



VALUE FOR MONEY AUDIT REPORT

of the

AUDITOR-GENERAL

on the

FACILITATION, PROVISION AND CONSTRUCTION OF SCHOOLS

by

THE MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



Presented to Parliament of Zimbabwe 2025

VFM 2025:01

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Dear Sir,

I hereby submit my Value for Money Audit Report on the Facilitation, Provision and Construction of Schools in terms of section 6(b) of the Audit Office Act [Chapter 22:18].

Yours faithfully,

R. KUJINGA,

ACTING AUDITOR-GENERAL.

Harare,

January 17, 2025



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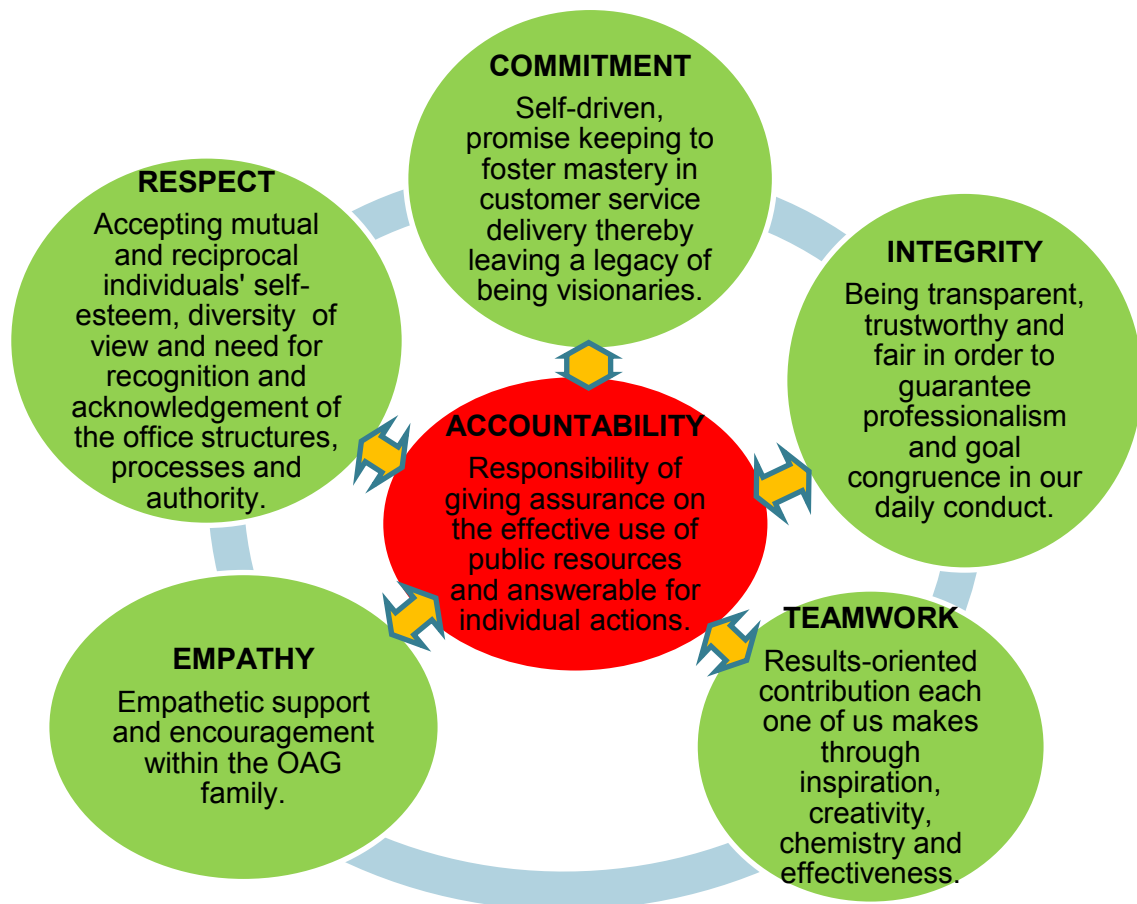


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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DSI	District Schools Inspector
ECD	Early Childhood Development
HRD	Human Resources and Discipline
MoFEDIP	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
RA	Responsible Authority
SDC	School Development Committee
SIDO	Schools Infrastructure Development Officer
SPPRS	Strategic Policy Planning Research and Statistics
PED	Provincial Education Director
PMU	Procurement Management Unit
PSIP	Public Sector Investment Programme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
ZBC	Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Infant School: Means a school for children between 4 and 7 years making up ECD A, B, grade 1 and 2.

Junior School: Means a school for children between 8 and 12 years comprising of grades 3 to 7.

Primary School: Means a school for pupils aged between 4 and 12 years, comprising of Infant and Junior school.

PSIP: PSIP stands for Public Sector Investment Programme. This is a programme where the Government provides funding for capital projects for example the construction of schools.

Responsible Authority: According to the Education Act [*Chapter 25:04*], it is the person, body or organisation responsible for the establishment and management of the school.

Satellite School: It is an unregistered school, attached to an established school to cater for huge demand for education of children in new resettlement areas.

School: Means a primary school (infant and junior) or a secondary school.

Secondary School: Means a school for pupils aged between 13 and 18 years which follows after primary education.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background of the Audit

The Value for Money Audit on the Facilitation, Provision and Construction of schools by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was conducted to assess the extent to which the Ministry was providing, facilitating and constructing schools so as to solve the challenge of inadequate number of public schools.

Over the past six (6) years from 2018 to 2023, the Government invested the sum of ZWL\$ 4.7 billion in the provision and construction of schools to meet the needs of the growing population of children that require basic education.

Despite Government's financial commitment for construction of schools, there are complaints from various stakeholders as noted from local media regarding inadequate public schools.

It was for this reason that a decision was made to conduct a value for money audit on facilitation, provision and construction of schools by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to ascertain the extent to which the Ministry had addressed the shortage of schools in the country.

Summary of Findings:

My audit revealed shortcomings in the facilitation, provision and construction of schools. Shortcomings were on issues of rolling out/execution of the construction plans and provision/construction of schools in new settlements.

1. Rolling out/Execution of the Construction Plans

Schools were not being constructed as per the plan. The plan was to construct three hundred (300) schools per year translating to 1 800 schools for the 6 years under review, 2018 to 2023. However, only two hundred and forty-two (242) were constructed during the period under review. Delays to execute the construction plans resulted in overcrowding in schools. As a temporary measure the Ministry was using satellite schools and hot seating sessions which were not conducive for learners. The inadequate execution of the construction plans was attributed to the following:

- **Delays in the Construction of Schools.**
- **Ineffective Coordination in Procurement of Materials.**
- **Contract Price Variations and Termination of Contracts.**
- **Under-utilisation of the Released Budget.**
- **Non-functionality of the Project Management Committee.**
- **Inadequate Supervision and Monitoring of Construction Projects.**

1.1 Delays in the Construction of Schools

I noted that there were delays in the completion of construction projects. Out of the eight (8) PSIP projects audited in Harare, Manicaland and Bulawayo provinces, none had been completed. The projects delayed to be completed by a range of 4 to 6 years and some construction works had stopped for more than five (5) years. Budiro Secondary School in Manicaland was planned to be constructed from 2023 to 2026. At the time of audit in April 2024 construction had not yet started as tendering and bidding processes were still in progress. Two sites in Bulawayo Province were reserved for schools construction in 2003 but construction had not yet started as at the time of audit on July 4, 2024.

1.2 Procurement of Materials

The procurement of materials for the schools' construction projects were being managed at the Provincial and Head Office level with no or limited involvement of the Districts and the school heads. Audit noted that some materials bought were for other stages not yet reached. For instance, roofing materials at Budiro 6 Primary School in Harare and Chitungwiza Early Learning Centre were bought when construction was still at foundation level. The roofing materials were bought in 2019 and the classroom blocks were still at foundation level as at September 2023.

1.3 Contract Price Variations and Termination of Contracts

In Manicaland Province at Magamba Primary School, the Contractor requested price variation of 7% for completed stages in September 2022. The Contractor had cited inflationary pressures as the reason for requesting contract price variations. The Contractor stopped construction in July 2023. However, the Ministry had not yet responded to the requests to adjust prices and the school remained uncompleted as at April 4, 2024.

In Bulawayo Province, at Ngwenyama Primary School, a contract was terminated by the Ministry in July 2021 due to non-performance and failure to meet timeframes by the Contractor. The Contractor was unable to complete a double classroom block within eleven (11) weeks from October 10, 2018. The project was at foundation level when the contract was terminated and there were no further activities carried as at July 4, 2024.

1.4 Utilisation of the Released Budget

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education received ZWL\$3.8 billion out of ZWL\$4.7 budgeted amounts for the period 2018 to 2023, which was fully utilized for public schools' construction. However, ZWL\$0.9 billion was not funded, resulting in the Ministry being unable to complete the planned activities.

1.5 Non-Functionality of the Project Management Committee

The Ministry appointed a Programmes and Projects Infrastructure Development Committee in April 2023. The committee comprised of nine (9) members from the Head Office. The committee was not functional and did not have terms of reference to guide them on what they were expected to do. The committee had not met since appointment. The committee was reappointed in July 2024 and its role is to provide technical support and advice to provinces, districts and schools in PSIP projects implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The committee is also meant to advocate for PSIP projects support including creating a bridge between financiers, policy makers and partners.

