

# Improving Access to Education in Mfantseman and Savelugu-Nanton in Ghana: Exploring Enrolment, Attendance, Overage and Achievement

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# Mfantseman District

- Not one of the 53 deprived districts but selected because of low Gross enrolment (below 60%),
- Semi-urban district (approx. 50% of the population living in urban areas)
- Occupational distribution: 51% fisher folks, 30% farmers and 19% commerce.
- Child labour, popular market centre which drives commercial activity
- Six communities with above characteristics were selected



# Savelugu-Nanton district

- Ranked the fourth lowest on the list of the 53 deprived districts in Ghana (MOESS, 2004).
- Its gross enrolment rate was below 60%.
- District classified as rural
- Predominantly agricultural : 97% of economically active population involved mainly in subsistent farming
- Child labour, popular market centre located which drives the commercial activity
- Seven communities with above characteristics were selected



# Participants

- Mfantseman-14 public and two private schools were purposively selected from 4 out of 8 circuits.
- Kormantse is semi-urban with high enrolment but is a fishing community and close to large urban market centre; Saltpond school is urban but draws pupils mainly from nearby rural community (Ankaful)
- Savelugu- 12 public and one private school from 7 communities were selected from 4 out of 8 circuits.



## The study included

- interviews with caregivers/household heads and the profile of their households
- interviews with school drop-outs and never enrolled children
- primary 1, 4, 6, and JHS1 children – attendance, achievement, age profile, dropout, repetition, health and disability
- tracking of primary 1, 4, 6, and JHS1 children from 2007-2009
- characteristics of schools, teachers, headteachers, and enrolment patterns



