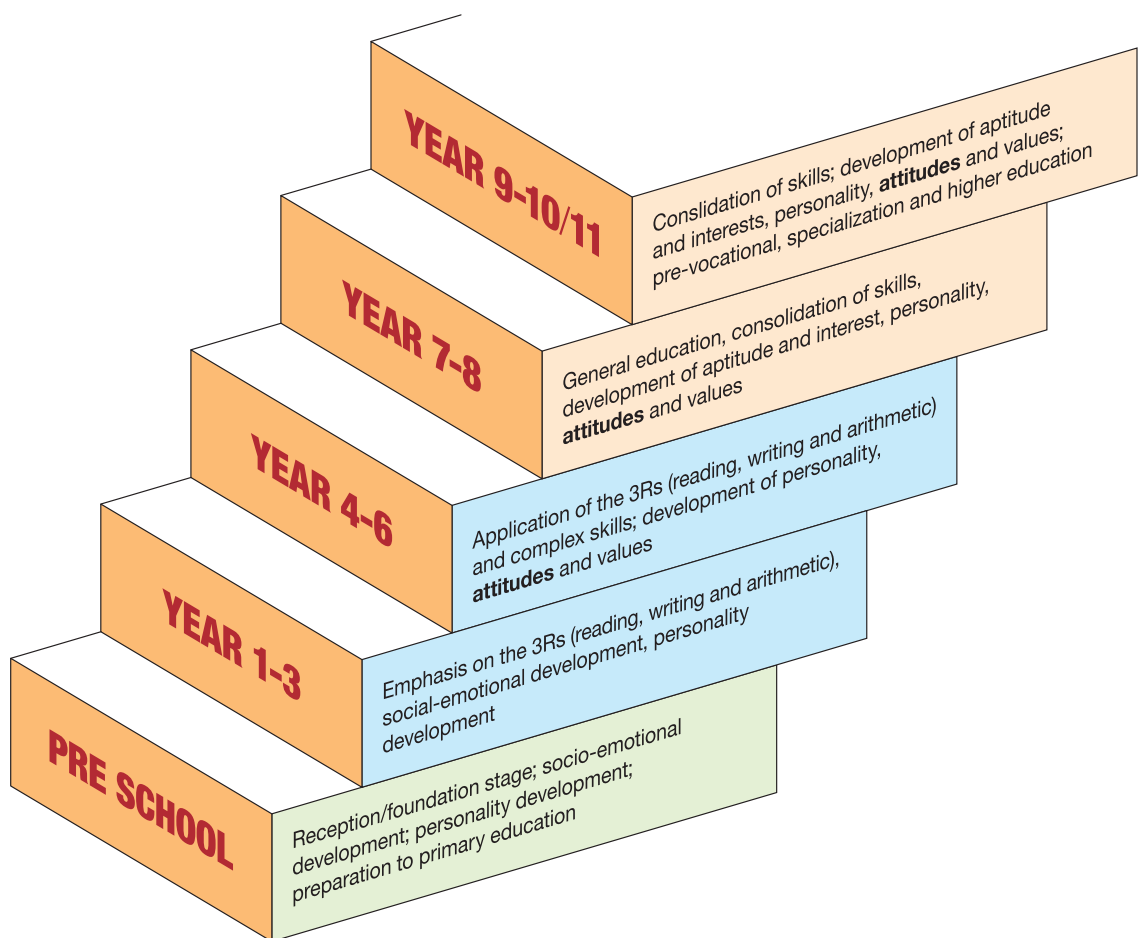


### 2.2.4 Other key features of the education system

In the context of this report's aims and objectives, one should be aware of other key features of Brunei's wider education system.

**Figure 21:** SPN21 curriculum and education levels (reproduced from SEAMEO documentation<sup>117</sup>)

#### The different levels of education



Free education for young people in Brunei generally begins at pre-school level, i.e. below age five. This is followed by primary school for a period of six years and secondary school for up to five years, culminating in O Level examinations, and in the case of English, either the Cambridge O Level or IGCSE exam. In families that can afford to do so, a proportion of young people may start their education with kindergarten (or 'pre'-pre-school) at private institutions.

<sup>117</sup> Brunei MoE (2008) p. 5



**Table 1:** Previous system and SPN21 – difference in year labels and examinations (recreated from UNESCO Brunei document)<sup>118</sup>

Expected age for every school level	Previous system	SPN21	
5 years	Pre-school	Pre-school	
6–11 years	Primary 1–6 <i>Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (PSR) or Primary School Assessment</i>	Primary 1–6 <i>Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (PSR) or Primary School Assessment</i>	
12–16 years	Form 1	4 year 'express' programme	5 year programme
		Year 7	Year 7
	Form 2	Year 8 <i>Student Progress Assessment (SPA)</i>	Year 8 <i>Student Progress Assessment (SPA)</i>
	Form 3 <i>Penilaian Menengah Rendah (PMR) or Lower Secondary Assessment</i>	Year 9	Year 9
	Form 4	Year 10 <i>Brunei-Cambridge GCE O Level Examination</i>	Year 10
	Form 5		Year 11 BC GCE O Level Examination

<sup>118</sup> MoE Brunei (UNESCO) (nd) p. 2





### 2.2.5 Subject divisions

At primary level, subjects are split between 'core' (*Bahasa Melayu* or Malay language, English, science and mathematics) and 'compulsory' (Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK), Malay Islamic Monarchy (*Melayu Islam Beraja*, or MIB), health & physical education, art & culture and technology). With the exception of *Bahasa Melayu*, IRK, MIB, a portion of health & physical education and art & culture which are taught in Malay, all other subjects are taught in English. At secondary level, one sees the introduction of 'elective' subjects such as languages (Arabic, French and Mandarin, Malay literature and English literature), physics, chemistry and biology, additional mathematics, geography, history, economics and so on. Elective subjects are taught in English with the exception of languages.

In addition to the express (four year) and regular five year programmes, there are also two types of Applied programme: 'Applied' where electives such as subjects in the humanities and social sciences, art & culture, technology and health & physical education are all taught in English; and the 'Special Applied' programme where the elective subjects are 'modular', taught in a mixture of English and Malay and cover areas such as 'Production' (for example crop production, dressmaking and design), 'Services' (for example catering, servicing automobiles) and 'Commerce' (for example book-keeping, clerical skills).

### 2.2.6 Inclusive education

Brunei began implementing an 'inclusive' education system in 1994 whereby all school-age children 'with varying learning and special needs' are educated together with 'their peers in the regular classroom'.<sup>119</sup> The proportion of students with special needs in the national system is estimated at four per cent.<sup>120</sup> This figure is said to exclude 'students with other diverse learning needs who may be provided with learning support in schools' (that is, students that are not on formal 'remedial education plans').<sup>121</sup>

With these contextual factors in mind, we now move to the strengths and challenges of the system as perceived by this study's interviewees.

### 2.2.7 Strengths and challenges of the system

Commitment to the system and to maintaining a credible external gold standard to measure attainment and improvement in English competency is illustrated in the following quote:

*'A flaw in a lot of systems is the chopping and changing. While you can argue a monolingual system can be better than a bilingual system or whatever, it's the commitment to one or the other [that's important]. What's destabilising is change that's perceived to be ineffective. So in Brunei whether it was originally coerced or not is another issue, for example the O Level. Typically there'd be an opposition to it because we valorised the symbol that was in the UK. But I've seen teaching, the continuity of it, [and] having a stable continuous form of assessment probably outweighs the disadvantage of it being slightly inappropriate. And because Brunei's small, you simply don't have the resources to develop everything yourself.'*

<sup>119</sup> Brunei MoE (2008) p.19

<sup>120</sup> UNESCO (2009)

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*



**Table 2:** Strengths and challenges of the Brunei education system as perceived by different stakeholders

Area	Inclusive education
Strengths	<p>'Inclusive' system compared to Singapore – TIARA initiative at lower secondary for emerging readers, identifying literacy issues in Malay which have knock-on effects in English and vice versa; SEN students are integrated into mainstream schooling; CfBT is in discussion with MoE to include special needs provision to improve capacity.</p>
Challenges	<p>Classes (in some areas) were reported to be mixed ability and no longer 'streamed'; a view that this is leading to challenges further down the system. Teachers try to differentiate learning if students with SEN are placed with 'mainstream' students but difficult without support teaching and curriculum materials.</p> <p>Some perception that more government support is required around SEN provision, and a need for more special resources.</p> <p>The MoE notes that the area of SEN needs more training and support for teachers to help students in the classroom. The principle of inclusion is favoured; more attention is needed to diagnose learning needs in schools beyond the 3 per cent identified as SEN.</p>

Area	Links between local and international systems and standards
Strengths	<p>Long-term commitments are seen to be made by government, 'measure twice, cut once' model. Stable, continuous form of assessment may outweigh any perceived inappropriateness of O Level exam. Curriculum may have been viewed as 'aspirational' ten years ago but now it has progressed into being 'a bit too much'. Consistency and stability distinguish system 'from most others in Asia', balancing 'desirable good vs. necessary good'.</p> <p>30 to 40 per cent of students will achieve a meaningful qualification which is not dissimilar to other challenging education systems; helps to improve the country's economic potential.</p>
Challenges	<p>Openness to the outside world may lead to other challenges; aspiring to systems such as those in Canada and Singapore at a rapid pace (e.g. Singapore is seen to have had a 20-year head start after gaining independence in 1965).</p> <p>At such a pace, inputs may be prone to being applied by subject rather than at whole-school level.</p>



<b>Area</b>	<b>Long-term commitment balanced against rapid roll-out of selected initiatives and programmes</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	Speedy implementation of programmes: made possible by committed staff and CfBT support; Brunei being a small country has its advantages: stakeholders are able to work together to adopt a coordinated approach (e.g. some aspects of EPPS were 'rolled out over 48 hours across the whole country').
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>While commitment to the bilingual policy may be unwavering, the capacity to implement sudden changes regarding the curriculum and the setting of priorities have been reported.</p> <p>Capacity planning may be an issue: not enough teachers with required English competency are obtaining a Masters degree. Mention of issues around credentialism; requiring a Masters qualification to teach may create a capacity bottleneck. The MoE notes a need to focus on the supply of Early Years teachers; local universities apparently have stopped providing Early Years teacher training. CfBT has been helpful in enhancing and validating the quality of teaching in Early Years. The DPS expressed intention of increasing the number of CfBT teachers in order to maintain teacher supply across the whole age range. Notes difficulties inherent in higher entry standards requirement (Masters): 'perhaps there is a need to move slower on the Masters goal'. The Teach First model used in the US and England was cited as a possible means to encourage able and enthusiastic graduates into mathematics and science teaching, as they generally go on to other professions.</p>



Area	Pressure in different guises
<p><b>Strengths</b></p>	<p>Malay and Bruneian culture offers an environment and system that are less pressurised. Notion of love of children in a non-‘tiger mother’ way, balanced combination of ‘love and desire for success’; parents want stability and happiness for children.</p> <p>Less of a pressurised system and ‘teaching to the exam’ compared with certain other systems in Asia.</p> <p>The MoE notes that the Brunei system is ‘benchmarked’ against Singapore. English is seen as a global tool but Brunei wants to avoid inherent pressures of highly-competitive systems. Avoidance of early streaming mentioned. SPN21 is all about achieving competitive goals while using local strengths and cultural sensitivity.</p> <p>Use of targets to raise expectations across the system is perceived to have been a catalyst for change in quality of teaching.</p>
<p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<p>Tendency to focus on time taken to finish task rather than efficiency, i.e. the more time taken, the ‘better’ the outcome. System may be seen as less pressurised than others but ‘pressure is sometimes misdirected’. Notion of there being many inputs but not enough time to evaluate or innovate; students ‘develop passivity’ from too many hours at school, of which most is ‘book work’ (including time for religious school after the end of formal school day). Need to promote well-being e.g. combating obesity and promoting physical activity levels.</p> <p>View that one cannot ‘escape’ from exams and Brunei’s system is exam orientated; some teachers may revert to Malay (in English-medium subjects) to get concepts across faster. Too much focus on exam results perceived; should be more about the ‘process’ than exams; what students learn and retain.</p> <p>School days can be quite long, particularly for students in more rural areas who get the bus; some may arrive in school by 6.30am when registration starts at 7.10am.</p> <p>The MoE notes that the Brunei population values school education and religious education.</p>



Area	SPN21, progression and links with special needs identification and provision
<b>Strengths</b>	<p>SPN21 brought in outcome-based learning; AfL seen as a sophisticated lower secondary initiative to get teachers to prepare students for exam years later on; teachers are still on a steep learning curve.</p> <p>School principals noted that SPN21 offers variety of options for young people from Year 9 (science for the more academically-orientated; applied programme with a 'professional' orientation and the Special Applied Programme for 'weaker students'.</p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>Some teachers note that the new system of progression is seen to result from SPN21: students keep progressing through school years even if they exhibit learning difficulties or problems with attention or commitment from Pra level. Pra curriculum seen by some to leave less room for flexibility. Criteria that determine students' SEN status perhaps unclear in terms of learning difficulties compared to physical impairment or more general language difficulties. Principals and teachers would like to see more support and resources for special needs students. Currently, levels of support are perceived to be heavily dependent on teachers in the classroom.</p> <p>The MoE concedes that the SEN area may need more development; the DPS notes the need to be able to diagnose learning needs in schools beyond the 3 per cent identified as SEN. More awareness is also required about the 20 per cent in each cohort 'likely to struggle'. Lack of retention may lead to disincentive for some students to perform to a certain level. Need strong parental support to encourage student commitment to education.</p> <p>Principals: Brunei Common Assessment Tasks (BCATs) in Years 7 and 8 seen to be 'too much' for some teachers as they take place every term; propose 30 per cent school-based assessment and BCAT 1 in two terms.</p>



Area	School-based Assessment for Learning (SBAfL) and its applications
<b>Strengths</b>	<p>SBAfL spells out techniques, making clear learning objectives, vocabulary, assessments, modelling what is required of students; demonstrating what is a 'good composition, bad composition', practices showing how to 'succeed on a piece of assessment'; expectations; teacher-student conferencing; highlighting errors but getting students to work together to work out reasons behind errors. Principals note that SBAfL helps both English and Malay via peer assessment (but also may be too much in some instances).</p> <p>The MoE states that teaching and education should be research and evidence driven; e.g. SBAfL and Brunei-English phonetics approach in Pra and early primary.</p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>SBAfL sometimes seen to be incompatible with exam years and the added pressure to achieve outcomes in a set period. (But some shared elements with exam year requirements were also noted.)</p> <p>Principals noted that while SBAfL helps both English and Malay via peer assessment, it may also be too much workload for teachers.</p> <p>The MoE expressed that SBAfL provides a balance between formative and summative assessment (O Level work), and attempts to maintain the rigour of higher study skills. Assessment seen at times as a 'means to an end'; some teachers expressed a need for different approaches. A heavy workload was perceived in Years 7 and 8.</p> <p>Teaching has become more student-centred post-SPN21 but teachers are still adjusting to new methods. Some prefer the simplicity of external tests.</p>

Area	Regional and context-specific performance
<b>Strengths</b>	<p>Brunei 'a generation ahead' in terms of successes with bilingual policy, compared with closest comparator countries (Malaysia and Indonesia).</p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>Bruneians should have the confidence to 'measure themselves as an expert' so there is less of a need to look for external validation. The system has many strengths.</p> <p>Assumption that continuum moves from ESL into native speaker performance probably needs re-evaluating. Issues around ownership of language expressed in more remote geographical areas: 'fraught politically and emotionally'. More recognition required that ESL students' needs are different to native speakers'.</p>



Area	Macro level policy vs. micro level processes
<b>Strengths</b>	MoE has high aspirations and clear policy intentions; huge potential with wealth and resources available. Commitment to encourage active learning, and to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and the quality and supply of teachers.
<b>Challenges</b>	Relationships and communication channels between government departments not always clear (JSS, <sup>122</sup> CDD, <sup>123</sup> examinations etc); attainment data collected by CfBT goes to JSS but link with exams department uncertain. Methods of organisation slightly blurred. Level of resources sometimes received by schools does not quite correspond with numbers of students and so on.

Area	Assessment
<b>Strengths</b>	<p>Tripartite dialogue between MoE, CfBT and Cambridge Exam Board is and has been vital; parties are able to discuss suitability and contextualisation of the O Level exam and discuss the IGCSE (which also provides a pathway to higher education).</p> <p>IGCSE curriculum and approach were seen as better suited to the local context for many students e.g. stronger focus on listening, writing correspondence, making arguments.</p> <p>The DPS noted how the MoE is now talking with the Cambridge Board to ensure that the O Level is tweaked to better reflect local conditions and culture. IGCSE was recognised as placing more emphasis on oral/spoken language which was seen as desirable.</p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>Two-tier system perceived with the IGCSE and O Level; comes with parental expectations to push students towards the O Level (even though the IGCSE still provides a pathway to higher education).</p> <p>O Level seen as challenging due to its form of questioning; some teachers and principals noted that students need to be able to almost 'see what people are thinking'. IGCSE seen to be more context-appropriate.</p>

<sup>122</sup> Department of Schools (*Jabatan Sekolah-Sekolah*)

<sup>123</sup> Curriculum Development Department

### 2.3 The evolution of the MoE-CfBT relationship: from recruitment link to bilingual education partner

This section discusses the evolution of the relationship between the MoE and CfBT. A key feature of this theme relates to the perceived change in the nature of the ‘dialogue’ between the two partners from about 2006. Increased communication within the wider educational community was also reported to have taken place between the MoE, schools, CfBT and other stakeholders such as examination boards.

**Figure 22:** Shift of relationship between MoE and CfBT over time



Previously it was felt that there might have been reluctance in handling, or a degree of uncertainty around, the clarification of rubrics; for example there were questions and recommendations about marking schemes for examination papers. However, the need to ensure the O Level better fitted the Brunei context and the need for clarity about requirements eventually led to improved contextualisation of the O Level exam to suit local needs and discussions supporting the introduction of the IGCSE. Respondents argued that there now appears to be more of an ‘openness’ and perceived framework for ‘tripartite dialogue’ between the examination boards, the MoE and CfBT. While the MoE is perceived to be taking charge, explaining their requirements and expectations in a more specific manner, CfBT is viewed as being more able to participate and contribute towards discussions that may have previously been viewed as ‘off limits’ or exclusively at the ‘inner table’.

The period between 2005 and 2006 (along with events that influenced the range of activities and initiatives for teaching and learning English that took place afterwards) is felt to have been a watershed in the evolutionary path of the MoE-CfBT relationship. In May 2005, the then Minister of





Education had expressed concern about the level of O Level English attainment in Brunei that had shown only modest improvements since the inception of the bilingual education system in 1985.<sup>124</sup>

*[The Minister] sought recommendations from CfBT for improving English language performance overall and O Level results in particular. CfBT was informed that [the] Minister wanted to see a 30 per cent increase in students gaining Credit grades, bringing these to nearer 20 per cent of the students sitting the examination.*<sup>125</sup>

At the about the same time, in what was termed a 'key aspect' of CfBT's response to this new challenge, CfBT UK commissioned a study assessing the impact of CfBT's work in Brunei, and making recommendations to refocus this work, under the guidance of Professor John Stannard.

Educationalists in the UK may recognise John Stannard as a highly influential education expert who was the former Director of the National Literacy Strategy in England. This was a very high-profile national educational initiative that received major investment by the New Labour Government in 1997. Its main aims were to raise literacy standards for 11 year olds in National Curriculum tests and implement a framework for teaching literacy, including the introduction of a daily Literacy Hour in schools. A parallel National Numeracy Strategy was introduced in 1998 and the two programmes were later integrated to form the National Strategies. The National Strategies were seen as a crucial component of the Raising Standards agenda that combined accountability pressure,<sup>126</sup> especially target setting, with investment and support, with a major investment in materials and CPD. The National Strategies were widely recognised as being highly successful in supporting raising attainment by external evaluations<sup>127</sup> and in improving the quality of teaching, although the accountability pressures associated with target setting were not popular with all schools or teachers' professional associations.

Prior to his involvement in the National Literacy project, Professor Stannard was also a specialist adviser on English language to Ofsted and a district inspector for nursery and primary schools in what was then known as the Inner London Education Authority. In 2000, Professor Stannard was awarded a CBE for his services to education. In 2005, he became Principal Consultant at CfBT providing advice and strategic guidance on a range of national and international education projects, including Brunei, other parts of south east Asia, Canada and the Gulf region. During his time with CfBT, Professor Stannard devised and supported three key innovations: Success in Cambridge O Level Public Examinations (SCOPE), Sharing Practice in Effective Language Teaching (SPELT) and the Common Framework.

The notion of a 'post-SCOPE' era, frequently cited by CfBT project leaders, paints a vivid picture. The 'before' of what seems like a rather dreary, plodding, pre-2006 period of incrementally rising, plateauing, and in 2004 even decreasing, secondary student attainment scores at English O Level dramatically shifting into the 'after': a post-SCOPE era characterised by innovation, improved English teaching and learning quality and increased attainment. The proportion of students achieving A-C grades improved by an unprecedented five percentage points between 2006 and 2007, and continued to rise. The MoE's expectations had set ambitious targets regarding the increase in student attainment in the English O Level examinations; these had been met and exceeded. This was viewed as a highly promising development; it had enhanced CfBT's credibility as a change agent that could 'deliver' and pointed to the potential benefits of future collaboration if the relationship was retained and continued to be nurtured.

<sup>124</sup> CfBT (2007) p. 7

<sup>125</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> Sammons (2011); Sammons (2008)

<sup>127</sup> Earl et al. (2003); Beard (2000)

Both the MoE and CfBT were credited with contributing to the relationship shift. A number of restrictions were eased on the ministry side, which allowed for more effective implementation and reach of CfBT programmes. One of the main factors cited was that for the first time in 20 years, CfBT teachers across the board received a pay increase. Indeed, one of the common interventions applied among significantly-improved education systems identified by recent research was the improvement in the structure of teachers' and principals' salaries.<sup>128</sup> Another factor in the Brunei context was that (again for the first time) CfBT were given the go-ahead to work with school staff and students outside of school hours, conducting examination 'clinics' for students and training workshops for teachers. There was also a significant investment in the new English Project for Pre-School (EPPS) programme, which introduced bilingual education at pre-school level and challenged the original model favoured by Hugo Baetens Beardsmore of starting bilingualism later, at Year 4. The Early Years intervention was expressed by the MoE as providing a better start for students in the form of a 'staggered subsidy', especially to those who were not able to access kindergarten (or 'pre-pre-school') for various reasons (financial or geographical) and thus started school at a disadvantage compared with other children who had attended kindergarten. This showed the Ministry's awareness of international evidence on the importance of investing in the Early Years and how this had the potential to provide benefits in terms of better educational outcomes in the longer term.

From the mid-2000s CfBT was no longer seen as just a recruitment agency but an organisation that could promote improvement in teaching and outcomes, and work in fruitful partnership to support the Bruneian government's increased expectations of improving the quality of its education system and student outcomes. In this Brunei was showing a pattern common to many governments across the world that wish to improve student attainment and support economic development (for example, the OECD has recorded that the impact of PISA and TIMSS acts as a catalyst for many countries to review their educational systems to enhance performance and economic competitiveness).<sup>129</sup>

On the CfBT side, the implementation of the SCOPE project (and the design of the various strategies by John Stannard, brought in as an external consultant) was seen to have far-reaching implications for student attainment at a national level. The increased 'singularity of focus' of all parties to bring about improved attainment in the English O Level exam via targeted interventions, for example the MoE, department for schools (JSS) and teachers (both Bruneian and CfBT), was perceived to contribute significantly to the resulting change. The project initially sought to target all students at the C/D grade boundary and work to shift them into C-grade bands and above. However, this strategy was also perceived to promote a positive spill-over effect, with shifts from lower bands into higher grade bands system-wide, creating a ripple effect across the attainment spectrum for O Level entrants, and increases in entries overall. While the perceived success of the project and improved O Level results helped to build further trust between the MoE and CfBT, there was also a perception that teachers who had initially been sceptical of this type of approach had been 'won over' and convinced that individual students and teachers were able to reap the benefits of the different strategies applied. SCOPE was also viewed as having facilitated more systematic and comprehensive collection and analysis of data for use at the individual student, class, school and national levels, which had not been implemented before in a system-wide fashion in Brunei. Moreover, there was recognition of the benefits of focused professional development and improved resources and materials. Trust in CfBT was also built on other major valued contributions, such as being able to mobilise practitioners and work closely with the MoE to deliver the EPPS programme within a short time-frame, and to produce teaching and learning materials that prepared students for O Level examinations and supported the development of writing skills.

<sup>128</sup> Mourshed, Chijjoke and Barber (2010) p. 61

<sup>129</sup> Döbert, Klieme and Sroka (2004)



Confidence in CfBT grew further through successful initial collaboration in building infrastructure for improving professional development opportunities for teachers, including the provision of training that would enable teachers to assess students in a more streamlined manner and enhance teachers' diagnostic and assessment skills. Building on the established rapport, CfBT was entrusted with organising and writing standardised examinations for Years 9, 10 and 11 for the first time. This standardisation also facilitated the development of value-added measures to document student progress across years from earlier cohorts as well as monitoring the progress of current students through 'correlating test variables with O Level attainment' and with outcomes from the national exams in PSR Year 6 and PMB in Year 9. Both the MoE and CfBT were seen to be taking a long-term perspective and notions of being able to 'move a generation' ahead were again expressed.

Hence, the relationship between the MoE and CfBT is seen to have evolved from one based mostly around the recruitment of good quality teaching professionals to more of a partnership in supporting and enhancing bilingual education. This process was characterised by an attitude of 'learning the lessons together'; an outside observer noted that CfBT's work with the MoE could be viewed as a 'textbook partnership'.

However, building a higher degree of trust based on past achievements also brings with it higher accountability and more challenging expectations. There is an awareness of the strong but also delicately-spun ties between both sides. While there is a high degree of collaboration among staff at CfBT and the MoE, the nature and origins of the partnership continue to maintain the separation between the two enterprises. Also, while the relationship has become closer, especially under the last two CfBT country managers, it is also more demanding in terms of the MoE setting specific high-stakes targets for CfBT to play a key role in raising attainment. During the more challenging period of 2005/2006 when CfBT faced possible consequences around the renewal of their contract with the MoE, CfBT was seen to be able to rise to the challenge and exceed expectations. However, greater accountability also presents greater risk if any current and future projects do not go to plan. An added facet of this is CfBT's relationship with individual divisions within the MoE. The increased trust and familiarity of CfBT as an external partner that has 'proven its worth' has allowed it to function on more 'fluid terms' with various ministerial departments (schools, curriculum, inspection and examination divisions). The presence of CfBT is perceived to act as a useful justification for occasionally 'blurring the boundaries' in order to concentrate collective efforts into projects that seek to achieve targeted outcomes of policy important to Brunei.

**Figure 23:** Summary of change in MoE-CfBT partnership dynamic and specific initiatives in place

**Recruitment focus → bilingual education partner**

- New remit raising attainment standards reflecting changed and higher expectations by MoE
- Increase in O Level English attainment from 15.4% A-C in 2006 to 37.5% in 2011
  - Adapting, and building on, relevant international experiences of educational reform and improvement to Brunei context e.g. England experience of raising standards, target setting and National Strategies to raise GCSE and national assessment outcomes
  - Overall target set for CfBT, target setting by teachers in schools for students – ‘ripple effect’ shifting attainment up across whole student group, not just raising from D grades to C, mirrored by improvements in teaching and feedback
  - Realisation of importance of data on student attainment and progress as a key improvement tool
  - Increased dialogue and partnership between MoE, CfBT and Cambridge Examination Board to better contextualise O Level, plus introduction of IGCSE for a larger group of students



**Table 3:** Parallel timelines – change in Brunei education policy and CfBT engagement

Brunei education policy	Year	CfBT engagement
Brunei independent; Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) adopted	1984	
Implementation of bilingual ( <i>dwibahasa</i> ) education policy. Free schooling introduced to citizens and permanent residents. Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) opens	1985	Arrival of CfBT in Brunei
Recommendation made for other exams besides O Level	1987	Secondary English for Brunei Darussalam (SEBD) books introduced
Science becomes compulsory at secondary level	1988	
Reading and Language Acquisition (RELA) project introduced	1989	CfBT runs RSA TESOL course at Diploma level
SEBD books made available to all government schools	1991	CfBT runs RSA TESOL course at Certificate level
National Education Policy favours 12 years of education over 9 Science is 'upgraded' as its own subject in upper primary	1992	
UBD produces graduates with a major in education + TESOL	1993	
Lower Secondary Examination (PMB) introduced Learning Programme Styles (LEAPS) introduced	1994	
Medium of instruction in upper primary for history changed to Malay	1996	
Cognitive Research Trust (CoRT) 'Thinking Skills' launched	1997	
Implementation of 'inclusive education' policy	1998	
Selection of students sit for IGCSE ESL paper	1999	
	2000	CfBT Evaluation project Phase One (Brunei / Malaysia study)
IGCSE paper introduced in 1999 is discontinued	2003	
Beginnings of the EPPS project	2004	In-Service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT)

Strategic Plan (2007-2011); SPN21 scoped by national committee Implementation of English Project for Pre-School (EPPS) Vocational route introduced	<b>2005</b>	CfBT Evaluation project Phase Two released Observations made by the Minister of Education concerning English Language O Level results in 2005
Abolishment of the GCE 'N' Level Examinations	<b>2006</b>	CfBT set a target of a 10 per cent increase in credits; SCOPE (Success in Cambridge O Level Public Examinations), SPELT (Sharing Practice in Effective Language Teaching), Common Framework, negotiations to write standardised exams for Years 9–10
Compulsory Education Order 2007 passed (nine years)	<b>2007</b>	Established process for 'student needs analysis' Personal Education Plans + predictions based on AfL criteria
Student Progress Assessment (SPA) +SPE introduced for Year 8 Postgrad. level only teacher training policy introduced (MTeach) Medium of instruction in lower primary for mathematics changed to English	<b>2008</b>	SCOPE introduced in Sixth Form and Lower Secondary Introduction of EPPS Project
MoE embarks on SPN21; introduction of 'Express' programme for upper secondary Implementation of education programme for G&T students Science becomes its own subject in lower primary	<b>2009</b>	IGCSE project launched for upper secondary Tropical English Teacher (TET) launched
First cohort of students directed to IGCSE	<b>2010</b>	SBAfL project + writing syllabus for primary level begins Piloting of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) CfBT-Brunei contract put out to tender for the first time
Teaching Plus programme introduced	<b>2011</b>	Introduction of Cloze test kit; development of SBAfL rubrics; Involvement In Special Applied Programme (SAP); Secondary Vocational Programme (PMV) Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA) CLIL project implemented
Full implementation of SPN21 at all levels of schooling	<b>2012</b>	Introduction of Quality Improvement Learning Teams (QuILTs); Integrated Schemes of Work (iSoW)-CLIL extended to 5 years Launch of Magic Moments



### 2.3.1 The future: *Wawasan 2035*

Interviewees felt that Brunei was justified in its hopes that its commitment and investment in English as an 'instrument of learning' would be rewarded. The country is now seen as well placed to take advantage of economic growth across south east Asia, in achieving economic integration and its own goals of economic diversification. English is increasingly seen as 'culturally neutral' and a powerful tool in the ASEAN region. There are increasing moves towards creating a knowledge-based economy, helping to replace dependence on gas and oil production; but without making too many concessions to social change and retaining the distinctive features of the Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB). By 2015 ASEAN should achieve a 'single market'. There will be a deeper and wider market for 'high value' services. Brunei has made educational investments that ensure it is able to seize these emerging opportunities. In the future Brunei is seen as well placed to become an educational 'hub' and service provider.