1.6 Supervision and Monitoring of Construction Projects

The Ministry did not supervise and monitor the construction projects. Audit inspections done at Hatcliffe 3 Primary in Harare Province revealed that substandard classrooms were constructed and were condemned by the Ministry's inspectors after construction had been completed. The classrooms at Hatcliffe had no windows and finished floors. In Bulawayo Province, Contractor for Pumula South classroom block was served with a demolition letter by Ministry of Local Government and Public Works. The demolition order was served to the Contractor as the building materials used were not as per the contract and the building under construction did not meet the expected standard.

2. Provision of Schools in New Settlements

I noted that public schools were not being constructed in new settlements despite the settlements having large numbers of families living in the areas. Out of the forty four (44) sites reserved for the construction of schools for the period 2003 to 2015 only one (1) was developed, two (2) were partially developed and forty one (41) were not developed. The consolidated information for the period 2018 to 2023 on the reserved sites for the whole country was not availed by the Head Office for audit inspection.

Due to delays by the Ministry to construct schools in reserved sites, the sites were being occupied by illegal settlers. Houses were being constructed in some sites and some sites were being turned into agricultural land.

3. Other Funding Mechanisms for Construction of Public Schools

The Ministry was engaging in Public Private Partnerships in the construction of schools. In Manicaland, Harare and Bulawayo Provinces, twenty-four (24), twenty-two (22) and eleven (11) schools were constructed respectively under the Public Private Partnerships arrangement. In addition, Schools Development Committees were instrumental in funding construction of schools and additional blocks.

Recommendations

The Ministry should consider the following recommendations in order to improve on the facilitation, provision and construction of schools.

- 1** The Ministry should come up with realistic plans for construction of public schools that are in line with the availed resources as well as the population of the school going age and demand across provinces.
 - 1.1** The Ministry should come up with a systematic and prudent construction approach that ensures that construction works started on each project site are completed first before embarking on new projects. This will allow for effective use of project resources availed by the Government resulting in timely completion of projects.
 - 1.2** The Ministry should coordinate with Provinces and Districts when procuring materials so that the right materials are procured for the appropriate stage of construction.
 - 1.3** The Ministry should expeditiously address the issues of payments and price variations raised by contractors so that projects are completed as per plan. In addition, the Ministry should carry out thorough due diligence on Contractors so that those with capacity are engaged.
 - 1.4** The Ministry should frequently engage Treasury to ensure that all budgeted amounts are funded so that the construction projects are completed.
 - 1.5** The Ministry should facilitate the full functionality of the Project Management Committee to enable it to spearhead the implementation of the construction projects across the provinces.
 - 1.6** The Ministry should supervise and monitor construction projects at every stage to ensure that contractors are constructing according to Ministry requirements. No contractor should be allowed to proceed to the next level before certification of previous level.
- 2** The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should liaise with Ministry of Local Government and the Department of State Lands to obtain a database of all the sites allocated to them for construction of schools. On the known sites the Ministry should prioritise construction on those sites so that school going children do not walk long distances to access schools.
 - 2.1** For sites handed over to the Ministry, management should make regular monitoring and inspections to ensure that the sites are not taken over by illegal settlers or allocated for housing purposes.
- 3** The Ministry should continue to engage Public Private Partnerships in the construction of schools as the partners are playing a pivotal role in assisting the government with the provision and construction of schools.
- 4** Costs incurred should be recovered from contractors who constructed sub standard schools that were demolished.
- 5** The Ministry should prioritize provision of conducive learning environment by easing overcrowding in schools. In addition, temporary shades should be provided so that learners are not exposed to the sun and rains.

CHAPTER 1

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Education is a basic human right for everyone in society. Over the years the Government, through the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, has made significant investment in facilitating the provision and construction of schools to meet the needs of the growing population of children that require basic education in the country.

The education system in the country is mainly divided into infant (ECD A, B, grade one and two), junior (grade three up to seven) and secondary education (form one up to form six). The infant education has four (4) years; junior education has five (5) years and secondary education has six (6) years. The target population for the Ministry's school projects are children in primary (infant and junior) and secondary schools who are within the age range of four (4) to eighteen (18) years.

The value for money audit on the facilitation, provision and construction of schools by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was conducted to assess the extent to which the Ministry is facilitating the implementation of the schools' construction projects to ensure that there are adequate public schools in the country.

1.2 Motivation

This audit was motivated by the increasing public outcry over the inability of children to acquire basic education due to shortage of public schools and also overcrowding in the schools available. The results of the pre-study also showed that there were inadequate number of public schools constructed. There were challenges and constraints noted within the Ministry as reported in the local media and documents reviewed. For instance:

- A review of minutes of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Education showed that there was a shortage of three thousand (3 000) schools as of the year 2018.
- In the Herald of November 17, 2021, the Minister of Information Publicity and Broadcasting services indicated that there was a rise in the demand for education with 37,3% of the country's estimated total population being of school-going age. More schools were needed to accommodate the projected increase of 5.7 million for the school-going age.
- The Chronicle of May 9, 2023 also highlighted that most government schools have high enrolments with less infrastructure which then affects the delivery of education as classes are congested.

Over the past six (6) years that is between 2018 to 2023, the Zimbabwean Government invested the sum of ZWL\$4.7 billion in the provision and construction of schools to try and meet the needs of the growing population of children that require basic education in the country.

Despite Government's financial commitment for construction of schools, there were complaints from various stakeholders as noted from local media and from the legislators, regarding inadequate classrooms in public schools.

A report by the Centre for Innovation and Technology published on August 23, 2021 showed that schools in Zimbabwe faced numerous challenges in providing quality education ranging from a shortage of learning materials and other facilities such as classrooms.

It was for this reason that a decision was made to conduct a value for money audit on facilitation, provision and construction of schools by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and to ascertain whether the schools have been built to address the shortage of learning facilities being faced by the public in the country.

1.3 Audit Design

This part covers the audit objective, audit scope, audit questions, assessment criteria, audit methodology and sampling.

1.3.1 Audit Objective

The objective of this audit was to assess the extent to which the Ministry was facilitating the implementation of the schools' construction projects to ensure that there was provision of adequate public schools in the country.

1.3.2 Audit Scope

The audit focused on the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's activities related to facilitation, provision and construction of schools in Zimbabwe covering the period from January 2018 to the date of audit July 4, 2024.

1.3.3 Audit Questions and Assessment Criteria

AQ1. To what extent did the Ministry plan and facilitate the provision and construction of public schools?

AC1. According to the Secretary's contract, the Ministry is targeting to construct 300 schools annually.

AQ1.1. Was the schools construction programme being rolled out/executed as per the plan?

AC1.1. According to the Secretary's contract, the Ministry is targeting to construct 30 schools per province annually for the period 2018 -2023.

AQ1.2. To what extent is the Ministry ensuring that the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works is reserving sites for public schools?

AC1.2. According to the Ministry of Local Government Layout Design Manual, for every 500-700 residential units there should be a Primary school and for every 3-5 feeder primary schools there should be a Secondary school.

AQ1.3. Are there any public schools that were constructed on the reserved school sites in residential areas for the period under review?

AC1.3. According to Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of National Housing Layout Manual there are allocated sites in residential areas for the provision and construction of public schools and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education is mandated to construct public schools on those reserved areas.

AQ2.To what extent were the budgeted funds utilized towards construction of public schools?

AC2. According to the Appropriation Acts for the period of audit, all budgeted funds should be utilised for the intended purpose.

AQ2.1. Does the Ministry partner with other stakeholders in the provision and construction of public schools?

AC2.1. The SDC statutory instrument 87 of 1992 authorizes SDCs and Schools Responsible Authorities to construct schools as part of development in the education system. According to management, the Ministry may engage in Public Private Partnerships in the construction of public schools.

AQ3. Does the Ministry have a functional project management committee steering the provision of public schools?

AC3. According to the Terms of Reference for the Project Management Committee, Head Office should set up a Project Management Committee to perform the following: Providing technical support and advice to provinces, districts and schools in PSIP projects implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The committee should also advocate for PSIP projects support including creating a bridge between financiers, policy makers and partners.

AQ4. How does the Ministry supervise and monitor construction projects to ensure that public schools are constructed in line with the Ministry requirements?

AC4. According to the Ministry's Schools Infrastructure Development Guidelines, the Ministry's inspectors must make regular inspections at different levels of construction.

AQ4.1. How does the Ministry supervise and monitor the allocated sites to ensure that only public schools are constructed at those designated sites?

AC4.1. According to the management, the Ministry must make regular inspections to ensure that only public schools are constructed on the respective reserved sites.

1.4 Audit Methodology

The audit was carried out in accordance with the International Standards of Supreme Audit Institutions (ISSAIs). I used documentary reviews, interviews and inspections to collect data in order to gain an understanding of the processes involved in the facilitation, provision and construction of public schools. **Annexures A to C** has details about documents reviewed, interviews and inspections carried out.

1.4.1 Documentary Review

Documentary review was done to gather information on the operations, processes, procedures, policies and challenges related to the facilitation, provision and construction of schools. The main documents reviewed were the Strategic Plan 2018-2025, Education Act [Chapter 25:04], Government circulars, Schools Infrastructure Development Guidelines and Audited Financial Statements.

1.4.2 Interviews

Interviews were carried out with Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education officials responsible for the construction of schools, among other relevant key stakeholders to gather information as well as corroborate other information obtained from documentary review. The key personnel interviewed were Directors in different departments, the Projects and Infrastructure Committee members, Provincial Education Directors, District Schools Inspectors and Headmasters.

