

National Assessment in Namibia: A case Study

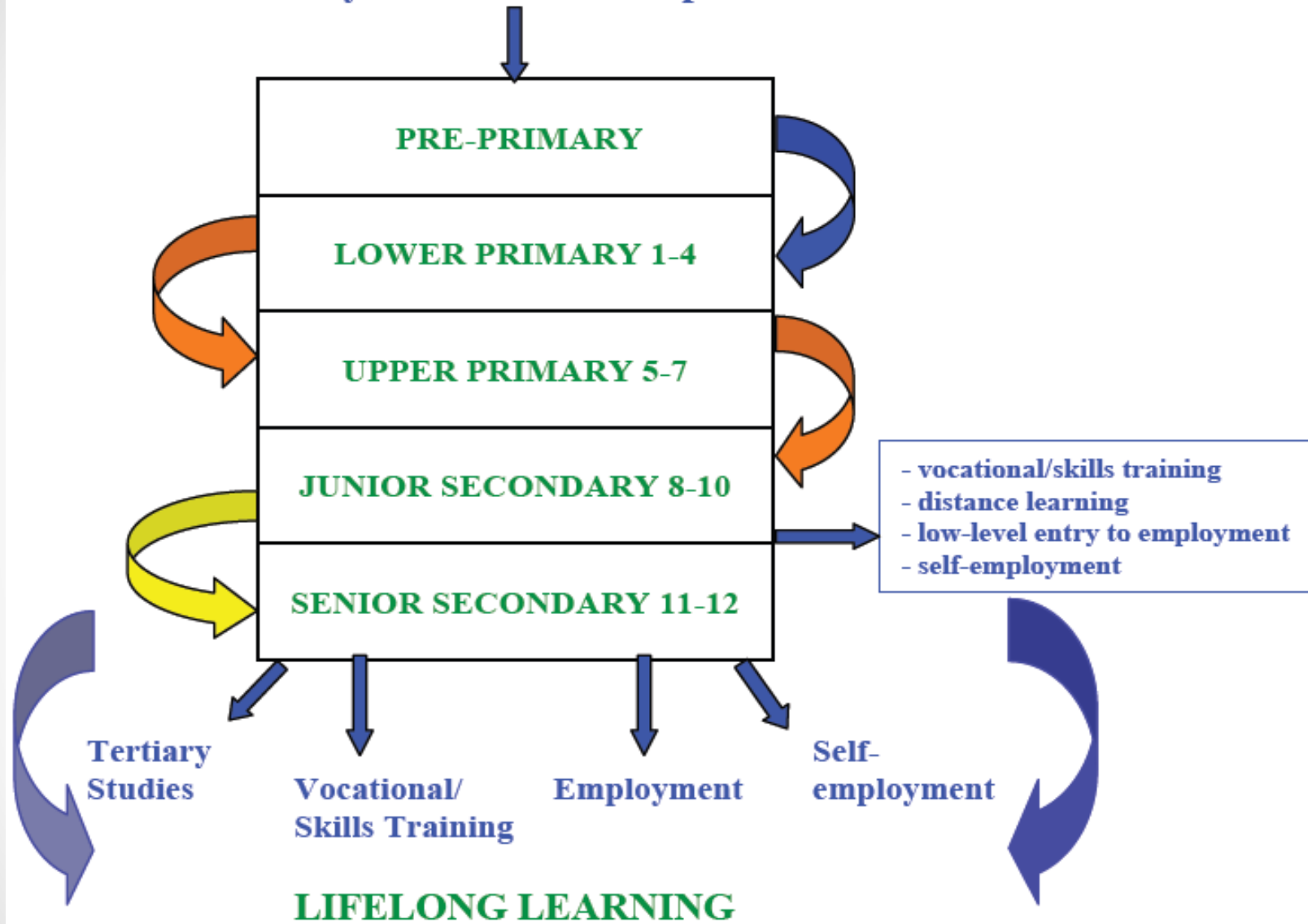
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Introduction

- Namibia Basic education system is structured in five phases:
 - Pre-Primary,
 - Lower Primary Grades 1-4,
 - Upper Primary Grades 5-7,
 - Junior Secondary Grades 8-10,
 - and Senior Secondary Grades 11-12.
- Formal Basic Education is for all from Pre-Primary to Grade 10,
- After which there are various opportunities:
 - entry into formal Senior Secondary education,
 - vocational education and training (VTC – NTA),
 - direct entry to employment, or distance learning.