One CfBT interviewee appeared candid and pragmatic about the future of the organisation's work in Brunei, particularly as in 2010 the contract was put out to tender for the first time:

*'It's important not to fight the last war. Until 2010 there's been a rollover. Tendering is a good thing. Explicating goals, objectives is good for both sides. That being said, after 2010, there's a little bit of, for us, the partnership is putting your hand in the dyke to stop the water coming out. There's also helping to build the new dykes. Where we'd really like to go, how we'll continue to stay here is to simply enable Brunei to get its Wawasan 2035.'*

The future includes supporting Brunei's efforts towards achieving key educational goals as part of *Wawasan 2035*, including the continued building of capacity and knowledge transfer at local teacher level:

*'I don't think we're minimalist about the contract. We absolutely guarantee we will do everything in the contract, as well as that we'll do a lot of other things. We've delivered on everything in the contract and we've got a few years to go. That's not really a problem. The greater problem is as well as being contracted here, we also play a public role, and part of that is not to overreach, so the CLIL move has to be... the ownership of that has to be the Bruneian teachers to want it.'*

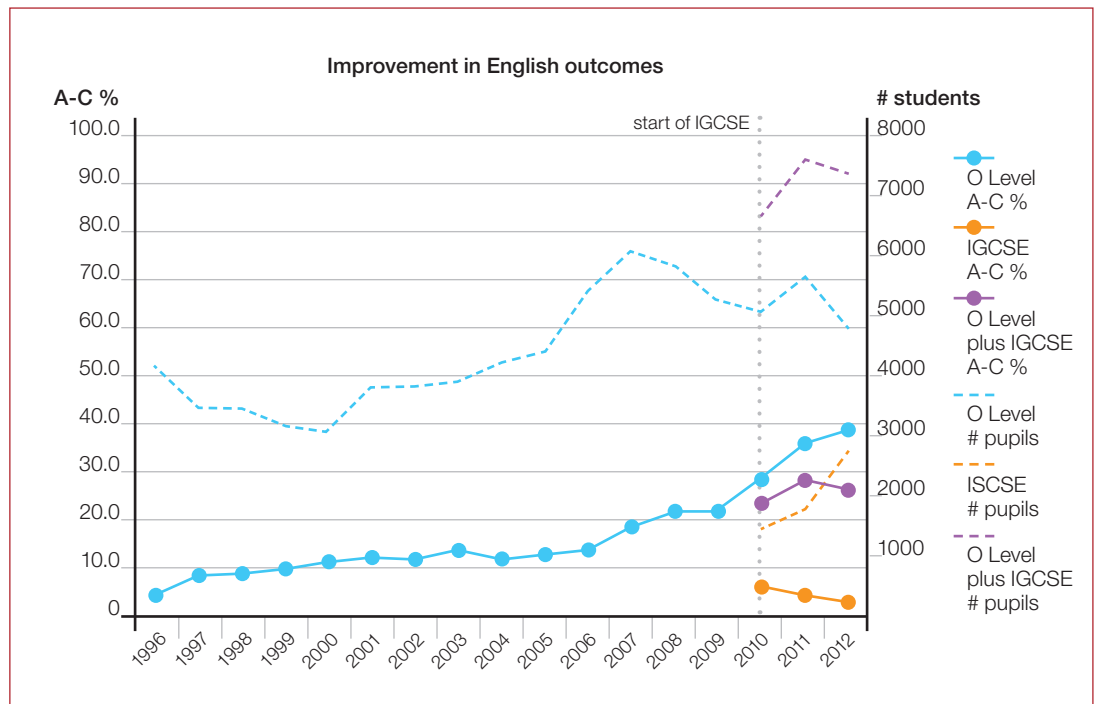
A rather sobering point made by one principal about the main 'stakeholders' in Brunei's education system, i.e. its students, concludes this chapter:

*'[W]hoever they are, they are the reasons why we are here. Maybe for the local teachers, they are our children. This is a small country, which only produces oil and gas. If that is dry, we are preparing our human resources to face the consequences. We are preparing our people to work in other countries, with the right attitude and the right qualifications.'*

## 2.4 Programmes targeting student outcomes and attitudes: from pockets of good practice to national-level reach

The fourth evolutionary path focused in detail on the range of programmes and interventions for English language learning (and to a lesser extent, English-medium subjects) in Brunei, particularly those put in place between the MoE and CfBT. These primarily related to initiatives designed to improve O Level attainment, key influences during the implementation of each programme and the use of data to inform next steps. This included targeting students and schools to promote improvement.

**Figure 24:** O Level English and IGCSE ESL attainment and number of entries 1996–2012<sup>130</sup>  
 (Source: CfBT)

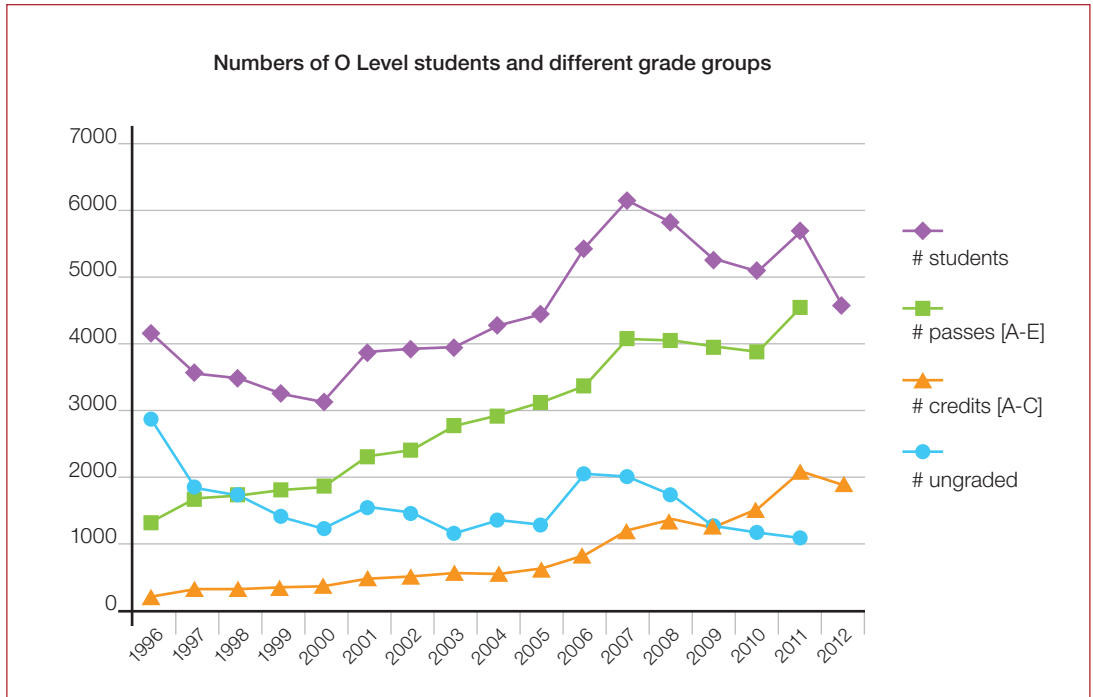


<sup>130</sup> Equivalences between IGCSE and O Level grades were verified; O Level A-E grades are given as equivalent to A-E in the IGCSE (CIE, 2011)





**Figure 25:** Number of O Level entrants and grade groups



One can see the general decrease in students obtaining a U grade and the general increase in the number of students attaining A-C and A-E grades. Also, the number of students attaining credits has overtaken students obtaining the U grade.



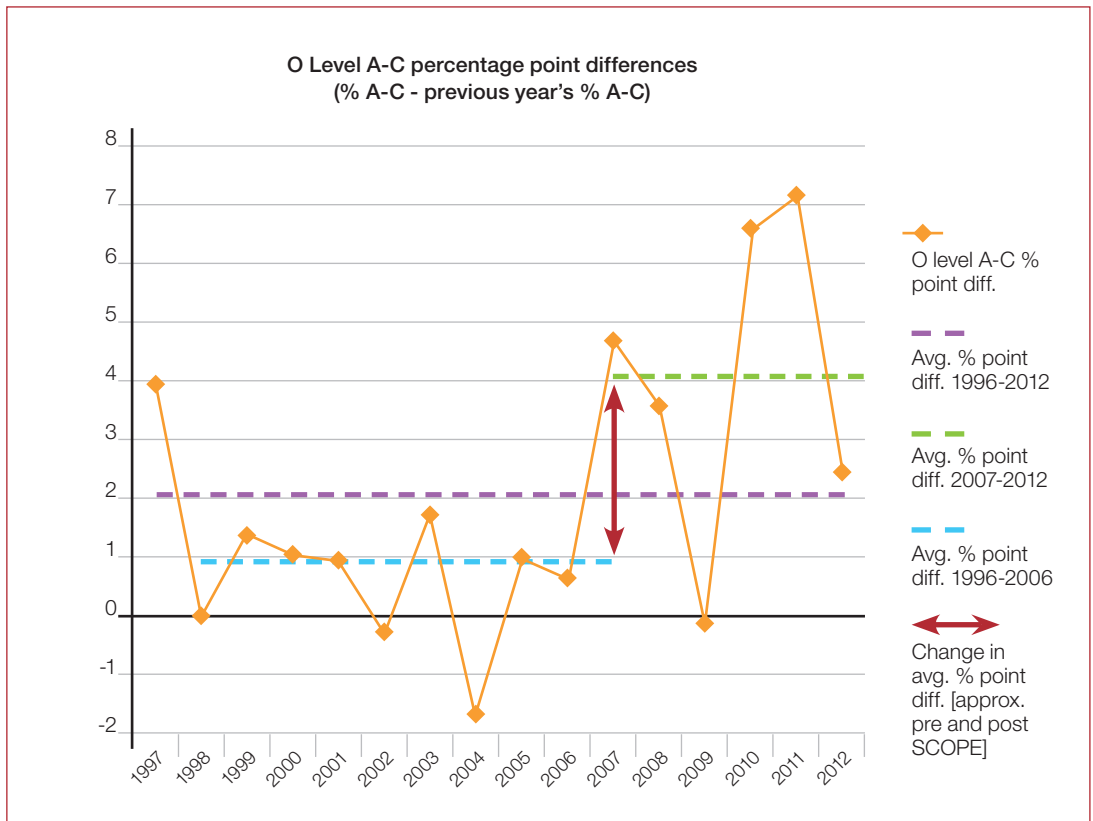
**Table 4:** Accompanying table to O Level and IGCSE attainment chart

Year	O Level A-C %	IGCSE A-C %	O Level + IGCSE A-C %	O Level A-C # pupils	IGCSE A-C # pupils	O Level + IGCSE A-C # pupils	O Level # pupils	IGCSE # pupils	O Level + IGCSE # pupils
1996	6.5			274			4,209		
1997	10.5			375			3,563		
1998	10.5			370			3,519		
1999	11.9			386			3,251		
2000	13.0			409			3,151		
2001	14.0			546			3,911		
2002	13.7			536			3,914		
2003	15.5			615			3,981		
2004	13.8			593			4,308		
2005	14.8			658			4,460		
2006	15.4			841			5,468		
2007	20.1			1,234			6,137		
2008	23.8			1,392			5,851		
2009	23.6			1,250			5,287		
2010	30.3	8.3	25.1	1,550	130	1,680	5,120	1,566	6,686
2011	37.5	6.4	29.7	2,135	122	2,257	5,701	1,894	7,595
2012	39.9	5.2	28.2	1,936	147	2,083	4,583	2,814	7,397

There has been a tenfold increase in numbers obtaining O Level or equivalent credits across 16 years. CfBT's target set by the MoE of obtaining at least 1,000 credits in O Level English by 2007 was exceeded, by a figure of 234 students.



**Figure 26:** O Level A-C percentage point difference (from previous years) 1997–2012 and split between the approximate pre- and post-SCOPE periods (Source: CfBT)





**Table 5:** O Level A-C percentage point differences

Year	O Level A-C %	O Level A-C % point diff
1996	6.5	
1997	10.5	4.0
1998	10.5	0.0
1999	11.9	1.4
2000	13.0	1.1
2001	14.0	1.0
2002	13.7	-0.3
2003	15.5	1.8
2004	13.8	-1.7
2005	14.8	1.0
2006	15.4	0.6
2007	20.1	4.7
2008	23.8	3.7
2009	23.6	-0.1
2010	30.3	6.6
2011	37.5	7.2
2012	39.9	2.4
Average percentage point difference 1996-2012		2.1
Average percentage point difference 2007-2012		4.1
Average percentage point difference 1996-2006		0.9



The general trend of percentage point differences in O Level English between 1997 and 2012 has increased. The overall increase was 2.1 percentage points. However, what is especially interesting is the split between percentage point differences 'pre-SCOPE' (average of 0.9 points) and 'post-SCOPE' (4.1 points). We have denoted these periods using the 'SCOPE' name as this emerged as the main initiative launched in 2006, with recognition that there were other projects implemented during that challenging period for CfBT. We now summarise the different initiatives that have taken place over the years.

#### **2.4.1 Programmes to raise student attainment in the English language**

Following concerns over the broadly static picture of student achievement in the English language O Level examination (for example, MoE 1997, 2005), CfBT strongly promoted two key interventions that sought to increase student achievement in the English language: 'Success in Cambridge O Level Public Examinations'(SCOPE) and the 'English Project for Pre-School' (EPPS).

##### **2.4.1.1 SCOPE: pushing borderline students into the credit range of the O Level examination**

The SCOPE project seeks to improve the achievement of borderline students in the O Level examination through exam clinics and roadshows that:

- familiarise learners with the exam format and content
- teach study skills (exam strategies and learning strategies, organising work and revision)
- target specific problem areas (e.g. oral skills, vocabulary, writing skills).

Students within the target group are characterised by limitations in their:

- range of reading experience
- vocabulary range
- exposure to English beyond the classroom
- knowledge about the characteristics of the written genre
- out-of-school support.

Although it is impossible to establish any direct causal links, the increase in the number of students achieving O Level credits after the implementation of SCOPE is remarkable. The programme was also brought up by a number of the interviewed principals and headteachers as a key factor responsible for the recorded increase in student achievement in the English O Level examination. In addition to targeting borderline students there is evidence of spill-over effects in using data and teaching and learning approaches that supported improvements for all students, both those above and those below the C/D borderline, plus an increase in O Level entries.

A review of the SCOPE teaching materials suggests that the exam clinic and roadshow materials are indeed very well focused and nicely staged, taking a comprehensive 'whole person approach' in preparing students for the O Level examination. The writing (Key Skills in Writing) and speaking (Talk is Cheap) preparation materials would benefit from a clearer progression and from an increase in the use of tasks (i.e. activities that require learners to use language in a collaborative way to achieve



a meaning-focused outcome either as rehearsal or interaction) in supporting the teaching of writing and speaking skills.

Significantly, the O Level examination places a strong emphasis on reading and writing skills, since written language production does not only feature in paper 1, but also in paper 2, which, in addition to testing reading comprehension, requires the students to write a summary. Considering the exam structure and the research literature, which strongly suggest that a key predictor of literacy development is the student's lexical development,<sup>131</sup> it appears that the single most important way to boost student achievement in the O Level examination would be a more prominent focus on teaching vocabulary.

#### **2.4.1.2 EPPS: building a strong foundation in English at Pre-School**

The EPPS (English Project for Pre-School) develops literacy in English, exploiting the fact that Standard Malay and English both use the Roman alphabetic system. The rationale for the introduction of the programme is strongly tied to the idea of placing equal status on English and Standard Malay during literacy development in order to address the complex problem of developing bilingualism in Bruneian students in the context of formal schooling. The EPPS project, and the work of Laura Huxford and John Stannard, were described by several interviewees as 'revolutionary' for their time.

*'I think that there's a huge debate about what age to introduce other languages... What I find fascinating about it is by making both languages equal at the learning to read phase, neither language has a status over the other. It's a remarkably easy solution to a complex thing. Of course that depends on the two languages having the same script to begin with. Western European languages could be doing this.'* (CfBT interviewee)

In a slightly staggered approach, during the first two terms children start reading and handwriting in Malay and at the same time learn basic receptive and productive oral language skills in English. In terms 3 and 4, oral language takes up the first 25 minutes of the English lesson, followed by Synthetic Phonics for another 30 minutes. A five-minute plenary or closure summarises the lesson. Thus, early English reading is taught by building on the foundation laid in Malay and familiarity with the 18 common consonants.

The CfBT materials relating to the phonics approach appear to be very sound and well developed. During the oral language part of the lesson and the closing story children are exposed to a much wider range of vocabulary (and of sounds) than that which is included in the phonics programme. It is considered favourable for learner development that vowels are introduced slowly in this programme since it gives the children more time to develop mental representations of their oral/aural inventory of vowels in English before they are obliged to read the full inventory. Another good feature of the programme is that in addition to the phonics, the children are learning sight words. Following the shift towards an earlier onset of English-medium instruction in core subjects, it would be of great value to ensure that the EPPS programme prepares young learners for the linguistic demands that the teaching and learning of mathematics, science and ICT through the English language from Year 1 entails. Given that the programme needs to prepare the children to be taught these subjects in English in the following year, questions arise as to whether sufficient emphasis is given to relevant vocabulary and structures. For example,

<sup>131</sup> For example Netten, Droop and Verhoeven (2011); Verhoeven (2000)



- *How many* is taught, but not *how much*, which is needed for talking about measuring. Similarly, would it be worth teaching *How...?* structures with the adjectives that the children are learning (*How big / long / hot / fast*)?
- Is sufficient consideration given to language that is needed to talk about basic mathematics, such as talking about shapes, or performing and expressing logical operations? For example, it appears that '*and*' is taught in the programme; however, '*but*' is not.
- Are there other meaningful additions that might be essential to mathematics and science classes (e.g. *take* only appears in *take off [clothes]*, but perhaps the prototypical meaning of *take* might be useful in mathematics)?

With consideration to the aspect of integration between the two languages, the pre-school listening and reading programme on the whole appears to be very well conceptualised and solid as regards the children whose L1 is Malay (this is assuming that the phonics programme is not the only approach and that children are also exposed to stories in Malay, and other reading-for-meaning activities). However, there are numerous studies showing that simultaneous learning of the basics of decoding script in two languages is highly challenging, except perhaps for more gifted language learners.<sup>132</sup> Generally, the potential for problems can be assumed to be greater for children whose L1 is not Malay. For example, if there are phonemic contrasts that exist in Malay, but not in the children's L1, this may make learning to decode difficult. Such issues can be determined by comparing the phonemic inventories of L1 and L2 and it would be straightforward to devise teaching materials that address these.<sup>133</sup> Thus, the challenges that arise from the simultaneous teaching of the basics of decoding script in two languages need to be addressed through careful and explicit comparison between English and Standard Malay in order to accommodate the need to differentiate them. Where appropriate, comparisons between the phonemic inventories of Standard Malay and the children's L1 should also be made. It might also be worth considering a future research study into students who underwent the EPPS programme at its inception in order to investigate these students' experiences and outcomes from Pra to O Level. This cohort of students would also have gone through the SPN21 system from the beginning.

#### **2.4.2 Key features of programmes and interventions for students by CfBT and the MoE**

Key features of programmes and interventions for students by CfBT and the MoE, and their inter-linkages, are illustrated in the diagram below. This figure shows that the different strategies fit together to promote improvement and how the whole is more than the sum of the individual constituent parts.

<sup>132</sup> For example Tollefson and Tsui (2004)

<sup>133</sup> For example Wade-Woolley and Geva (2000)

**Figure 27:** Key features of programmes and interventions for students by CfBT and the MoE



#### **2.4.3 Clear targets and goals for improvement: learning from and adapting international experiences in educational reform**

The interviews and document analysis indicated that John Stannard had played an important role in encouraging the use of National Literacy Strategies, target setting, the use of data to support improvement and professional development approaches developed in England in the process of ongoing educational reform during the period 1997-2005. However, these had been refined and adapted to suit the needs and context of Brunei.

Interviewees from CfBT were unanimous in one particular strategy that may have helped to increase O Level attainment after 2006: the strategic collection, analysis and use of data in order to diagnose problem areas and opportunities for improvement. The SCOPE programme facilitated the focusing of initial efforts on D grade students and devising testing instruments and strategies in order to move these students past the C/D grade boundary. The New Zealand based PAT test was used initially but was replaced by the Cloze test in order to increase relevance and contextualisation that was more suited to Bruneian experiences. Data such as student attainment in national exams (PSR in primary 6 and PMB in Year 9 secondary) was also collected, along with the assignment of target attainment figures in order to generate predicted variables and value-added measures.

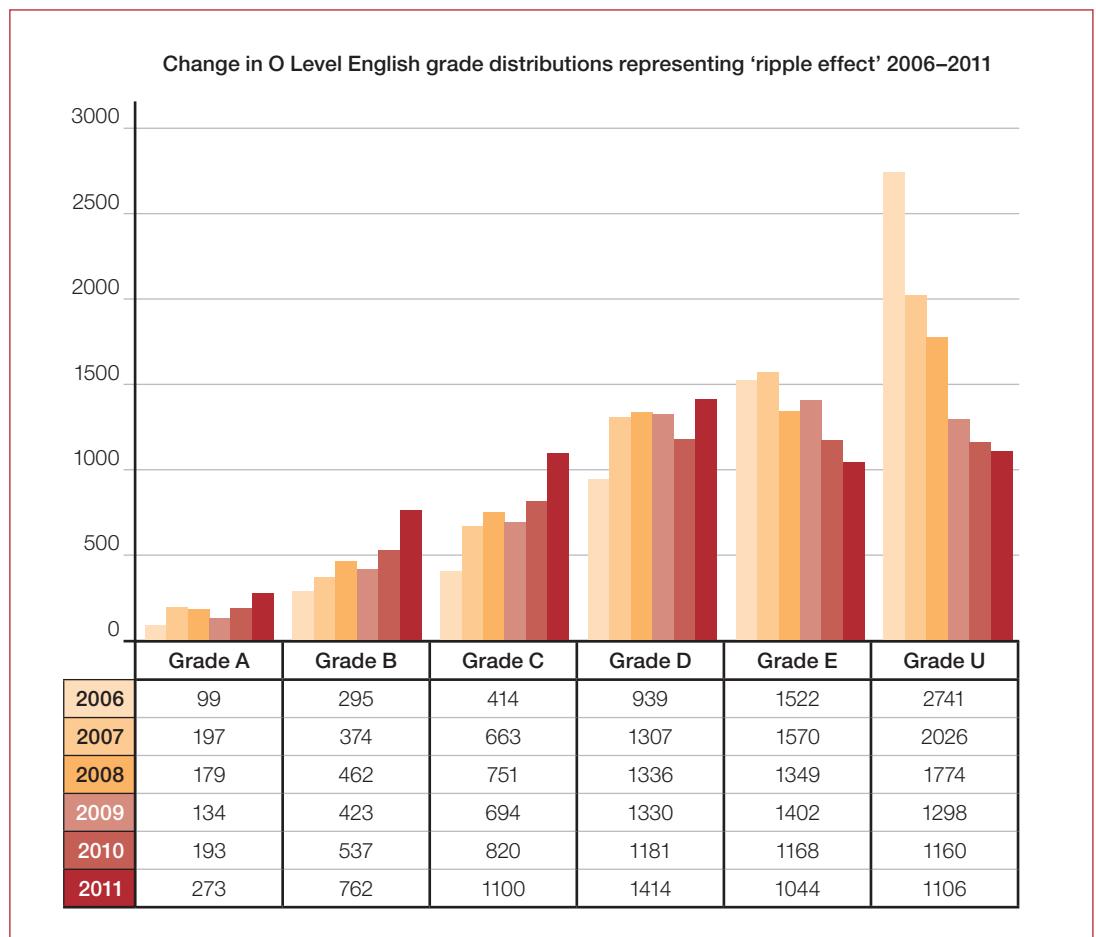




*'We were the key drivers for putting forward package of activities, related to data. We talked about the C/D area. The key focus that John Stannard told us [was] to drive for the D students, these were the students on the cusp of getting a credit, some students wouldn't have needed much to get over the line. For the first time, we were in a position where we were gaining information about students at an individual level, at a class level, school level and national level. This had never been done before.'*

CfBT teachers and management were also then able to determine some of the practices associated with credit students and apply strategies accordingly in other groups. The moving of C/D grade students then helped to create a 'ripple effect' across other grade boundaries. The SCOPE project seemed also to provide a clear set of strategies on which teachers, students and other stakeholders could focus their efforts.

**Figure 28:** O Level grade distributions 2006–2011 (Source: CfBT)





The clear alignment of goals at all levels of the education system providing consistency in approach is illustrated in this quote:

*'[SCOPE] changed the nature of the dialogue. It wasn't just what our teachers were doing in the classroom, it was the fact that there was a singularity of focus. Everyone was on focus, the Ministry, CfBT, local teachers, the department of schools, the office... It was absolutely key that there was a fidelity to what we were doing.'*

Part of the exercise in calculating predicted attainment involved the use of data from national exams. As some exams were 'normalised' every year, grade boundaries varied and so negotiations took place for the breadth of standardised exams to be expanded into other non-national exam years. CfBT was given access by the MoE to support the writing of standardised exams for Years 9, 10 and 11 and also to train teachers to collect such data and other prior attainment in order to link to O Level scores.

Professor Stannard was also a key influence in CfBT becoming more 'ambitious with its target' and using fine-grained analyses in order to target specific areas of the O Level examination paper and initiate improvements. Data from the O Level qualifying exam was used as an initial guide.

*'We would send [analyses] back [to individual teachers] so they could see where their students were, needing extra help etc. When we got the qualifying exam results, we were able to identify a more fine-grained analysis. We were able to identify where the weaknesses were between Paper 1 and Paper 2. We provided specialist exam clinics, targeted support, with the right students receiving the right support. The scattergun approach is not an effective use of resources.'*

Predictions at school level provided a framework to initiate dialogue with schools when making comparisons with actual attainment; stronger and weaker areas could then be identified. Thus as well as improving attainment outcomes for individual students this initiative supported a focus on schools and school improvement in English language teaching. It also explicitly engaged CfBT teachers collaborating with other English language teachers in their schools to improve practice.

The current arrangements for data collection, analysis and distribution at CfBT appear to have altered somewhat. It has emerged that several different people and teams are now responsible for the collection of data at different levels (primary, secondary, Cloze tests and so on) and there does not seem to be one person or unit, who manages the central 'storage' and linking together of the different datasets across the system. This area could be revisited and structured such that student attainment, and indeed other types of educational data, are managed by a dedicated team that has overall responsibility for collecting the data and maintaining a consistent approach in its analysis and interpretation.

### **Key idea**

While the collection and analysis of data require substantial levels of *technical expertise*, the interpretation and analysis of data is seen to require high levels of *professional expertise*.<sup>134</sup> Crucially perhaps, one should remember that data collection is also an important means by which to demonstrate and celebrate achievements.<sup>135</sup>

*'Good data management is about growing in-house expertise in handling data, managing its transfer between individuals, retaining and maintaining it as a school resource, managing*

<sup>134</sup> Kelly and Downey (2011)

<sup>135</sup> West, Ainscow and Stanford (2005)

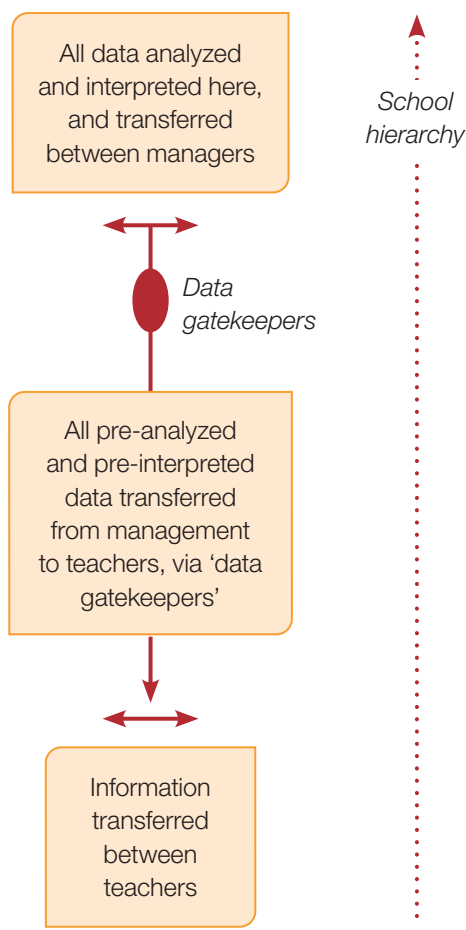


*its analysis and interpretation, and facilitating its dissemination. However, value is not added everywhere... The value is added through interpretation and use, and feeding back that experience to the school as an organisation, where it can be stored.*<sup>136</sup>

Data management systems can be seen as a system of complementary processes, between the different types of engagement with a particular set of data and how and where data ‘travels’.<sup>137</sup>

*‘Good data management, because of its predicative dimension, is a manifestation of a school’s commitment to its own future, and for the welfare and success of its staff. Data generates new value and expertise every time it is operationalised or transferred to a colleague; old insights are preserved and new ones generated.’*<sup>138</sup>

**Figure 29:** Data management system as a pair of complementary processes<sup>139</sup>  
(diagram reproduced from original)



<sup>136</sup> Kelly and Downey (2011) p. 142

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*, p. 144

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.*, p. 142

#### 2.4.4 Increased understanding of exam requirements and decrease in variation

Fine-grained analyses of how particular questions in examination papers were being answered by students and an increased understanding of how papers were being marked in each section may have also supported improvement in student outcomes. In relation to the O Level examination, one interviewee remarked:

*'It's partly a process – there's reports about what worked, didn't work, what was fair, not fair. Because it's such a high stakes exam here, more attention has been focused on the exam, some improvements/changes have been made this year. There are also small changes to the oral, it counts for 17 per cent, it's the area where Bruneian students do the best in. It's a bit like swing states in the election. Teachers can be taught to get good students to an A in the oral, because their oral English is quite good. But those who are shy might get a lower grade who do well in the reading and writing. The target is if they are Bs in their reading and writing, they should be trying to get an A in the oral. The same with the CD ones, we should get them to be an AB in the oral which could be enough, when you're talking about a few more marks.'*

There was also an awareness of a more standardised form of the O Level exam paper:

*'Nowadays it's more of a routine, you know the passage's going to be 1500 words probably, and in the past it could be between 1000 and 2000.'*

#### Introduction of IGCSE ESL exam

The initiation and encouragement by the MoE to develop a three-way dialogue between the Ministry, CfBT and the Cambridge exam board was also important to improving student attainment in the O Level English exam. Once the N Level examination was abolished in 2006, all students, regardless of ability, had only the O Level exam as an option at the end of secondary school. The IGCSE in English as a Second Language, although contributing to a return to a 'two-tier' examination system, was viewed by interviewees at CfBT and schools as more suited to some sections of the secondary school population.

