The Star

# Transforming education

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***Azman: Pupils will be given an intervention to ensure they are able to master the minimum literacy and numeracy level. — LOW LAY PHON/The Star***

THE Education Ministry's curriculum intervention plans are already bearing fruit – barely six months after being introduced.

Developed to address concerns raised by parents and the public, including issues of a curriculum being too difficult and not age-appropriate, efforts began at the start of the academic year in March.

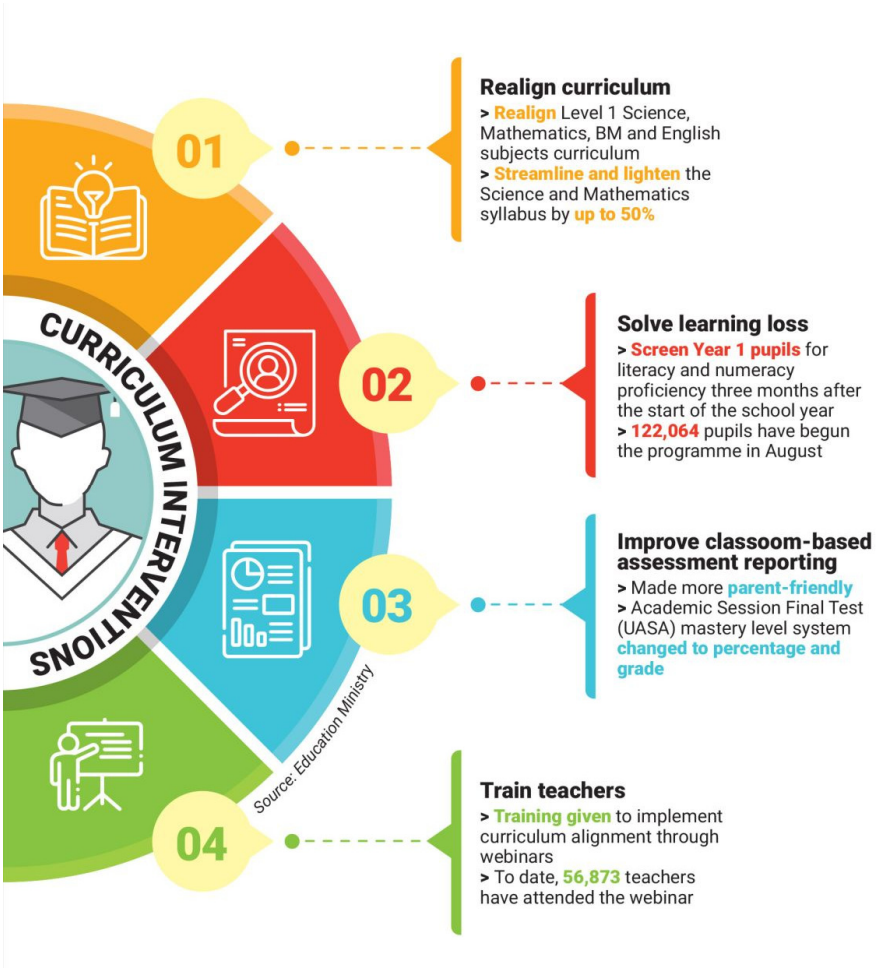
To begin with, Education director-general Azman Adnan said the ministry has successfully streamlined and simplified the syllabus for Level One primary school Mathematics and Science by up to 50%.

He explained that this was the result of combining topics or standards in the curriculum, as well as moving certain standards to the following year.

The streamlining of the syllabus follows the ministry's development and release of the Primary School Standard Curriculum (KSSR) Alignment Document (Revision 2017) Edition 3 as an option for primary school teachers to implement the curriculum.

Created for the Bahasa Melayu (BM), English, Science and Mathematics subjects, he said the document was designed to tackle the issue of students dropping out or falling behind in their studies.

Azman also said the document has been translated into Bahasa Malaysia, English, Chinese and Tamil for ease of use in national primary schools.