1.4.3 Inspections

Inspections were done on construction projects at new schools, at additional blocks being constructed at existing schools and reserved sites for the construction of public schools. Sites were inspected to establish existence as well as to confirm whether the use of the land was not changed. Some of the schools that were inspected included Eyecourt Primary (Chitungwiza), Apex Board Secondary (Harare), Magamba Primary (Makoni Rusape) and Ngwenyama Primary (Bulawayo).

1.4.4 Sampling

The team used judgemental sampling in coming up with a sample. A sample of three (3) out of the ten (10) provinces in Zimbabwe were chosen, that is Manicaland, Harare and Bulawayo. This was based on the 2022 Annual Education Statistics Report which highlighted that Manicaland province had the highest population of 15% of the school going age followed by Harare province with 14% and Bulawayo with the least of 4%.

CHAPTER 2

2. SYSTEMS DESCRIPTION

This chapter describes the mandate, funding, roles and responsibilities of key players and process description by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in the facilitation, provision and construction of schools.

2.1 Description of the Audit Area

2.1.1 Mandate

The mandate of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education as derived from the Ministry's Functions Handbook is to provide equitable, quality, inclusive, relevant and competence-driven primary, secondary and non-formal education. The education system should also be accessible, affordable and enable citizens to participate in the socio-economic transformation of the nation.

2.1.2 Funding

The major source of funding for the construction of government schools was from the Government through the Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion in the form of Public Sector Investment Programme (PSIP). Below is a summary of the budgeted and released funds received for construction of schools. Table 1 below show the budgeted and received amounts for the period 2018 to 2023.

Table 1: Funding for Construction of Schools.

Year	Budgeted Amount ZWL \$	Released Amount ZWL \$
2018	4 255 100	4 255 100
2019	34 547 948	34 547 857
2020	74 898 000	74 898 000
2021	300 697 618	291 228 443
2022	282 347 000	282 347 000
2023	4 255 418 404	3 990 302 398
Total	4 952 164 070	4 677 578 798

Source: Public Financial Management System Extracts and Audited Financial Statements (2018-2023).

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Players

2.2.1 Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

- Processing of registration documents for establishment of all schools.
- Facilitate the provision of funding from Ministry of Finance, Economic Development and Investment Promotion.
- Responsible for tenders, purchases and due diligence in the procurement of construction materials.
- Monitor and inspect work done by the contractors and make recommendations.
- Engaging and sourcing of funds from private players for construction of schools.

2.2.2 Ministry of Local Government and Public Works

The Ministry is responsible for the physical construction of schools. However, they can subcontract if they have no capacity to construct. The Ministry has the following departments; department of physical planning, architectural department, department of quantity surveying and engineering department. The roles played by this Ministry include:

- Site identification and production of site plans.
- Production of a bill of quantities and valuation.
- Tendering and procurement of contractors.
- Production of drawings, site works and supervision of construction works.
- Designing, supervision and maintenance of all government schools and
- Handing over of the completed school to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Beneficiary handover).

2.2.3 Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development Resettlement

The Ministry is responsible for the provision of land and authorisation of school sites in rural and resettlement areas.

2.2.4 Local Authorities and Rural District Councils

These are responsible for the provision of land, enforcement of building by-laws and quality assurance. They also construct council schools which are now considered public schools according to the Amended Education Act [*Chapter 25:04*] of 2020.

2.2.5 Project Management Committee

According to the Ministry's circular dated April 20, 2023, the committee was put in place to monitor progress against plan, supervise and monitor the schools construction projects implementation and ensure adherence to project quality. The committee would provide technical support and advice to provinces, districts and schools in PSIP projects implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The committee would also advocate for PSIP projects support including creating a bridge between financiers, policy makers and partners.

2.3 PROCESS DESCRIPTION

Allocation of Sites

According to the Ministry of Local Government Layout Design Manual, the Ministry of Local Government allocates sites to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for the construction of schools. The Schools' Infrastructure Development Guidelines stipulates that the following should be taken into consideration when allocating sites:

- distance between the proposed primary school and the existing neighbouring schools in the area, as a guide in rural areas it should ordinarily be 10km apart so that no pupils will walk a distance of more than 5kms to the school depending on population density.
- The distance from the proposed secondary school to the existing secondary schools in the area as a guide should ordinarily be 22kms apart depending on the population density as well.

In urban areas, for every 500 households there should be a primary school and for every 1 500 households there should be a secondary school.

When the need to establish a school arises a pre-site visit is conducted by the Ministry, the Physical Planning Department, Ministry of Lands, the Local Authority and representatives from the responsible authority. The purpose of the pre-site visit is for site identification and to assess if the expected hectares of land for the proposed primary/secondary school is met. The required stand size for a primary school should be twelve (12) hectares of land (for rural schools), three and a half (3.5) hectares of land (for urban schools). The required stand size for a secondary school should be twenty-seven (27) hectares of land for rural schools and eight (8) hectares of land for urban.

After the pre-visit, the local authority invites the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Physical Planning department, Ministry of Lands, the District Development Fund (DDF), Environment Management Agency (EMA) and representatives from the Responsible Authority for siting and a feasibility study is carried out by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary.

Application and Granting of Authority for Establishment and Construction of a School

The Responsible Authority will then make an application for establishment and construction of the proposed primary or secondary school and submits to the District Office for onwards submission to the Provincial Office for recommendation and further transmission to Head Office for approval.

The Annual Secretary's contract, has a target of thirty (30) schools per province per year. The Secretary for Education grants permission to the responsible authority for the establishment and construction of the school. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education then applies for the authority to construct from the Department of State Lands under Ministry of Local Government and Public Works or the Local Authority if it's a council stand.

Drawing of Technical Plans and Budget

After the authority to construct is granted by the Department of State Lands, technical drawings and the bill of quantities are then made by the Department of Public Works. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education plans and budget for construction of public schools and submit the budgets to Treasury. Funds are then received from Treasury.

Procurement of Materials

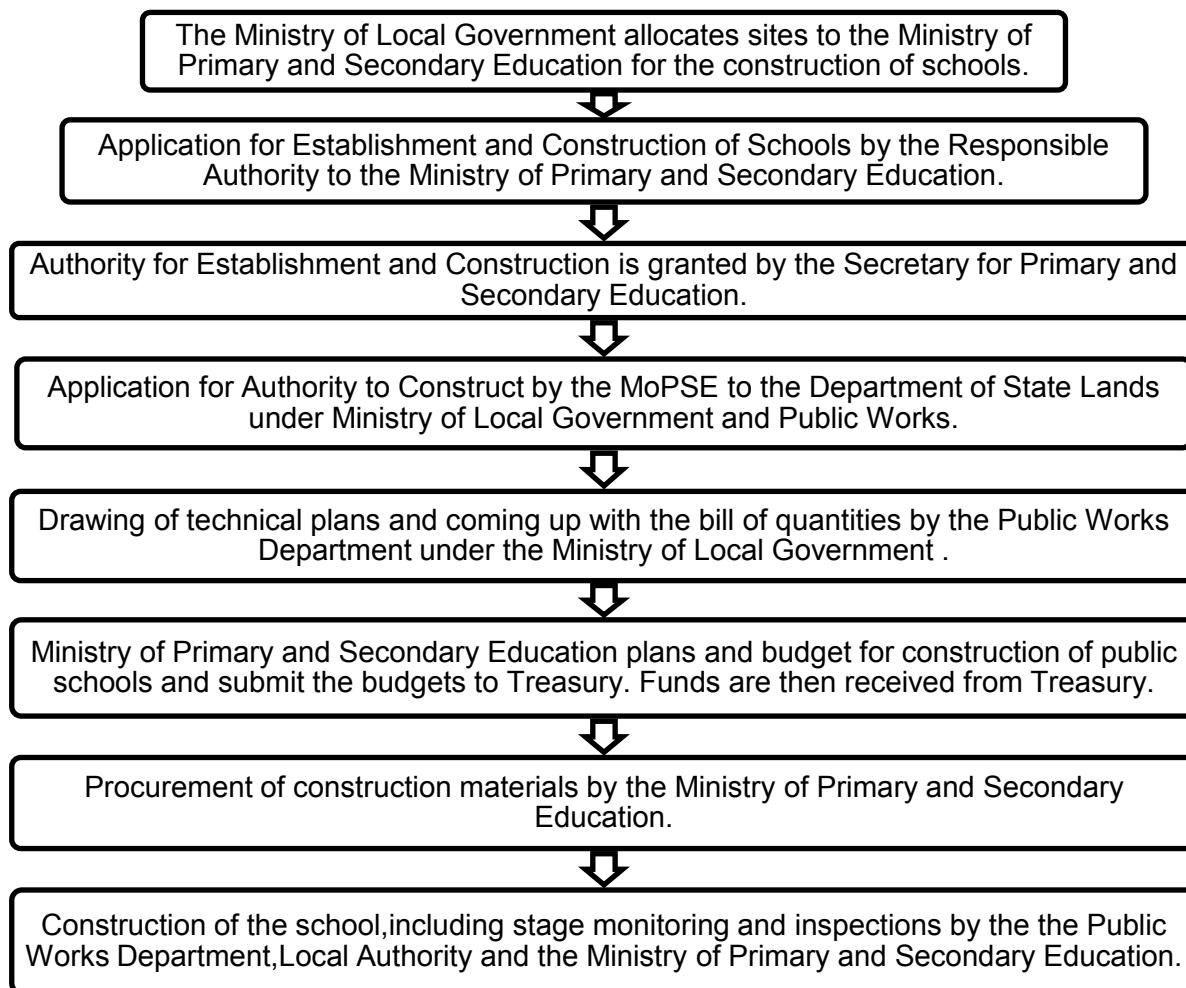
The purchase of construction materials is the responsibility of the respective Provincial office for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. All purchases for construction materials shall be made in consultation with the Director Finance at Provincial level and Director Procurement Management Unit at Head Office. Construction materials should be bought in stages so that other materials will not expire before usage for instance cement. Secure storage facilities should be put in place before procurement of construction materials. An inventory record of all construction materials should be kept on site and regularly checked by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education for purposes of avoiding pilferage and materials being obsolete.