*'The thing about the O Level and IGCSE, bringing out Cambridge was very important in establishing that tripartite dialogue, because they were saying very, very clearly, we're here as a curriculum provider, you're the client. If you want us to continue with the O Level we will, but if you want us to develop something, we will. It was after 2007 or 2008 they started coming out to us. We did have some initial people who were forging a trail with IGCSE, they saw it correctly, it met more needs for our students than the O Level. And there was a time when historically every student in upper secondary did O Level, because they did away with the N Level.'*

#### 2.4.5 Singularity of focus and system 'buy-in' to using data and professional development to enhance the quality of teaching and learning

The other key message running through the commentary on how student attainment in English seems to have improved is the 'singularity of focus' mentioned earlier. Initiatives such as SCOPE that were previously questioned were later 'accepted' and implemented as a matter of course due to previous successes. A 'chain of events' was described by one interviewee, which included achieving buy-in and approval from schools and principals and the production and mobilisation of resources at a strategic level.

*'There needs to be buy-in from the schools... we get more from some than others. An indicator is who turns up to workshops. We worked very closely with the heads of department, and we did work through the MoE with cluster groups, so the principals got together for all schools through the cluster. The key thing was that we were all on the same message. A whole bank of resources were developed to support the teachers in their O Level work. Our teachers wrote the Key Skills in Writing and Comprehension. We then got buy-in from the MoE to put those books on their reading list, and schools were buying them in bulk. The contract size stayed the same but we managed to recruit more teachers and retain them.'*

#### **2.4.6 SPELT programme for teachers and the Common Framework: linking skills to outcomes**

Another strategy devised by John Stannard, to work in parallel with the SCOPE project, was to link teacher skills to student outcomes. Inventories of teacher skills were drawn up; strengths and weaknesses could then be identified from classroom observation and teacher questionnaires, and information combined to provide opportunities for teacher professional development. Hence there was a two-pronged approach with SCOPE for students, linked with SPELT workshops conducted for teachers.

*'This is an approach looking at where the skills are and how that impacts on the students and how teacher skill-sets can change over time. We worked in parallel with the MoE, it's a very good model, they developed a taskforce to shadow our observations of our pre- and post-testing (of students) and observation of each teacher. We gave a pre-questionnaire to teachers about their backgrounds and what they perceived to be good things and bad things. The students did the Oxford Placement test, the Year 8s and 10s (the non-examined year groups)... In general it was interesting to see that there was improvement in teacher skill-sets, but you could see where our overall strengths and weaknesses lay in that particular cohort.'*

The two approaches were brought together and underpinned by principles outlined in the Common Framework.

*'John Stannard introducing the Common Framework, which still philosophically drives what we do. It identified, from what the research indicated, what good practices successful students demonstrate, and then what practices teachers need to demonstrate in order to allow students to perform in a way that is successful. It's been reinvented as two interlocking cogs now, and that common framework drove the observation questionnaire, and it still drives our performance management system.'*

#### **2.4.7 Motivation and interest**

Shared approaches were used in both urban and rural schools by CfBT teachers. Principals and teachers expressed very positive views about the influence of CfBT teachers on students' attitudes and motivation towards English language learning. Lessons were seen as more 'fun', engaging, active and student-centred. The general consensus among interviewees was that the Brunei education system was moving from more traditional, teacher-fronted settings towards 'active, learner-centred classrooms'. Teachers could act as positive examples for students if teachers themselves are seen to be motivated, engaged and interested in the subject and care for children. Also, students appear to enjoy 'speaking with foreigners' and are forced to communicate in English with CfBT teachers. Some CfBT teachers were also seen to provide and share extra materials to engage students further such as CDs of English songs, educational games and cards. Greater use of group and pair work was also noted as a positive change from earlier practice. One CfBT member

of staff recalled the way a CfBT teacher's practice could act as a model:

*'My experience in my school was that when I first came there, there was a bit of suspicion of 'why is the room noisy?' That went on for a while. The next year, you'd get the slightly bolder, younger teacher going 'I've got your 7A class from last year and they're saying Why can't you teach like [name]'. They might try things, and when it works, they might ask if you have more things like that.'*

**Figure 30:** Summary of programmes and interventions at student level

**CfBT capacity building follows 'BOOT' model,**  
(analogy from construction industry):  
**Build – Own – Operate –Transfer**

**How to 'add value' to education projects and work collaboratively with Brunei participants, organisational and joint learning**

- SCOPE delivering EPPS programme at high speed recognised as successful (Intensive Phonics Programme – Oxford Learning Tree)
- EPPS joint teaching of Phonics in English and Malay at Pra level has much potential to provide a good start to English learning and support better outcomes for Malay
  - Use of CfBT teachers in Pra and plans to increase in upper primary
- Fine-grained analysis allows targeted interventions, e.g. O Level exam clinics, pinpointing strengths and weaknesses, improving study skills, feedback
- Negotiating access to write standardised tests for Years 9, 10 and 11, new Cloze test contextualised to Brunei, all to help study progress, make predictions, support interventions to raise examination attainment
- Able to function on more fluid terms in relations with MoE departments to support working towards set objectives and targets

## 2.5 Programmes targeting teaching practice, professional development and capacity-building

### 2.5.1 Evolution of teaching practice

One member of CfBT management described the main feature of the perceived change in teaching practice in Brunei over the years. Less of a change in the basic principles and content of English language learning was seen but more of a shift in methods.

*'CfBT teachers are still tasked with improving language capabilities across the system. We're still here to make that happen. But the 'how' has certainly changed... The introduction of SPN21 was very important in changing the how, especially at the lower secondary level, the commitment to the more formative approach to assessment, with the school-based assessment for learning, which is a paradigm that changes dramatically what should happen in the [classroom].'*

**Figure 31:** Key features of evolution in teaching and professional development



Hence while the fundamentals of classroom activity – or the ‘what’ – had perhaps not altered as much, the introduction of SPN21 was seen as instrumental in transforming the ‘how’. Part of the ‘narrative’ of the particular style of approaches implemented in Brunei was seen to originate from CfBT’s earlier work in Germany and Malaysia. CfBT’s work in Brunei in the 1980s grew out of teacher development schemes in Germany in the 1960s which then fed into programmes in Malaysia during the 1970s. Each new set of contracts brought with it a new set of experiences and lessons learned which could be applied to the next. Some of the key learning points are explored below:

*'The country has to be an attractive host. Brunei is an attractive host. It requires skill to recruit teachers. [In a different project], they're a third full with roughly the same conditions, probably better jobs in many ways. I think it's partly longevity.'*

CfBT's contributions towards its expatriate teachers' sustained commitment in Brunei appeared to focus on an understanding of the peripheral details that may influence teachers' experiences in settling into a new and unfamiliar country.

*'[In some of the other projects], they don't think about school-age kids. You sort out your own kids... That's a huge thing; for people coming here, their kids will go to an international standard school. So like going to [a nearby country] for example, it's hard getting your kid into school. Brunei is well provided, healthcare is good. Attention to detail. Having worked as an expatriate a number of times, you come in at CfBT, you're picked up at the airport (well after midnight), taken to a lovely house that's got bread, jam and milk in the fridge. The thought's that gone into it, it's a huge effort... No other expatriate project does it that way.'*

There appeared to be an awareness that if teachers as professionals were well looked after, they could 'get on with the day job'. A pragmatic view based on past experiences and what might transpire if less attention is paid to small details was expressed:

*'We do it not to be kind, but out of bitter experience over many years. If you neglect people, they can be very harmful to the project. People come in to orientation, they get over the initial hump and are actually able to function as professionals. If you look at forums of English teachers in [another country]... of course we have problems here too.'*

Precise figures on the retention rates of comparable English language teaching projects in other Asian countries are difficult to source but one example can be found in Hong Kong's Native Speaker's English Teaching (NET) programme. While the retention rate appears to have improved considerably between 2004 and 2008, attrition has been a constant worry.<sup>140</sup> At primary level in the 2004/05 school year, 46 per cent of NETs did not renew their contracts; at secondary level this was 54 per cent. In 2007/08, these figures were reduced to 24 per cent at primary and 28 per cent at secondary level. Research indicates that despite government financial incentives put in place in 2005/06, only slight improvements were seen and there were more far-reaching issues in relation to 'cross-cultural adjustment', sometimes manifesting in the form of personality and culture clashes between NETs and local teachers and NETs and local students.<sup>141</sup> In August 2012, the *South China Morning Post (SCMP)* reported that '[a]bout half the teachers due to renew their contracts this year decided to quit – way above the 20 per cent expected when the scheme was launched in 1998'.<sup>142</sup>

In stark contrast, CfBT documents its 2011 teacher retention rate in Brunei as 96 per cent.<sup>143</sup> While this particular figure appears to have been calculated in a different manner (i.e. the percentage reportedly only includes teachers that CfBT 'wished to retain' and not those who were not offered new contracts), the overall numbers of teachers who left the project over time can be seen below. Certainly attrition rates pre-2008 mostly stood above 20 per cent, but (in direct comparison) 2012 saw only 15 per cent of teachers leaving Brunei. This seems very favourable in the light of the 50 per cent NET scheme figure implied in the *SCMP*.

<sup>140</sup> Chu (2009) pp. 1-5

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*

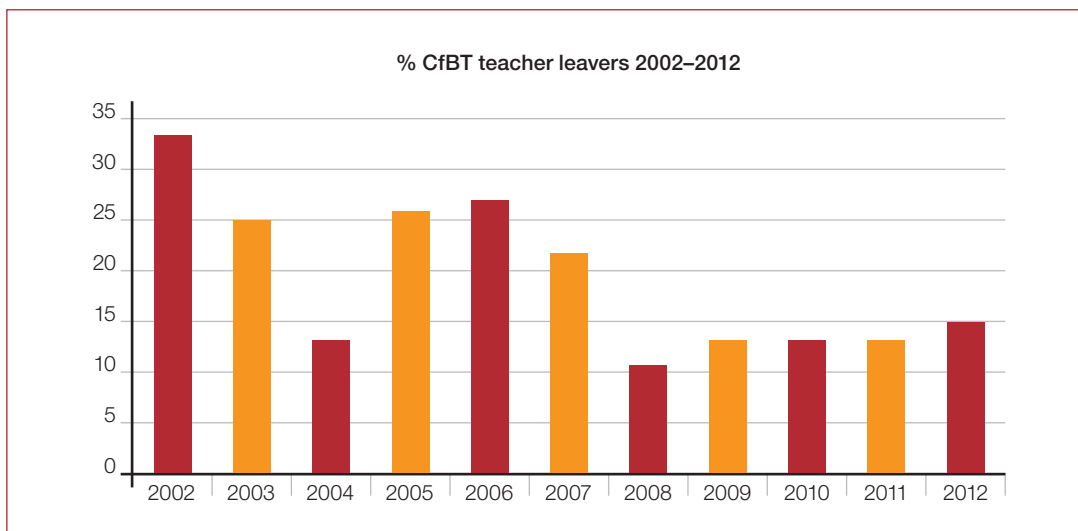
<sup>142</sup> *South China Morning Post* (2012)

<sup>143</sup> CfBT Education Malaysia (2013)





**Figure 32:** Proportion of CfBT teachers leaving Brunei over time 2002–2012 (Source: CfBT)



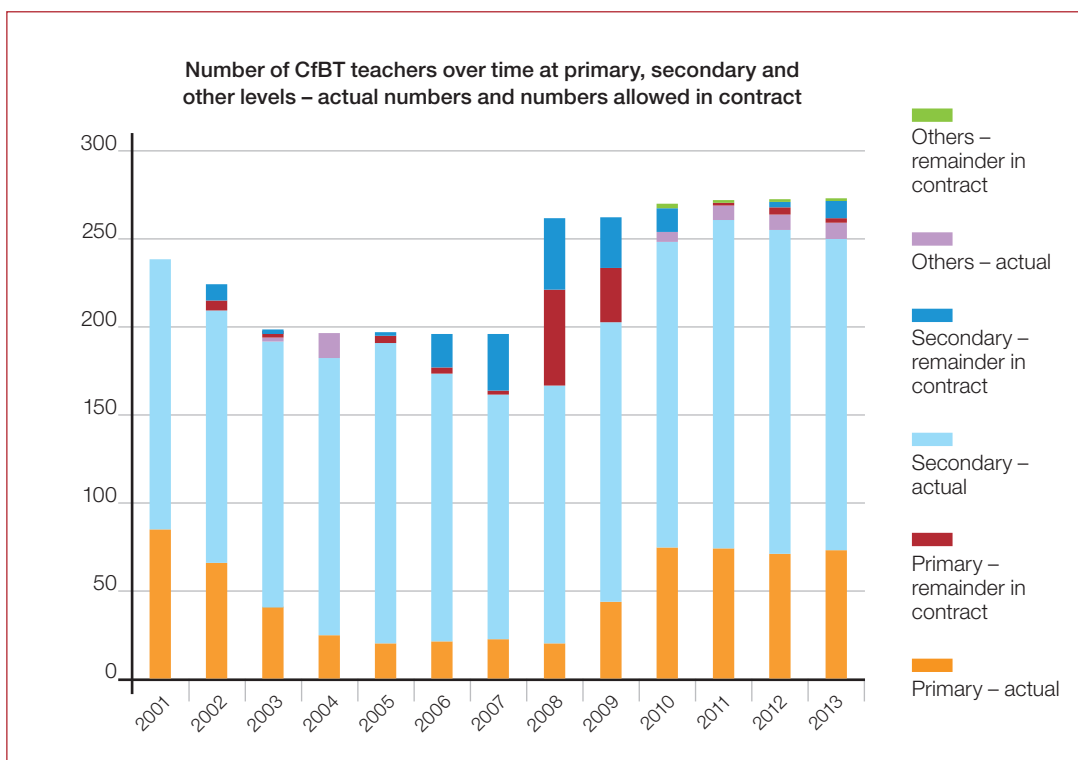
Note: Number of leavers per year includes ‘teachers who did not complete contracts, dismissals, sickness and deaths’.

In terms of raw teacher numbers, about 260 teachers are contracted with CfBT Brunei, of which 73 are at primary level, 177 at secondary and 10 are based in international and religious schools.

Crucially Brunei is perceived as a stable, peaceful family-friendly place to work and CfBT as a supportive employer. CfBT also has high standards in recruiting teachers with appropriate educational levels and experience. Thus it is seen as providing a high quality workforce to enhance Brunei’s capacity.



**Figure 33:** Number of CfBT teachers at different levels of contract (primary, secondary and others) 2001–2013 (Source: CfBT)





**Table 6:** Number of CfBT teachers employed at different levels

Year	Primary		Secondary		Others		Grand total	
	Actual	Total in contract	Actual	Total in contract	Actual	Total in contract	Actual	Total in contract
2001	85	85	154	154			239	239
2002	65	71	144	154			209	225
2003	41	45	151	154	3	3	195	202
2004	25	25	157	157	15	15	197	197
2005	20	25	170	172			190	197
2006	21	25	151	172			172	197
2007	23	25	138	172			161	197
2008	20	75	145	187			165	262
2009	44	75	157	187			201	262
2010	75	75	173	187	5	8	253	270
2011	74	75	187	187	9	10	270	272
2012	71	75	184	187	9	10	264	272
2013	73	75	177	187	10	11	260	273

One should note, however, the quite different contexts of Brunei and Hong Kong. While there is no concept of index-linked pay for local and expatriate teachers in Brunei and only one pay increase has been documented for local and CfBT teachers in 2006, CfBT teachers (along with Bruneian citizens) enjoy tax-free salaries and a comparatively lower cost of living than places like Hong Kong, and even their close neighbour Malaysia. Additionally, Brunei benefits from minimal rates of inflation and government subsidy of staples such as rice, sugar and petrol<sup>144</sup> while citizens also receive free education and medical care.<sup>145</sup> Oil and gas reserves form the 'backbone of the economy accounting for 70 per cent of GDP and 78 per cent of exports'. The country is reported to be the third-largest oil producer in south east Asia. However, in order to sustain the country's economic successes, Brunei is said to have 'recognised the need to diversify the local oil and gas industry and the broader economy as well'.<sup>146</sup> One of our interviewees commented that the labour market endures no shortage of professional and lower-level skilled workers but has a dearth of middle managers and technicians. It is hoped that new deep-water oil and gas facilities and Chinese oil refinery investment will create significant numbers of technical jobs. In terms of economic stability:

<sup>144</sup> Brunei Ministry of Home Affairs (2009) p. 28

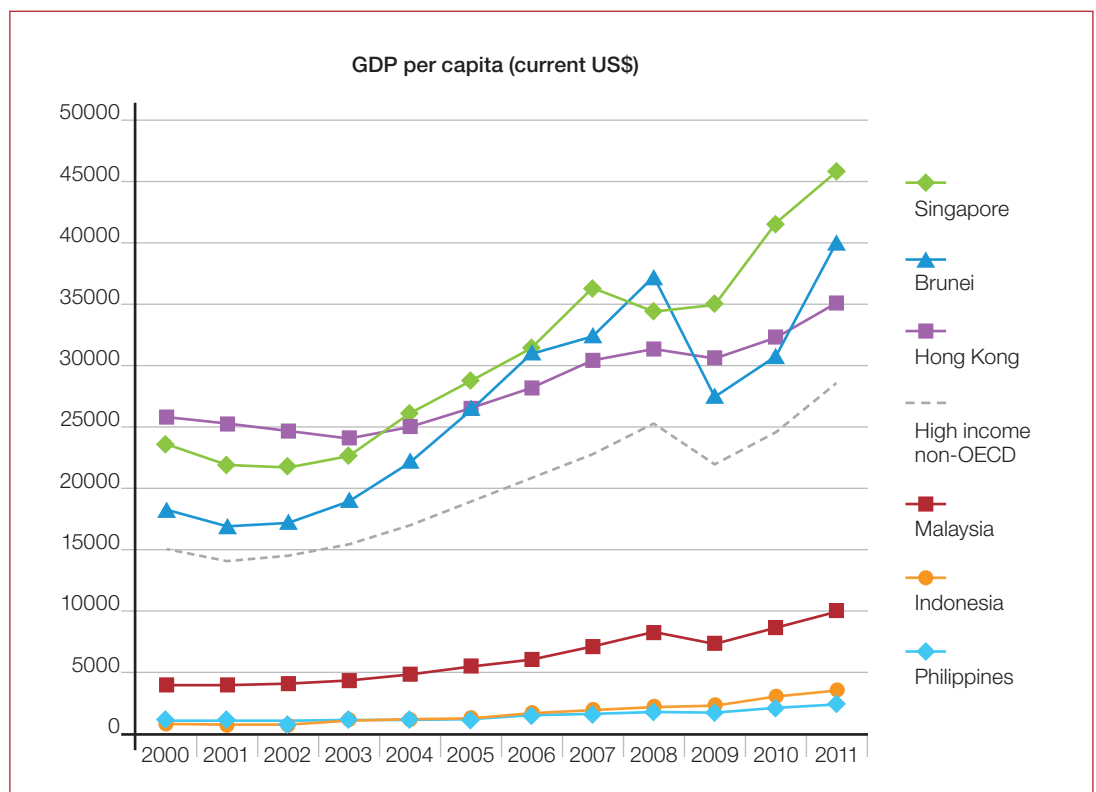
<sup>145</sup> US Department of State (2011) [<http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/brunei/176394.htm>]

<sup>146</sup> Brunei Ministry of Home Affairs, *op. cit.*, p. 8



*'Brunei continues to have one of the lowest GDP growth rates of any ASEAN nation; however, Brunei is also ranked as having one of the highest rates of macroeconomic stability in the world and the highest in Asia. Brunei's conservative economic policies insulated it from much of the global financial crisis in 2008-2009.'*<sup>147</sup>

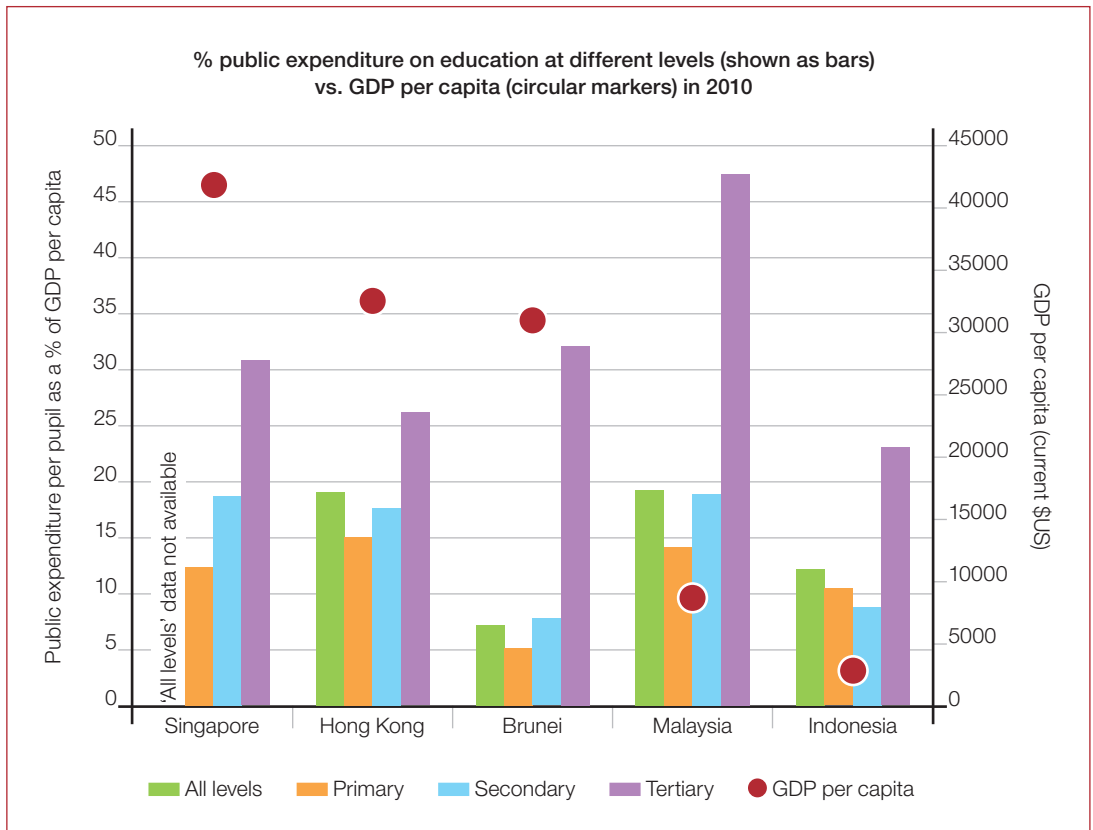
**Figure 34:** GDP per capita (current US dollars) of selected comparator countries 2000–2011  
(Source: World Bank)



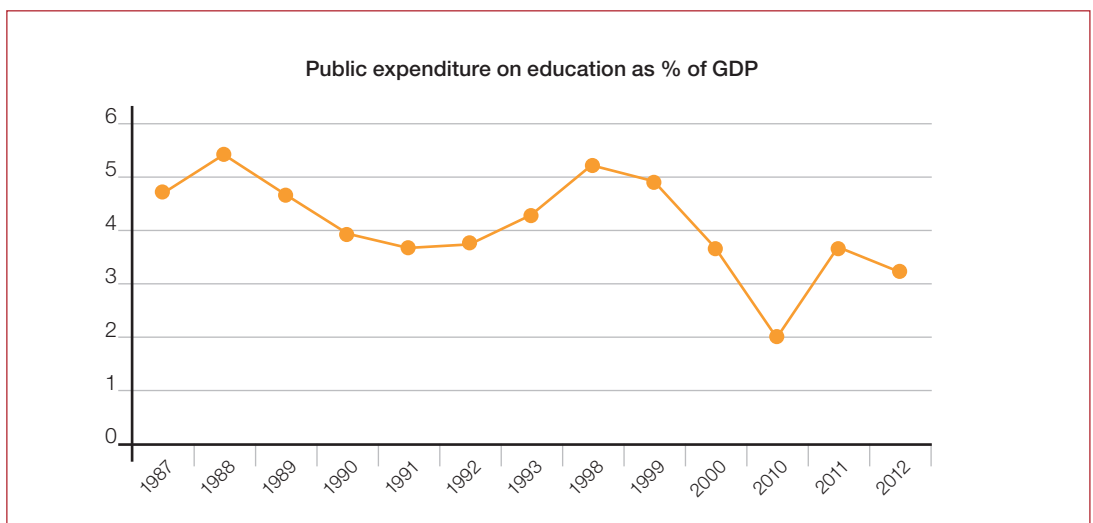
<sup>147</sup> US Department of State (2011) [<http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/brunei/176394.htm>]



**Figure 35:** 2010 proportion of public expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP per capita (current US dollars) for same comparator countries (Source: World Bank)

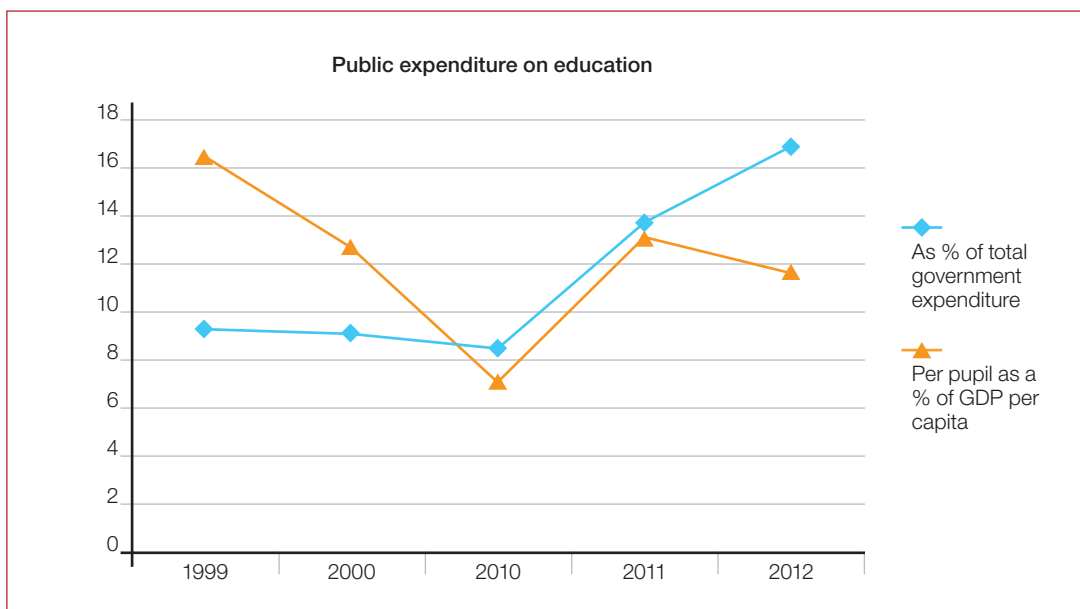


**Figure 36:** Public expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP 1987–2012 (Source: World Bank)





**Figure 37:** Public expenditure on education as a proportion of total government expenditure vs. as a proportion of GDP per capita 1999–2012 (Source: World Bank)



While public expenditure on education as a proportion of GDP per capita dropped between 1999 and 2010, and in 2012, expenditure as a proportion of total government expenditure rose from 8.5 per cent to 16.9 per cent between 2010 and 2012.

Returning briefly to teacher working conditions, some of the CfBT teachers interviewed perceived longer working hours in Brunei than in the UK. Contradictorily, the same teachers also mentioned the better opportunities to achieve a healthy ‘work/life’ balance in Brunei. Of course teachers may experience a variety of different working experiences at any one point. To sum up, however, a member of CfBT’s management team commented on CfBT teachers’ overall working conditions and context:

*‘The Brunei context has been relatively favourable for the ongoing recruitment and retention of a high quality and stable English language teaching resource, especially compared to other east Asian contexts over the 28-year period. The ready availability of quality housing, international schooling and an open, friendly, multicultural society combined with an attractive expatriate salary and benefits package makes Brunei one of the few options for ‘whole of lifetime’ employment as a professional expatriate teacher.’*



### 2.5.2 Building capacity

Interviewees described the following features of professional development and capacity building initiatives at two levels: within CfBT and at a more local level.

#### Within CfBT (in collaboration with the MoE)

1. A system of workplace certification and formalising arrangements for teachers who take on additional responsibilities, for example appointing lead teachers and education project managers.
2. The introduction of the SPELT programme in 2006 under the guidance of Professor John Stannard:

*'SPELT (Sharing Practice in Effective Language Teaching) set out to measure students' progress alongside CfBT teachers' classroom performance, to identify and then share best practice. Performance Management and Continuing Professional Development programmes were refocused and new observation instruments developed and drafted into a Common Framework of effective practice.'*<sup>148</sup>

The programme also involved drawing up an inventory of teacher skills, along with the 'impact' made on students and how skills change over time. CfBT worked in parallel with the MoE in order to develop a 'taskforce' to conduct shadow observations of teachers and student assessment.

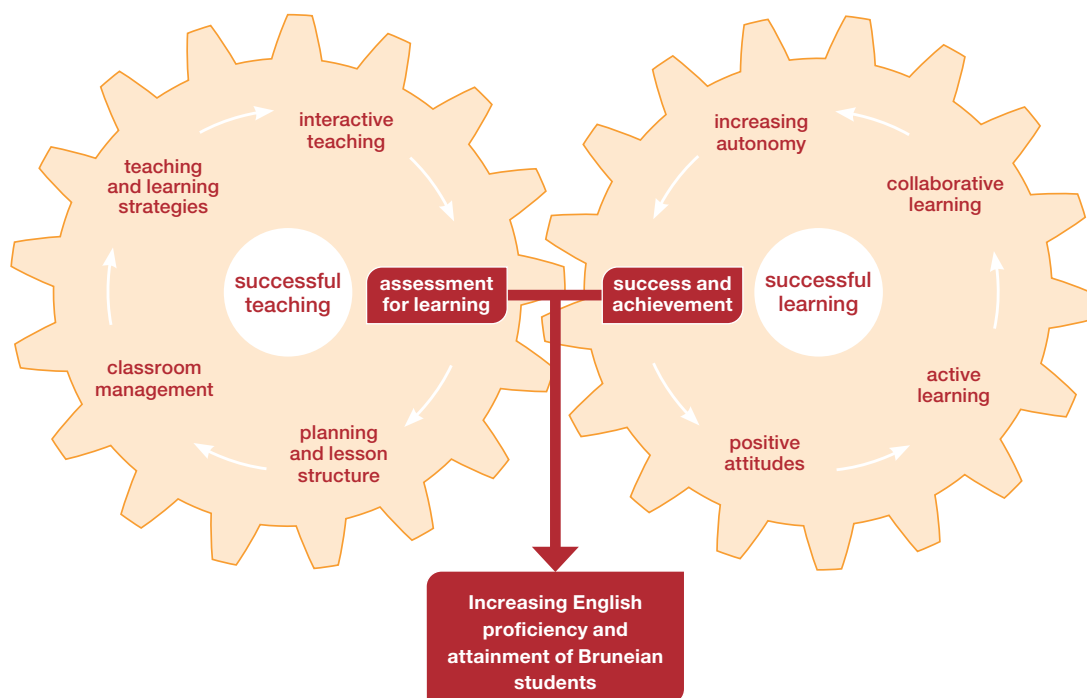
The Common Framework for learning and teaching has been described as:<sup>149</sup>

- a practical policy with clear, observable criteria to underpin quality and improvement
- applicable to all subjects, not just English
- requiring a commitment from the teaching community, for example at national, subject, school, department levels
- a foundation for professional development
- providing criteria for assessing the quality of learning and teaching
- being aligned with the aims and principles in the MoE's Strategic Plan (2007–2011).