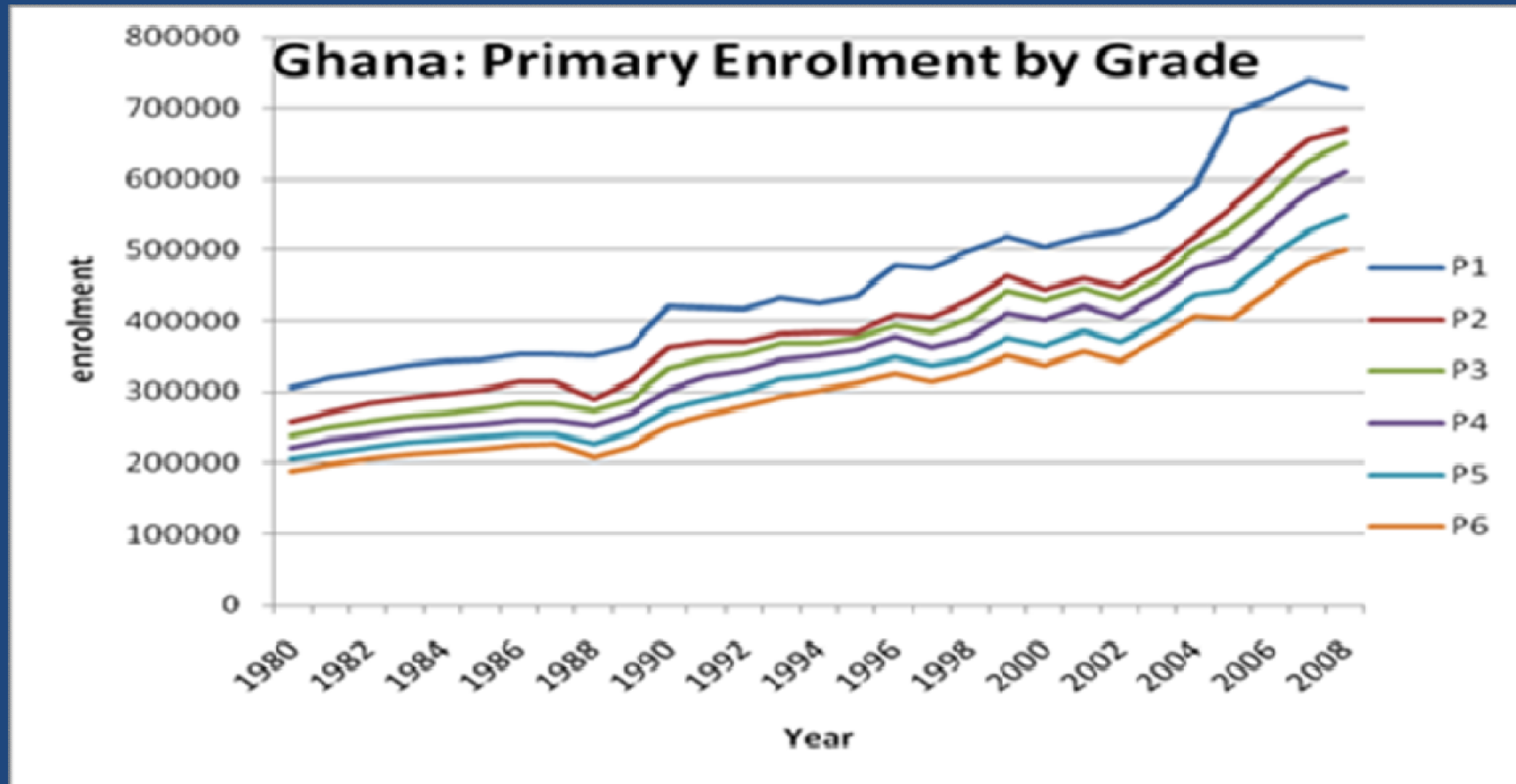
# Key Finding 1- Enrolment

## Reasons for never-enrolled

- Fosterage, single parenting
- Poverty (parents or guardians' inability to meet the direct and indirect costs of schooling)
- Illiterate parents/guardians
- Socio-economic activities peculiar to communities
- Need for child labour



# Structure of Progress



# Enrolment Pattern, 2007/08-2009/10

	2007/08		2008/2009		2009/2010	
	Primary	JHS	Primary	JHS	Primary	JHS
<b>Mfantseman</b>	1365	731	1640	873	2253	823
<b>Savelugu-Nanton</b>	2278	1312	2553	1413	2497	1506