Commencement of Construction

The Public Works department is responsible for the construction. However, if they do not have the capacity they subcontract to independent contractors. Only qualified contractors with the capacity to build schools should be hired. Construction of the building structures will commence and must be regularly inspected at different stages of construction as directed by Public Works to ensure compliance with the Local Authority building by-laws. The Ministry's schools' inspectors of infrastructure and development together with Department of Public

Works should make regular inspections at the different levels of construction. Refer to the flow chart outlined in **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1: Process Flow Chart.



Source: Schools Infrastructure Development Guidelines.

CHAPTER 3

3 FINDINGS

This chapter details my findings relating to the assessment on how the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education was facilitating, providing and constructing schools. My assessment revealed strengths and weaknesses in the way the Ministry was facilitating the provision and construction of schools. If these weaknesses are converted into strengths this can improve the learning environment in terms of infrastructure and have a positive impact on the quality of education.

3.1 Rolling out/Execution of the Construction Plans

I noted that the schools' construction programme was not being rolled out as per the plan. The Ministry had planned to construct 300 schools per year. For the period under review, 2018 to 2023 the Ministry was expected to have constructed one thousand eight hundred schools (1 800) for both primary and secondary. The Ministry only managed to construct two hundred and forty two (242) schools during the period under review. **Table 2** below shows the targeted number of public schools against the actual constructed per province.

Table 2: Public Schools Target versus Actual Construction for the Period 2018-2023.

Provincial Target/year-30 Schools.		Actual Construction							
		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total for the 6 years	% (Actual Total Construction/ Target per year*6 years)
Total Target for 6 years (30x6) 180									
Harare	180	8	3	0	0	0	6	17	9%
Bulawayo	180	6	3	0	0	0	1	10	6%
Mashonaland East	180	13	12	0	8	8	6	47	26%
Mashonaland West	180	14	4	0	0	4	1	23	13%
Matabeleland North	180	4	1	0	8	4	3	20	11%
Matabeleland South	180	9	0	0	8	9	1	27	15%
Mashonaland Central	180	5	28	0	6	6	2	47	26%
Masvingo	180	6	0	0	0	5	4	15	8%
Manicaland	180	10	3	0	0	2	3	18	10%
Midlands	180	7	0	0	7	4	0	18	10%
Total	1 800	82	54	0	37	42	27	242	13%

Source: Correspondence from the SPPRS Department Head Office (2018-2023).

A review of the Ministry's Annual Education Statistics Report for 2022 highlighted that the school going population was over five (5) million and the available schools were not in a position to accommodate all the learners, hence the need for more Government schools to be constructed. Documentay reviews also revealed that the Ministry had not been able to meet the demand for public schools as the enrolments continued to increase. The number of schools constructed showed a decline since 2018 except for 2022 when the number slightly increased. However, no explanation was given for the decline. Information which pertains to 2023 could not be analysed as the Ministry's Annual Education Statistics Report for 2023

was not yet out as at July 4, 2024 when I concluded the audit. In addition, I noted that there was an increase in the number of private schools constructed for the period 2018-2022. Refer to **Table 3** below.

Table 3: Number of Schools and Enrolments for the Period 2018-2022.

Year	Primary Schools			Secondary Schools		
	Government	Private	Total Enrolment	Government	Private	Total Enrolment
2018	5 331	957	2 725 970	2 170	701	1 085 828
2019	5 348	1 323	2 789 692	2 180	774	1 124 881
2020	5 330	1 468	2 869 735	2 189	791	1 137 178
2021	5 322	1 759	2 899 259	2 185	881	1 087 632
2022	5 282	2 104	2 943 370	2 167	964	1 121 591

Source: 2018-2022 Annual Education Statistics Report.

Due to the fact that the Ministry was not constructing adequate public schools, it had resorted to the use of satellite schools as a temporary measure. Below, is **Table 4** showing the total number of satellite schools in the country for the period 2018 to 2022. There was an increase in the number of satellite schools for both primary and secondary schools with the exception of 2022 which showed a decline in the number of satellite schools and no explanation was given for the decline. Information which pertains to 2023 could not be analysed as the Ministry's Annual Education Statistics Report for 2023 was not yet out as at July 4, 2024

Table 4: Total Number of Satellite Schools in the Country.

Year	Primary	Secondary	Total
2018	1 029	837	1 866
2019	1 051	853	1 904
2020	1 069	858	1 927
2021	1 087	876	1 963
2022	963	784	1 747
Grand Total	5 199	4 208	9 407

Source: Annual Education Statistics Reports 2018-2022.

Out of the three (3) visited satellite schools in Harare province, two (2) of them (Eyecourt Primary and Apex Board Secondary) had been in existence for fourteen (14) years and were in a dire state which was not conducive for learners. Eyecourt Primary and Apex Board Secondary converted tobacco barns into classrooms. I visited Hatcliffe 3 Primary School which was also a satellite school and I noted that the classrooms at the school had no windows and finished floors. The ECD block was dilapidated and had cracks. The ablution facilities were inadequate given the enrolment of the school as five (5) toilet seats were serving five hundred and twenty-two (522) girls, thus an average of 104 pupils per toilet seat. This was in violation with the Ministry's Schools Infrastructure Guidelines which state that, in an urban setup one toilet seat should serve twenty (20) girls.

In Bulawayo and Manicaland provinces, I noted that in areas where construction was still in progress, the learners were attending lessons at the surrounding schools resulting in high enrolments which affected the teacher to pupil ratio. The standard teacher to pupil ratio for infants is 1:20, junior 1:40 and secondary 1:30. An example was that for Tategulu Primary school in Bulawayo Province, which had a ratio of 1:50 for both Infant and Junior. In addition, Mabvazuva Primary school in Manicaland Province had a ratio of 1:63 for juniors and 1:40 for infants.

Furthermore, according to Annual Education Statistics Report (2018-2022), the average learner to classroom ratio was 1:58 for ECD, 1:46 for Junior and 1:39 for secondary instead

of the standard 1:20, 1:40 and 1:30 respectively. **Table 5** below shows the average learner classroom ratio from 2018 to 2022 according to the annual education statistics reports.

Table 5: Learner Classroom Ratio.

Year	ECD	Junior	Secondary
2018	68	45	39
2019	60	46	40
2020	58	46	40
2021	54	46	37
2022	51	45	39
Average	58	46	39

Source: 2018-2022 Annual Education Statistics Reports.

Twenty-three (23) schools were visited that is six (6) secondary schools and seventeen (17) primary schools. Out of the six (6) secondary schools visited five (5) had exceeded the standard ratio required in a classroom and one (1) was within the standard. Thirteen (13) infant schools had exceeded the standard ratio of 1:20 whilst four (4) were within the range. Fourteen (14) junior schools had exceeded the required standard ratio whilst two (2) were within the standard. Refer to **Annexure D** for schools with high enrolments and schools that had exceeded standard ratios.

In some schools they had resorted to hot seating as the classrooms were not adequate to accommodate all learners. An example was that of Tategulu Primary School in Bulawayo province, which had twenty-six (26) classrooms meant to accommodate 2 432 learners meaning the infrastructure that was available allowed 94 pupils in a class. However, the school had resorted to three (3) sessions per day and learners would get one chance per week of using a classroom. The remaining days they would be learning from outside under trees or on pavements thereby exposing them to harsh weather conditions. Refer to **Picture 1** for pupils learning under a tree at Tategulu Primary School in Bulawayo Province.

Picture 1: Grade 6 Pupils Learning under a Tree at Tategulu Primary School.



Source: Picture taken by OAG at Tategulu Primary on July 3, 2024.

In addition, at Matshayisikova Primary School, Percy Boston Primary School and Cowdry Park Primary School in Bulawayo Province pupils were also learning outside due to shortage of classrooms. Refer to **Pictures 2- 4** for pupils learning outside at Matshayisikova Primary School, Percy Boston Primary School and Cowdry Park Primary School in Bulawayo Province. During rainy season, it may mean that some pupils do not attend lessons.

Picture 2: Pupils Learning under Trees at Matshayisikova Primary in Bulawayo Province.



Source: Picture taken by OAG at Matshayisikova Primary on July 03, 2024.

Picture 3: Pupils Learning Outside at Percy Boston Primary in Bulawayo Province.



Source: Picture taken by OAG at Percy Boston Primary on July 03, 2024.

Picture 4: Pupils Learning Outside at Cowdry Park Primary in Bulawayo Province.



Source: Pictures taken by OAG at Cowdry Park on July 04, 2024.