<sup>148</sup> CfBT Brunei (2007)

<sup>149</sup> Stannard (2007)

**Figure 38:** CfBT Common Framework formulated with support by John Stannard (referenced in CfBT QuLLTs document)



In 2012, a new strategy for ‘performance and development improvement’ emerged from previous projects led by CfBT and Professor John Stannard (i.e. SPELT and SCOPE): Quality Improvement Learning Teams (QuLLTs). The aim of this peer observation programme was described as:

*‘to encourage innovative, experienced teachers to reflect on and share best practice with colleagues in order to build capacity in the Brunei education system.’<sup>150</sup>*

Prior to the QuLLTs initiative, lessons were observed solely by the Education Project Managers (EPMs) in line with the Common Framework.

*‘CfBT recognised that in order for our teachers to secure a position in Brunei, they needed to be experienced high-performing teachers in the classroom and proficient in managing administrative tasks. New teachers to the project bring with them innovative ideas that enhance the teaching and learning experience of their Bruneian students and colleagues. CfBT wanted to devise an efficient way to share best practice amongst its teaching staff as well as value their expertise and experience. This led to the research and development phase of the QuLLTs initiative.’<sup>151</sup>*

The QuLLTs cycle is made up of three stages:<sup>152</sup>

- i. Data gathering. Here, teachers are meant to engage in reflective practice by completing a series of surveys: one for student perception, a teacher-based questionnaire and a pre-observation checklist. ‘All of these evaluation instruments enable the teachers to identify the focus areas of the lesson observation.’

<sup>150</sup> Elmi and Nagorcka (2012) p. 3

<sup>151</sup> *ibid.*, p. 4

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*, p. 7



- ii. Pre-lesson conversation. This acts as a 'catalyst for the professional conversations' that the teachers may have with their colleague (a peer observer or Education Project Manager) who will be observing their lesson. Dialogue is meant to be open and questions are asked around the objectives of the lesson, particular areas that the observer should be taking note and observing closely, success criteria and so on.
- iii. Observation phase. The observer uses the lesson plan in conjunction with the lesson observation proforma. 'A crucial element of this process is that it is evidence based and provides accurate data to inform the post-lesson discussions in relation to the observation targets.'

Interviewees noted that action plans are put in place for weaker teachers but sometimes it is difficult to get the balance right; that is, being able to differentiate between teachers' ability levels and skill-sets and fitting any support that is provided to those levels (which is a new and unique feature of the programme). QULLTs was seen as less of an 'externally imposed' system and more collaborative in nature. Unlike regular observation systems, the QULLTs approach was also described as a facilitator for differentiation.

*'Quite often there is a mechanism. You never get teachers teaching in the same way. It's a difficult thing to get right. You want the true artist to be left alone to do it. You want the middle people made sure they're encouraged etc and the weak people brought to a standard model as a minimum. Part of that QULLTs initiative is to differentiate. If you look at analyses of CfBT teachers in the past they would probably show a lack of differentiation.'*

3. EPPS, the Cooperating Teachers programme and CfBT's collaboration with the Brunei English Language Teachers Association (BELTA) in the English Project for Pre-School (EPPS) were seen to 'set up the relationship' between CfBT teachers and local Bruneian teachers. Local teachers were described as possibly less 'anti-phonics' compared to expatriate teachers at the time the initiative was introduced by the MoE (2005). Along with the support of CfBT teachers, including those who led the implementation of the project, a large proportion of local teachers were associated with 'driving the momentum of phonics' in some cases.

The Cooperating Teachers project was introduced in tandem with the EPPS programme at pre-school level and aims to develop the skills of local teachers via a team teaching approach.<sup>153</sup> 'After a year as cooperating teachers, local colleagues become fully-fledged main teachers supporting the next cohort of cooperating teachers and ensuring the programme's sustainability.'<sup>154</sup> While local teachers may benefit from teaching classes together with CfBT teachers (although school timetables do not always allow for this), CfBT teachers also reported gaining from the exchange of experiences, particularly since at Pra level, some pupils are more likely to have some basic language skills in Bruneian and/or standard Malay or other indigenous languages, than English. Local teachers, with their knowledge of Malay and possibly other dialects and languages as well as cultural familiarity, may be able to provide initial support and guidance for CfBT teachers who may have less or no knowledge of local languages. More is explored later in this section on cooperating teacher-CfBT teacher dyads.

Over time, CfBT has forged ties with BELTA. The partnership includes the provision of training workshops to local teachers, the joint organisation of an annual national English Language Teaching conference<sup>155</sup> and CfBT sponsorship of local teachers chosen by BELTA to participate in

<sup>153</sup> CfBT (online) EPPS

<sup>154</sup> CfBT (2011)

<sup>155</sup> CfBT (online) *Teacher recruitment*

the Cambridge In-Service Certificate in English Language Teaching course and attend overseas conferences.

4. In-service teacher training in the form of Cambridge Board courses was viewed as CfBT's 'biggest investment'. Postgraduate research is also funded where participants are asked to contribute to an in-house journal called *Tropical English Teacher* to share their experiences and professional learning and so help to spread and support good practice.
5. Development of Professional Learning Communities: CfBT teachers support the development of curriculum 'programmes' (or written materials) for each year group and the running of training workshops. Teachers also take on higher responsibilities from work that develops out of Specialist Interest Groups.

### **Local capacity**

1. Cooperating Teachers programme: CfBT and local teachers work in partnership, formulating strategies, 'going through the curriculum, sharing materials, teaching together'. Teachers involved in the programme who were interviewed expressed difficulty in 'teasing out the "co-op" processes' but they noted that knowledge transfer happened both ways; for example in the phonics programme (EPPS) where local teachers may provide expertise in Malay phonics and thus an initial 'connection' with Pra students.
2. CfBT teachers were seen to take on extra responsibilities in school that presented opportunities from which local teachers could learn and collaborate, for example, running professional development sessions and 'translating' some of the finer detail contained within wider JSS or MoE training to local teachers in the school (if CfBT teachers were more familiar with certain key concepts). One CfBT teacher indicated that the manner in which expertise is shared is important; he reported regularly running both formal and informal training sessions for colleagues at his school (where there is only one CfBT teacher). He noted that the generally positive and active response to these sessions may be helped by his familiarity with the local context and its teachers and his long-standing in the community, particularly as he has been stationed in that area for seven years.

**Key idea**

Recent research has attempted to catalogue the many factors that may affect cross-cultural adjustment between native English teachers and the ‘host culture’.<sup>156</sup>

**Figure 39:** Factors that influence ‘cross-cultural adjustment’ of teaching professionals in international contexts (Diagram reproduced from original research report<sup>157</sup>)

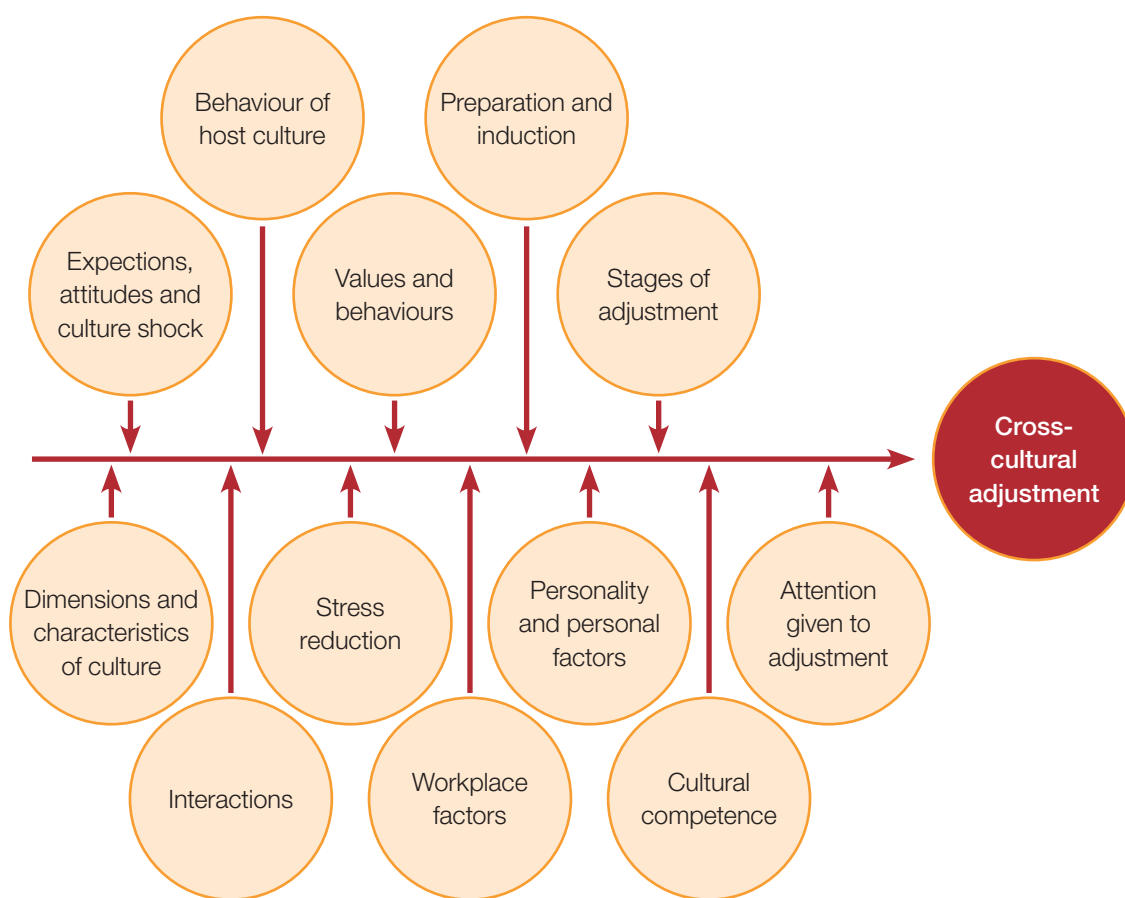


Figure 39 presents the different dimensions that may be inherent in the process of ‘crossing a cultural divide’. These dimensions could be explored further, certainly where apparently successful examples were found in the Bruneian context mentioned here.

In this particular example, a CfBT teacher was interviewed along with his ‘cooperating teacher’ and both displayed what seemed to be a high degree of rapport and mutual trust during the two-hour interview. At one point the interview turned to how one teacher was learning how to play the guitar from the other outside school hours. The CfBT teacher concerned even seemed to have picked up the local language-related custom of ending certain sentences with relevant inflections such as ‘ah?’ and phrases such as ‘true or not?’ and ‘put the ‘cho’ (used in Malaysia and Brunei to denote the placing of an official stamp on a document). While we are not proposing that every CfBT teacher adopt these turns of phrase in order to ‘fit in’, closer inspection of this particular example may hold

<sup>156</sup> Chu (2009) p. ii  
<sup>157</sup> *ibid.*, p. 22

benefits for other teachers, even in slightly different cultural contexts, and attempt to highlight some of the simpler and widely applicable ways to form positive relationships with teachers that are part of the 'host culture'.

Another positive feature of this cooperating teacher-CfBT teacher dyad was the mention of how the local teacher was viewed by the CfBT teacher as just 'a teacher' and on an 'even keel'; the relationship was expressed as one of 'exchange' rather than 'knowledge transfer'. While this CfBT teacher displayed an ability to share expertise in a non-threatening manner (during discussions with the local teacher that emerged during the interview), the pair noted that there could be further improvements. Not all teachers in the school felt able to participate in the extra activities or initiatives organised by the two teachers (an apparent 'gender-divide' was noted) and time constraints were also mentioned, as timetabling may be such that peer observation or collaboration might be difficult to achieve and maintain. This particular school benefited more than most in that the cooperating teacher initiative appeared to have clear buy-in from the school principal and other senior management. Another CfBT teacher from a different school reported a divergent perspective. He revealed that while a cooperating teacher had been assigned in the past, he had not worked with them for over a year. It was felt that there was some 'reluctance' towards the initiative due to the heavy effort involved adding that 'if you do the job professionally and seriously it is a workload'. This teacher also expressed notions of a slight 'me and them' dynamic and admitted to not conversing much with local teachers at the school on a more social level. However, he added: 'All the teachers help me when I need it. They know I don't speak Malay and they know if I need to be somewhere, they let me know. And likewise, if there are any English issues I help them too.'

More informal influences were also described by members of CfBT management. For instance, current local teachers who as students remember having been taught by a CfBT teacher who then attempt to emulate some of the more enjoyable aspects of classroom practice that they can recall and perhaps recreate.

*'Partly as a result of having good CfBT teachers, and students who've been taught well, and studying to be English teachers, I've had two of my students become teachers. The first [time] I really loved school was when I had your lessons. And I wanted to give that...' It's a small enough country that it can permeate. There are many Bruneian English teachers who are absolutely world-class. It makes me feel very proud that we've had that sort of influence.'*

Overall, the notion of developing a sense of self-awareness and collaborative culture were discussed.

*'There's always the sense that you're showing off if you're doing it right. You've got to be very careful of that. You've got to bring people with you rather than demonstrating too much.'*

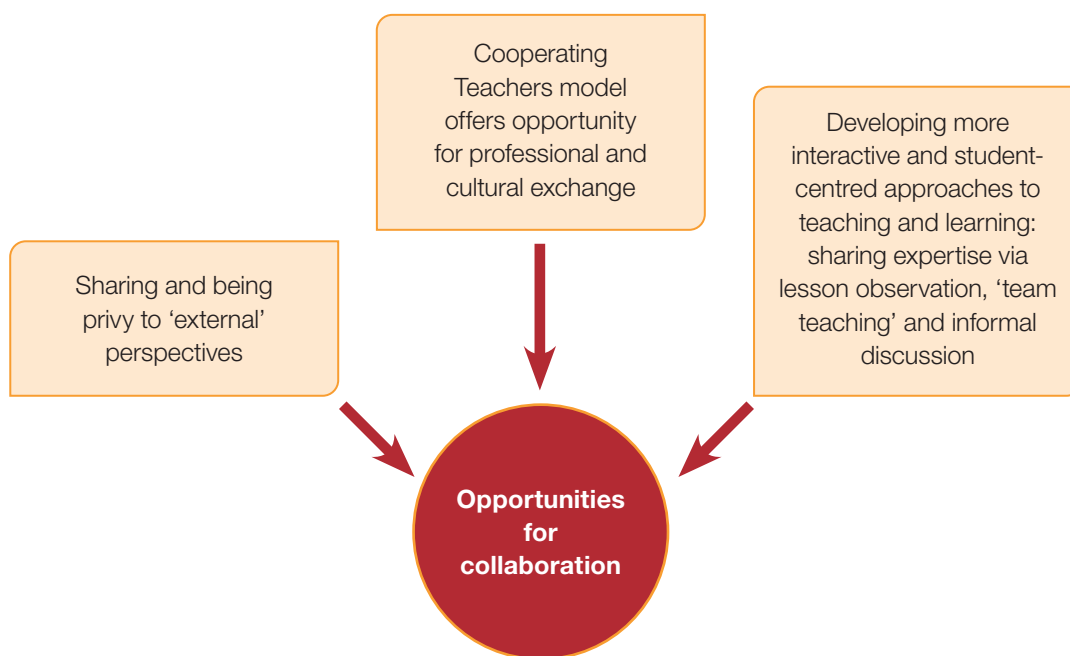
There seemed to be a fine line implied, a skill or even an 'art' to knowing when demonstrating a particular concept might be appropriate and when it might be more acceptable to hold back and work more collaboratively with others. A different perspective was also offered; that CfBT teachers' expatriate status could sometimes even facilitate the in-group dynamic and group cohesion. One CfBT teacher admitted to usually being the one put forward by others in the school to express views or opinions to officials or senior management that may be slightly controversial or that present new ways of doing things. Being candid and going slightly 'against the grain' was described as expected and perhaps acceptable behaviour of a foreign teacher in some cases. Nonetheless, the CfBT teacher in question noted the importance of being very careful about how opinions are voiced, even if it is seen as 'expected behaviour':

*'We can lose our contract so I'm not going to stand up there and [criticise] them. But I will tell them there is a problem... When it's all said and done we're here to work within the system, not to change it. We do change it though, slowly, chip away. We do make changes, often through "modelling".'*

Classroom observation could be viewed as a sensitive issue among some local teachers but the reverse was also observed. A number of local teachers were featured in DVDs produced by CfBT on effective practice (for example, 'Magic Moments' and the use of School-Based Assessment for Learning (or SBAfL)). Heads of department in schools were said to observe both local and CfBT teachers, and local teachers sometimes observed CfBT teachers' lessons. The DPS expressed the importance of good practice being shared across departments and that heads of department (HoDs) had an important role to play to ensure that this took place effectively. He also noted that there should be more training available for HoDs in this area.

CfBT 'sharing sessions' were also seen to bring teachers closer together as a group. Sharing of expertise in SBAfL, IGCSE and SCOPE was mentioned. However, timetable constraints did not always allow for professional development, particularly if there were issues around arranging suitable cover for local teachers.

**Figure 40:** Opportunities for professional collaboration available in the CfBT Brunei cross-cultural context



The notion of teachers, the MoE and CfBT having different definitions of 'professional development' was also raised. One CfBT teacher indicated that some of the training provided at local level could be perceived as 'knee-jerk' and not necessarily always followed up with initiatives that may have been planned and publicised during training sessions. Some MoE-based workshops were described as more 'lecture' or 'trainer'-centred in contrast to the more participant-centred CfBT training sessions



cited by several teacher interviewees (both local and CfBT). Overall, however, workshops were seen to be useful and packed with significant amounts of detail but in the case of MoE-based training, sometimes within too short a space of time. Follow-up sessions in-school (sometimes organised in collaboration with CfBT teachers) were recommended as a means to help teachers absorb and recognise particular concepts and strategies at a more practical level, and slightly slower pace.

### Key idea

The McKinsey report into significantly improved education systems found that:

*'[S]ystems undergoing the poor to fair journey cascade standardized literacy and numeracy training programs that focus on supporting teachers in learning the prescribed content and pedagogy, whereas systems undergoing the great to excellent journey seek to provide a greater number of professional development hours, but allow teachers flexibility in selecting the topics that are most relevant to their own development needs.'*<sup>158</sup>

Singapore was offered as an example where teachers are required to participate in a certain number of hours of training every year but are given a choice as to which training courses to attend, based on their individual needs and interests. Certainly with the proposed increase of more student-centred approaches in classroom learning, the idea of implementing a more teacher-centred approach to professional development may act as a natural progression in the Bruneian context, towards a more high-performing education system. Allowing teachers more freedom to select training modules to suit their own professional development needs was also cited by other recent research into teacher development initiatives. Seven features of professional development have been found to make the most difference to teachers; those that:<sup>159</sup>

1. are concrete and classroom-based
2. use external expertise
3. incorporate teacher participation in the choice of areas to develop and activities in which to take part
4. enable collaborative working with peers
5. involve opportunities for mentoring and coaching
6. are sustained over time
7. are reinforced and supported by effective leadership.

However, in relation to their analysis of education systems, researchers at McKinsey also stated that approaches based on 'mandating' and 'choice' both have their benefits and drawbacks:

*'Mandating enables fast action and fidelity of practice across the system, but risks stakeholder resistance. Persuasion allows stakeholders to gradually get used to the particular change and to feel real ownership over their decision, but risks complacency and the slowing of reform momentum.'*<sup>160</sup>

<sup>158</sup> Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber (2010) p. 64

<sup>159</sup> Walter and Briggs (2012)

<sup>160</sup> Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber, *op. cit.*, p. 71



Applying a similar analogy to teacher professional development, any change in the Brunei system needs to build in an appropriate balance of ‘top-down’ direction and some elements of teacher choice so as to optimise the performance of the education system and teachers’ learning experiences while keeping and promoting the current focus on improving teaching and learning experiences and outcomes for students.

### 2.5.3 Perceptions of the teaching profession in Brunei

Generally, the teaching profession was seen as ‘well-regarded’ by society but on a different level to doctors and civil service roles. Generally there are more female teachers than male. Proportions of female teachers at different levels are shown in Figure 42, Figure 43 and Figure 44. The status of teaching was perceived to be higher a decade ago, as the current length of time spent ‘waiting for a job’ might make the profession less appealing. For some, teaching may be a ‘last choice profession’, but this might depend on the geographical area. In more rural locations, teachers may be seen as ‘more educated and so should be respected’. Parents in remote areas tend to speak to teachers in a more ‘humble’ manner, calling them ‘cikgu’ (teacher) in conversation. There was also some discussion on the new MTeach requirement to qualify as a teacher which was perceived by some to cause potential capacity issues in the long term. Background to these changes is provided below:

The Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Institute of Education (SHBIE) is one of the faculties of the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) responsible for teacher training in government schools:

*‘Prior to August 2009 SHBIE prepared teachers for various undergraduate teaching qualifications (certificate in education, diploma in education, postgraduate certificate in education [PGCE], and bachelor’s degree in education [BEd], as well as postgraduate level credentials (master of education [MEd] and doctor of philosophy in education [PhD])). In the middle of 2008, the government of Brunei Darussalam, through the MoE, introduced a new policy in teacher education that required SHBIE to train teachers at only the postgraduate levels such as master of teaching (MTeach), MEd, and PhD.’<sup>161</sup>*

Indeed, a report in 2009 to the Bruneian government reviewing teacher education in the country recommended that:

*‘Given the potential impact of the move to graduate-only entry into teaching on teacher supply, we would strongly recommend that the University reviews the time scale of its proposed changes. Those changes should be phased, with the undergraduate programme remaining until such time as the school system can produce sufficient 18 year olds with the appropriate ‘A’ level grades to enter the University’s other faculties on an equal footing with other undergraduate students. This is likely to take 7–8 years, if the current school reforms are successful.’<sup>162</sup>*

There was, however, a counter-argument expressed by some interviewees that capacity can be used in different ways; focusing teachers on particular areas may be a better solution and ‘more does not necessarily mean better’. There was an acknowledgement of the shortage of English and English-medium subject teachers by some members of school senior management. When asked what they might change about current policy, a frequent view referred to having more autonomy in the recruitment of staff, including access to more CfBT teachers. The MoE on the other hand seemed less inclined towards giving more autonomy to principals to ‘hire and fire staff’, particularly teachers that are seen as weak. The importance of the MoE and government’s social role in ensuring employment and providing economic security was stressed; and also that the quality of teaching

<sup>161</sup> Mundia (2012) p. 326

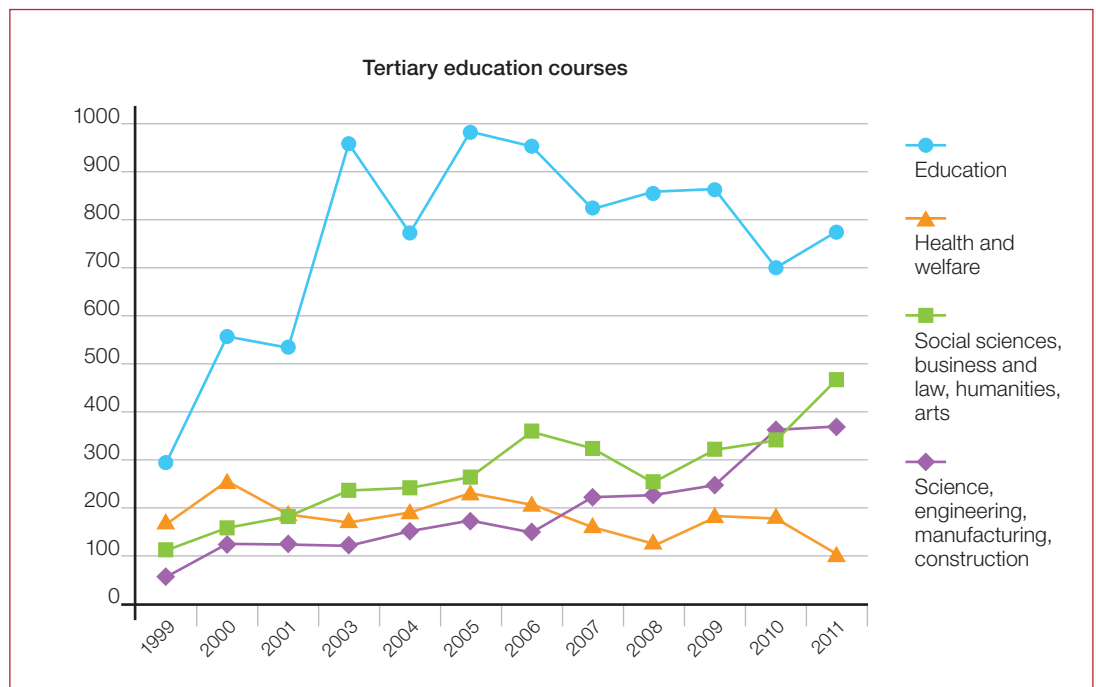
<sup>162</sup> Furlong et al. (2009) p. 4



can usually be improved by appraisal and professional development, including working and learning with CfBT staff. The aim is to focus more initial investment on teacher training costs (and professional development) in order to avoid the later social costs of unemployment. Developing teachers and enhancing capacity were seen as important objectives of the system and CfBT was seen to play an increasingly valued role in this endeavour.

The DPS conveyed an interest in the role of school leadership development for principals, school improvement models and the work of the National College for School Leadership<sup>163</sup> in the UK. He stressed the importance of school leadership in Brunei in order to motivate staff and retain their commitment to teaching. 'Business' models of leadership were seen as inappropriate in education, as schools 'have the task of shaping young minds and civic outcomes, social, moral as well as academic'. School principals needed to be sensitive and be able to support and encourage staff in supporting students. 'Principals have an important part to play in shaping school culture; management is a distinct set of skills.' Teachers need to be empowered but not at the expense of lowering standards.

**Figure 41:** Number of graduates in Brunei in main types of tertiary education courses 1999–2011 (Source: World Bank)

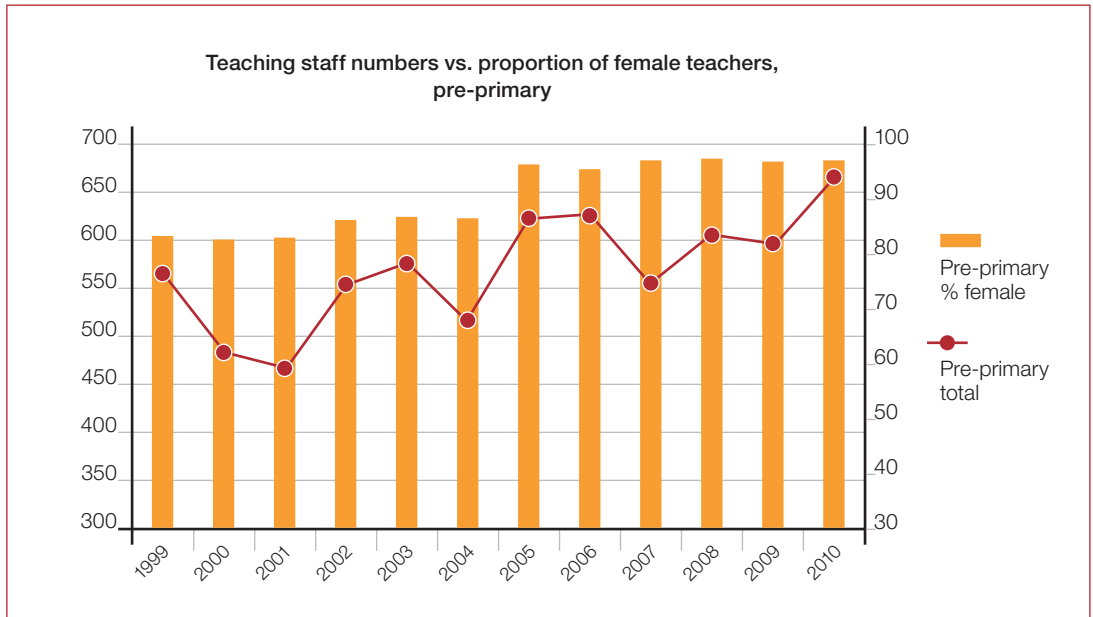


<sup>163</sup> On 1 April 2013, the NCSL merged with the Teaching Agency to form the National College for Teaching and Leadership.