# Age-in-grade

- Distribution of children into primary education relative to official age in 2005 shows 2 years or more over-age in countries in
  - a. Sub-saharan Africa
  - b. East Asia and the Pacific
  - c. South and West Asia
  - d. Latin America and the Carribean



- Ethiopia, Mozambique and Ghana in 2005 had the highest proportion of over-age children (15% or more)
- Cuba and Iceland had no over-age children in primary one and Tunisia had no children over-age by more than 2 years and virtually no children overage by 1 year.

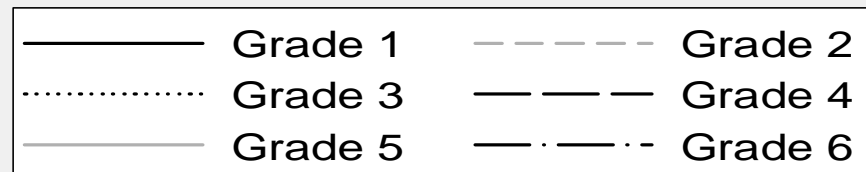
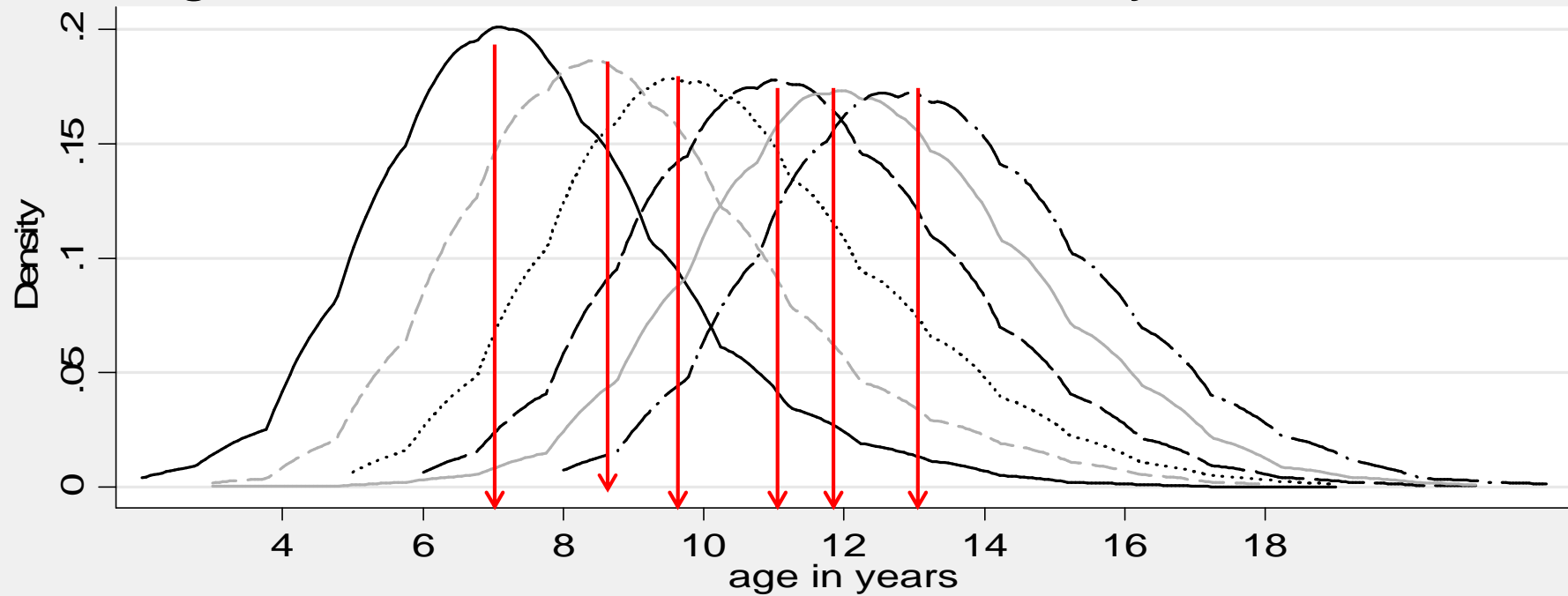


