



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Sunday, October 1, 1972

MORE SPECIALISTS FOR EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Five newly trained specialists have returned from the United Kingdom to reinforce the Special Education Section of the Education Department.

This brings the number of specialists in the Section to 31. Seven others, still undergoing training in Britain, are due to return to Hong Kong in another year or so.

Of the five new staff members, two are trained in the education of the educationally subnormal, one in the education of maladjusted children, one in the education of the blind and one in speech therapy.

The expansion of the Special Education Section is part of the Government's five-year development plan for special education.

The majority of people approaching this Section for help are school teachers and parents of children with problems. Others are referred by the Social Welfare Department, the Medical and Health Department, general practitioners and voluntary welfare agencies.

Mrs. Grace Yung, an educational psychologist, interviews on an average between 70 and 90 children a month. These are children with learning difficulties or behaviour problems.

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"When a child is referred to us for help, we first interview him together with his parents. Then we give him an intelligence test followed by a series of psychological tests until we arrive at the root of the problem," she says.

"We aim to help the child so that he can be accepted as an equal member of the community. We assess him according to his age, intelligence and ability to receive education and refer him to one of the special schools depending on his difficulties, or to a special class in an ordinary school where he can benefit from schooling in an ordinary environment."

Another aspect of the diagnostic services of the Special Education Section is provided by the Speech and Hearing Centre.

About 5,000 primary one pupils in government schools are given screening tests each year to detect and identify hearing impairments and to provide correct treatment and appropriate training at an early age.

Ten per cent of the children given screening tests are found to be in need of therapeutic treatment.

Part of the audiologist's work is to diagnose the type and degree of hearing loss of the children. He then places them in suitable schools for education.

Students suffering from minor hearing impairments are placed in special classes for the partially-hearing in ordinary schools where they receive special tutorial help from teachers. At the same time, they undergo medical treatment or use hearing aids.

Once they can follow ordinary class teaching. They are transferred to ordinary classes.

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The Government Lotteries Fund has made it possible for hearing aids to be provided free to children in need of them.

Every year, the Special Education Section conducts speech screening tests for primary three pupils of government primary schools. About 4,000 pupils are screened and 300 are given remedial therapy each year.

Teachers are given basic knowledge about pupils with minor speech defects and children with more serious speech and language problems are referred to the Speech and Hearing Centre for special training.

An educational counsellor is always on hand to assist the specialists in winning the understanding and co-operation of the parents and teachers, without which rapid improvement would not be made.

Not only primary school pupils receive the benefit of services provided by the Special Education Section. Among the list of people presently under the care of the specialists are a number of secondary students.

When the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations are held, a special centre is set up for students with difficulties. There they are given special arrangements based on recommendations given by the specialists after consideration of their difficulties.

A common aspect in the work of all the specialists in the Special Education Section is the help they give in teacher training.

Besides operating one-year in-service courses in special education, they also conduct seminars and short courses for teachers in ordinary schools and student teachers at the three colleges of education.

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MOSQUITO NUISANCE MAY DEVELOP

The recent downpour of rain may trigger off a widespread mosquito nuisance, a spokesman for the Urban Services Department warned today.

He pointed out that mosquitoes breed only in stagnant water - clean or otherwise - regardless of the environment.

People are urged to keep a sharp lookout for stagnant water in the vicinity of their own home for possible breeding places.

In built-up areas the most favourite breeding places are discarded receptacles such as tins and bottles. Choked surface drains and uncovered water tanks are also common breeding grounds.

The neglected places can be located and destroyed or removed. The Urban Services Department gives the following advice:

pay special attention to open areas, such as roofs, balconies, verandahs, canopies and yards;

remove all empty tins and bottles and turn large receptacles up side down; and

cover up water tanks and clear all rain water outlets to prevent blockages.

The Government has been doing what it can to control large-scale breeding places, such as streams, pools, ponds, building sites and vacant land, the spokesman said.

The control of small breeding places in and around domestic buildings is, however, just as important.

Everyone can help to remove the nuisance, by regularly checking for possible breeding places and destroying them, the spokesman added.

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Release Time: 3.00 p.m.