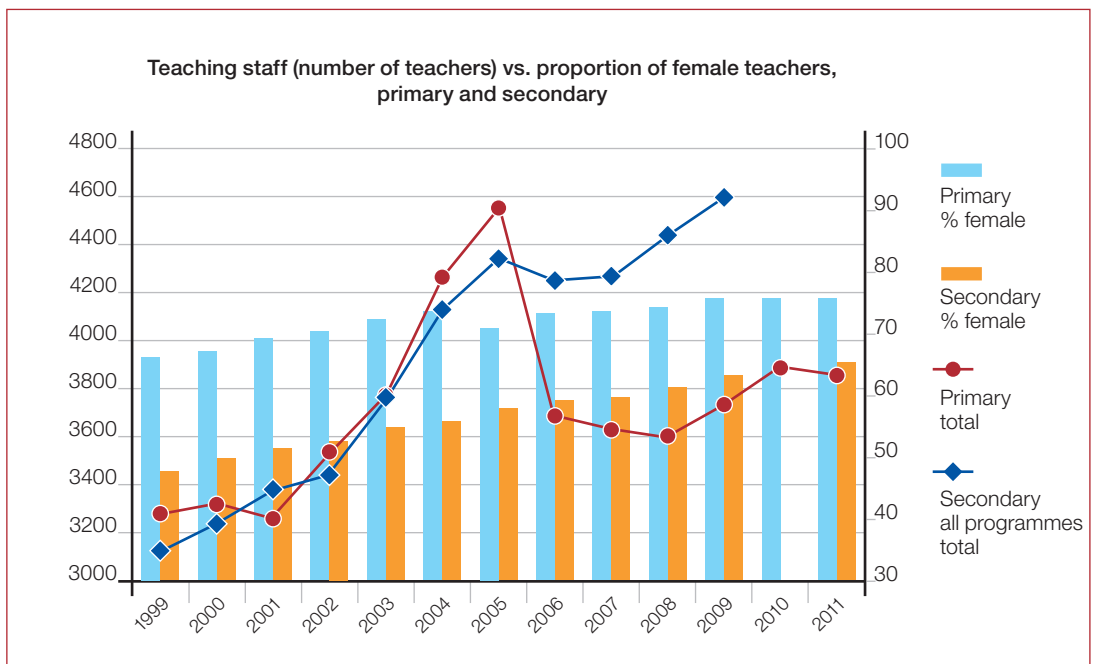




**Figure 42:** Number of pre-primary teachers vs. proportion that are female 1999–2010  
 (Source: World Bank)

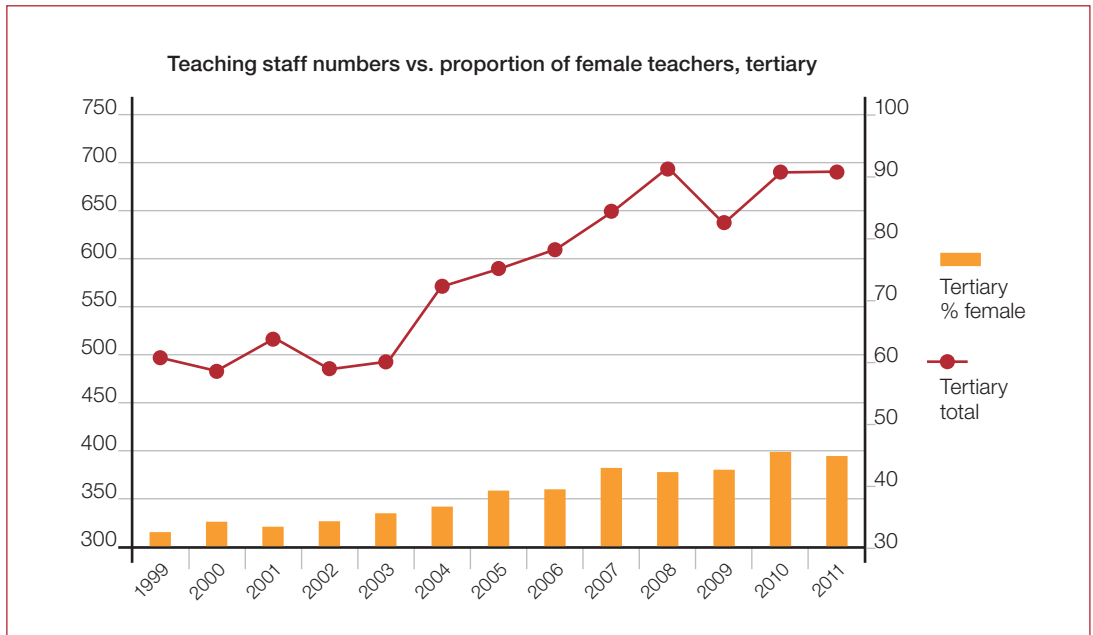


**Figure 43:** Number of primary and secondary teachers vs. proportion of female teachers respectively 1999–2011 (Source: World Bank)

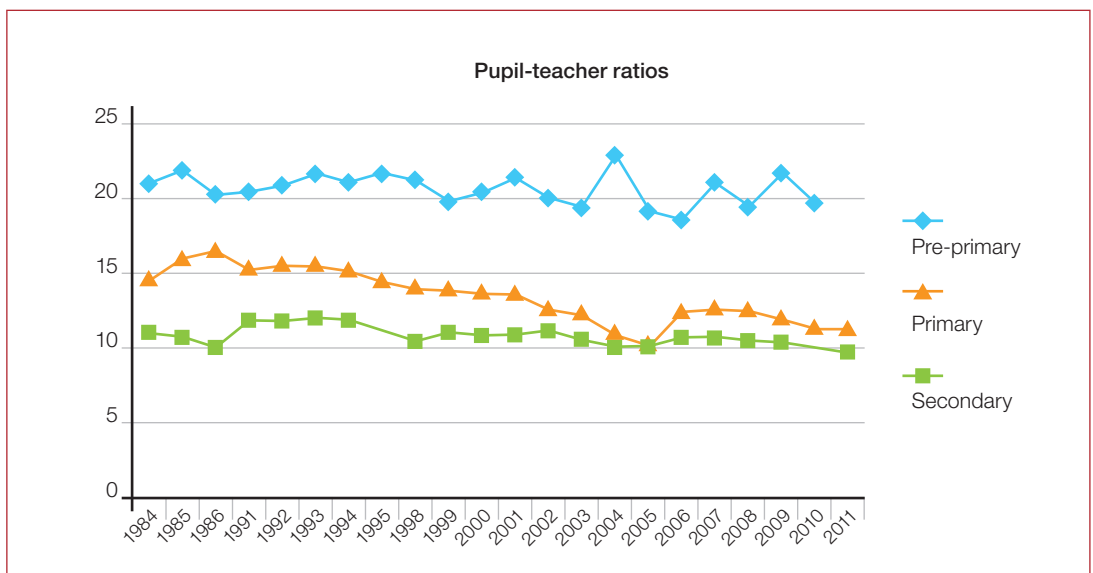




**Figure 44:** Number of tertiary education teaching staff vs. proportion that are female 1999–2011 (Source: World Bank)

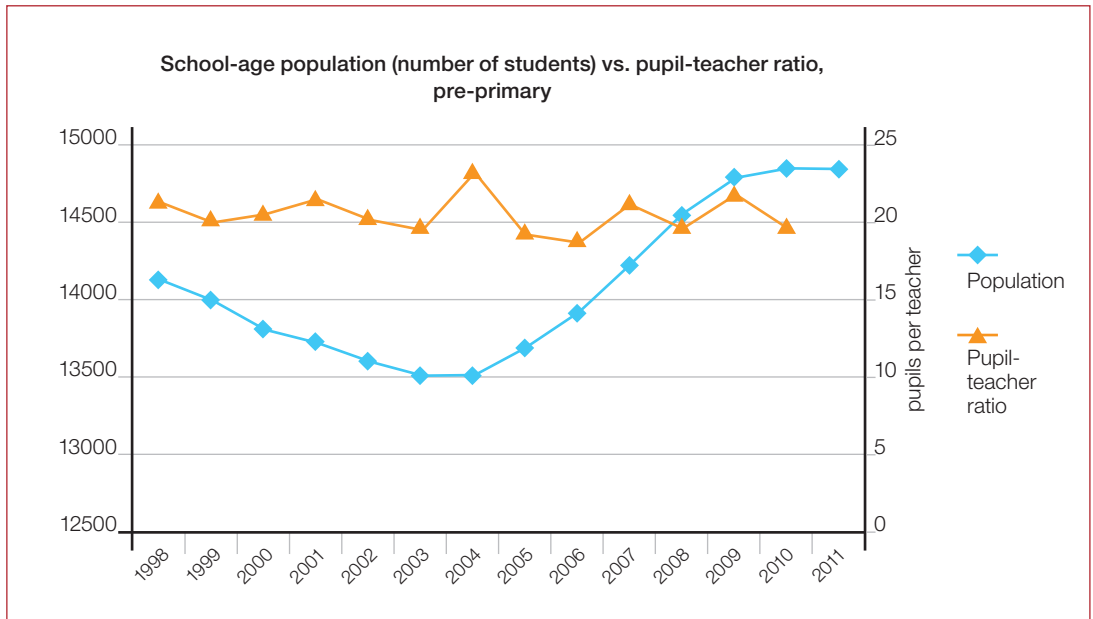


**Figure 45:** Change in pupil-teacher ratio at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels since independence 1984–2011 (Source: World Bank)

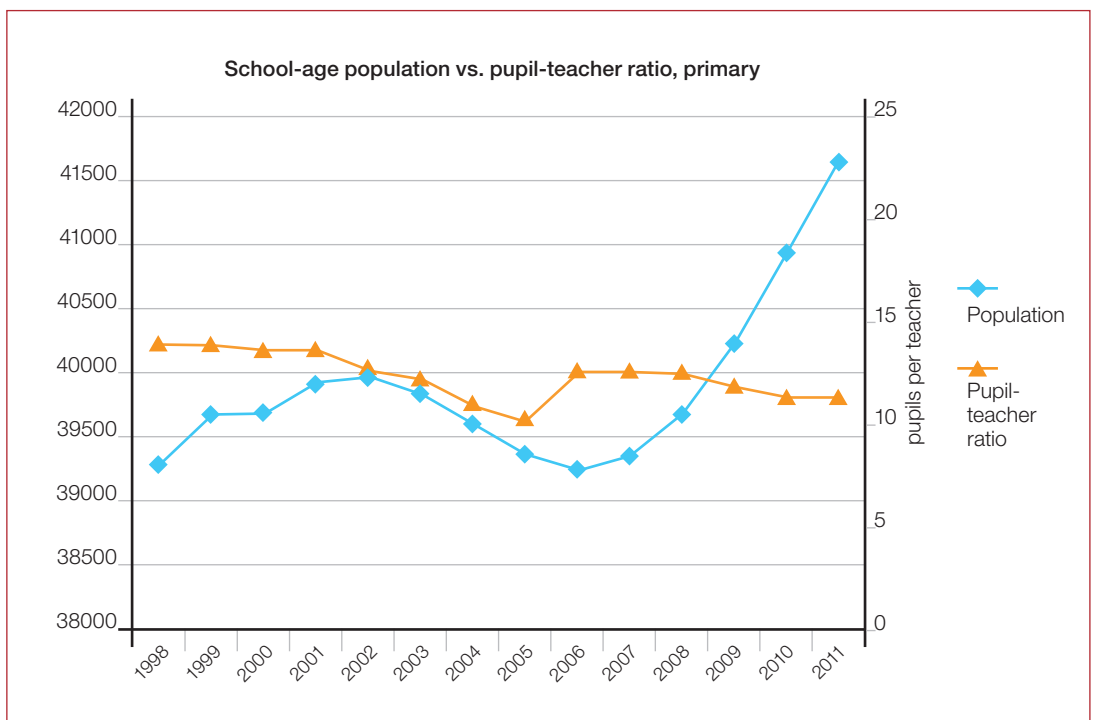




**Figure 46:** Maintenance of pupil-teacher ratio (right-hand axis) compared with change in school-age population at pre-primary level 1998–2011

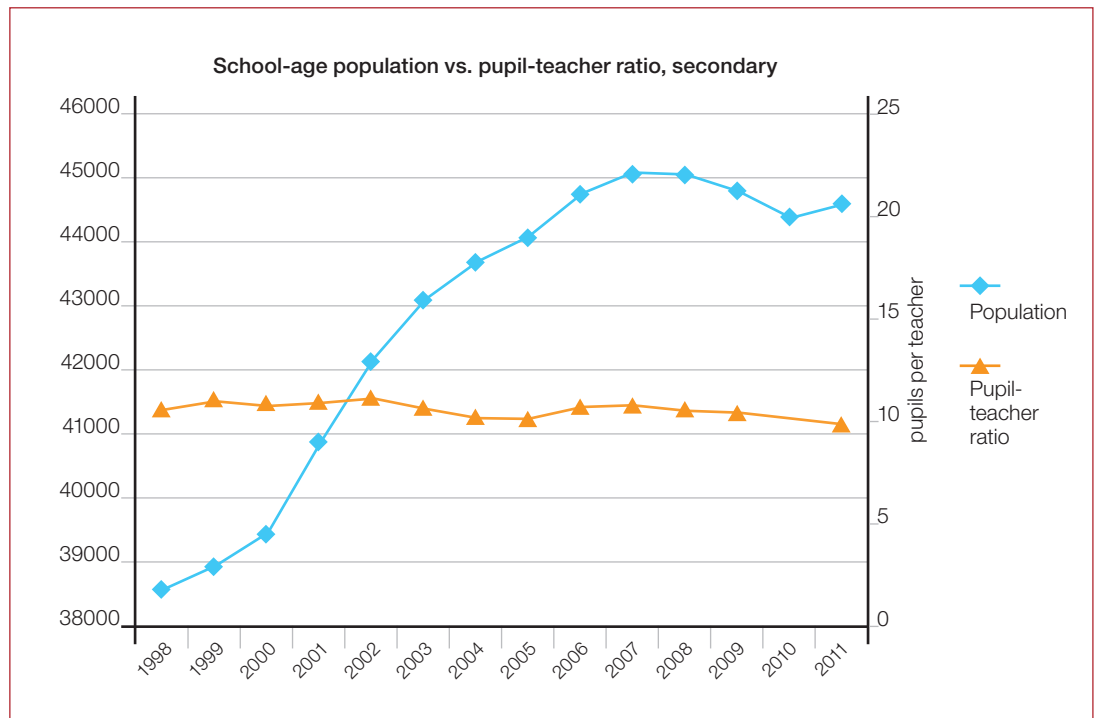


**Figure 47:** Maintenance of pupil-teacher ratio (right-hand axis) compared with change in school-age population at primary level 1998–2011





**Figure 48:** Maintenance of pupil-teacher ratio (right-hand axis) compared with change in school-age population at secondary level 1998–2011



These figures indicate that despite reported teacher shortages, the system shows a maintenance, to some degree, of pupil-to-teacher ratios particularly at secondary level, where the school-age population is rising.

#### 2.5.4 Perceived features of CfBT teachers

This section of interview questions elicited an interesting mix of responses from research participants. Questions were asked of educational practitioners, both local and CfBT, along the lines of:

*'If you were to compare CfBT teachers to non-CfBT teachers of English in your school, in what ways do you think they are rather similar and in what ways rather different?'*

Principals and deputy principals seemed, on the whole, more direct in delineating perceived differences between the local and CfBT teachers they had come into contact with or observed at their schools. Distinct approaches to teaching, relationships and interactions with students and how active certain teachers appeared in school activities and responsibilities outside school hours were some of the main features cited. Heads of department and teachers however, usually began by saying that there was no difference. For example:

*'Once you are in the school, you become an "English teacher". There is no difference between local and CfBT teachers; we are all part of the English department.'*



Rather contradictorily, one local teacher followed the above statement with:

*'Students speak English with CfBT teachers which is a good thing. [...] CfBT sharing sessions are very useful and have brought teachers in school closer. [...] CfBT teachers are very patient with English medium teachers. [...] CfBT teachers are very positive about observations and invite others to observe. The school is generally positive about observation. More so since CfBT workshops. [...] Students tend to behave better when there is an observer in the room. CfBT teachers help to improve education in Brunei. We need them, we want them.'*

'Professionalism' (as it was termed) was also mentioned, and the observed difference in consequences if local teachers and CfBT teachers did not 'perform to standards'. These types of statements appeared to corroborate those expressed by the DPS around the government's social role in ensuring the economic security of its employees.

Even among the mixed and somewhat paradoxical set of statements amassed during interviews and observations, some salient features of CfBT teachers (as perceived by their colleagues) emerged:

1. Enhancing the quality of English language teaching:

The DPS commented that there has been much success in this area. CfBT teachers were also associated with the use of more interactive approaches to teaching and applying more differentiation in the classroom. More active and interactive approaches were seen to build students' confidence; relationships with students were seen to be different to those between local teachers and students. For example, some CfBT teachers were perceived to pay more attention to classroom practice and less to students' homework, whereas local teachers may be stricter about getting students to complete homework assignments.

2. Taking initiative:

While most CfBT teachers were seen to go over and above their 'day role', get involved in extra-curricular activities and lead new projects (such as special interest groups), there was also a view that some teachers could participate more in afternoon work. The DPS also suggested that CfBT teachers could be more immersed in the cultural life of the schools in some cases. Some teachers in the earlier years of the CfBT Brunei partnership were seen to express more cynicism about new initiatives. Part of the reason may have been that they were not able to see where their contributions led. Historically, the school environment may have been perceived as more 'restrictive' and less conducive to share ideas or hold workshops outside of school hours, which is generally quite different to the situation in schools now.

3. Both formal and informal sources of knowledge and expertise

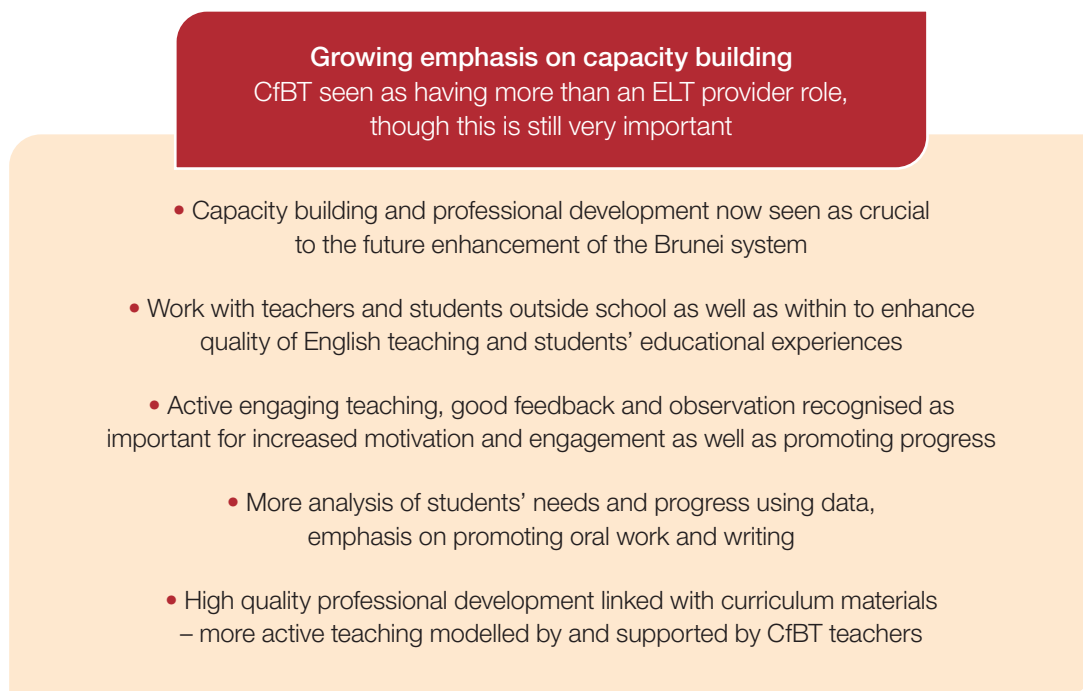
4. Providing opportunities for students to converse in English, raise aspirations, expectations and motivation

5. Able to source, create and share materials

6. Bringing an outside perspective that principals can put to use in schools; sometimes bringing perspectives other than from native countries.

There were mixed opinions on the perceived differences and similarities between CfBT and local teachers.

**Figure 49:** Summary of capacity building initiatives in Brunei



*'They [sic] are a first language speaker and a role model for the children as well as for us. And then we like to see different approaches, different from us, from locals. We have somebody who can bring different approaches, different strategies and different way of teaching.'*

## 2.6 Building the infrastructure: potential for school- and system-wide improvement

Here we bring together the five themes discussed earlier and consider some of the features of the Brunei-CfBT partnership that may lend themselves well to the propagation of school- and system-wide improvement.

**Figure 50:** Key features of Brunei's education infrastructure and its potential for system-wide improvement

Ownership	Widening perspective	Continuity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application of strategies across a range of English-medium subjects via CLIL project; local teachers taking ownership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview stance in relation to data collection and use, particularly in English attainment at a national level</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability of relationship between MoE and CfBT; supporting Brunei's efforts towards <i>Wawasan 2035</i></li> </ul>



So what do we mean by school improvement? The aspect we wish to emphasise here is the idea of ‘collective endeavour’, one that enables the significant enhancement of the quality of teaching and learning and improves student outcomes. Analogous to the more student-focused SCOPE, running in parallel with the teacher-focused SPELT, the counterpart to improvement in classroom practice would be the ‘professional learning community’ in which both teachers and students learn and move forward together. Hence, school improvement can be defined as:

*‘a distinct approach to educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school’s capacity for managing change.’<sup>164</sup>*

Improvement-type processes are often kick-started after a ‘significant event’, such as an evaluation, inspection or observation of a school or system and its particular functions and ways of working.<sup>165</sup> If we study the timeline of the MoE-CfBT partnership, the 2005–2006 period when CfBT was presented by the MoE with a challenge and associated targets to meet can be viewed as such an event. It certainly sparked a number of different initiatives aimed to support improvement, including:

- the commissioning of external expertise in the form of John Stannard
- the application of principles and strategies from educational reform initiatives elsewhere, including the National Literacy Strategies programme and the development of the Common Framework
- the strategic use of data to diagnose problems and implement appropriate interventions
- putting together a ‘targeted package of activities’ for both students and teachers including SCOPE and SPELT
- the clarity of the ‘message’ or aim of these programmes and a ‘singularity of focus’ that was seen to take place through the multiple channels and stakeholders of the system (the MoE and its different departments, students, local and CfBT teachers along with school and CfBT management).

This could be seen in terms of the popular analogy of school improvement as a path of progress and growth,<sup>166</sup> sometimes illustrated using ‘horticultural’ terminology:<sup>167</sup>

- the ‘sowing’ of ideas in an environment or culture that enables such endeavours
- the ‘germinating’ or careful cultivation of these ideas
- the ‘thinning’ to select the most promising projects
- the ‘pruning’ process where knowledge is shaped and validated
- and finally the propagation, dissemination and exchange of knowledge, after which the growth process may continue into a different series of processes and initiatives.

Bringing these elements together, we can see some corresponding features:

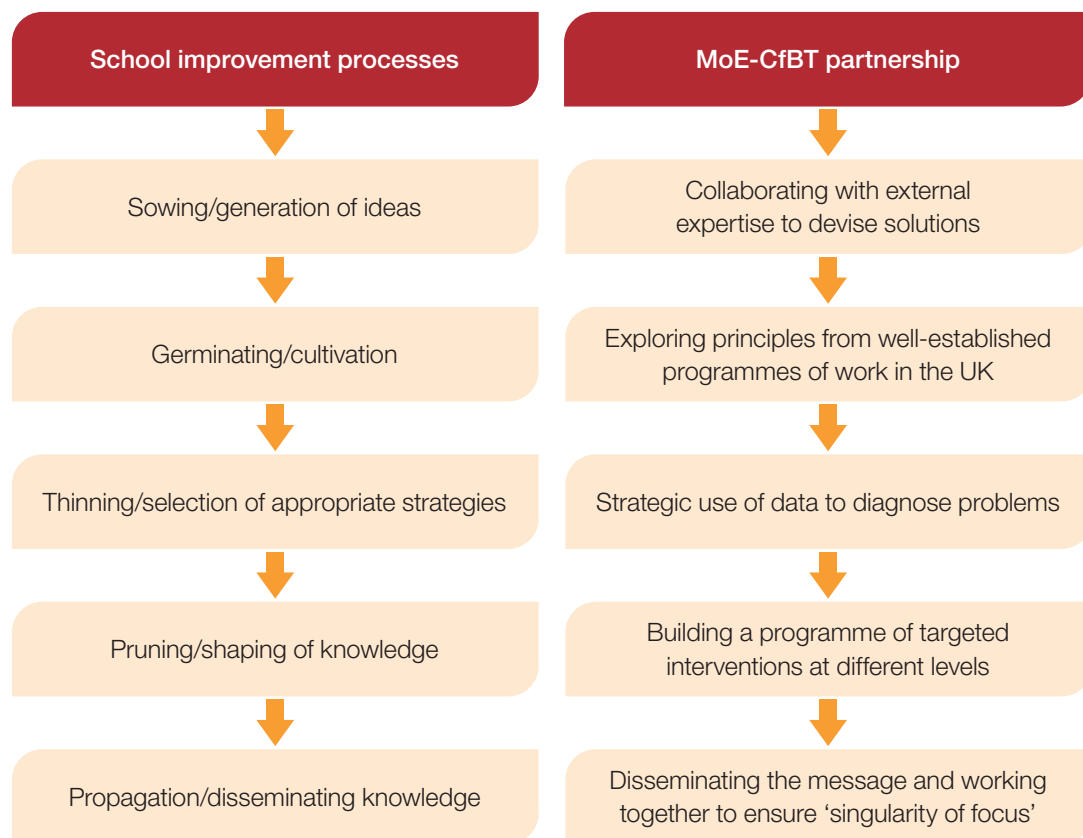
<sup>164</sup> Hopkins (1998) p. 2-3

<sup>165</sup> Harris, Jamieson and Russ (1996)

<sup>166</sup> Mortimore and MacBeath (2003)

<sup>167</sup> Hargreaves (1998)

**Figure 51:** Synergy between school improvement processes and the MoE-CfBT partnership in raising English attainment



School improvement can be seen as a series of overlapping processes and phases<sup>168</sup> that can be interpreted in different ways, although certain basic aspects are generally covered.

Figure 52, following, shows some key principles for a holistic focus on school improvement. However, we need to add to this focus – on a relatively small number of clear goals and priorities – a strong and consistent focus on fostering better outcomes for students, the use of data and review or evaluation of success as a feedback loop.

<sup>168</sup> Chapman and Sammons (2013)



**Figure 52:** Strategies in a holistic approach<sup>169</sup> to school improvement



The CfBT-MoE partnership in Brunei can be seen to have followed similar principles, including the strong focus on improving student outcomes and use of data, review and evaluation as a feedback loop in capacity building to promote improvement:

- clear goals aligned with MoE targets for raising student attainment
- the planning and collaborative implementation of a series of evidence-informed, targeted programmes building on educational reform experience in England and adapted to local Brunei context from 2005/2006 onwards including SCOPE, SPELT, EPPS and more recent initiatives such as Magic Moments,<sup>170</sup> QuLTs and the *Tropical English Teacher* journal<sup>171</sup> and fellowship programme
- the collection and strategic use of data and the application of evidence-based approaches based on a Common Framework; developing more sophisticated methods of investigating exam performance and rubrics; working together to introduce the more context-appropriate IGCSE ESL exam and improve the contextualisation of the O Level English exam
- setting directions and putting in place system redesign; developing a common understanding at school, CfBT and ministry levels on the purpose and aims of each initiative, and disseminating results and outcomes; involving teachers in the planning and implementation of key initiatives, including the use of Special Interest Groups

<sup>169</sup> Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994)

<sup>170</sup> A collection of examples of engaging classroom practice that seeks to support students' written and spoken English skills, presented as a DVD and accompanying guide.

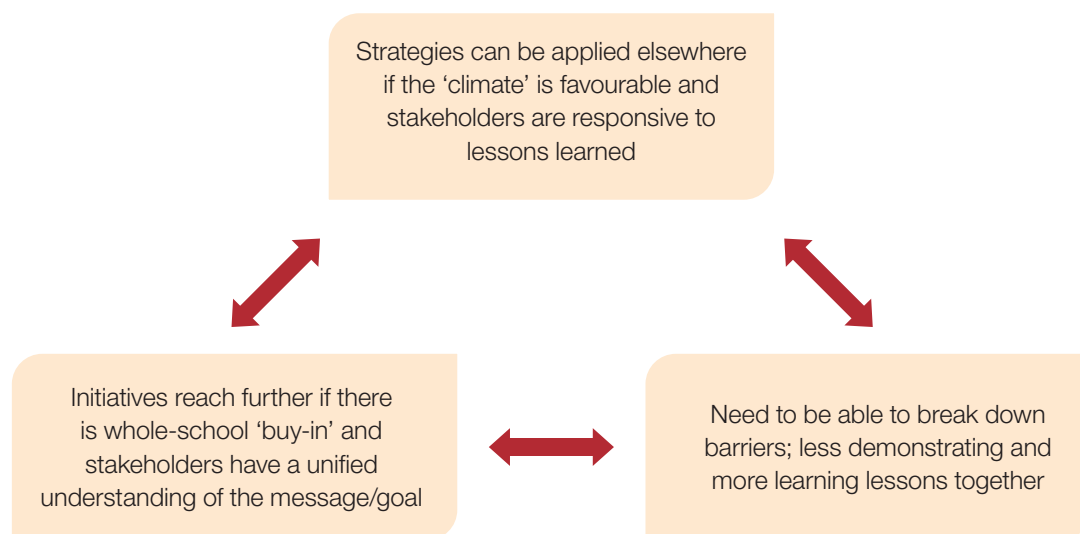
<sup>171</sup> A refereed publication sponsored by CfBT which includes journal-type pieces and articles supporting the exchange of ideas among educational professionals in Brunei.

- committing to the professional development of both local and CfBT teachers via in-house training, workshops and opportunities to study for higher qualifications in external courses
- coordination of the partnership from both MoE and CfBT ends; maintaining a give-and-take type of relationship, the MoE for example loosening past perceived restrictions on the organisation of extra activities outside school hours and CfBT teachers taking the initiative in conducting workshops with teachers and exam clinics with students.

CfBT Brunei's Chief Executive during the pre- and post-SCOPE era change, Mike Gibbs, remarked in 2007:

*'Only when attention, imagination and resources are focused on achieving specific goals, is it possible to plan projects, design interventions, track progress, and disseminate effective practice. CfBT is promoting a common framework for teaching and learning – based on evidence and observation of effective classroom practice.'*<sup>172</sup>

**Figure 53:** Summary of processes described by interviewees as influencing system-wide improvement in the Bruneian context (and beyond)



Some of the initiatives put in place can also be seen as beginning to approach improvement at a wider systemic level. CfBT's relationship with the MoE, for example, has been described as having shifted from one of 'capacity provision' to collaborative 'capacity building'. Both local and CfBT educational practitioners are seen as being able to acquire knowledge, collaborate and inform key decisions on school improvement processes. The notion of 'communities of practice' emerges here, along with, crucially, the development of 'learning communities'.