Early Childhood Development



Introduction

- The National Standardized Achievement Tests (NSATs) provide diagnostic information about learners in Grade 5 and Grade 7.
- They test the learners on key learning competencies in the curriculum and help monitor schools' progress from year to year.
- Test blue prints were developed based on the respective syllabuses – on the defined competency level
 - Basic
 - Above Basic
 - Excellent
- The technical assistance was provided by American Institutes for Research (AIR), funded by: USAID and MCA till 2013.



Introduction

- The SATs were developed under the Education and Training Sector improvement Programme based on the following objectives:
 - Monitor learners' acquisition of identified skills and competencies in key subject areas (English, Mathematics and Natural Science and Health Education) and implement nationally at Grades 5 and 7.
 - Set baseline and performance targets to monitor the progress of learners at individual schools.

Introduction

- Disseminate diagnostic feedback from test results to schools and advisory/ inspection services in each of the regions.
- a comprehensive competency-based report is prepared and dispatched to each school timely.
 - to inform classroom instruction for improved learners' performance
 - monitoring the school's progress from one assessment year to another.

Methodology

- The first/baseline NSATS were conducted in 2009 (grade 5) and 2010 (grade 7)
- follow-up tests
 - Grade 7 (2012, 2014)
 - Grade 5 (2011, 2013 & 2014)
- English and Mathematics – Grade 5
- English, Natural Science and Mathematics – Grade 7

Methodology

- Three test forms (Form A, B and C) are administered for each subject (English Second Language, Mathematics and Natural Science).
- Each test form consisted of 40 (for Grade 5) and 50 (for Grade 7) questions that counted towards learners' scores.
- The test forms met the test blue print, meaning the number of points per theme was maintained.
- The test forms met psychometric requirements, including that the test forms were of equivalent difficulty



Methodology

- Reliability Coefficients for Grade 5 and 7 SATs Instruments (Cronbach's alpha)

Reliability Coefficient	Grade 5		Grade 7		
	English 2 nd Language	Mathematics	English 2 nd Language	Mathematics	Natural Science
Form A	0.80	0.81	0.86	0.83	0.78
Form B	0.77	0.80	0.88	0.82	0.77
Form C	0.80	0.83	0.88	0.84	0.77
Average	0.79	0.81	0.87	0.83	0.77

Population

- All learners in Grades 5 and 7 are tested
- A total of 57 443 Grade 5 learners (51.7% male and 48.3% female) from 1181 schools (67.8% rural and 32.2 % urban)
- while 48 025 Grade 7 learners (48.6% male and 51.4% female) from 1142 schools (68.3% rural and 31.7% urban) participated in SATs in 2014.
- The regional distribution of both grade 5 and 7 are uneven and depends on regional population.