## Key Finding 2: Age-in-grade

- The vast majority (at least 85%) of children are overage in all grades.
- The age range for grade 1 in most schools is 7-10 years (43.1% in Mfantseman & 53.1% in Savelugu)
- Grade to age overlaps and wide spreads right across the primary school cycle.
- Overall the picture shows that children are beginning school at a late age (repeating grades, or dropping in and out of the school system).



## Age-Grade Pattern Estimates - Primary School 2005/6



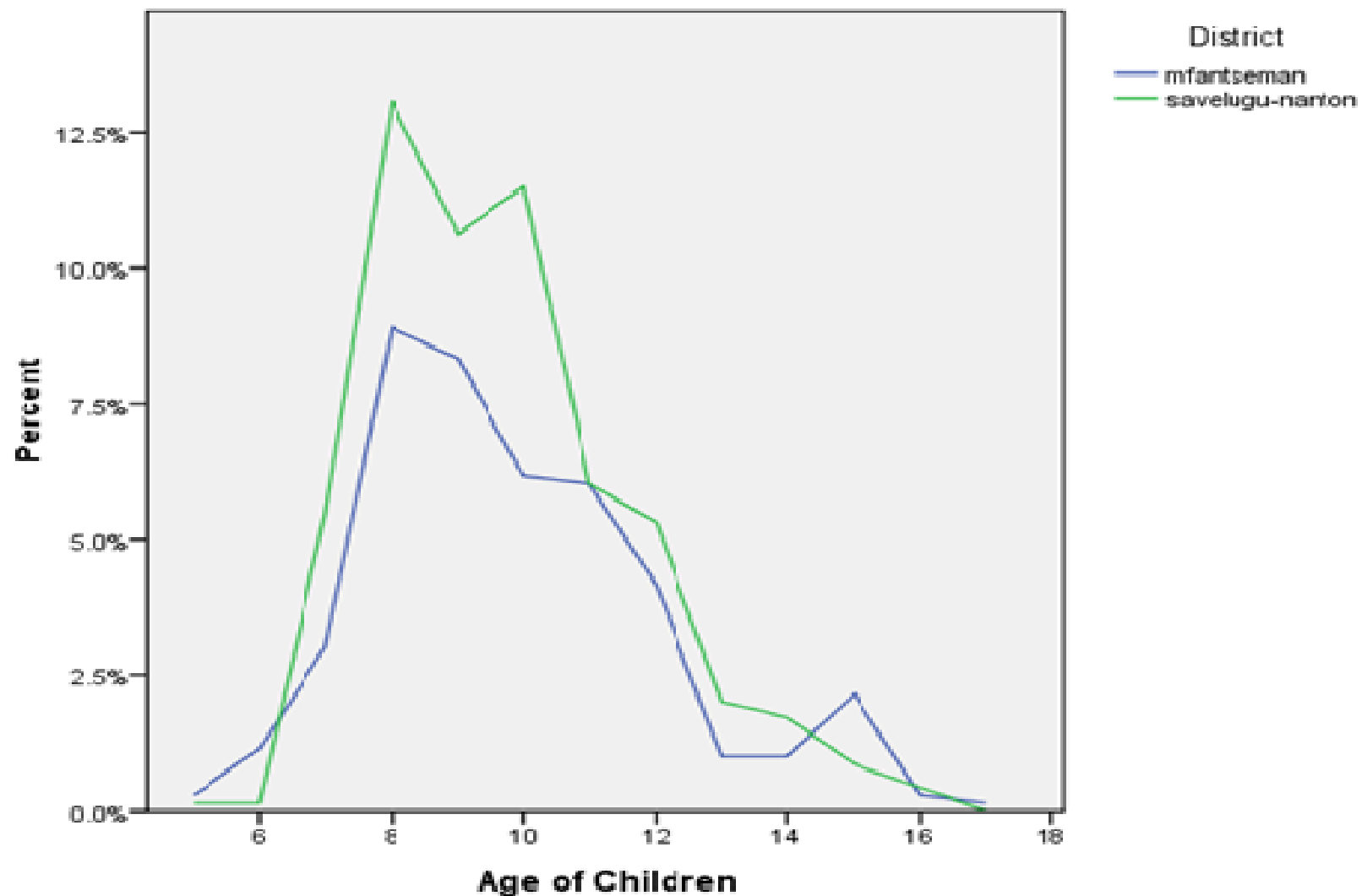
Source: GLSS 5

**Age-grade primary (official age range 6-14)**

Wide age-grade variations across the school cycle

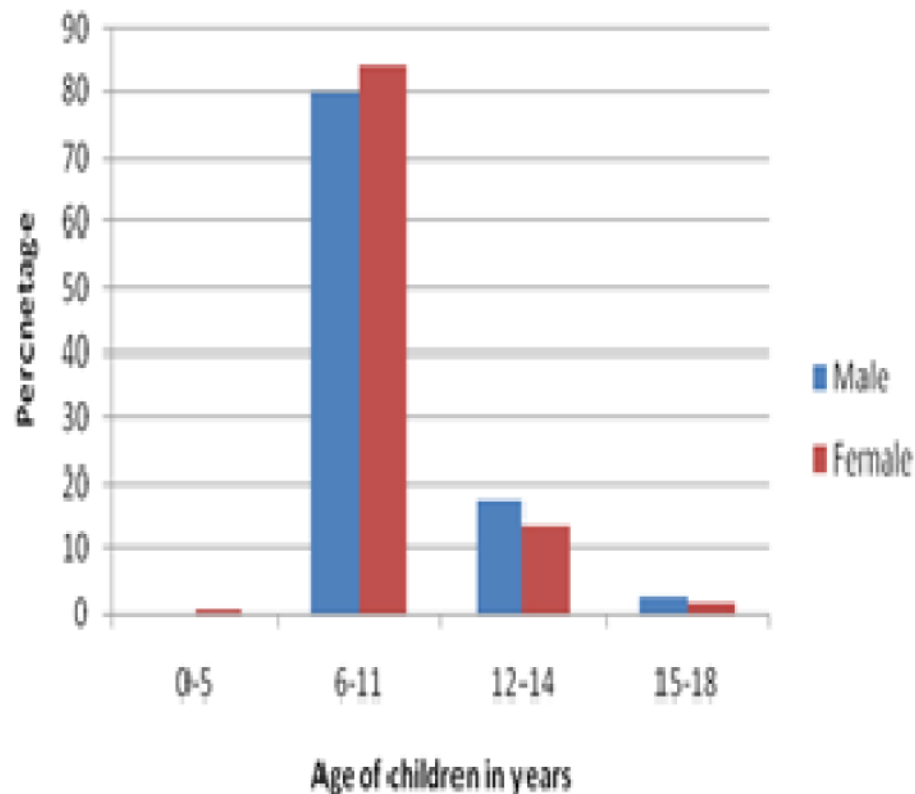


# Primary one enrolment age distribution of children in Savelugu-Nanton and Mfantseman districts

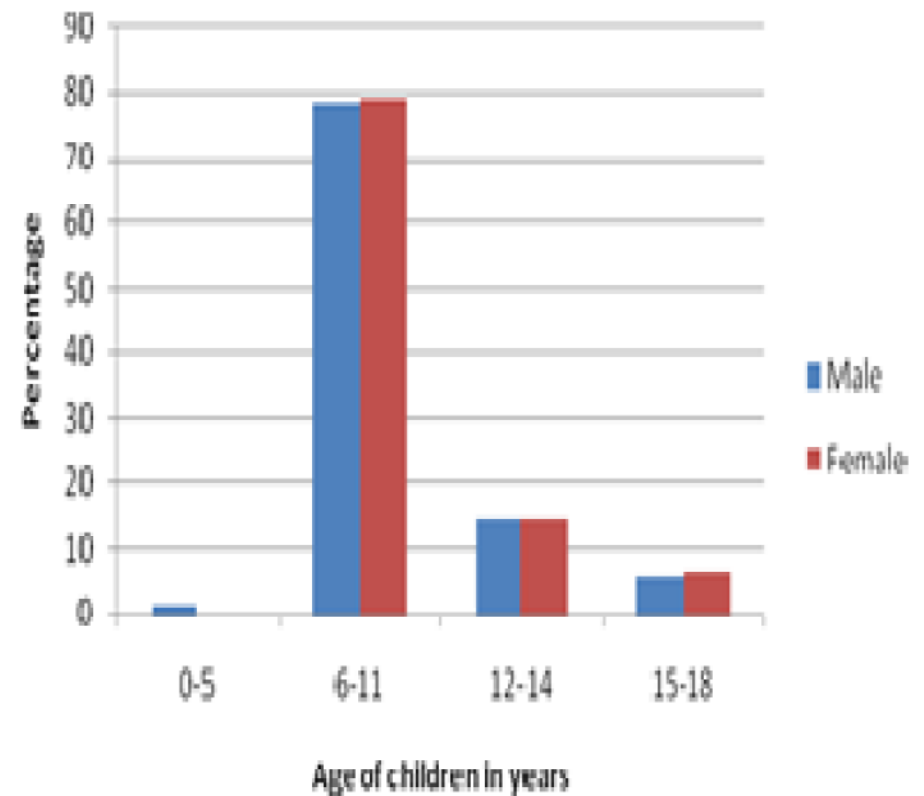


# Age distribution of primary one enrolment in selected communities

### Savelugu-Nanton



### Mfantseman



Academic challenges	Social challenges	Discipline challenges
She does not contribute in class work	He normally does not play with his colleagues	I sometimes receive harsh punishment from my teacher
She is not active at all in class during teaching and learning	She always isolates herself from her mates	My punishment is always more than some of my colleagues
He disturbs a lot when classes are in session	He does not contribute well in class with the fear of colleagues laughing at him	<b>Finds it difficult to understand why I'm punished with the whole class at times</b>
<b>He is very dull and does not talk in class</b>	<b>Instead of playing with his mates, he rather plays with his seniors</b>	Sometimes late for school due to numerous household chores