The inadequate Rolling Out/Execution of the Construction Plans was attributed to the following:

- **Delays in the Construction of Schools.**
- **Ineffective Coordination in Procurement of Materials.**
- **Contract Price Variations and Termination of Contracts.**
- **Under-utilisation of the Released Budget.**
- **Non-functionality of Project Management Committee.**
- **Inadequate Supervision and Monitoring of Construction Projects.**

Management Response

The Ministry takes careful note of the observations and recommendations regarding the necessity for realistic planning in constructing public schools, aligning them with the available resources during the reviewed period. The challenges hindering plan implementation stem from both internal issues inherent to the Ministry and external factors, as school construction involves multiple stakeholders at various levels. It is important to clarify that the use of satellite schools is not merely a temporary measure but a strategic approach. These schools are granted authority to operate before formal registration to facilitate the construction process at the designated site.

Furthermore, special consideration is imperative, especially when students are compelled to traverse long distances to access the nearest school. A Satellite school, overseen by a teacher-in-charge, is nurtured under a registered mother school by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The Head of the Mother School assumes responsibility for the entire administrative operation of the satellite school, with teachers at the satellite school receiving their remuneration through the Mother School.

The Ministry takes note of the audit finding on the decline on the number of schools in the 2022 Annual Education Statistics Report. The report is a product of the Ministry's Education Management Information System (EMIS) that annually collects census data on a prescribed given day from every school in Zimbabwe. The decline in the number of schools in the EMIS data was due to incorrect capturing of the schools' statuses by the Headmasters. Data collection takes place directly from the school with the Head as the responsible person. During the period, it was observed that Heads were capturing the status of their schools erroneously. Most schools owned by Local Council and other Government Line Ministries miscaptured their schools as being registered in the Ministry's data base. The issue was then later addressed through capacity development and awareness raising.

The Ministry with support from development partners has made significant progress in supporting satellite schools to enhance the quality and inclusive education service delivery. This support has been through grants targeted mainly at satellite schools. The major grants are the School Improvement Grant (SIG) Regular, School Improvement Grant Complementary and the School Improvement Grant for Water and Sanitation Hygiene (WASH).

Funding for WASH is aimed at increasing access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene at the schools. Schools without access to water are targeted for this funding and they are required to be in areas not prone to drought and where borehole drilling is feasible.

The Ministry acknowledges the observation made on the overcrowding in public schools. Furthermore, it also acknowledges that the country has a critical shortage of schools which has led to the pressure on the existing schools resulting in the over-enrolment beyond the capacity of existing facilities. In response to this challenge the Ministry has resorted to mitigatory stop-gap measure in hot sitting to uphold the right of every child for access to education. Additionally, the Ministry continues to mobilise support for infrastructure development from development partners and private players. This has resulted in the construction of classroom blocks and additional school infrastructure in all districts to alleviate the situation.

Evaluation of Management Response

The response on hot-seating is acknowledged. However, the Ministry could consider providing shades so that the pupils are not affected by harsh weather conditions.

3.1.1 Delays in Construction of Schools

I noted that there were delays in the completion of construction projects. Out of the eight (8) PSIP projects audited in Harare, Manicaland and Bulawayo provinces, none had been completed. The projects delayed to be completed by a range of four (4) to six (6) years and some construction works had stopped for more than five (5) years. Two (2) sites, Mahatsula Primary and Cowdry Park 2 Primary in Bulawayo Province were reserved for school construction in 2003 but construction had not yet started as at the time of audit in July 2024. However, construction materials for both schools was procured in September 2023. Budiriro Secondary School in Manicaland was planned to be constructed from 2023 to 2026. As at the time of audit in April 2024 construction had not yet started as tendering and bidding processes were in progress. For more details refer to **Table 6 below:**

Table 6: Construction and Status of the Sampled Projects 2018-July 2023.

Province	Name of school	Project start date	Expected Project end date	Number of years the project was delayed from the expected project end date	Date of audit	Status as at the time of the audit
Harare	St Mary's-Chitungwiza Early Learning Centre	2019	2020	4	September 14, 2023	One block at foundation level awaiting conduits and the other at wall plate level.
	Budiriro 6 Primary	2019	2020	4	September 15, 2023	At box level awaiting cement.
Manicaland	Magamba Primary	2019	2022	2	April 4, 2024	At ring beam level awaiting funds.
	Budiriro Secondary	2023	2026	-	April 04, 2024	Tendering and bidding process in progress.
Bulawayo	Pumula South Secondary	2018	2018	6	July 03, 2024	Construction of a Block at window level, however awaiting demolition due to poor workmanship.
	Ngwenyama Primary	2018	2018	6	July 03, 2024	Construction of a Block. At foundation level contract was terminated due to poor workmanship.
	Mahatshula Primary site	Site reserved in 2003	-	-	July 04, 2024	Materials were bought in September 2023 but works had not started, awaiting funds to pay contractors.
	Cowdry Park 2 Primary site	Site reserved in 2003	-	-	July 04, 2024	Materials were bought in September 2023 but works had not started, awaiting funds to pay contractors.

Source: Provincial Records for 2018-2023.

Physical observations and documentary reviews in Harare Metropolitan Province revealed that the school construction projects at Budiriro 6 and St Mary's Early Learning Centre which were both started in 2019 had not gone beyond foundation level. Construction for both blocks had stopped in 2019. Officials at the schools explained through interviews that, the reason for the seemingly abandoned projects was due to unavailability of some materials, for example at Budiriro 6 there was no cement but all other materials were bought. The Ministry confirmed the unavailability of some materials and funds to purchase the required materials.

In Manicaland Province, of the three (3) districts visited two (2) schools were under construction that is Magamba Primary and Budiriro Secondary. Documentary reviews and inspections in Makoni District revealed that Magamba Primary school project started in 2019 and was abandoned. It had been idle since July 2022. The contractor had requested in 2022 for a variation of prices for the stages he had completed. The Contractor cited changes in prices due to inflationary pressures as the reason for requesting for price variations. As at April 4, 2024 the Ministry had not yet responded to the price adjustments.

The plan was to construct a 2 by 2 classroom block. The project was at ring beam level. Non completion of Magamba Primary had resulted in local learners travelling to other surrounding schools hence high enrolments. For instance, Mabvazuva Primary which accommodated 1 254 pupils and Vhengere Primary school had a total of 1 207 pupils catering for learners from Magamba area. In addition, the teacher pupil ratio at the schools increased as compared to the standard ratio. Mabvazuva Primary School had a teacher to pupil ratio of 1:40 for infants 1:63 for juniors and Vhengere Primary School had 1:30 for infants and 1:75 juniors. This was against the standard of 1:20 for infants and 1:40 for juniors. **Picture 5** below also shows the incomplete classroom blocks at Magamba Primary School.

Picture 5: Incomplete Classroom Blocks and Quarry for Construction of Magamba Primary School.



Source: Picture taken by OAG on April 04, 2024 at Magamba Primary, Makoni District.

In Bulawayo Province, I noted that at Pumula South Secondary School a 2 by 1 classroom block was not completed despite that a contract entered on October 11, 2018 required the Contractor to complete construction within eleven (11) weeks.

In December 2018, the Contractor wrote to the province asking for an extension of construction time by three(3) months because of adverse prevailing economic conditions. On July 21, 2021 the province wrote to the Contractor about contract expiration. A revalidated contract for forty (40) days was signed on August 11, 2021. However, in June 2022, the province wrote to the Ministry of Local Government, Public Works and National Housing requesting for a demolition letter which had been served to the Contractor to demolish the structure and start afresh. This was because the Ministry's inspectors had noted that construction was not in line with the Ministry's requirements. On August 18, 2022 the Contractor wrote a letter of commitment to complete the classroom block and requested for

an extension of up to October 30, 2022. As at July 4, 2024 the structure had neither been demolished nor completed.

Management Response

The observations are acknowledged. The Ministry attributes the delays in completing construction projects during the reviewed period to funding challenges. The inflationary environment impacted material pricing, leading to procurement delays. To address these issues, more effective procurement strategies have been introduced to expedite the processes for the five (5) ongoing projects planned by the Ministry. Going forward the Ministry continues to actively mobilise financial resources for these schools to ensure that they are constructed and that quality service delivery is offered to the pupils.

3.1.2 Procurement of Materials

The procurement of materials for the schools' construction projects were being managed at the Provincial and Head Office level with no or limited involvement of the Districts and the school heads. Audit noted that some materials bought were not appropriate for the stages being constructed. For instance, at Budiriro 6 Primary in Harare, roofing material was bought when construction was still at foundation level. Other construction material (bricks, pit sand etc) was on site, only cement was needed to complete the construction of the building before roofing.

At Chitungwiza Early Learning Centre roofing materials were purchased before completion of the second phase. The second phase was at box level. Construction stopped because of inadequate conduits but all other materials were on site. The conduits were supposed to be installed underground. The roofing materials for Budiriro 6 Primary School and Chitungwiza Early Learning centre were procured in 2019. For more details, refer to **Picture 6 and 7**.

Picture 6: Incomplete Classroom Block- Chitungwiza Early Learning Centre.



Source: Picture taken by OAG on September 9, 2023.

Picture 7: Incomplete Classroom Block Budiriro 6 Primary in Harare Province.



Source: Picture taken by OAG on September 9, 2023.

In Bulawayo Province, materials for two (2) sites, Cowdry Park 2 Primary School and Mahatshula Primary School were purchased in September 2023 but construction had not started as at the time of audit on July 4, 2024. The Provincial management indicated that the Ministry was waiting for funds to pay Contractors.

Management Response

The Ministry acknowledges procurement gaps in acquiring materials for construction projects. To address this, the National Projects Committee has been established to oversee the management of national PSIP projects. The Ministry also recognizes the necessity to decentralize similar structures for project management at the Provincial and District levels, as recommended by the evaluation.