Highlights of findings

Table 2: Grade 5 Average National Percentage Scores in 2009, 2011, 2013 and 2014

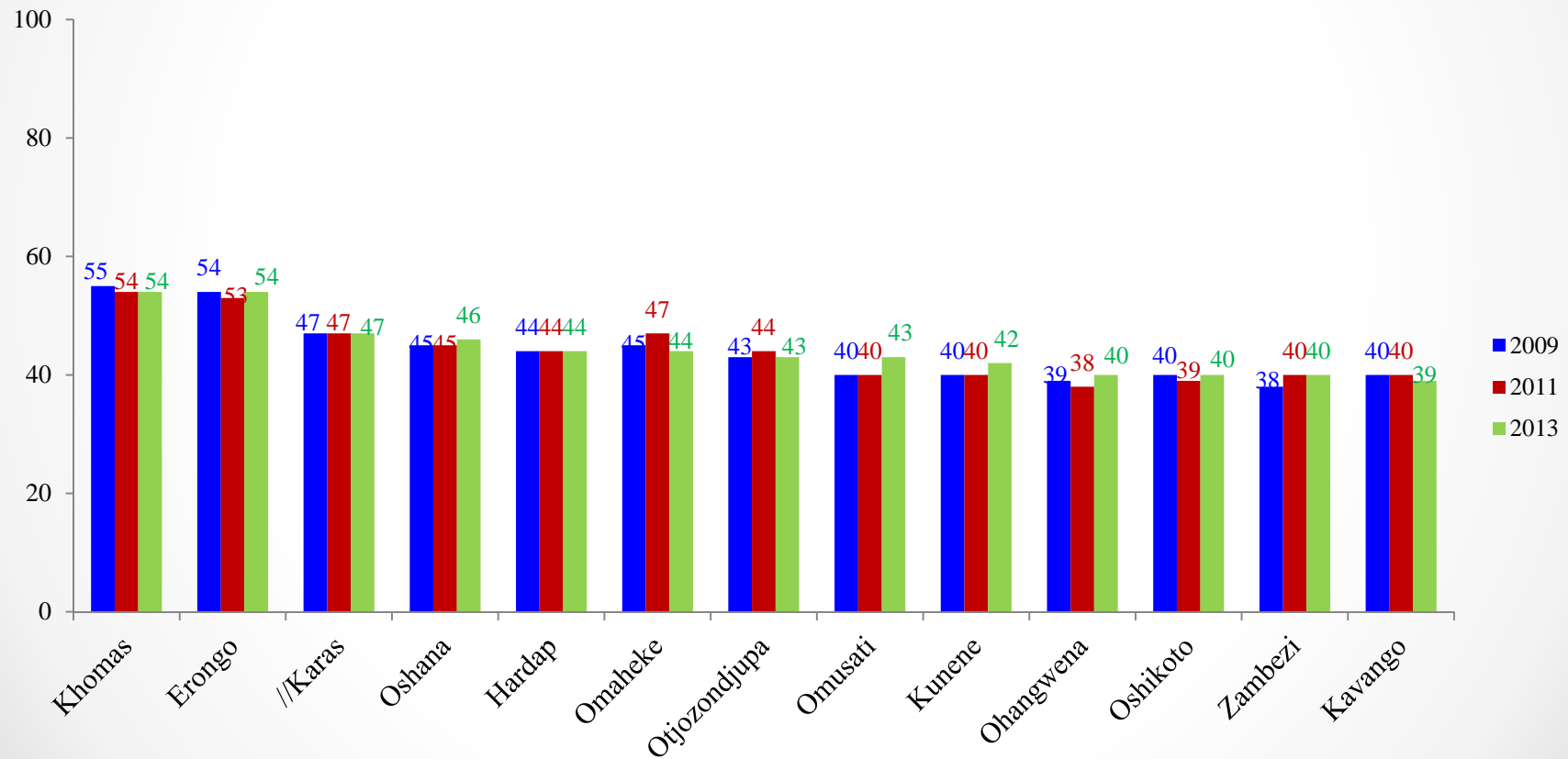
Subject	2009 (baseline)	2011	2013	2014
English 2 nd Language	42	46	44	44
Mathematics	43	43	44	47