When you ask her questions she refuses to answer	<b>Feels very shy when playing with classmates. Hardly mixes with classmates.</b>	<b>Hardly accepts punishments in front of class</b>
<b>Hardly concentrates in class when lessons are going on. Combining academic work with farm and fishing business</b>	At times withdraws from school gatherings and the company of friends.	Sometimes late for school. Hardly participates in cleaning the compound

# Key Finding 3: School Attendance

- Children with right age-in-grade attended school more regularly than over-aged children
- Age-in-grade children attended, on average, 84 per cent of the lessons in the academic year 2008-09;
- whereas children who were over age by two to three years attended 79 per cent of the lessons and
- Children who were over age by four or more years attended only 72 per cent of the lessons in the same academic year.
- School attendance was poor on market days, Fridays, and during planting, harvesting and fishing seasons





# Key Finding 4: Dropouts

## Mfantseman

- Out of a total of 1069 pupils in four cohorts tracked in 3 academic years, 167 (15.6%) had dropped out by 2009
- Dropouts was highest (19.0%) for primary 1 cohort and lowest for the JHS1 (12.4%).

## Savelugu

- Out of a total of 1470 pupils in four cohorts in 3 academic year, 238 (16.2%) had dropped out by 2009.
- Dropouts was highest (30.7%) for primary 6 pupils and lowest for the JHS1 (6.8%).  
Primary 1 was 12.7%.



## Key Finding 4: Dropouts cont'd

- Dropout was sometimes sporadic and temporary
- Dropout was rare in the private schools



# Factors contributing to dropping out

- Critical events/reasons

**child labour, poverty,** parents' lack of interest in formal education, death, fosterage, poor performance, teachers, sickness, pregnancy and miscellaneous events

- Preceding contributory at-risk events.