3.1.3 Contract Price Variations and Termination of Contracts

In Manicaland Province at Magamba Primary School, the Contractor had requested price variation of 7% for completed stages in September 2022. The Contractor cited inflationary pressures as the reason for requesting contract price variations. The Contractor stopped construction in July 2023. The Contractor stopped construction when the building was at ring beam level. However, the Ministry had not yet responded as at April 4, 2024.

In Bulawayo Province, at Ngwenyama Primary school, a contract was terminated by the Ministry in July 2021 due to non-performance and failure to meet timeframes by the Contractor. The Contractor was unable to complete a double classroom block within 11 weeks from October 10, 2018. The project was at foundation level when the contract was terminated and there were no any further activities carried as at the time of audit July 4, 2024.

Management Response

The observations are noted. The Ministry reaffirms its commitment to complying with the Procurement Regulation Authority of Zimbabwe (PRAZ) regulations. While noting factors contributing to contract price variations and terminations, such as low releases from Treasury, the Ministry actively engages with Treasury to secure funding for its projects. In addition, the Ministry has also engaged contractors for the formation of new contracts which are sustainable.

The Ministry has collaborated with Treasury and current contractors to assess the way forward for outstanding projects. Previously, some contracts were stalled due to issues with local currency and contractors requesting price variations. To address this, the Ministry has agreed with Treasury to meet with each contractor individually to negotiate and settle these price variations. This engagement is expected to facilitate the completion of the outstanding works and ensure that construction projects progress without further delays.

For projects that are still outstanding but do not have contractors, the Ministry plans to engage other Government agencies to complete the work. These agencies may include organizations such as Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (RIDA), Infrastructure Development Bank of Zimbabwe (IDBZ), and the Public Service Pension Fund. The idea is to contract the necessary technical expertise from these agencies, allowing the completion of the projects that have been left unfinished.

For all new construction projects, the Ministry will partner with other Government agencies for the actual construction work. The Ministry, through Treasury, will provide the necessary budgetary support for these projects. This approach is expected to streamline the process and ensure that more projects are completed successfully and on time. The Ministry's strategies focus on resolving the issues of stalled projects through price negotiations with contractors.

3.1.4 Utilisation of the Released Budget

According to the Appropriation Act, all budgeted funds should be utilized for the intended purpose. Audit noted that the Ministry had an approved budget of ZWL\$4.7 billion for the construction of public schools. From the total budgeted amount, ZWL\$3.8 billion was funded (cash released) and the Ministry had utilised the whole amount that was funded for public schools' construction. However, an amount of ZWL\$0.9 billion was not funded. The amounts that were budgeted and utilised by the Ministry for construction projects are shown in **Table 7** below.

Table 7: Amounts Budgeted and Released, Funded and Utilised for the Construction of Public Schools.

Year	Amount Budgeted ZWL\$ (000)	Funded and Utilized for Construction ZWL\$ (000)	Not Funded ZWL\$ (000)	Percentage of Funds not Funded
2018	4 255	2 574	1 681	40%
2019	34 548	24 579	9 969	29%
2020	74 898	21 300	53 598	72%
2021	291 228	149 358	141 870	49%
2022	282 347	98 178	184 169	65%
2023	3 990 302	3 528 203	462 099	12%
Total	4 677 578	3 824 192	853 386	18%

Source: Public Finance Management System records (2018-2023).

The Ministry was unable to utilise all the budgeted funds allocated for the construction of schools as part of the budgeted amount was not funded. According to interviews with management they indicated that this was caused by the delays in the releases into the system and delays in the cash releases. Cash was released towards the end of the year. However, the Ministry could not provide the dates when the funds were released.

Management Response

The Ministry acknowledges the observation on the utilisation of the released budget. The ZWL\$0.9 billion that was not funded could not be utilized as it was not possible for the Ministry to utilize funds which had not been availed to the Ministry.

3.1.5 Non Functionality of the Project Management Committee

The Ministry had appointed a Programmes and Projects Infrastructure Development Committee in April 2023. The committee comprised of nine (9) members from the Head Office. The committee was not functional and did not have terms of reference to guide them on what they were expected to do. The committee had not met since appointment. The committee was reappointed in July 2024. The committee's role was to provide technical support and advice to provinces, districts and schools in PSIP projects implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the projects. The committee was also meant to advocate

for PSIP projects support including creating a bridge between financiers, policy makers and partners.

Management Response

The Ministry takes note of the observation on the non-functionality of the Project Management Committee. In a bid to strengthen the Ministry's systems in the management of infrastructure development projects the Ministry has since provided Terms of Reference and will continue to enhance this framework to empower the Committee in the management of projects nationally. In addition, one of its roles is to monitor and provide support for all projects under the Ministry. The committee is also supposed to produce a detailed status report on all the existing PSIP projects. This status report will be followed up with an implementation plan for the year 2025.

Going forward, the committee will produce a quarterly national report on all projects. At a provincial level the Ministry will also rely on the expert support from the Schools Infrastructure Development Officers (SIDOs) coupled with the regular supervisory support from the Schools Inspectors at Provincial and District levels whose role is also to monitor and supervise infrastructure development projects.

3.1.6 Supervision and Monitoring of Construction Projects

According to the Ministry's Schools Infrastructure Development Guidelines, the Ministry's inspectors must make regular inspections at different levels of construction. Construction projects were not being supervised and monitored resulting in substandard buildings being constructed. This resulted in wasteful expenditure and wastage of time. Project files and reports for the construction projects in three (3) of the sampled provinces were not availed for audit in-order to ascertain whether supervision and monitoring was carried out during the period under review.

My visit to Hatcliffe 3 Primary School in Harare Province revealed that substandard classrooms were constructed and were condemned by the Ministry's inspectors. The classrooms at Hatcliffe 3 Primary School had no windows and finished floors. The ECD block was dilapidated and had cracks. The ablution facilities were inadequate given the enrolment of the school, for example five (5) toilet seats were serving five hundred and twenty-two (522) girls. This was in violation with the Ministry's Schools Infrastructure Guidelines which state that, in an urban setup one toilet seat should serve twenty (20) girls. **Picture 8** below shows the condemned structures at Hatcliffe 3 Primary.

Picture 8: Classroom Block with no Windows at Hatcliffe 3 Primary School, Harare.



Source: Picture taken by OAG at Hatcliffe 3 Primary School, Harare on October 2, 2023.

According to Provincial Management in Bulawayo, the Contractor for Pumula South classroom block was served with a demolition letter by the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works. The demolition order was served to the Contractor as the building materials used were not as per the contract and the building under construction did not meet the expected standard. The demolition letter was not availed for audit.

Management Response

The observations are noted. There is need for supervision and monitoring of construction projects by all its structures especially for the accessible urban sites. The Ministry would like to highlight the challenges stemming from the lack of mobility to cover projects in the rural areas due to old and depleted fleet which is shared by all departments at the Provincial Offices for various Ministry's responsibilities.

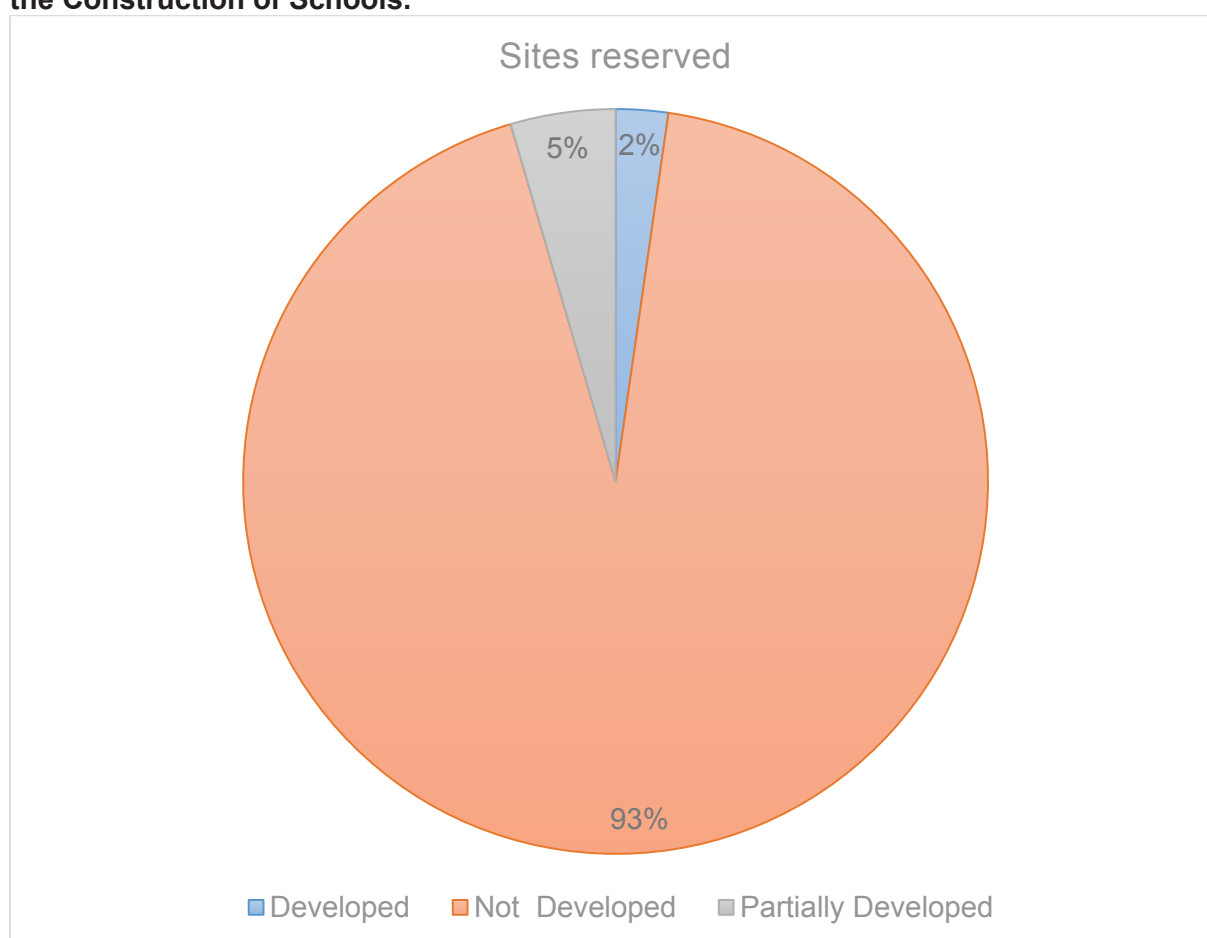
In addition, the School Infrastructure Development Officer (SIDO) which is responsible for providing support on infrastructure projects is limited to the Head Office and the Provincial Office. There is need for resources for the procurement of vehicles and budget for the recruitment of personnel at District level to assist the schools implementing infrastructure development projects. This is a technical field which requires technically equipped personnel to provide the much-needed support for schools.