Table 3: Grade 7 Average National Percentage Scores in 2010, 2012 and 2014

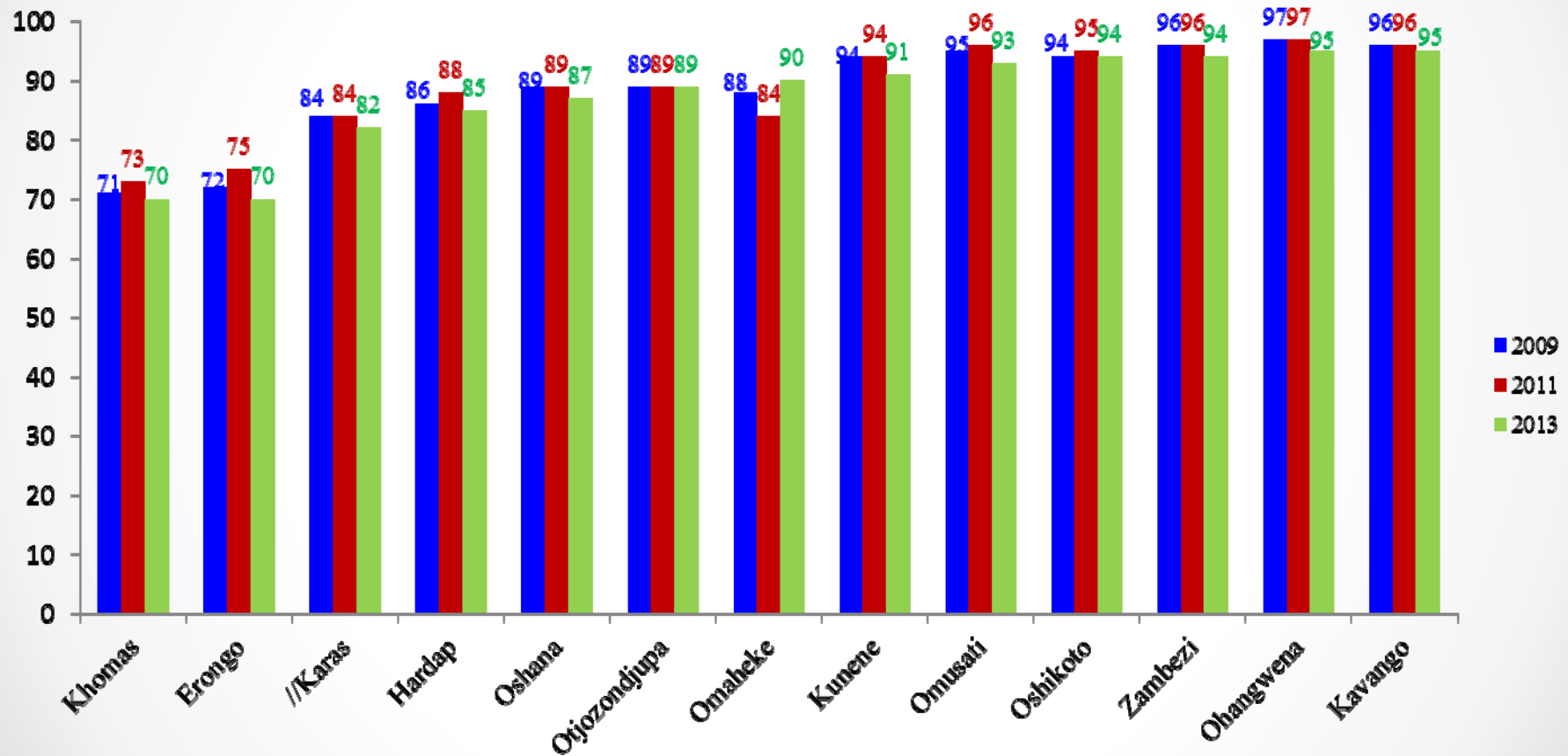
Subject	2010 (baseline)	2012	2014
English 2 nd Language	45	45	49
Mathematics	42	45	48
Natural Science	51	54	58