<sup>172</sup> CfBT Brunei (Autumn 2007) p. 7



*'The metaphor of the learning community encapsulates the importance of fostering and harnessing the learning of all individuals: parents, students, governors and teachers... While it is possible for schools to improve themselves, it is also important to recognise that building the capacity for learning is enhanced through external support and drive.'*<sup>173</sup>

In 2010, CfBT Brunei management systems were reportedly 'upgraded': the original overall managerial role was split into two roles, those of Country Manager and Education Director. The former was seen to be based more around the 'business' and strategic side while the latter required more in the way of specific knowledge and experience in education management. Dr Greg Keaney, who was appointed Education Director in 2010 (with James Douglas as Country Manager) then moved into the Country Manager role after James Douglas' move to become Director of CfBT Asia. Greg Keaney had been a teacher for a number of years in Brunei, and other parts of Asia. He also became a 'Lead Teacher' and worked on several key projects with CfBT Brunei (such as SCOPE and writing materials) prior to his appointment to his current role of Country Manager. His doctorate was also based around international education management. The reconfiguration of managerial roles at CfBT Brunei to include a position that is underpinned more by expertise in 'educational leadership' has been viewed as a step in a favourable direction. Certainly, literature in the area of education management suggests that the study of (school) leadership in England is sometimes reduced to a particular branch of Education Management Studies (EMS):

*'Education-as-a-commodity requires to be 'packaged', 'delivered', and 'marketed' as efficiently as possible and Education Management Studies has risen to a position of potential dominance in order to facilitate these developments.'*<sup>174</sup>

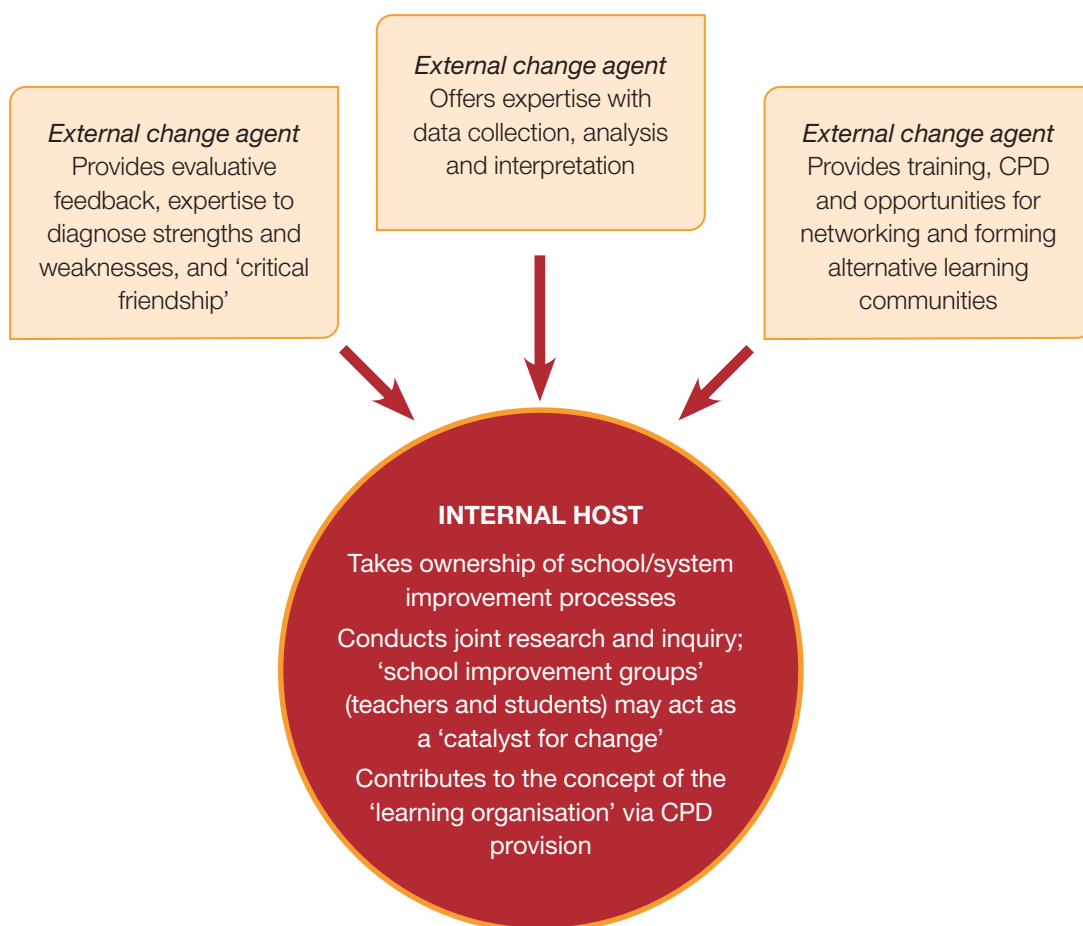
Hence the shift in 2010 at CfBT Brunei from what was perceived to be a more management-focused role to one of 'educational leadership' can be viewed as positive and potentially contributing to the system-wide building of infrastructure discussed here.

Next we explore the dynamic that may emerge from the different types of support contributed by the internal and external sides of a partnership such as CfBT in Brunei.

<sup>173</sup> Harris (2002) p. 57

<sup>174</sup> Grace (1995) p. 5

**Figure 54:** The potential dynamic of support provided by an 'external change agent' and internal 'host' relationship



Explicating this interplay of external and internal forces further, we now turn to the concept of 'educational change' and the conditions that have been found to facilitate a more 'holistic and systemic' view of educational improvement. For example, the International School Improvement Project (ISIP), funded by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), proposed the following:<sup>175</sup>

- the school is at the centre of change: external support and interventions ideally consider individual school and classroom contexts without recourse to a 'one-size-fits-all' approach
- a systemic model for change: strategic planning, coordination and taking a longer-term view are key aspects of any proposed change
- 'internal conditions' of schools are also extremely important: leadership, teaching and learning and even school rules and procedures

<sup>175</sup> Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994)



- adopting a 'multi-layered' perspective: schools are embedded within an educational 'ecosystem' where different stakeholders may be able to work collaboratively, including parents, governors, partner organisations and policy makers
- integrative implementation: finding a synergy between 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches
- the drive towards institutionalisation: where change evolves into natural practice and becomes 'second nature' at all levels of the school.

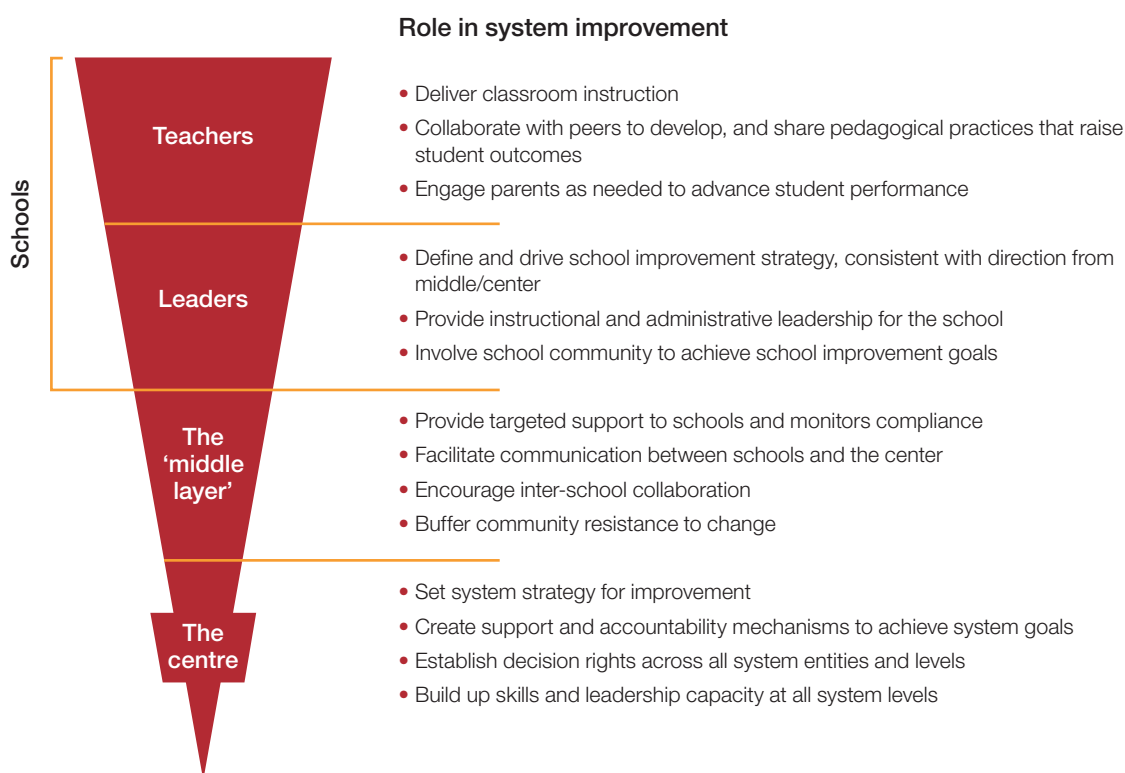
This leads us to consider the CfBT-MoE partnership dynamic and how each side may look to shape the future of the educational system in Brunei, both from an individual and collaborative level. A recent comparative review of education systems that were seen to have made extensive and sustained gains in student outcomes over a ten-year period concluded that:

*'despite their different contexts, all improving school systems appear to adopt a similar set of interventions, one that is appropriate to their stage of the journey. This to not to say that context is not important, but it is secondary to getting the fundamentals right.'*<sup>176</sup>

The review also highlighted what might be interpreted as the 'ideal characteristics and strategies' of the different roles involved in system-based improvement. The four layers are presented in Figure 55, following.

<sup>176</sup> Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber (2010) p. 17

**Figure 55:** System improvement requires integration and coordination across these levels  
(Source: Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber (2010)<sup>177</sup>)



**Exhibit from *How the world's most improved school systems keep getting better*, November 2010, McKinsey & Company, <http://mckinseysociety.com>. Reprinted by permission.**

An interesting finding was reported by the research team who produced the above diagram in a study of the 'most improved school systems' around the world. During the early stages of their research, their initial hypotheses described the importance of the interplay between improvements required at school level (at the top of the diagram) and those at ministry or 'head office' level.

*'Student learning would not progress without improving what happened in classrooms, and whole systems of schools could not improve systematically and sustainably without changes in the support and stewardship provided by the centre.'*<sup>178</sup>

What they had not anticipated during the later phase of their study, however, was what they termed the 'critical role' of the mediating layer and its contribution between the centre and school levels:

*'In terms of our computer analogy, this role is akin to that of the operating system acting as a conduit and interpreter between the user interface and the central processing unit. We found that sustaining system improvement in the longer term requires integration and intermediation across each level of the system, from the classroom to the superintendent or minister's office.'*

<sup>177</sup> Mourshed, Chijioke and Barber (2010) p. 92

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91



In examining Figure 55, one may speculate that the role of CfBT is spread across all four layers in some form:

- in the 'teachers' layer: the provision of classroom instruction
- in the 'leaders' layer: collaborating with the school community (teachers, leaders, students and parents)
- in the 'centre' layer: the building of capacity within CfBT and at local teacher level through training, 'modelling' and collaborative projects.

What is especially interesting is CfBT's perceived role in the 'middle' layer:

- the provision of 'targeted support' (in initiatives such as SCOPE, the supporting and implementation of the EPPS programme and teacher development programmes SPELT and QuILTs)
- the facilitation of communication and acting as a potential 'buffer' between schools and the MoE's different departments in the form of CfBT management, Education Project Leaders and on occasion, CfBT teachers on specific projects. The working at school level with local teachers to implement educational change in projects such as SCOPE including the collection, analysis and distribution of student attainment data, and more recently CLIL in collaboration with English-medium subject teachers (for example the active involvement of local teachers in the production of materials and resources such as Magic Moments)
- the implementation of student attainment initiatives and teacher workshops in school clusters, and therefore the supporting of inter-school collaborative working.

In the case of our study in Brunei, this too is an interesting and not entirely anticipated finding. Certainly, depending on the next phase of CfBT's partnership with the MoE, and its role in supporting the achievement of key educational goals related to Brunei's *Wawasan 2035*, it appears that further exploration of CfBT's contribution to the 'middle' layer of Brunei's education system may prove of strategic value in the country's efforts towards system-wide improvement.

The McKinsey research team went on to say:

*'In several systems where the mediating layer already existed, its role in delivering improvement was strengthened: as was the case, for instance, in the local education authorities in England, the municipalities in Poland, the school boards in Ontario, the districts in the Western Cape, the regional and school-based support services to schools in Hong Kong, and the provincial offices in South Korea. In other systems where there was no such intermediary, such as in Singapore and Boston, a mediating layer (school clusters) was created afresh to meet the need for strengthening coordination and support across schools.'*<sup>179</sup>

As a final point to consider, a number of conclusions have been drawn from studies based on Effective Educational Research:<sup>180</sup>

- Individual schools and teachers can make a significant difference to the development, progress and achievement of students.

<sup>179</sup> Mourshed, Chijjoke and Barber (2010) p. 91

<sup>180</sup> Sammons (2012) p. 24-5

- Effectiveness is best seen as a dynamic, retrospective and relative concept that is time and outcome dependent.
- There can be significant internal variation in school effects, and fine rank-ordered distinctions of individual school performance are inappropriate, though it is worthwhile targeting improvement efforts at schools that are at the trailing edge of the system (where student progress is poor in value-added comparisons).
- Teacher and educational effectiveness research evidence can inform improvement initiatives and guide system reform.
- Teacher/classroom effects are generally larger than those attributable to schools and thus the improvement of teaching quality and classroom climate should remain a strong focus for all improvement initiatives.
- Schools improve most by focusing on the quality of learning and teaching while also addressing their culture and internal conditions.
- Intervention work for school or system improvement needs to be based on appropriate research findings and theoretical models.

An interviewee's comments on the possible future of CfBT in Brunei closes this section:

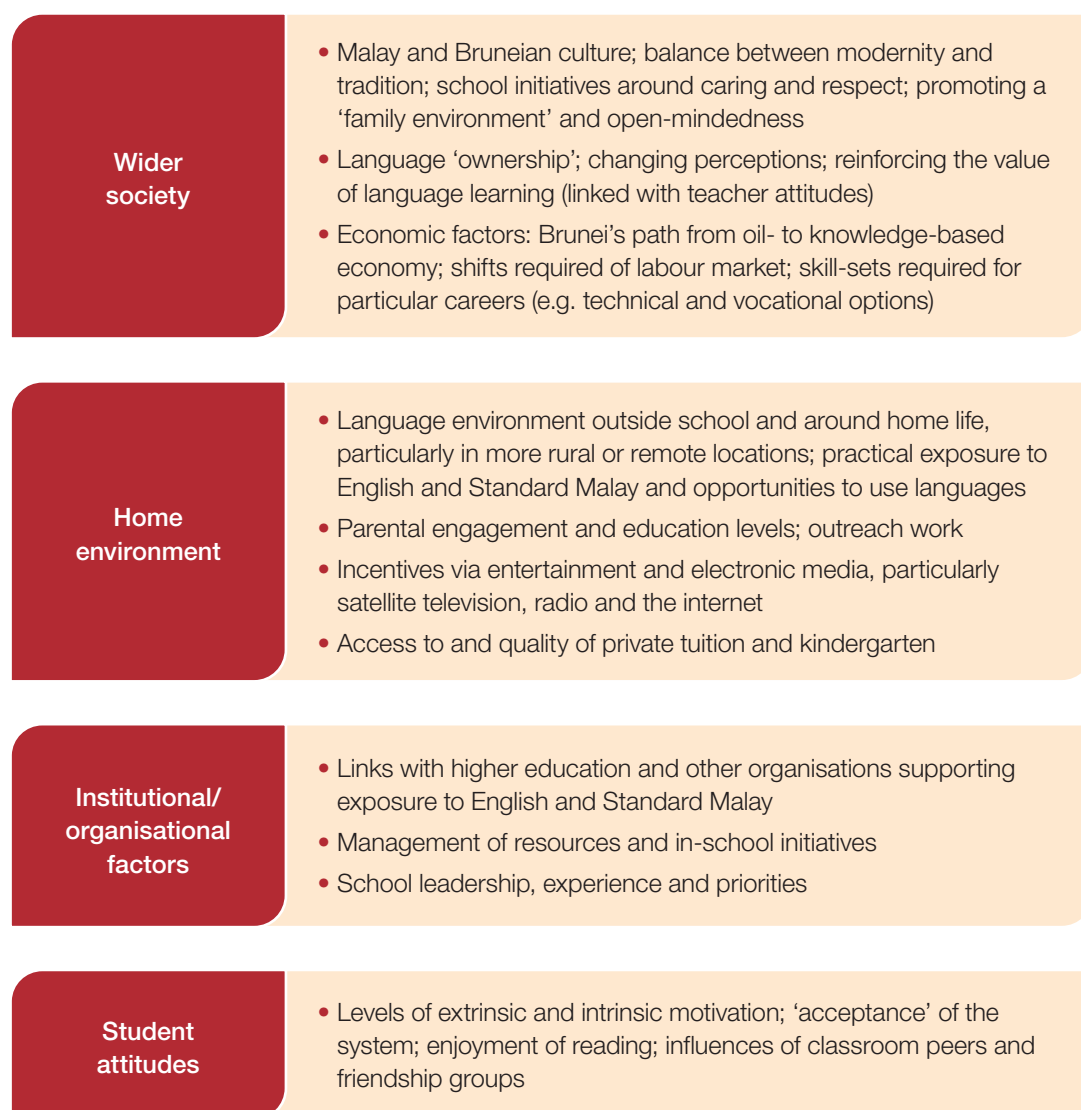
*'The next stage [might] be to pick up the transition year, and the balance between primary 6 and Year 1 in secondary. [...] The idea would be to have a system-level improvement, as SCOPE should have gone down the system, EPPS should have moved up and we should meet in the transition years. [...] If starting from a set-up of a project, as long as you've built in the objectives within the scope of the project, then you've got a much better way of working. If you're starting 'here's a group of teachers, try and do something with them', it's a very difficult group to herd into a formula that's going to make a difference and have a consistent set of policies. The overview of data, the progression we've developed isn't going to apply just to one topic. It would apply to all and we should be taking the time to step back from the project and analyse how that has worked throughout. So you can see this makes a difference at this point, plotting where progression fits with improvement.'*



## 2.7 Other contextual factors that may influence policy implementation

This section discusses the main sub-themes that emerged from our analysis of interviews and documents in the areas of wider environmental and institutional factors that may influence the future of the Bruneian education system and bilingual education policy. While there are some challenges presented, they are also offered as potential opportunities for further or alternative engagement with CfBT. The main areas that emerged from interviews can be categorised as ‘wider society’ (issues around culture, language ‘ownership’ and economic factors), the home environment for students and their learning experiences outside of normal schooling, wider institutional factors and student attitudes (and levels of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation).

**Figure 56:** Summary of other factors that may influence Brunei’s bilingual policy implementation





The following table illustrates the different factors explored in Figure 56 from the perspectives of two groups.

**Table 7:** Wider environmental and institutional factors that may influence education system and CfBT engagement: perspectives from school senior management and those of teachers, subject leaders and heads of department

<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Malay and Bruneian culture and maintaining a balance:</b>            Brunei has been described as an ‘intriguing model of modernity and tradition’. Perceptions of safe and stable, family- centred society, strong focus on Malay Islamic Monarchy. Parents said to aim for a balanced combination of success and stability. Notion of the importance of this balance and achieving a ‘caring society’ emerged quite strongly. School initiatives around caring and respect were noted; principals cited one of their key priorities as promoting a ‘family environment’ and improving equality; open-mindedness; becoming world-savvy and hopefully less prone to ‘extremism’.</p>
<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Language environment in and around home in more rural/remote areas:</b>            Some students have less exposure to Malay, let alone English. Students may watch some English television but have few opportunities to use the language. Communication at shops, with friends and with family may be in other native languages, including indigenous languages and dialects which are more spoken than written.            Most students are seen to speak English in the ‘better schools’, even in their free time.  <i>‘Different schools have different problems’:</i> view that teachers are responsible for ensuring students’ exposure to English via school activities in order to address the lack of opportunities for students to speak English.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Practical exposure:</b>            Ideally there would be a programme that allowed students to visit different locations where they needed to use English and experience other cultures. Students who attend school every day only have 200 hours of English a year, which if in isolation, may not make ‘huge inroads’.</p>



<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Parental involvement:</b>                  Some schools have ‘outreach programmes’, e.g. ‘how to teach mathematics’, ICT skills, asking parents to monitor children’s work (although parents who are less educated may be less able to participate). Attendance from parents perceived to be low (in some schools).                  MoE has an aim for every school to have a parent outreach programme. School tries to increase parental participation via annual information letters, parent-teacher meetings (but attendance is perceived to be less than 50 per cent, mostly attended by parents of students who do well), and language classes for parents.                  ‘Extremes’ observed; some parents heavily involved, others say that school is the teachers’ sole responsibility and ‘territory’.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Collaborative efforts:</b>                  CfBT and local cooperating teacher dyad teaching phonics to parents, highlighting where Malay phonics differ from English; persistence even though parents reluctant and ‘think it’s impossible’. Teachers also provide bespoke cards for parents to learn English vocabulary in order for them to support their children and provide encouragement.                  Schools have parents’ meetings but less educated parents may not attend; teachers instead ask for support from elder siblings to advise, talk to and read with their younger siblings.  <i>There may be an opportunity here for CfBT and local teachers to work together, in the provision of outreach work with parents and families.</i>                  One school has teachers who issue picture dictionaries and games to parents, and information on the curriculum every month to initiate more participation at home.  <b>Prospects:</b>                  View that students of parents who have good English or functional English ‘do well’. Not all parents are eligible for government jobs; employment tends to be dependent on one’s level of citizenship (permanent residents with functional English seen usually to be bus drivers, farmers or working at fuel stations while full citizens generally have access to government roles, which may require a certain level of competence in English).</p>



<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Opportunities to use languages and exposure:</b>                  Malay can be used when writing formal correspondence and in some shops. English is an advantage and sometimes a requirement for job applications, e.g. covering letters: Shell selects employees who can write in English.  <i>Extra exposure to 'English-only' or mostly-English lessons by CfBT teachers seen as an advantage for students to be encouraged to speak in English.</i></p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>In-school exposure via English-medium subjects:</b>                  Perception that students can continue to fail English but pass other subjects; secondary school teachers seen to revert to Malay in order to quicken grasp of concepts; English-medium subject textbook material and exam text seen to be 'formulaic' where language is tested less than content and facts; humanities subjects seen to be Brunei-context-heavy, which may ease understanding of content, and requires less understanding of actual language and its 'correct use'.  <b>Subject pressures:</b>                  Some subject teachers receive more pressure to 'convert curricula into English' e.g. science teachers, some have started using phonics to teach new vocabulary.</p>
<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Ownership of languages:</b>                  Students perceived to be 'showing off' if they use English or Standard Malay among friends; perception that these languages 'do not belong to them'; 'fear' of being ridiculed for using English and Standard Malay builds up. Perceived 'elevated' status of English and Standard Malay. [How does this relate to impressions of native or indigenous languages that are sometimes unwritten and spoken less widely in the region?] Schools 'trying to change' perception and encourage notion that 'English is for everybody', regardless of career choice.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Reinforcing value of learning languages:</b>                  HoD and teachers try to emphasise and promote 'instrumental value' of English language knowledge to students; care more about effort and commitment than results but students also need to get through formative assessments. Students sometimes seen to care more about passing or failing as opposed to why they received a particular grade.</p>



<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Other organisations supporting exposure to languages:</b>                  MoE and <i>Brunei Times</i>: some schools are given free newspapers, but no instruction on how they can or should be used in the classroom. Bilingual books provided by Shell and the Language Bureau to schools.                  Wider links exist between Brunei’s institutions and other organisations worldwide:                  – Russell Group of universities, including the British Universities Brunei Association (BUBA)                  – TVET (UNESCO)                  – Biodiversity Institute, Oxford University                  – Robert Gordon University (Aberdeen)                  – various teaching hospitals in the UK.                  Foreign &amp; Commonwealth Office has created a new post for a local resident to help promote and facilitate increased economic diversity in Brunei.  <i>How can these be brought in to support and enhance the educational experiences of students at different levels of schooling?</i></p>
<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Private tuition:</b>                  Some provision takes place in schools in the afternoons (which is not compulsory) but transport can be a problem for students in more rural/remote locations, particularly if parents are unavailable. Muslim students (the large majority) also have religious school in the afternoon; extra tuition presents a longer school day. Issues around perhaps having too much ‘input’ at a desk and book work. Low attendance at afternoon classes a ‘major concern’ for some.                  Private tuition take-up generally lower in areas/households with low SES.                  Perceived take-up of private tuition of less than 10 per cent. Extra revision classes available in school on Fridays and Sundays, 80 per cent attendance rate for Year 6 exam preparation.                  Students in express route or ‘good students’ tend to receive private tuition.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Private tuition:</b>                  Take-up seen to be high but quality of provision questioned.                  CfBT also provides private tuition (as a separate entity unrelated to the MoE contract).</p>



<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>School resources and initiatives:</b></p> <p>One school obtains books for the library because (English) books are generally expensive. Also provides good internet connection in the library.</p> <p>Organising morning reading programme four days a week for 15 minutes (reading aloud with English and English-medium subject teachers and reading in silence); Reading Recovery Programme for students with difficulties; Read-a-thon and choral speaking competitions.</p> <p>Schools try to make teaching engaging and ‘fun’; use differentiation in classroom; peer-teaching programmes; ICT-based learning, more student-centred approaches, and promoting lifelong learning.</p> <p>Programme involving tutorials, team teaching and drilling, aiming for five credits at O Level; early division programme, students who struggle form a small group and receive extra tuition; keeping parents informed by phone.</p> <p>Programme to improve English speaking skills, to improve confidence and also train parents in speaking; positively received.</p> <p>Computer laboratory available for use by parents during holidays; also providing ICT training.</p> <p>MoE aims for every school to have a ‘parent outreach’ programme.</p> <p>General attitude to English in school may be positive but students from lower income households have difficulties; lack of reading culture and less use of Standard Malay and English.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Collaborative efforts:</b></p> <p>CfBT and local cooperating teacher dyad teaching phonics to parents.</p> <p><b>Whole-school efforts:</b></p> <p>Greater success from initiatives if all or most staff participate; some gender separation noted; awareness that one programme does not work in every school.</p> <p>‘Only English’ days in school: teachers wear badges that say ‘please talk to me in English’.</p>
<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Resource management:</b></p> <p>Need to ensure adequate stocking and use of libraries; books that engage readers. Culture of borrowing books not embedded; too much fear seen to be instilled in students as resources are expensive.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Resource coordination:</b></p> <p>Some resources and materials appear in schools with little explanation; takes effort to gets books ‘approved’ for use, some expensive resources go to waste.</p> <p>Some schools receive too many books for the number of students on roll and others too few.</p>



<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Entertainment and electronic media:</b>                  Incentive to understand and navigate websites, television, radio.                  [Key idea: are there programmes that use Malay (Standard and Brunei) and English? Compare need for literacy in English (and Standard Malay) with that of Chinese, German or Spanish where one can obtain software (like Microsoft applications) in those languages so perhaps less imperative to be literate in English.]</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Satellite television and access:</b>                  English series, film and music; popular culture an incentive. Programmes such as <i>Oh My English</i> combine slang uses of English with standard uses in entertaining, less ‘forced’ manner. [Malaysia has dedicated channels related to national exam revision and curriculum; is there something similar for Bruneians?]                  Not all families have access to the internet or satellite television. Radio might offer better opportunities.</p>
<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Teacher attitudes:</b>                  Issue around ‘how’ different teachers use English with their students particularly in English-medium subjects; some tendency to converse in Malay noted. Students also seen to ‘pick up bad habits’ if teachers converse with one another in Malay. Only so much one can do to encourage teachers to use English in the classroom, one view that ‘maybe we should do more’.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Continuity in staffing:</b>                  Encouraging a supportive environment that develops teachers and ‘rewards’ them for long service (with seemingly simple measures such as being able to continue with the same class years over time).                  Performance and motivation of local teachers seen to vary; some would like to improve their teaching but ‘don’t know how’. Quality control and performance evaluation systems for local teachers seen to be less motivating.                  Perception of too much focus on results and applying language skills in English-medium subjects; exams do not always reflect students’ knowledge; sometimes down to luck; problems with how students ‘transfer knowledge’ into English-medium subjects lead to questions by English teachers on English-medium subject teachers’ methods.</p>



<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Student attitudes:</b></p> <p>Teachers note some students feel they are being ‘forced’ to learn English, and cite their parents who do not speak English but are still employed. The majority of students seem positive, however.</p> <p>Perception that while most students can understand some English, writing is a major issue. [The question arises about quality of exposure to languages and how far-reaching activities or influences are in certain groups.]</p> <p>View that students in ‘top classes’ understand that they have to ‘train’ themselves in the language.</p> <p>Perception of ‘complacency’; country where ‘everything is free’, education sometimes taken for granted.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Student attitudes:</b></p> <p>Some teachers say they experience difficulties in convincing a minority of students of the value of learning English, especially in more remote geographical areas where there may be fewer prospects. Questions arose if the aim was for more urbanisation or to create more opportunities in rural/remote locations?</p>
<p><b>School senior management and other sources</b></p>	<p><b>Student motivations:</b></p> <p>Understanding languages used in film and songs, career and further education opportunities. [Media plays a role but again question arises about quality of provision: if mostly American film and music favoured, and type of language used in these more informal settings is different to the requirements of an O Level exam. Media incites interest but need to be aware of what languages are being ‘picked up’ and how.] Interest may stem from love of reading and motivation to understand different types of or favoured literature.</p>
<p><b>Teachers and subject leaders</b></p>	<p><b>Student motivations and home pressures:</b></p> <p>IGCSE results: some students lack motivation but have great potential; might be from poorer backgrounds; may leave school at 18 and get a job to support their families (one school estimates about 10 per cent leave school ‘early’); jobs are normally low-paid.</p> <p>Perhaps there needs to be some level of acceptance and understanding that English is ‘part of the system’ and required in order to progress through educational path. [Some idea of student trajectories may be helpful here.]</p>





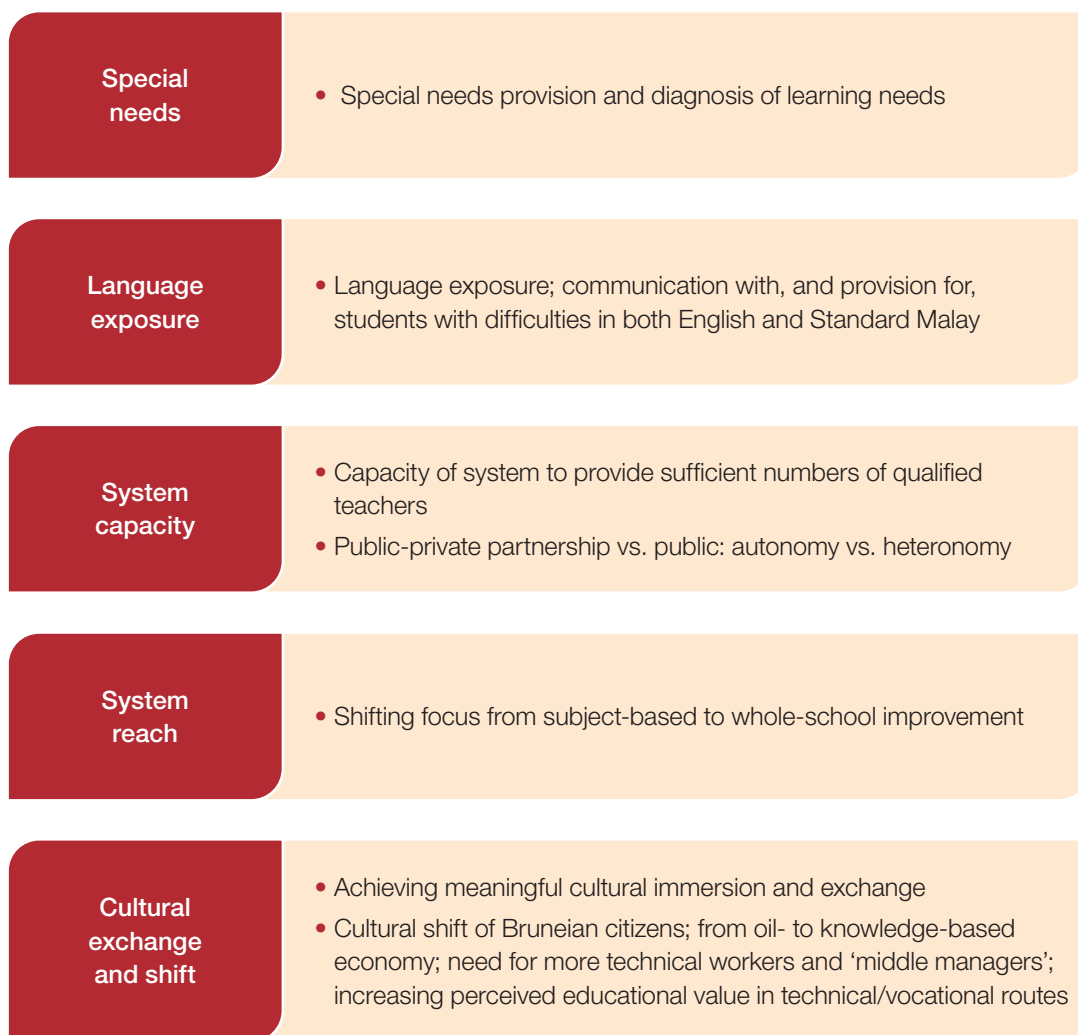
<b>School senior management and other sources</b>	<p><b>Special needs support:</b>                  Parents responsible for finding suitable caregivers to assist special needs students in class; not always possible if parents cannot afford such support.</p>
<b>Teachers and subject leaders</b>	<p><b>Special needs provision:</b>                  Learning difficulties may not be diagnosed in isolation from behavioural difficulties. SEN seems largely focused on physical disability and high-level needs. But the inclusive system means there may be hearing- or sight-impaired students in mainstream classrooms. Coping with students with such vastly different needs sometimes causes difficulties. Lack of resources and specialist SEN support or representative at school or national level.</p>

**Principals, with years of teaching and leadership experience:**  
 [Principals in sample seem to be relatively new to each school: earliest recruit = 2009; one with over ten years' principal experience, others have up to 15 years' teaching experience.]