Going forward the Ministry has procured thirty (30) brand new vehicles to address the above challenges of mobility for supervision and monitoring of all Ministry programmes. Also, the implementing of the Electronic Supervision and Inspection which is an online solution to assist with supervision and monitoring of the education sector will also assist to track progress on school's construction. On a termly basis the Ministry through the joint monitoring visit will further provide an overview of the status of all projects. This approach will be able to strengthen implementation, supervision and monitoring for all infrastructure development projects in the Ministry.

3.2 Provision of Schools in New Settlements

According to the Ministry of Local Government Layout Design Manual, for every settlement with 500 households there should be a primary school and for every 1 500 there should be a secondary school. Audit noted that public schools were not being constructed in new settlements despite the settlements having large numbers of families living in the areas. There were forty four (44) sites reserved for the construction of schools in the three provinces audited for the period 2003 to 2015. Information for the period 2016 to July 2024 for the reserved sites was not availed for audit inspection. Out of the forty four (44) sites reserved for the construction of schools only one (1)(2%) was developed, two (2)(5%) were partially developed and forty one (41)(93%) were not developed. For more details refer to **Pie Chart 1** and **Annexure E**.

Pie Chart 1: Analysis of the Progress of Construction at Sites that were Reserved for the Construction of Schools.



Source: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's Districts records.

There were twenty four (24) sites without details pertaining to when the sites were reserved for the construction of schools. The consolidated information on the reserved sites in the country at Head Office was not availed for audit inspection.

Management Response

The observation is noted. These new settlements have not been serviced hence there are no official layout plans to clearly outline school locations for the Ministry to be able to facilitate schools there.

The Ministry also recognizes that it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works under Spatial Planning to allocate space for the provision of social amenities including schools in every new area. Furthermore, the enforcement of by-laws rest with the Local Authorities which are under the same Ministry. The Ministry may not have knowledge or oversight on the land allocated for public schools in new and existing areas.

It is the Ministry's view that there is need for more active coordinated approach between the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and all key stakeholders to ensure that the allocated land is preserved for schools' construction.

Furthermore, the Ministry will actively engage the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and Investment Promotion and Ministry of Public Works for the provision of new schools in new settlements. Additionally, the Ministry has fully embraced the continuous engagement of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the construction of schools.

3.2.1 Supervision and Monitoring of the Reserved Sites

Due to delays by the Ministry to construct schools in reserved sites, the sites were being occupied by illegal settlers. Houses were being constructed on some sites and some sites were being turned into agricultural land. Inspections at Apex Board Secondary school in Harare Province revealed that a site was allocated in 2015 but no development had been done as at March 2024. I noted that there was a church and houses constructed on the school site. Refer to **Picture 9** for the church built on a school site. At a school site in Cowdry Park in Bulawayo there were illegal structures erected within the site perimeter as well as a group of individuals moulding bricks. Also, at Westlea site in Manicaland, the site had been occupied by a farmer.

Picture 9: Church Built on School Site.



Source: Picture taken by OAG at Apex Board Secondary School Site on March 14, 2024.

Management Response

MoPSE recognizes that it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works under Spatial Planning to allocate space for the provision of social amenities including schools in every new area. Furthermore, the enforcement of by-laws rest with the local authorities which is under the same Ministry. The Ministry may not have knowledge or oversight on the land allocated for public schools in new and existing areas.

It is the Ministry's view that there is need for more active coordinated approach between the Ministry of Local Government and Public Works, Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education and all key stakeholders to ensure that the allocated land is preserved for schools' construction.

3.3 Other Funding Mechanisms for Construction of Public Schools

I noted that the Ministry was engaging in Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) in the construction of schools. These included churches, non-governmental organisations and School Development Committees (SDC's). For the period 2018 to 2023 a total number of fifty-seven (57) schools were constructed under PPPs arrangements in Manicaland, Harare and Bulawayo from the sampled districts. For more details, refer to **Table 8**.

Table 8: Statistics of Organisations Who Assisted in the Construction of Schools.

Province	Development Partner	Number of Schools Constructed by Public Private Partnerships Arrangements
1. Manicaland	i. Church Schools	19
	ii. Trust Schools	5
2. Harare	i. Church School	1
	ii. Trust Schools	19
	iii. Non-Governmental Organisation	2
3. Bulawayo	i. Latter Day Saints Charities	10
	ii. Thembalezizwe Trust	1
Total		57

Source: Correspondences and records from provinces visited 2018-2023.

Management Response

The observation is noted. The Ministry expresses full support for diverse funding approaches for these projects. The Devolution Fund has played a crucial role in funding numerous infrastructure development projects particularly the construction of schools nationally.

In addition, the Ministry acknowledges assistance from development partners and church organisations which have actively supported the Ministry to build schools in the drive towards quality education service.

CHAPTER 4

4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents audit conclusions based on the audit objective and audit questions provided in Chapter One of this report. The audit conclusions are categorized into two main parts: the general and specific.

4.1 General Conclusion

My audit concludes that, the Ministry has not been efficiently and effectively facilitating the provision and construction of public schools. This is evidenced by the shortcomings in the planning processes, delays to construct schools, non-provision of schools in new settlements. In as much as the private players and developing partners have come on board to fill the gap in terms of the number of schools constructed, the Ministry has not fully played its role to ensure that there is provision of public schools which are affordable thus compromising access to education for all as private schools are expensive.

4.2 Specific Conclusions

- 4.2.1 I established that the Ministry has not been effectively executing the construction plans for public schools from 2018 to July 2024. The main causes are delays in the construction of schools, construction materials are being procured for other stages before earlier stages are completed. Also, there were contract price variations due to change in prices and some contractors were not performing as per expectation resulting in termination of contracts. Furthermore, all budgeted funds are not being fully utilised and the Project Management Committee is not yet fully functional. Last but not least construction projects are not being supervised and monitored.
- 4.2.2 There is emerging of new settlements but there are no schools being constructed in those settlements despite the settlements having reserved sites. Some sites are being illegally occupied. Delays in constructing schools in new settlements is resulting in children travelling long distances to access schools.
- 4.2.3 The Ministry is engaging Public Private Partnerships in the construction of schools. The engagement is bearing positive results as additional schools and blocks at existing schools are being constructed.
- 4.2.4 Concerns of contractors are not being addressed timely resulting in projects remaining uncompleted for a long time.
- 4.2.5 Supervision of construction projects was not being timeously done resulting in some of the schools being constructed to completion, only to be demolished when inspection is done after construction.
- 4.2.6 Pupils are travelling long distances to school while others are learning in the open, with access to classroom only once a week.
- 4.2.7 Teacher to pupil ratio is too high in some cases and this may result in ineffectiveness of the teacher.
- 4.2.8 The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education does not have full data of designated sites for construction of schools.

- 4.2.9** Sites designated for construction of schools are being used for other purposes depriving the community of the access to education of the pupils learning in the area. Pupils end up travelling long distances and this will also compromise the safety of the children.

CHAPTER 5

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ministry should consider the following recommendations in order to improve on the facilitation, provision and construction of schools.