Regional Comparison: 2009, 2011 and 2013

Average Percentage Score: Grade 5 Mathematics



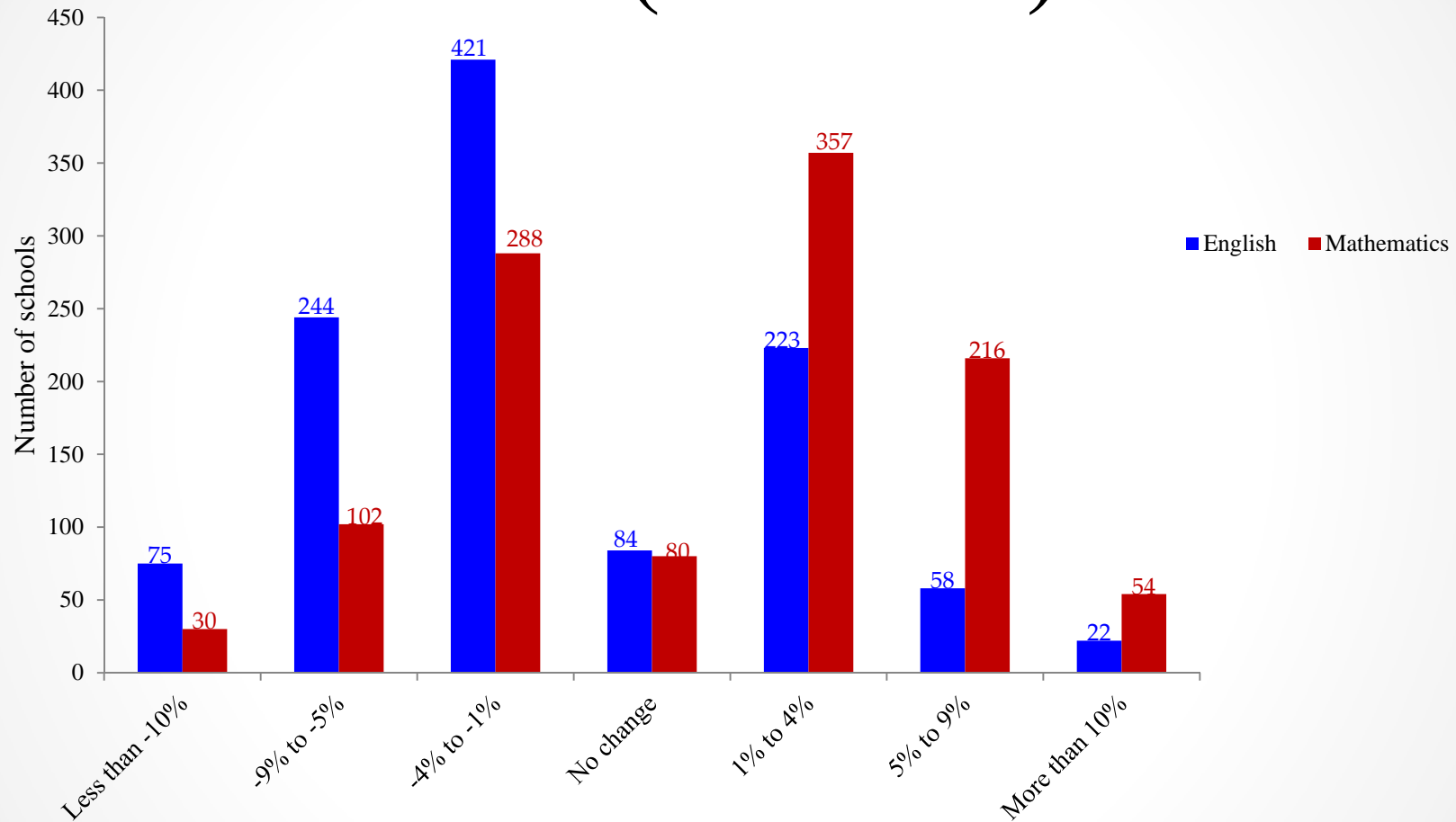
Percentage of Below Basic and Basic Learners: Grade 5 Mathematics



Average Percentage Scores by Rural/Urban Comparison

Subject	Location	2009	2011	2013
English	Rural	37%	40%	36%
	Urban	56%	59%	54%
Mathematics	Rural	40%	39%	41%
	Urban	52%	51%	51%

Level of Improvement: 2011 vs. 2013 (Grade 5)



Discussion

- In general, the results indicate that the majority of the schools have shown minimal improvement in Mathematics, the same cannot be said for English.
- The primary purpose of this national assessment is to provide information to policy makers; education managers and other stakeholders,
- But learners' learning is unlikely to improve unless these findings are used to develop policies and strategies directed towards changing school and classroom practices.
- The SATs provide data on all schools in different locations, schools of different types, schools serving populations of varying socioeconomic levels; thereby supplying a basis for targeted intervention for school categories ,



Intervention Strategies

- *Example – Enhancing teachers’ professional development by providing pre-service and in-service courses.*
- Professional development courses to focus on aspects of the curriculum and of students’ scholastic development that a national assessment (SATs) finds problematic,
- Example – providing information on specific areas of reading or Mathematics where students – and by inference teachers – need support.



- In this regard the following activities were done:
 - Manuals in science and mathematics were by the Ministry's PQA and CPD unit of the University of Namibia.
 - model lessons reflecting best practices
 - Strengthening pre-services programmes for primary school teachers

Challenges and Concerns

- **Invigilation:** - Teachers have been receiving training on how to administer SATs since 2009.
- **Inclusion of visual hearing impaired learners**
- By 2014 learners with visual and hearing impairment were still not participate in Grades 5 and 7 SATs in 2014
- The time is too short to have the intervention strategies implemented before the next tests are taken.

Thank You!