**Priorities:**  
 Changing parents' and students' 'mindset' regarding education; creating a 'family environment' and improving equality.  
 'Core Values' initiative; events promoting caring and respect; commitment from teachers; developing 'happy, fun' education experience; shared leadership; teamwork; well-being; 'children are first priority'; student happiness and motivation; imperative to prepare 'human resources' for country when 'oil and gas run dry'; preparing students to work in other countries with the 'right attitude and right qualifications'; respect; honesty; willingness to work; broad-/open-mindedness and being 'world-savvy'; tolerance; avoiding extremism; development of social skills.  
*[Ministry: key priorities of principals should include achieving consistency in standards and quality of teaching. Teaching education should be evidence and research driven.]*

**Improving trend in O Level:**  
 This is attributed to: primary schools teaching reading; better foundations at primary level; increased availability of materials, MoE support and attention; more parents sending children to kindergarten [or pre-pre-school] (not all parents can afford kindergarten fees but it is certainly an advantage to those with access and means); more parents speaking to children in English (depending on geographical location); improved teaching; more exposure to English inside and outside of school and media; higher parental expectations (particularly in relation to children's prospects for overseas study [English used as 'gate-keeping criterion']); factors 'working together'.  
 Additional factors mentioned: changes in wider society since 1996; many programmes besides the regular curriculum, which boosts confidence of students (drama events and competitions); help of local teachers being able to explain concepts in Malay.  
 There is apprehension at decrease in attainment in Malay language and general low attainment in mathematics, perception [in contradiction to views on exposure to language] that 'English is everywhere', improved access for 'younger generation' but less so for Malay. Pass rates may be high (80 per cent and above) but issue around obtaining credits in Malay.

**Figure 57:** Proposed areas of improvement to explore in the future





## 2.8 Diagnosing and addressing learning difficulties

Concerns were raised that identifying and addressing special educational needs warrant more attention and training. In particular, greater differentiation is needed in identifying and addressing more general special educational needs and those specific to language development, such as reading difficulties. This would also involve the training of teachers in accurately identifying reading difficulties as early as possible. The correct diagnosis of reading difficulties can be challenging, since word-based basic reading skills tend to correlate highly with text-based reading skills, but not necessarily with oral language proficiency, which might result in masking effects.

Although the language requirements of a bilingual education system can be assumed to be demanding for every child, those children with home languages other than Malay in particular may be at a higher risk of experiencing reading difficulties since they have to develop literacies in Malay and English as a second and third language when they enter formal schooling. Previous research into second language literacy development has shown that children who first learn to read in a language that is not their native language tend to keep up with their L1 peers in word decoding, but can have problems with spelling and comprehension.

Research has found that vocabulary knowledge is crucial for literacy development and recommends that 'children learning to read in an L2 should be helped to build their lexical knowledge and that reading instruction should be matched to this knowledge';<sup>181</sup> one previous study supported this conclusion.<sup>182</sup> In other words, special care should be taken to teach the children the words in L2 Standard Malay to ensure they acquire the proficiency that they will need in order to read their class texts. Thus, there is a strong argument for improving the screening for diagnostic purposes at the primary level in particular and for the context-appropriate use (and potentially the development) of remedial language learning materials, such as graded readers on topics of interest.

<sup>181</sup> Verhoeven (2000)

<sup>182</sup> Droop and Verhoeven (2003)

### 3 Discussion and conclusions

*‘The moon and sun are travellers through eternity. Even the years wander on. Whether drifting through life on a boat or climbing toward old age leading a horse, each day is a journey, and the journey itself is home.’ Matsuo Bashō*

This report provides an overview of an exploratory case study that investigated the following areas: (i) the development of the bilingual education system in Brunei Darussalam; (ii) the MoE’s collaboration with CfBT in facilitating the delivery of bilingual education and supporting improvements in students’ attainment; and (iii) the MoE’s collaboration with CfBT in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The research has studied the policy context and evidence related to the processes of change and improvement within the Bruneian education system. A particular focus is placed on the teaching of English as an additional language in the bilingual system and the involvement of CfBT as an external education provider and change agent. The research constitutes a multi-method case study that collected and analysed data from a cross-section of perspectives and a range of data sources. These included: the analysis of trends across years using data on student attainment and other statistics on teacher and student numbers and student enrolment over time, interviews with key stakeholders of the system (MoE officials, CfBT staff, principals, CfBT and non-CfBT teachers, and students), visits to schools (including informal observations in classrooms) and documentary analysis.

The case study provides evidence to illuminate the rise in pupil attainment at O Level since 1996 and the particular processes that led to a stronger trend of improvements from 2006 onwards (see chart below). It provides evidence based on the perceptions, experiences and explanations of stakeholders about these trends. It also identifies features of good practice and shows how CfBT and its teachers contribute to the work of schools in promoting high-quality teaching and learning to support improvements in attainment in English.

#### 3.1 The six evolutionary paths: a bird’s eye view

Six themes or ‘evolutionary paths’ emerged from the data analysis. Five of these ‘paths’ emerged as distinctive in the coding structure applied to interview transcripts and other data sources, while the final theme synthesises the links between the five original themes and how, taken together, they have created the potential for system-wide improvement and helped Brunei to move to being ‘a generation ahead’ of its near neighbours in terms of its approach to bilingual education and achieving the improvement in students’ attainment in English that are needed to support economic development in the 21st century.

Figure 58: The six emerging themes from this study



### 3.1.1 Bilingual policy

Theme 1 describes the historical underpinnings of Brunei's bilingual policy, particularly in the south east Asian context, and the perceptions and observations from the different perspectives relating to its current policy, including its perceived strengths and challenges, and the multilingual milieu within schools and wider society. It reveals that the consistent focus on promoting bilingual education has proved a strength, encouraging stability and consistency in the priority accorded to promoting competence in both English and Standard Malay. This has supported recognition of Brunei's contribution to and ability to offer leadership from the lessons learned in the teaching and learning of English in the ASEAN region.

### 3.1.2 Education system

Theme 2 reflects the views and documentary analysis of the Bruneian education system including the various forms of assessment, the implementation of different programmes and initiatives both at CfBT and local levels, for example SPN21, and provision within the system for different types of student, including those with special needs and of different language heritages. It shows that Brunei has become a leading example of bilingual education and its systemic implementation at all levels of the education system. Although Brunei, in common with many countries internationally, has been influenced by education reform initiatives elsewhere, it has also diverged from others in its consistent commitment to the Brunei bilingual education policy and its thoughtful adaptation of reforms to fit the Brunei context. There is a strong consensus on the perceived need to promote higher levels of English attainment to promote economic competitiveness, recognising English as a crucial 'tool' for the 21st century, rather than a colonial relic. This has changed the relationship with CfBT, leading to greater demands and higher expectations for the delivery of ongoing improvements in student attainment. The MoE has adopted the concept of linking targets in terms of performance to the CfBT contract, wanting a tangible return on its investment that goes beyond recruitment of good CfBT

teachers to enhance its capacity to embed CfBT English language teachers in all schools. CfBT's ongoing ability to deliver measurable outcomes across short- and medium-term timescales has strengthened the relationship.

### 3.1.3 The MoE-CfBT relationship

Theme 3 highlights the evolution of the relationship forged between Brunei's MoE and CfBT. It charts the historic timeline of CfBT initiatives in parallel with those of the MoE and changes in the relationship dynamic over the years, as well as the development of CfBT's role and activity, what has worked well and what could be further improved. It shows that there has been **a change from being a respected recruitment link (a supply-side focus) to a deliverer of improved attainment and a capacity-enhancing role that has led to a strong and productive view of successful bilingual partnership.**

### 3.1.4 Student programmes

Theme 4 focuses in detail on the range of programmes and interventions for English language learning (and to a lesser extent, English-medium subjects) in Brunei, particularly those put in place between the MoE and CfBT. These primarily relate to initiatives designed to improve O Level attainment, key influences during the implementation of each programme and the use of data to inform next steps. This has included targeting students and schools to promote improvement. The evidence indicates that CfBT has provided successful CPD for English language teachers, including promoting a strong focus on the use of data and research evidence. CfBT has drawn on education reform experiences elsewhere to support **context-specific improvements in the quality of teaching and learning, promoting more active student learning in schools, with a focus on enhancing study skills and improved attainment.**

### 3.1.5 Teacher development

Theme 5 describes programmes and interventions for English language teaching in Brunei, including the provision of high quality continuing professional development (CPD) for both Bruneian and CfBT English language teachers. It explores the evolution of teaching practice at different levels, general perceptions of the teaching profession in Brunei and the challenges facing teacher training and education as a whole within the country. It also provides evidence on stakeholders' views of CfBT teachers and their contributions, including the relationship dynamics between Bruneian and CfBT teachers at different levels.

### 3.1.6 System-wide improvement

Lastly, theme 6 explores some of the implications for system-wide improvement offered by Brunei's continued partnership with CfBT and the infrastructure that has been built thus far. It studies the initiatives and programmes already in place which are underpinned by the bilingual policy context of the country and how the collective range of interventions by CfBT and the MoE may continue to influence educational experiences at whole-school level and across the different stages of schooling. It reveals that **the relationship has evolved into one where CfBT expertise is focused on capacity building as well as capacity providing. It has come to be seen as a valued education improvement partner rather than just an effective recruitment agency, an organisation that helps to support MoE aims and one that promotes positive educational change and improved practice in schools as well as improved outcomes for students.**



### **3.2 Some examples of successful CfBT/MoE-supported initiatives to promote attainment and quality of teaching and learning in Brunei**

Following the concerns over the broadly static picture of student achievement in the English language O Level examination (e.g. MoE 1997, 2005), and the setting of targets for improved attainment outcomes in English at O Level, CfBT strongly promoted a key intervention to increase student achievement in the English language: ‘Success in Cambridge O Level Public Examinations’ (SCOPE).

#### **3.2.1 The SCOPE (Success in Cambridge O Level Public Examinations) project**

sought to improve the achievement of borderline students in the O Level exam through exam clinics and road shows that

- familiarise learners with the exam format and content
- teach study skills (exam strategies and learning strategies, organising work and revision)
- target specific problem areas (oral skills, vocabulary, writing skills).

Although it is not possible to establish causal links, the increase in the number of students achieving O Level credits after the implementation of SCOPE is remarkable. The programme was referred to very favourably by a number of principals and teachers as a key factor supporting increases in student success in the English O Level examination. In addition to targeting borderline students, there is strong evidence of spill-over effects in using data and teaching and learning approaches that supported improvements for all students, both those above and those below the C/D borderline, plus an ongoing increase in O Level entries.

#### **3.2.2 SPELT programme for teachers and the Common Framework: linking skills to outcomes**

Another CfBT strategy devised to work in parallel with the SCOPE project was to link teacher skills to student outcomes. Inventories of teacher skills were drawn up; strengths and weaknesses could then be identified from classroom observation and teacher questionnaires, and combined to provide opportunities for teacher professional development. Hence there was a two-pronged approach, with SCOPE for students linked with SPELT workshops conducted for teachers. The MoE was closely involved – again an indicator of collaboration and partnership.

*‘This is an approach looking at where the skills are and how that impacts on the students and how teacher skill sets can change over time. We worked in parallel with the MoE, it’s a very good model; they developed a taskforce to shadow our observations of our pre- and post-testing (of students) and observation of each teacher. We gave a pre-questionnaire to teachers about their backgrounds and what they perceived to be good things and bad things. The students did the Oxford Placement test, the Year 8s and 10s (the non-examined year groups)... In general it was interesting to see that there was improvement in teacher skill sets, but you can see where our overall strengths and weaknesses lay in that particular cohort.’*

The two approaches were brought together and underpinned by principles outlined in the Common Framework.

*‘John Stannard introducing the Common Framework, that still philosophically drives what we do – identified from what the research indicated, what good practices successful students*

*demonstrate, and then what practices teachers need to demonstrate in order to allow students to perform in a way that is successful. It's been reinvented as two interlocking cogs now, and that common framework drove the observation questionnaire, and it still drives our performance management system.'*

### **3.2.3 English Project for Pre-School (EPPS): building a strong foundation in English at pre-school**

The MoE has made a significant investment in the Pra programme, recognising the importance of the Early Years for future educational success. CfBT has played a key role in the development of EPPS. This programme promotes literacy in English from a young age, exploiting the fact that Standard Malay and English both use the Roman alphabet system. The rationale for the introduction of the programme is strongly tied to the idea of placing equal status on English and Standard Malay during literacy development in order to address the complex problem of developing bilingualism in Bruneian students in the context of formal schooling. The EPPS project, along with the work of Laura Huxford and John Stannard, was described by several interviewees as 'revolutionary' for its time.

In a slightly staggered approach, children start reading and handwriting in Malay and at the same time learn basic receptive and productive oral language skills in English during the first two terms. In terms 3 and 4, oral language takes up the first 25 minutes of the English lesson, followed by Synthetic Phonics for another 30 minutes. A five-minute plenary or closure summarises the lesson. Thus, early English reading is taught by building on the foundation laid in Malay and familiarity with the 18 common consonants. Interviews with various stakeholders, including CfBT and non-CfBT English language teachers and school principals, indicated that EPPS was very positively regarded and seen to provide a good foundation for bilingual development.

Key features of programmes and interventions for students by CfBT and the MoE are illustrated in Figure 27 (see page 62). These show how different strategies fit together to promote improvement and how the whole is more than the sum of the individual constituent parts. CfBT interviewees drew attention to the growing importance of capacity building and suggested that **CfBT capacity building follows the 'BOOT' model**, an analogy from the construction industry (Build – Own – Operate – Transfer). It was argued that this shows how to 'add value' to education projects and to ways of working collaboratively with Brunei participants, promoting both individual teacher, organisational and joint learning. Figure 30 on page 68 summarises some of the main capacity-building initiatives that fit the notion of the BOOT model.

### **3.3 Summary of potential foci for further improvement**

The Brunei case study has identified many strengths to the education system and examples of the ways in which CfBT has worked with the MoE to support improved attainment and capacity building that is promoting educational change and improvement. These include:

- the consistent policy commitment to bilingual education since 1984
- the stable environment, making Brunei an attractive place to work for English language teachers and promoting recruitment of a relatively stable and high-quality teaching cadre by CfBT
- the provision of more student-centred and active English language classroom instruction in collaboration with local teachers and following key principles outlined in Bruneian government policy (Strategic Plan 2007-2011 and SPN21)





- the building of capacity within CfBT and at local teacher level through training, 'modelling' and other collaborative projects
- the provision of targeted support (in initiatives such as SCOPE, EPPS, SPELT and QuLLTs)
- the facilitation as a 'middle layer' between the MoE's different departments, schools and educational practitioners
- the creation of a large number of special interest groups that bring together professional educators to develop effective communities of practice
- the implementation of student attainment and teacher development programmes and the supporting of collaborative inter-school working; the collection, analysis and redistribution of student attainment data and its use in specific, targeted interventions.

Those interviewed also identified areas for further improvement or development and some specific examples are summarised here.

### Student attainment

- Research suggests that evenly balanced biliteracy success may be difficult to achieve in predominantly English-medium education. Further efforts could be targeted at optimising English literacy and functional literacy in Standard Malay for the largest possible number of learners. If the aim is to achieve cognitive academic language proficiency not only in English, but also in Standard Malay, this needs to be supported appropriately by instruction and sufficient exposure to scripts, that is, (academic) reading input and writing output, including, for example, reports and business letters for older age groups. There may also be an argument for introducing an advanced Malay stream for students who are high achievers and extra diagnosis and tailored support for those who struggle.
- It could be helpful to increase CfBT activities into the upper primary years in order to ease the transition between primary Year 6 and secondary Year 7 as well as in Pra and lower grades to ensure students develop a good grasp of English and appropriate oral, reading and writing skills to cope with the demands of secondary schooling from Year 8.
- There is strong evidence to suggest that lexical development assumes a key role in predicting literacy development.<sup>183</sup> A key route to boosting students' achievement in English is to pay special attention to oral and vocabulary skills. The O Level examination is very demanding in terms of reading and writing skills, and a stronger focus on teaching and building vocabulary may help to promote both reading and writing skills.
- The useful SCOPE writing (Key Skills in Writing) and speaking (Talk is Cheap) preparation materials would be further enhanced if there was a clearer progression path and an increase in the use of tasks<sup>184</sup> in supporting the teaching of writing and speaking skills.
- Following the shift towards an earlier onset of English-medium instruction in core subjects in primary school, the EPPS programme should pay special attention to preparing children for the linguistic demands that are entailed in the teaching and learning of mathematics, science and ICT through the English language from Year 1.

<sup>183</sup> Netten, Droop and Verhoeven (2011); Verhoeven (2000)

<sup>184</sup> Activities that require learners to use language in a collaborative way to achieve a meaning-focused outcome, either as rehearsal or interaction.

- The challenges that arise from the simultaneous teaching of the basics of decoding script in two languages need to be addressed through careful and explicit comparisons between English and Malay, in order to accommodate the need to differentiate them. Where appropriate, comparisons between the phonemic inventories of Malay and the children's (non-Malay) L1 should be made.
- It might also be worth considering a future research study into students who underwent the EPPS programme at its inception in order to investigate these students' experiences and outcomes from Pra to O Level. This cohort of students would also have gone through the SPN21 system from the beginning.
- With regard to special educational needs, there is a perceived need for improving the screening for diagnostic purposes, for the development of stronger teaching support (for example teaching assistants, in-school SEN representatives), as well as for the context-appropriate use (and potentially the development) of remedial language learning materials, such as graded readers on topics of interest closely linked to the curriculum.
- There was considerable interest in and a perceived need for support in developing a 'books at home' programme where students can choose books to read for pleasure; shifting the mindset of 'fear' of misuse when borrowing books from school.
- In the context of Brunei, the role of new technology, such as e-readers and low-cost notebooks in supporting out-of-school learning, may prove beneficial, especially in more remote areas.
- In order to promote the home learning environment and adult learning, resources should be targeted at enhancing support for parents (as some schools are beginning to do), including the distribution of learning materials that do not assume parents are able to speak English themselves.
- In order to strengthen career support and workforce development, it would be desirable to promote the tracking of student trajectories post-secondary school (and beyond). This would also facilitate programmes of inviting successful young professionals back to the school to share experiences with current students, which is one way of further enhancing student motivation.
- Key idea for improvement: 'bridging' type subjects that focus both on English and Malay usage for English-medium subjects. Opportunity for local and CfBT teachers to work together and hopefully slightly ease the burden for English-medium teachers of carrying the load in their individual lessons. Timetabling may be an issue, as the school day appears quite full.

#### **Professional development**

- Programmes – for both Bruneian English-medium of instruction and English language teachers – of workshops that concentrate on promoting high-quality pedagogy and curriculum delivery, including active student involvement (in addition to curriculum content), to share and enhance good practice could be provided on an ongoing basis to enhance professional development opportunities.
- The demands on English-medium teachers of mathematics, science and ICT in facilitating both content learning and English language development from the early stages, are increasing. There is a good argument for a programme of teacher development which introduces them to the

principles of content and language integrated learning (CLIL). It is also worth considering the potential merits of adding to the initial briefing of CfBT teachers a small 'toolkit' of Bahasa Melayu mathematics, science and ICT words and phrases.

- There is potential in expanding on the idea of a Cooperating Teachers model, in which both teachers are on an equal footing, allowing for more paired collaboration within the confines of specific objectives. This model might extend the scope of teacher dyads from those with CfBT teachers and Bruneian teachers to those where a Bruneian teacher who has previously worked in a CfBT dyad is paired up with another, more inexperienced Bruneian teacher.
- With regard to capacity and professional development, it is worth exploring possibilities around the setting up of an educational/training hub that organises and promotes collaboration with teacher training providers to enhance the skills of newly qualified teachers.
- Teachers and other educational practitioners could be offered a mixture of 'core' (and compulsory) CPD courses and 'elective' modules that can be chosen based on individual experiences and needs. The role of Professional Development Coordinators in schools or clusters of schools could be considered.

#### **Other**

- Exploring whole-school improvement strategies, such as embedding partnership beyond English teaching to work with principals in order to support English-medium subject teaching across the school.
- Exploring in what ways the experiences from the 'English language success story' in promoting significant improvements in English attainment could be harnessed in order to maintain and further improve the current levels of student attainment in Standard Malay.
- Having a dedicated individual or small team responsible for data capture, maintenance and analysis at CfBT. These responsibilities appear to be spread across different sections of the organisation, one person for secondary, another for primary, a different team dealing with the Cloze test etc. Setting up one team and building stronger links with the exams and other MoE departments may be valuable in the long term.
- Similarly, the MoE should consider the benefits of collecting and analysing student attainment and other data in more depth (for example to monitor student progress across grades and phases of education) and to provide a better basis for monitoring the system and for identifying trends and improvement.
- The Brunei MoE and CfBT could jointly reflect on the successes and lessons learned from their partnership on the successes in promoting bilingual education and competence, and offer this expertise externally to see how far this can be applied in other contexts.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Timelines

#### Brunei education system and CfBT engagement (full version)

Year	Brunei education policy + system	CfBT engagement
1974	Need for a public examination system based outside Malaysia noted (due to political tensions); MoE agrees to joint Brunei-Cambridge O and A Levels. <sup>185</sup>	
1979	Adoption of 1972 Education Commission Report; hence pre-school becomes compulsory <sup>186</sup> before admission to primary I is allowed; <sup>187</sup> Bahasa Melayu is reaffirmed as the 'main medium of instruction' while need to raise standards in English at primary and secondary level is stressed. <sup>188</sup>	
1984	<b>Brunei achieves full independence from Britain</b> (after first being declared a British Protectorate in 1888 and achieving 'limited self-government' from Britain in 1959); <sup>189</sup> Malay Islamic Monarchy (MIB) given prominence. <sup>190</sup>	

<sup>185</sup> Gunn (1997) p. 154

<sup>186</sup> Chan, S. (2009) [blog]

<sup>187</sup> UNESCO (2011)

<sup>188</sup> Jones (1989) p. 296

<sup>189</sup> Loo (2009) p. 147

<sup>190</sup> Talib (2002) p. 141



Year	Brunei education policy + system	CfBT engagement
1985	<p><b>Implementation of bilingual (<i>dwibahasa</i>) education policy</b><sup>191</sup> [where English is taught as a separate subject but Malay is used as the medium of instruction in lower primary I to III followed by English becoming the medium of instruction from primary IV onwards for mathematics, science and geography. The end of primary VI includes exams in English, Malay, mathematics and a 'general paper' where students with all As would be selected for 'prestigious schools'.<sup>192</sup> 'Prestigious' may also equate to 'science schools'.<sup>193</sup>] <b>Free schooling introduced to citizens and permanent residents.</b><sup>194</sup> <b>Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD) opens.</b><sup>195</sup></p>	<p><b>Arrival of CfBT in Brunei</b></p> <p>Work grown out of CfBT engagement in Germany (1960s), Malaysia (1970s). Tony Abrahams' approach: 'supporting professionals'.<sup>196</sup></p> <p><b>Original Brunei contract specifies 'recruitment of teachers'.</b><sup>197</sup></p> <p><b>2011 contract commences</b> with [the following language]:<sup>198</sup> <b>Core goals in CfBT's contract are given as:</b></p> <p>'CfBT Education Services (B) Sdn Bhd's core goals, specified in the contract with the MoE remain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increase in the proficiency and attainment levels of Bruneian students</li> <li>• The delivery of high impact teaching and learning which promotes student involvement</li> <li>• The building of the capacity of CfBT and Bruneian English teachers'.<sup>199</sup></li> </ul>
1987	<p>'The Project Group' recommends in a <b>1987 report</b> that the MoE should consider other exams besides the O Level; some students are given the chance to sit the IGCSE ESL paper in 1999.<sup>200</sup></p>	<p>CfBT becomes involved in creating <b>Secondary English for Brunei Darussalam (SEBD) books.</b></p>
1988	<p>Science becomes compulsory at secondary level.<sup>201</sup></p>	
1989	<p><b>Reading and Language Acquisition (RELA)</b> project introduced in 20 primary schools and then extended nationwide.</p>	<p>CfBT runs <b>RSA TESOL</b> course at Diploma level.<sup>202</sup></p>
1991	<p><b>SEBD books</b> made available to all government schools.<sup>203</sup></p>	<p>CfBT runs <b>RSA TESOL</b> course at Certificate level.<sup>204</sup></p>

<sup>191</sup> Saxena (2008)

<sup>192</sup> Martin (2008)

<sup>193</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

<sup>194</sup> Borneo Bulletin (2005) p. 24

<sup>195</sup> Saxena (2008)

<sup>196</sup> Interviews (2012)

<sup>197</sup> CfBT (2012) [email correspondence]

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>199</sup> CfBT Brunei (2011)

<sup>200</sup> Nicol (2005)

<sup>201</sup> Chan, S. (2009) [blog]

<sup>202</sup> Nicol (2005)

<sup>203</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>204</sup> *ibid.*



Year	Brunei education policy + system	CfBT engagement
1992	<b>National Education Policy</b> states that 12 years of education should be provided for children as opposed to the original nine (seven years in primary including one year in pre-school, three years in lower secondary and two in upper secondary or vocational or technical education). <sup>205</sup> Science is 'upgraded' as its own subject in upper primary. <sup>206</sup>	
1993	' <b>UBD produces graduates with a major in education and TESOL</b> '. <sup>207</sup>	
1994	<b>Lower Secondary Examination (PMB)</b> introduced (to replace previous BJCE and hence allow for better preparation towards the O Level exam). Brunei endorses the provision of 'inclusive education' as stipulated in the Salamanca statement [governments are urged to enrol 'all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise' (UNESCO, 1994)]. <sup>208</sup> <b>Learning Programme Styles (LEAPS)</b> introduced. <sup>209</sup>	
1996	Medium of instruction in upper primary for history changed to Malay (from English). <sup>210</sup>	
1997	<b>Cognitive Research Trust (CoRT) 'Thinking Skills' project</b> from Cambridge launched in secondary schools nationwide [piloted in six government schools 1993]. <sup>211</sup>	
1998	Implementation of ' <b>inclusive education</b> ' policy <sup>212</sup> [about 4 per cent of the student population are known to be classified as having 'special needs' <sup>213</sup> ].	