Teachers, he added, also have the option of combining the document with the subject's Level I Guidance Modules (MOBIM) to tailor their content delivery methods to match pupils' abilities.

"This should make it easier for teachers to carry out teaching and learning (PdP) and allow all pupils to fully understand the learning standards required by the curriculum," he said during a press conference on Sept 9.

During the initial survey, he said 18,000 out of 20,000 teachers said they were using the curriculum alignment document in their lessons while the rest were using the current curriculum document – depending on pupils' abilities.

Azman said four specific interventions are being carried out.

Besides realigning the curriculum, the ministry is tackling learning loss among pupils, improving classroom-based assessment (PBD) reporting, and training the teachers to be able to effectively implement the improvements.

He said the ministry has begun an early intervention programme for Year One pupils who do not meet the minimum literacy and numeracy standards.

The first cohort of Year One pupils began the three-month programme last month after being screened from March to May by their Mathematics and BM teachers.

Of the 48,113 pupils, 122,064 have been identified for the programme that is being conducted in their schools.

"Based on the results of the screening, the pupils will be given an intervention to ensure they are able to master the minimum literacy and numeracy level," he said.

During the three month intervention, the pupils will be continuously assessed through PBD and if they meet the minimum proficiency standard, they will return to the mainstream classroom.

He said the intervention is carried out during schooling hours in a separate space, with teachers utilising an intervention kit containing suitable learning and reading materials.

"It is easier for pupils to receive guidance in smaller groups. It is also better for us to ensure their competency improves," he said, adding that this intervention prevents pupils who have fallen behind in schools from going unnoticed.

If these pupils are still not able to meet the minimum standard after three months, they will continue for another three months until they have exceeded the minimum proficiency levels, he explained.

"Hopefully, at the end of the first phase of intervention, there will be fewer pupils who would have to continue for another three months," he added.

If, however, a pupil is still not able to meet proficiency standards even after one year of intervention, they will still be allowed to proceed to the following year of study but will remain in the intervention programme, Azman assured.

The programme's first cohort is expected to complete the first intervention phase next month.

Azman said the ministry has refined PBD reporting to make it more parent-friendly and easier to understand with clearer definitions being used for each mastery level descriptors in the Integrated Assessment Management System (SPPB).

As for the Academic Session Final Test (UASA) mastery level system, reporting is now done using a percentage and grade structure so that this summative assessment can be easily understood.

"This new reporting system will be used this November and can easily be accessed by parents or guardians online through the ministry's SPPB," said Azman.

Teachers, he said, have also been receiving training through talks, webinars and workshops so that they are able to easily carry out the curriculum alignment measures.

Conducted as a series, the training began on March 19, a day after the interventions were announced.

"These trainings are being held at all levels – school, district education departments and state education offices," he said, adding that the training focuses on the BM, English, Mathematics and Science subjects.

So far, 56,873 teachers have attended the webinar.

**Monitoring in progress**

All these interventions, said Azman, are being implemented and monitored consistently by a special taskforce in charge of the curriculum intervention for both primary and secondary schools.

The taskforce is chaired by the Education Ministry deputy director-general of policy and curriculum and is made up of members from all the related ministry divisions together with the Education Advisory Council.

The taskforce also has to determine the primary and supplementary activities to be implemented at all levels to help teachers simplify the PdP and allow pupils across the country to take part in all the supplementary activities.

“This is so that they can learn and master all the topics and subjects in the curriculum,” he said.

Azman said all these intervention methods are in line with the ministry’s ongoing Education Reform agenda.

“Right now, we are carrying out various support programmes to ensure our children are given the attention and reinforcement so that they can obtain the knowledge in the curriculum,” he said, adding that they welcome any ideas and feedback from the public to strengthen their efforts.

He stressed that the ministry was committed to ensuring the efforts carried out under the curriculum intervention have a positive effect on the pupils’ learning experience as well as the overall quality of learning.