

A comprehensive evaluation of English learning, teaching and assessment

Ministry of Education

Malaysia



Cambridge Assessment English has worked with the Ministry of Education to evaluate the learning, teaching and assessment of English in schools in Malaysia. At the same time, we tested language proficiency from pre-school to pre-university across the four skills using a mixture of online and face-to-face modes of delivery.

In October 2011, the Ministry of Education launched a review of the education system in order to develop a new National Education Blueprint – the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025.

Following this, the Ministry asked us to undertake a comprehensive evaluation of English learning, teaching and assessment from pre-school to pre-university levels to enable the Malaysian Government to set realistic and achievable targets for the future. This initial baseline study took place in 2013, with a follow-up evaluation study to measure the impact of educational reforms administered in 2017.

A key aim of the 2013 evaluation was to benchmark student and teacher English language proficiency against international standards. Teachers were also benchmarked with regard to international standards of teaching knowledge and teaching practice. The impact of a range of other factors on language proficiency such as the contexts of and attitudes towards learning, school location, school type, class specialisation and gender was explored, and current national curricula, assessments and learning materials were reviewed.

A full report on our findings was presented to the Malaysian Government, along with recommendations on how to further improve standards of English teaching, learning and assessment across the country.

Key findings and recommendations were focused on three areas of the project – students, teachers and curricula, assessments and learning materials – with all recommendations linked to the transformational changes identified in the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013–2025. Based on these, the Ministry produced The Roadmap 2015–2025 to make the goals for English language education reform explicit, and entered into a 5-year collaboration plan with Cambridge English in order to realise those goals.

The follow-up evaluation study carried out in 2017 was designed to determine where pupils and teachers were in relation to the goals. Although the study identified areas for further improvement, there was empirical data to show that tangible gains had been made in key areas.

These evidence-based evaluation studies have allowed the Ministry to set realistic achievable objectives for English language education in Malaysia based on internationally recognised standards, and measure progress towards those objectives. In the future, further evaluation studies will be carried out as part of the ongoing monitoring and review of the programme to ensure that actions continue to drive progress.

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