<sup>205</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

<sup>206</sup> Chan, S. (2009) [blog]

<sup>207</sup> Nicol (2005)

<sup>208</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

<sup>209</sup> Chan, S. (2009) [blog]

<sup>210</sup> Martin (2008)

<sup>211</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

<sup>212</sup> Mundia (2010)

<sup>213</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

Year	Brunei education policy + system	CfBT engagement
1999	Following 1987 report, some students are given the chance to sit the <b>IGCSE ESL paper in 1999 but this is discontinued in 2003.</b> <sup>214</sup>	
2000		<b>CfBT Evaluation project Phase 1</b> (Comparative study between students in Form 3 [or current Year 9] in Belait (Brunei) and Miri, Sarawak (Malaysia). <sup>215</sup>
2003	<b>IGCSE paper introduced in 1999 is discontinued.</b> <sup>216</sup>	
2004	Ministry starts to explore ways to raise standards in English from pre-school level; 17 CfBT teachers deployed at 15 trial schools (in 2005); which forms the beginnings of the EPPS project [mentioned below in 2008]. <sup>217</sup>	<b>Introduction of In-Service Certificate in English Language Teaching (ICELT)</b> [‘prior to 2004 the Cambridge DELTA was offered to CfBT teachers for more than 10 years’]. <sup>218</sup>
2005	MoE puts in place <b>Strategic Plan (2007-2011).</b> <sup>219</sup> [‘At about the same time’] National Education System Review Committee formed to ‘fine-tune’ Strategic Plan; to differentiate education systems, <b>new system is called SPN21.</b> <sup>220</sup> <b>Implementation of English Project for Pre-School (EPPS).</b> <sup>221</sup> Introduction of ‘ <b>early intervention programme</b> ’ enabling students to proceed directly through the vocational route instead of mainstream schooling. <sup>222</sup>	<b>CfBT Evaluation project Phase 2</b> released (longitudinal study from 2001 to 2003 using Cyril Weir’s test). <sup>223</sup> <b>Observations made by the Minister of Education concerning English Language O Level results in 2005, hence CfBT begins to explore solutions ‘under the guidance of Professor John Stannard’;</b> two principal projects emerged (SPELT and SCOPE). <sup>224</sup> [Minister of Education ‘expresses disappointment with O Level English results since the introduction of bilingual education in 1985’. ‘CfBT was informed that [the] Minister wanted to see a 30 per cent increase in students gaining credit grades, bringing these to nearer 20 per cent of the students sitting the Examination.’ Concurrently, an impact study (the aforementioned evaluation study) was commissioned by CfBT.] <sup>225</sup>

<sup>214</sup> Nicol (2005)

<sup>215</sup> Evaluation report (CfBT, Apr 2005)

<sup>216</sup> Nicol (2005)

<sup>217</sup> CfBT Brunei (2008)

<sup>218</sup> Education Department Quarterly Report (CfBT, Term 1, 2011)

<sup>219</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

<sup>220</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>222</sup> Chan, S. [blog]

<sup>223</sup> Evaluation report (CfBT, Apr 2005)

<sup>224</sup> CfBT Brunei (2007)

<sup>225</sup> *ibid.*



Year	Brunei education policy + system	CfBT engagement
2006	<p><b>Abolishment of the GCE 'N' Level Examinations</b> in 2006 [taking effect for students who sat for their PMB or Lower Secondary Examinations in 2004]. Previously, students who obtained fewer than four credits could sit for the N Level.<sup>226</sup></p>	<p>MoE requested CfBT's help to increase the number of students achieving A-C 'credit' grades in GCE O Level English in Brunei. <b>CfBT is set a target of a 10 per cent increase in credits in the November 2006 exams – double the improvement trajectory over the previous ten years.</b><sup>227</sup></p> <p>Introduction of <b>SPELT</b> (Sharing Practice in Effective Language Teaching);</p> <p><b>SCOPE</b> (Success in Cambridge O Level Public Examinations) and '<b>Key Skills in Writing</b>' textbook; along with '<b>Key Skills in Comprehension</b>'.</p> <p>A <b>Common Framework</b> is established for the professional development of project teachers.<sup>228</sup></p> <p><b>New performance management and CPD programmes</b> including new observation instruments adapted to Common Framework.</p> <p><b>New materials for developing oral skills</b> in the O Level examinations (e.g. for oral skills and vocabulary).</p> <p><b>Ministry sets up task force</b> to monitor SPELT evaluations (all projects supported by John Stannard).<sup>229</sup></p> <p>Putting forward package of activities related to <b>data collection and analysis at individual, class, school and national level which had never been done before</b> (key influence: John Stannard). <b>Focus on moving students from D to C grades.</b></p> <p>Negotiations with MoE to manage the introduction of <b>standardised qualifying exams for Years 9 and 10, train teachers to assess students and correlate achievement on testing variables and PMB with O Level attainment.</b></p>

<sup>226</sup> Mundia (2010)

<sup>227</sup> Annual Report (CfBT, 2007)

<sup>228</sup> Impact Study (CfBT, 2006)

<sup>229</sup> *ibid.*





Year	Brunei education policy + system	CfBT engagement
2007	<p><b>Compulsory Education Order 2007</b> passed under the Constitution which covers nine-year compulsory education (six years in primary and three in lower secondary).<sup>230</sup> [Note: this seems to exclude pre-school.]</p>	<p>Involvement of 'Form 4 teachers' in SCOPE.</p> <p>Introduced predictions based on AfL criteria.</p> <p>Established process for 'student needs analysis' and Personal Education Plans; Study leave 'contracts' introduced; Use of Common Framework.<sup>231</sup></p>
2008	<p>Schemes of work introduced for Years 7 and 8 for the 'cascading of the Cambridge GCE O Level syllabus into Year 7'.</p> <p><b>Student Progress Assessment (SPA) introduced and Student Progress Examination (SPE) introduced for Year 8</b> – replaces Lower Secondary Examinations (PMB) sat in Year 9.<sup>232</sup></p> <p><b>New teacher education policy introduced: Sultan Hassan Bolkiah Institute of Education (SHBIE) 'to train teachers at only the postgraduate levels</b> such as master of teaching (MTeach), master of education (MEd), and doctorate of philosophy (PhD).<sup>233</sup></p> <p><b>Medium of instruction in lower primary for mathematics changed from Malay to English.</b><sup>234</sup></p>	<p><b>SCOPE introduced in Sixth Form and Lower Secondary</b> (including strategies to develop a 'reading culture' [Oxford Reading Tree] and the Reading Recovery Programme).</p> <p>Introduction of <b>EPPS Pra Hour</b> (including a mix of whole-class and individual activities; vocabulary, phonics and reinforcement).</p> <p>Introduction of <b>EPPS Project</b> (including use of synthetic phonics, developing a Common Framework for EPPS, revising Cooperating Teacher journals, and designing the EPPS phonic syllabus and EPPS AfL, EPPS in-srvice programme for 22 local and 20 CfBT teachers).<sup>235</sup></p> <p>LSERP project introduced.<sup>236</sup></p>

<sup>230</sup> Brunei MoE (2008)

<sup>231</sup> MoE presentation (CfBT, August 2007)

<sup>232</sup> SEAMEO (2008)

<sup>233</sup> Munda (2010)

<sup>234</sup> Chan, S. [blog]

<sup>235</sup> MoE Presentation (CfBT, June 2004, v4)

<sup>236</sup> Education Department Quarterly Report (CfBT, Term 1, 2011)



Year	Brunei education policy + system	CfBT engagement
2009	<p><b>MoE embarks on SPN21</b> ('derived from eight education policy directions in Brunei's Vision 2035') [this includes <b>introduction of 'Express' programme for upper secondary</b>].<sup>237</sup></p> <p><b>Implementation of 'education programme for gifted and talented students'</b>.<sup>238</sup></p> <p><b>Science becomes its own subject in lower primary</b>.<sup>239</sup></p>	<p><b>IGCSE project</b> launched for upper secondary.<sup>240</sup></p> <p><b>Tropical English Teacher (TET)</b> launched.<sup>241</sup></p>
2010	<p><b>First cohort of students directed to IGCSE</b>.<sup>242</sup></p>	<p><b>SBAfL project</b> introduced;</p> <p>Beginnings of <b>writing syllabus for primary level and developing materials</b>;</p> <p><b>Piloting of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)</b> in SM Berakas;<sup>243</sup></p> <p><b>CfBT-Brunei contract put out to tender for the first time</b>;<sup>244</sup></p> <p><b>CfBT management systems 'upgraded' to include two management roles (Country Manager and Education Director)</b>.<sup>245</sup></p>

<sup>237</sup> UNESCO (2009)

<sup>238</sup> Mundia (2010)

<sup>239</sup> Chan, S. [blog]

<sup>240</sup> Education Department Quarterly Report (CfBT, Term 1, 2011)

<sup>241</sup> Education Department Quarterly Report (CfBT, Term 1, 2012)

<sup>242</sup> Education Department Quarterly Report (CfBT, Term 1, 2011)

<sup>243</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> CfBT (2012) [email correspondence]

<sup>245</sup> Interview (2012)



Year	Brunei education policy + system	CfBT engagement
2011	Teaching Plus programme introduced. <sup>246</sup>	Introduction of <b>Cloze test</b> kit; Primary teachers conduct <b>Burt Reading Test</b> <sup>247</sup> ; and a range of local assessments; Formation of <b>Primary level Assessment Special Interest Group</b> ; Development of <b>SBAfL rubrics</b> <sup>248</sup> <b>Special Applied Programme (SAP)</b> project introduced; <sup>249</sup> <b>Secondary Vocational Programme (PMV)</b> project introduced; <b>Cambridge Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults (DELTA)</b> introduced; <b>CLIL project</b> fully implemented. <sup>250</sup>
2012	<b>Full implementation of SPN21 at all levels of schooling</b> <sup>251</sup> [meaning SPN21 commenced with students entering school primary Year 1 and secondary Year 7 and 'moved through with them – so it took six years for the new curriculum to be rolled out'. <sup>252</sup> ]	Introduction of <b>Quality Improvement Learning Teams (QILTs)</b> ; <b>Integrated Schemes of Work (iSoW) – CLIL project in SM Berakas extended to five years</b> (from a one-year pilot) by senior administration at school; Launch of <b>Magic Moments</b> ; Writing of <b>Year 3 English programme being supported by two CfBT teachers</b> . <sup>253</sup>

<sup>246</sup> Education Department Quarterly Report (CfBT, Term 1, 2012)

<sup>247</sup> CfBT Brunei Annual Education Report for MoE (CfBT, 2011)

<sup>248</sup> Education Department Quarterly Report (CfBT, Term 1, 2011)

<sup>249</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> UNESCO (2011)

<sup>252</sup> CfBT (2012) [email correspondence]

<sup>253</sup> Education Department Quarterly Report (CfBT, Term 1, 2012)



## Appendix 2: CLIL resources

*The European Framework for CLIL Teacher Education*, published by the Council of Europe:  
<http://clil-cd.ecml.at/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=C0kUO%2BvEc6k%3D&tabid=2254&language=en-GB>

Introductory booklet *Teaching Maths through English – a CLIL approach* published by the University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations: [https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/digitalAssets/116196\\_6999\\_0Y10\\_CLIL\\_Maths\\_Book\\_W.pdf](https://www.teachers.cambridgeesol.org/ts/digitalAssets/116196_6999_0Y10_CLIL_Maths_Book_W.pdf)

*One stop English* – extensive resource bank for content and language teachers by Macmillan:  
<http://www.onestopenglish.com/clil/>

The British Council periodically runs a ‘CLIL Essentials’ course (approximately 2.5 hours per week over 20 weeks, offered to individual teachers on the Teaching English site and potentially available in Brunei). For more information see: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-training/clil-essentials>



## Appendix 3: Interview schedule examples

### A. Questions for deputy principals and heads of department

#### Introductory questions

1. How long have you been deputy principal / head of department of your school?  
Past experience/training?
2. What is your understanding of 'bilingual competence'? What do you think are some of the main advantages of bilingualism for students? Do you perceive any disadvantages?
3. In your view, what are the key challenges in implementing the Dwibahasa at the school level (for example, a multilingual situation)?
4. What are the main challenges in achieving bilingual competence in your school?
5. How do you think these challenges can be overcome?

#### School

6. Could you describe CfBT's involvement in your school?
7. Can you describe CfBT's work in your department? Key positive features? What can be improved?
8. Besides CfBT, do you work with other organisations that support English learning and teaching in your school?
9. What does the school do to involve parents in the learning process?
10. What about the role of Malay or other indigenous languages?
11. How would you describe the role of private tuition in English in education in Brunei? What are take-up rates like?
12. How would you describe staff's attitudes about the emphasis on teaching English in your school?
  - English language
  - English-medium
13. How, to your knowledge, do students use English and Standard Malay outside of the school context?
14. In general, what are your perceptions regarding the students' attitudes towards learning English? What are their motivations for learning English?
15. How would you evaluate the impact of CfBT teachers on students' attitudes and motivation towards English in your school?



### Teachers

16. How is the teaching profession regarded in Brunei? Is it esteemed as a career choice?
17. How do you define high quality (language) teaching?
18. Are there any particular challenges for English language teachers in your school? For English-medium teachers?
19. What do you see as the key priorities of English language teachers in your school? Of English-medium teachers?
20. How do you see the role of CfBT teachers in your school?
21. From your experience, how would you describe some of the characteristics of a typical CfBT teacher? Student involvement?
22. How would you describe a typical CfBT teacher's lesson?
23. If you were to compare CfBT teachers to non-CfBT teachers of English in your school, in what ways do you think are they rather similar and in what ways rather different?
24. How do you see the relationship or interaction between CfBT teachers and non-CfBT teachers of English in your school? How would you describe the relationship of CfBT teachers with teachers of English-medium subjects?

### Training and professional development

25. What can you tell us about the role of teachers' professional development in your school? In what ways, if any, does the school support professional development?
26. How do you see the role of CfBT in developing teachers' English language teaching competence? Have you attended any CfBT-led teacher training workshops (to observe etc)? If so, how would you evaluate the quality of the training?
27. How do CfBT teachers support the delivery of high quality (English language) teaching in Brunei?
28. How do you facilitate the Cooperating Teachers at Pra level? → Primary only.
29. Is your school involved in any special CfBT projects, for example SCOPE, CLIL?

### Outcomes

30. There is some evidence of improvement in attainment in English measured by student O Level results (show graph). How do you interpret this trend? What are the main factors responsible?
31. To what extent do you think the O Level examinations in Brunei are appropriate to the local context?
32. What are the results in the IGCSE? Are they also improving?



33. How do you facilitate English language learning in your school? Do you use any special approaches?
34. What do you see as some of the obstacles to English language learning in your school?
35. How do you support students who struggle? or low attainers in English?
36. Have your school's results in English language attainment changed since CfBT's involvement? If so, how? What about results in English-medium subjects?
37. How would you evaluate the impact of CfBT teachers on students' English language proficiency?
38. What is the role of teachers' assessment of students in supporting the development of students' bilingual competence?
39. How is assessment for learning used?
40. How far is the 'blended version' of AfL known as SBAfL used?
41. How do you think the bilingual policy supports the improvement of students' attainment in English and in English-medium subjects?
42. How do you see the future of CfBT's work in your school?
43. Do you have any other comments?
44. Would you like to ask us any questions?



## **B. Questions for principals**

### **Introductory questions**

1. How long have you been headteacher of your school? Past experience/training?
2. In your view, what are the main strengths of the Brunei education system?
3. What are the main challenges the education system in Brunei is currently facing?
4. In your view, what are main strengths and weaknesses of the bilingual policy in Brunei?
5. What is your understanding of 'bilingual competence'? What do you think are some of the main advantages of bilingualism for students? Do you perceive any disadvantages?
6. In your view, what are the key challenges in implementing the Dwibahasa at the school level (for example a multilingual situation)?
7. What are the main challenges in achieving bilingual competence in your school? How do you think these challenges can be overcome?

### **School**

8. How long has your school been working with CfBT?
9. Could you describe CfBT's involvement in your school?
10. Could you tell us how the relationship between CfBT and your school has evolved?
11. Can you describe the partnership with CfBT? Key positive features? What can be improved?
12. Besides CfBT, do you work with other organisations that support English learning and teaching in your school?
13. What does the school do to involve parents in the learning process?
14. How would you describe the role of private tuition in English in education in Brunei? What are take-up rates like?
15. How would you describe the general culture and attitude towards English in your school?
16. How, to your knowledge, do students use English and Standard Malay outside of the school context?
17. In general, what are your perceptions regarding the students' attitudes towards learning English? What are their motivations for learning English?
18. How would you evaluate the impact of CfBT teachers on students' attitudes and motivation towards English in your school?





### Teachers

19. How is the teaching profession regarded in Brunei? Is it esteemed as a career choice?
20. How do you define high quality (language) teaching?
21. What are the challenges facing English language teachers in Brunei? And for teachers of English-medium subjects?
22. Are there any particular challenges for English language teachers in your school?
23. What do you see as the key priorities of teachers in your school?
24. How do you see the role of CfBT teachers in your school?
25. Do you have any criteria for placing CfBT teachers in classes? If so, what are they?
26. From your experience, how would you describe some of the characteristics of a typical CfBT teacher? Student involvement?
27. How would you describe a typical CfBT teacher's lesson?
28. If you were to compare CfBT teachers to non-CfBT teachers of English in your school, in what ways do you think are they rather similar and in what ways rather different?
29. How do you see the relationship or interaction between CfBT teachers and non-CfBT teachers of English? How would you describe the relationship of CfBT teachers with teachers of English-medium subjects?

### Training and professional development

30. What can you tell us about the role of teachers' professional development in your school? In what ways, if any, does the school support professional development?
31. How do you see the role of CfBT in developing teachers' English language teaching competence? Have you attended any CfBT-led teacher training workshops (to observe etc)? If so, how would you evaluate the quality of the training?
32. How do CfBT teachers support the delivery of high quality (English language) teaching in Brunei?
33. How do you facilitate the Cooperating Teachers programme at Pra level? → Primary only.

### Outcomes

34. There is some evidence of improvement in attainment in English measured by student O Level results (show graph). How do you interpret this trend? What are the main factors responsible?
35. To what extent do you think the O Level examinations in Brunei are appropriate to the local context?
36. What are the results in the IGCSE? Are they also improving?



37. How do you facilitate English language learning in your school? Do you use any special approaches?
38. What do you see as some of the obstacles to English language learning in your school?
39. How do you support students who struggle? or are low attainers in English?
40. Have your school's results in English language attainment changed since CfBT's involvement? If so, how? What about results in English-medium subjects?
41. How would you evaluate the impact of CfBT teachers on students' English language proficiency?
42. What is the role of teachers' assessment of students in supporting the development of students' bilingual competence?
43. How is assessment for learning used? How far is the 'blended version' of AfL known as SBAfL used?
44. How do teachers view the shift from pre- to post-SPN21, from Malay in lower primary to bilingual instruction from lower primary onwards? → Primary only.
45. How do you think the bilingual policy supports the improvement of students' attainment in English and in English-medium subjects?
46. How do you see the future of CfBT's work in your school?
47. Do you have any other comments?
48. Would you like to ask us any questions?



## **C. Questions for local teachers**

### **Introductory questions**

1. How long have you been a teacher?
2. What groups do you teach? Can you tell us about what different roles you hold in the school?
3. How did you come to be a teacher?
4. What was your teacher training experience like? / What do you think of the quality of teacher education in Brunei? / Please tell me about your experience of teacher education in Brunei.
5. What are your key priorities as a teacher?
6. Could you describe your relationship with other teachers of English in your school?  
And with teachers in general?
7. Could you describe your relationship with CfBT teachers in your school?

### **English language teaching**

8. What are the challenges facing English language teachers in Brunei?
9. What do you think are the challenges to developing bilingual competence for students in your class?
10. In your view, what are the main strengths and weaknesses of the bilingual policy?
11. What, in your view, are some of the strengths of CfBT's involvement in bilingual education in Brunei? Can you identify any areas for improvement?
12. How do you see your role within the wider contribution of CfBT to bilingual education in Brunei?

### **Personal experience with English language teaching**

13. How would you describe the general culture and attitude towards English in your school?
14. How, to your knowledge, do students use English and Standard Malay outside of the school context?
15. What do you see as the main difficulties in developing students' English proficiency in your classroom?
16. If you had to describe a typical lesson by a CfBT teacher and one by a non-CfBT teacher in English, how would you do that? / In what ways do you think lessons by CfBT and non-CfBT teachers are rather similar and in what ways rather different?
17. Could you reflect on your relationships with other CfBT teachers in your school?
18. What about your relationships with non-CfBT teachers? With CfBT teachers in other schools?



19. How, to your understanding do teachers such as yourself and teachers of English-medium subjects (e.g. science, mathematics etc) interact at the different levels of schooling?
20. Do you teach SEN students? If so, what are your approaches to teaching SEN students? What type of support or guidance do you receive for teaching SEN learners?

### **Marking and assessment**

21. There is clear and impressive evidence of improvement in attainment in English measured by student O Level results (show graph). How do you interpret this trend? What are the main factors responsible?
22. To what extent do you think the O Level examinations in Brunei are appropriate to the local context?
23. How do you see the role of teacher assessment in supporting the development of students' bilingual competence?
24. What is your approach to marking students' work?
25. What is your approach to assessment (creating tests, test conditions, marking)? What guidance do you receive on assessment?
26. How is assessment for learning used? How far is the 'blended version' of AfL known as SBAfL used?
27. How do you think the bilingual policy supports the improvement of students' attainment in English and in English-medium subjects?
28. How do teachers view the shift from pre- to post-SPN21, from Malay in lower primary to bilingual instruction from lower primary onwards?

### **Context outside school**

29. How do you see the role of private tuition in students' education here?
30. How involved are parents in their children's English education?
31. Is there use of technology in the classroom? Or for homework purposes? What type of support or guidance do you receive for using technology in the classroom?

### **Training and professional development**

32. How would you describe the quality of the training and support you receive as a teacher?
33. Have you ever attended any CfBT-led professional development workshops? Can you reflect on these?
34. How, if at all, have you been able to implement the new skills learned in the CfBT workshops in the classroom?



35. How do you see the role of CfBT in developing teachers' English language teaching competence?
36. How often do you get the opportunity to observe classroom practice of other teachers?
37. What are some of the things you like best about being a teacher? What are some of the things you like less?
38. How do you see the future of CfBT's involvement in Brunei, particularly in light of SPN21 and Wawasan 2035?
39. Do you have any other comments?
40. Would you like to ask us any questions?



## **D. Questions for CfBT teachers**

### **Introductory questions**

1. How did you come to be a CfBT teacher in Brunei?
2. What groups do you teach? Can you tell us about what different roles you hold in the school?
3. How long have you been working with CfBT in Brunei?
4. Do you remember what your expectations were about teaching and living in Brunei before you started?
5. Were there any differences or similarities between what you expected and what you found?
6. How did you adjust to life as a teacher in Brunei and the expectations of teachers in Brunei schools?

### **English language teaching in Brunei and CfBT involvement**

7. What are your impressions of the quality of English language teaching in Bruneian schools?
8. What are the challenges facing English language teachers in Brunei?
9. In your view, what are the main strengths and weaknesses of the bilingual policy?
10. How do CfBT teachers support the delivery of high quality (English language) teaching in your school?
11. What, in your view, are some of the strengths of CfBT's involvement in bilingual education in your school? Can you identify any areas for improvement?

### **Personal experience with English language teaching in Brunei and CfBT**

12. How would you describe the general culture and attitude towards English in your school?
13. How, to your knowledge, do students use English and Standard Malay outside of the school context?
14. What do you see as the main difficulties in developing students' English proficiency in your classroom?
15. If you had to describe a typical lesson by a CfBT teacher and one by a non-CfBT teacher in English, how would you do that?/ In what ways do you think lessons by CfBT and non-CfBT teachers are rather similar and in what ways rather different?
16. Could you reflect on your relationships with other teachers in your school – CfBT, non-CfBT, English-medium?
17. What are your key priorities as a CfBT teacher?



18. Do you teach SEN students? If so, what are your approaches to teaching SEN students? Does CfBT offer any support or guidance for teaching SEN learners?

### **Marking and assessment**

19. There is some evidence of improvement in attainment in English measured by student O Level results (show graph). How do you interpret this trend? What are the main factors responsible?
20. To what extent do you think the O Level examinations in Brunei are appropriate to the local context?
21. How do you see the role of teacher assessment in supporting the development of students' bilingual competence?
22. What is your approach to marking students' work?
23. What is your approach to assessment (creating tests, test conditions, marking)? Does CfBT offer any guidance on assessment?
24. How is assessment for learning used? How far is the 'blended version' of AfL known as SBAfL used?

### **Context outside school**

25. How do you see the role of private tuition in students' education here?
26. How involved are parents in their children's English education?

### **Training and professional development**

27. How would you describe the quality of the training and support you receive as a CfBT teacher?
28. Can you reflect on the two-week preparation course that CfBT offers prior to when you started teaching?
29. Are you a member of any special interest groups? Can you tell me about them?
30. Have you ever attended any CfBT professional development workshops? Can you reflect on these?
31. How, if at all, have you been able to implement the new skills learned in the CfBT workshops in the classroom?
32. Do you study Malay? If so, please tell us about that.
33. How do you see the role of CfBT in developing teachers' English language teaching competence?
34. How often do you get the opportunity to observe classroom practice of other teachers?



35. What are some of the things you like best about being a CfBT teacher? What are some of the things you like less?
36. If you could change one thing about the CfBT Brunei project, what would it be?
37. Do you have any other comments?
38. Would you like to ask us any questions?





## **E. Questions for CfBT staff**

### **Introductory questions**

1. In your view, what are the main strengths of the Brunei education system?
2. What are the main challenges the education system in Brunei is currently facing?
3. In your view, what are the main strengths and weaknesses of the bilingual policy?
4. What evidence is used to evaluate the operation of the bilingual policy?
5. What are your views on the complex multilingual context in Brunei and its implications in promoting bilingual competence?
6. Are there particular difficulties for students whose parents do not speak Standard Malay (e.g. Dusun, Murut, Iban etc)?
7. What progress has been made in developing students' bilingual competence since the policy was first introduced in 1984? What progress has been made in the last decade?
8. What are the main challenges in achieving bilingual competence in Brunei? How do you think these challenges can be overcome?
9. How has the partnership with CfBT evolved?
10. Can you describe the key positive features of the partnership with CfBT? What can be improved?
11. How does CfBT's work in supporting English language teaching in Brunei link with the work of other organisations?

### **Teaching**

12. How is the teaching profession regarded in Brunei – status, quality?
13. How do you evaluate the quality of English language teaching in schools in Brunei? Of teaching of English-medium subjects?
14. What are the challenges facing English language teachers in Brunei? And teachers of English-medium subjects?
15. How do you define high quality (language) teaching in Brunei? And the teaching of English-medium subjects?
16. What does the Ministry do to support teachers' professional development – for English language teachers; for English medium-teachers?
17. How do you see the role of CfBT within the context of English language teaching in Brunei? Can you outline the main aspects and purposes of the Ministry's partnership with CfBT? To what extent does the MoE influence the work of CfBT in Brunei (both general aims as well as how these aims are set to be achieved)?

18. How would you describe the approach to English language teacher recruitment in Brunei (for both local and expatriate teachers)? What are the main challenges? What is the role of CfBT in ensuring sufficient capacity?

### Capacity building

19. How do you see the role of CfBT in developing teachers' English language teaching competence (Bruneian English teachers, CfBT teachers and English-medium teachers)?
20. How do CfBT teachers support the delivery of high quality (English language) teaching in Brunei?
21. How do you see the relationship or interaction between CfBT teachers and non-CfBT teachers of English? How would you describe the relationship of CfBT teachers with teachers of English-medium subjects?
22. What is the contribution of CfBT teachers in developing bilingual competence for students in Brunei?

### Attainment and assessment

23. There is clear and impressive evidence of improvement in attainment in English measured by student O Level results (show graph). How do you interpret this trend? What are the main factors responsible?
24. To what extent do you think the O Level examinations in Brunei are appropriate to the local context?
25. What other evidence do you have for improvement in student attainment and proficiency in English (e.g. SBA exams)?
26. What is the role of teachers' assessment of students in supporting the development of students' bilingual competence (e.g. the introduction of SBAfL)? How is assessment for learning used?
27. How has the partnership with CfBT supported the development of student attainment and proficiency in Brunei? Is there:
- Evidence of increased student involvement in lessons?
  - Evidence on quality of teaching?
  - Evidence of increased student motivation and engagement in English lessons?

### Evaluating Dwibahasa's outcomes

28. How would you describe the outcomes of the bilingual policy to date?
29. How has the bilingual policy supported the improvement of students' attainment in English and in English-medium subjects?
30. What are the main achievements of the bilingual education policy in Brunei?



31. What has the Ministry gained from its partnership with CfBT?
32. What might other countries in the region learn from Brunei's bilingual policy?
33. Going forward, what are the main reasons you think underlie the Ministry's continuing partnership with CfBT in the short and medium term?
34. How do you see the future of CfBT's involvement, particularly in relation to SPN21 (medium/long term) and Wawasan 2035?
35. Have you any other comments about English language teaching and bilingual competence?
36. Do you have any other comments?
37. Do you have any questions for us?



**Appendix 4: Coding template with example interview excerpt**

Interview excerpt [...]= generally denotes actions or contributions from other parties or during interviews or researcher additions Second column onwards = 'codes' in headers and summary of interview text in each row	Interview specific notes	Collaboration with CfBT	Other factors besides CfBT	Timeline	Bilingual policy
<p>There's less variation. [Interviewer: that's a very important point.] It's partly a process, there's reports about what worked, didn't work, what was fair, not fair. Because it's such a high stakes exam here, more attention has been focused on the exam. Teachers can be taught to get good students to an A in the oral, because their oral English is quite good. The target is if they are Bs in their reading and writing, they should be trying to get an A in the oral. The same with the CD ones, we should get them to be an AB in the oral which could be enough, when you're talking about a few more marks. In the SCOPE programme, using the cards, it's a development from stuff we were doing in 2006.</p>		<p>More targeted intervention around exam requirements, playing to Bruneian students' strengths (e.g. oral part of the O Level exam).</p>		<p>'Less variation' in exams. More of a process, more monitoring of what worked, was fair or was less fair.</p>	



Bruneian education system	
Features of CfBT teachers	
Strategies to improve students' outcomes, attitudes and motivation	<p>Targeted interventions:          'The target is if they are Bs in their reading and writing, they should be trying to get an A in the oral. The same with the CD ones, we should get them to be an AB in the oral which could be enough, when you're talking about a few more marks.'</p>
Teaching profession	
Professional development / capacity building	
CfBT/local teacher relationships	
Recommendations	
The future	

## Appendix 5: Code definitions and key

Code categories	Definition	Group
<b>Collaboration with CfBT</b>	<p>Descriptions and ‘nature’ of CfBT’s work and general interaction between CfBT staff (senior management, teachers, project managers) with other parties (schools, MoE, students, teachers, parents etc).</p> <p><b>Note:</b> ‘Collaboration’ can be seen to cover a wide range of work and hence has been further divided into a number of subcategories using cell and text colours, including some of the other categories in the code list. However, as ‘collaboration’ forms a key element of one of the study’s research questions, this category also remains as an individual code.</p>	Main code
<b>Other factors besides CfBT</b>	<p>Other factors perhaps not directly linked with CfBT or to some degree beyond CfBT’s control, that may influence students’ overall educational experience, language development and contextual factors related to attainment, e.g. media (newspapers, radio, TV); parental involvement; home environment; wider opportunities to speak particular languages; application of government policies and initiatives (appreciating that CfBT may have supported the implementation of some of these projects); peer relationships</p>	Main code [+ Subcategory * (e.g. collaboration) if CfBT have some involvement but wider issues exist, e.g. CfBT teachers provide opportunities to speak English in the classroom but there may be wider issues around what other opportunities exist for some students to communicate in English and other languages]
<b>Implications and potential for wider school and system influence</b>	<p>Influences on and potential for whole-school and/or system-wide reach with CfBT initiatives beyond English language teaching; influences on English-medium or other subject relationships (e.g. CLIL), system overview</p>	Subcategory *
<b>CfBT-MoE (Brunei) relationship</b>	<p>CfBT-MoE relationship dynamic/ communication/partnership/evolution</p>	Subcategory *



Code categories	Definition	Group
<b>CfBT relationships with local teachers</b>	Particular mentions, observations and perceptions of CfBT teacher and local teacher interactions in schools and the wider system	Subcategory *
<b>Strategies to improve student outcomes, attitudes and motivation</b>	Targeted interventions by CfBT (or in collaboration with Bruneian government) including specific projects (SCOPE, EPPS etc); specific views or issues related to student attainment/ behaviours/motivation/attitudes; ability of CfBT/schools/the system to diagnose requirements; exam preparation; collection and use of data	Main code + Subcategory *
<b>Teaching profession</b>	Teaching profession context in Brunei; wider issues beyond CfBT's engagement per se; historical elements related to the teaching profession; perceptions of the profession in general (more in a local context)	Main code
<b>Professional development</b>	CfBT contributions to and engagement with training and capacity development involving CfBT and local teachers and the wider education system	Main code + Subcategory *
<b>Special educational needs provision</b>	Particular mentions, views and recommendations around special educational needs provision	Subcategory *



Code categories	Definition	Group
<b>Timeline</b>	<p>‘Significant’ events or time-specific moments mentioned in relation to CfBT’s engagement in Brunei, education policy, perceived shifts in attitude among a particular ‘community’ or environment.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> ‘Timeline’ can be seen to cover a wide range of work and hence has been further divided into number of subcategories using cell and text colours, including some of the other categories in the code list. However as the ‘process of change’ forms a key element of one of the study’s research questions, this category also remains as an individual code.</p>	Main code
<b>Bilingual policy</b>	<p>Events and mechanics related to Brunei’s bilingual policy and bilingual/multilingual environment (a component of the education system as a whole); influences of academic literature; issues around theory and practice, literacy, language issues in Brunei and elsewhere</p>	Main code
<b>Brunei education system</b>	<p>Events and mechanics related to Brunei’s education system and environment (of which the bilingual policy is a component); influences of academic literature; issues around theory and practice, education issues in Brunei and elsewhere</p>	Main code
<b>Features of CfBT teachers</b>	<p>Roles played by CfBT teachers in school and in the wider educational context; perceived attitudes and behaviours of CfBT teachers by other parties within and outside of the school environment; observed characteristics and accounts of practice</p>	Main code





Code categories	Definition	Group
<b>Recommendations</b>	<p>Suggestions and recommendations proposed by research participants on CfBT engagement and the Brunei system as a whole.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> 'Recommendations' can be seen to cover a wide range of work and hence has been further divided into number of subcategories using cell and text colours, including some of the other categories in the code list. However, as formulating recommendations and strategies to 'inform best practice' form key elements of one of the study's research questions, this category also remains as an individual code.</p>	Main code
<b>Future</b>	Views on how research participants see the future of CfBT's engagement in Brunei and the education system as a whole	Main code
<p><b>Subcategory</b> * = used in Collaboration, Timeline, Recommendations and Future categories as these codes cover a range of subcategories and types of engagement</p>		



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