- 5.1** The Ministry should come up with realistic plans for construction of public schools that are in line with the availed resources as well as the population of the school going age and demand across provinces.
- 5.1.1** The Ministry should come up with a systematic and prudent construction approach that ensures that construction works started on each project site are completed first before embarking on new projects. This will allow for effective use of project resources availed by the Government, resulting in timely completion of projects.
- 5.1.2** The Ministry should prioritize provision of conducive learning environment by easing overcrowding in schools. In addition, temporary shades should be provided so that learners are not exposed to the sun and rains.
- 5.1.3** The Ministry should coordinate with Provinces and Districts when procuring materials so that the right materials are procured for the appropriate stage of construction.
- 5.1.4** The Ministry should expeditiously address the issues of payments and price variations raised by contractors so that projects are completed as per plan. In addition, the Ministry should carry out thorough due diligence on Contractors so that those with capacity are engaged.
- 5.1.5** The Ministry should frequently engage Treasury so that all budgeted amounts are funded so that construction projects are completed.
- 5.1.6** The Ministry should facilitate the full functionality of the Project Management Committee to enable the Committee to spearhead the implementation of the construction projects across the provinces.
- 5.1.7** The Ministry should supervise and monitor construction projects at every stage to ensure that contractors are constructing according to Ministry requirements. No contractor should be allowed to proceed to the next level before certification of previous level. Costs incurred should be recovered from contractors who constructed sub-standard schools that were demolished.
- 5.2** The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education should liaise with Ministry of Local Government and the Department of State Lands for a database of all the sites allocated to them for construction of schools. On the known sites the Ministry should prioritise construction of schools so that children do not walk long distances to access schools.
- 5.2.1** For sites handed over to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education by the Ministry of Local Government and the Department of State Lands, management should make regular monitoring and inspections to ensure that the sites are not taken over by illegal settlers or allocated for housing purposes.
- 5.3** The Ministry should continue to engage in Public Private Partnerships as the partners are playing a pivotal role in assisting the government with the provision and construction of schools.

ANNEXURES

Annexure A: Documents Reviewed.

Document	Reason for review
Strategic and Annual Plans (2018-2025)	To obtain long and short-term objectives, planned programs and budgets of the Ministry.
Secretary's Contract	To understand performance and targets of the Secretary with regard to construction of schools.
Appropriation Act	To understand the purpose of the budgeted funds and if funds were utilized for the intended purposes.
Annual Reports (2018-2022)	To understand achievements and challenges of the Ministry with regard to construction of schools.
Education Act [Chapter 25:04]	To understand the provision of the Act relating to the Ministry's role on construction of schools.
Government circulars	To get an overview of the policies that govern construction of schools.
Schools Infrastructure Development Guidelines	To understand the policies that govern the construction of schools.
Contracts with contractors	To understand the terms of the agreement in relation to obligations of the contractor and the Ministry as well as timeframes.
Audited Financial Statements and Public Financial Management System Extracts	To determine funding that was used in the school's construction projects.

Annexure B: Interviewed Personnel.

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education-Head Office	Reasons for interview
Secretary for Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education	To understand the roles and responsibilities of the Ministry in the facilitation, provision and construction of schools.
Projects and Infrastructure Committee Members	To understand their different roles and responsibilities in the construction of public schools.
Director Procurement	To understand the processes and activities involved in the procurement process of materials for construction of public schools.
Chief Accountant	To understand and determine the funding sources, amounts channeled towards construction and utilization.
Director Internal Audit	To understand the internal control systems in place and to enquire whether there were audits on construction of public schools which were carried out before.
Projects Manager	To get an overview of the school construction projects.
Province	
Provincial Education Director	To understand the role of the provincial office in the construction of public schools within a particular province.
Director Finance	To determine funding sources and utilization.
Provincial Planner	To get an overview of the school construction projects within the provinces.
District	
District Schools Inspector	To understand the role of the district office in the construction of public schools.
Headmasters	To understand and get an overview of the headmaster's role in the construction of public schools and an update on the progress at their schools.

Annexure C: Schools/Sites Inspected.

Name of School/Site	District	Province
Reserved Sites		
Eyecourt Primary	Chitungwiza	Harare
Apex Board Secondary	Highglen	Harare
Dzivarasekwa Extension Secondary	Warren Park/Mabelreign	Harare
DC Mutasa Secondary	DC Mutasa	Manicaland
Linkroad	Mutare Urban	Manicaland
Magamba Primary	Makoni	Manicaland
Cowdry Park 2 Primary	Reigate	Bulawayo
Mahatshula	Imbizo	Bulawayo
New Schools		
Hatcliffe 3 Primary	Northern Central	Harare
Budiriro 6 Primary	Glenview/Mufakose	Harare
Stoneridge Primary	Highglen	Harare
Ngwenyama Primary	Imbizo	Bulawayo
Cowdry Park Primary	Reigate	Bulawayo
Pumula South Secondary	Khami	Bulawayo

Annexure D- Enrolments and Teacher Pupil Ratios.

	Name of School	District	Grade/ Form	Total Number of pupils	Standard Ratio	Actual Ratio
SECONDARY SCHOOLS						
1	Apex Board Secondary	Highglen	Secondary	170	1:30	1:40
2	Vhengere Secondary	Makoni	Secondary	1 446	1:30	1:60
3	Mzilikazi High	Reigate	Secondary	1 603	1:30	1:40
4	Pumula High	Khami	Secondary	1 686	1:30	1:50
5	Pumula South secondary	Khami	Secondary	667	1:30	1:50
6	Nketa High	Imbizo	Secondary	1 377	1:30	1:30
JUNIOR SCHOOLS						
1	Eyecourt Primary	Chitungwiza	Junior	1 306	1:40	1:50
2	Stoneridge Primary	Highglen	Junior	1 072	1:40	1:41
3	Budiriro 6 Primary	Glenview/ Mufakose	Junior	695	1:40	1:65
4	Hatcliffe 3 Primary	Northern Central	Junior	1 054	1:40	1:55
5	Rujeko Primary	Makoni	Junior	934	1:40	1:50
6	Mabvazuva Primary	Makoni	Junior	1 254	1:40	1:63
7	Vhengere Primary	Makoni	Junior	1 207	1:40	1:75
8	Nzvimbe Primary	Makoni	Junior	759	1:40	1:50
9	Cowdry Park Primary	Reigate	Junior	1 390	1:40	1:34
10	Tategulu Primary	Reigate	Junior	2 432	1:40	1:50
11	Percy Ibbotson Primary	Khami	Junior	440	1:40	1:55
12	Mafakela Primary	Khami	Junior	930	1:40	1:39
13	Matshayisikhova Primary	Khami	Junior	959	1:40	1:50
14	Senzangakhona Primary	Imbizo	Junior	2 041	1:40	1:48
15	Mgqiqika Primary	Imbizo	Junior	2 002	1:40	1:50
16	Ngwenyama Primary	Imbizo	Junior	878	1:40	1:50
INFANT SCHOOLS						
1	Eyecourt Primary	Chitungwiza	Infant	1 306	1:20	1:20
2	Stoneridge Primary	Highglen	Infant	1 072	1:20	1:40
3	Budiriro 6 Primary	Glenview/ Mufakose	Infant	695	1:20	1:80

Annexure D Continued- Enrolments and Teacher Pupil Ratios.

4	Hatcliffe 3 Primary	Northern Central	Infant	1 054	1:20	1:46
5	St Mary's Early Learning Centre ECD	Chitungwiza	Infant	616	1:20	1:30
6	Rujeko Primary	Makoni	Infant	934	1:20	1:25
7	Mabvazuva Primary	Makoni	Infant	1 254	1:20	1:40
8	Vhengere Primary	Makoni	Infant	1 207	1:20	1:30
9	Nzvimbe Primary	Makoni	Infant	759	1:20	1:30
10	Cowdry Park Primary	Reigate	Infant	1 390	1:20	1:20
11	Tategulu Primary	Reigate	Infant	2 432	1:20	1:50
12	Percy Ibbotson Primary	Khami	Infant	440	1:20	1:35
13	Mafakela Primary	Khami	Infant	930	1:20	1:36
14	Matshayisikhova Primary	Khami	Infant	959	1:20	1:30
15	Senzangakhona Primary	Imbizo	Infant	2 041	1:20	1:20
16	Mgiqika Primary	Imbizo	Infant	2 002	1:20	1:30
17	Ngwenyama Primary	Imbizo	Infant	878	1:20	1:20

Source: Enrolment Records from the sampled schools.

Annexure E-Status of Reserved Sites Per District.

	Name of the Reserved Sites	District	Status of Site	Year Reserved
1	Eyecourt primary school	Highglen	Not developed	2015
2	Apex Board secondary	Highglen	Not developed	2015
3	6 sites (names not availed)	Highglen	Not developed	Years not availed
4	Stoneridge primary School	Highglen	Developed	2014
5	Hatclife 3 primary school	Northern Central	Partially developed	Year not availed
6	Dzivarasekwa Extension secondary school	Warren Park/ Mabelreign	Not developed	2014
7	Beira Corridor location site	Mutare Urban	Not developed	Year not availed
8	Pegasus location site	Mutare Urban	Not developed	Year not availed
9	Area 16 location site	Mutare Urban	Not developed	Year not availed
10	Gimboki location (7 sites)	Mutare Urban	Not developed	Years not availed
11	Natview location (3 sites)	Mutare Urban	Not developed	Years not availed
12	Raheen location site	Mutare Urban	Not developed	Year not availed
13	Chikanga 2 location site	Mutare Urban	Not developed	Years not availed
14	Link road location (4 sites)	Mutare Urban	Not developed	2014
15	Westlea location site	Mutare Urban	Not developed	2010
16	Magamba primary school	Makoni	Partially Developed	Year not availed
17	Budiriro secondary school	Makoni	Not Developed	Year not availed
18	Rufunde primary and secondary site	Makoni	Not developed	2000
19	Nyakasikana primary and secondary site	Makoni	Not developed	2000
20	Mufusire primary and secondary site	Makoni	Not developed	2000
21	Vaaklop primary and secondary site	Makoni	Not developed	2000
22	Cowdry park 2 primary school	Reigate	Not developed	2003
23	Cowdry Park Location	Reigate	Not developed	2003
24	Mahatshula Primary site	Imbizo	Not developed	2003

Source: Records from the Districts.