**difficulty in learning, corporal punishment,** irregular school attendance, repetition and over-age/under-age.



# Key Finding 5: Repetition

## Mfantseman

- Out of a total of 1069 pupils in four cohorts tracked in 3 academic years, 132 (12.3%) repeated their class at least once.
- This is made up of 45 (13.6%) out of 331 primary 1 children

## Savelugu-Nanton

- Similarly, out of a total of 1470 pupils tracked, 200 (13.6%) repeated their class at least once. 47 (9.9%) out of 474 children were in Primary 1
- Repetition was based on performance rather than attendance with or without the consent of parents and pupils

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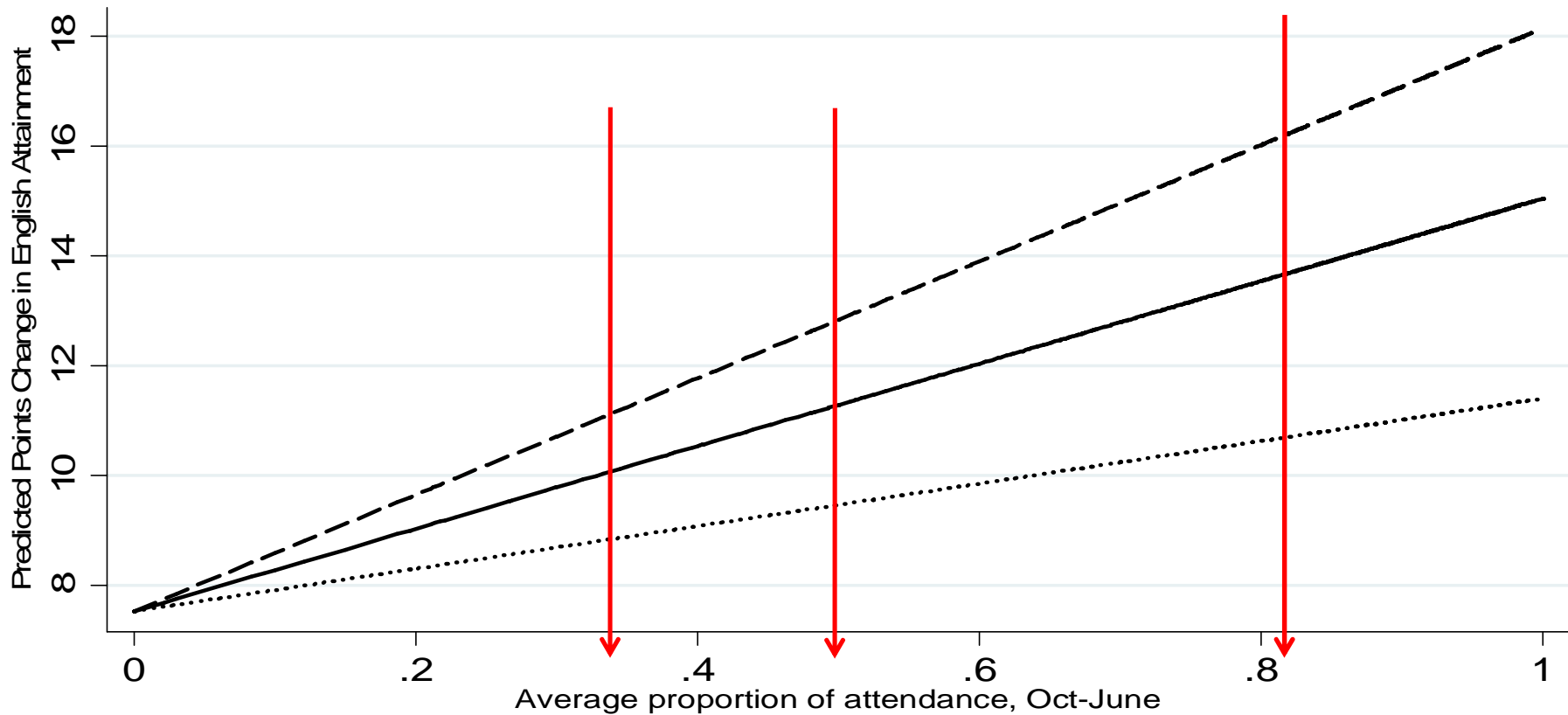
# Key Finding 6: Achievement in English and mathematics

	Savelugu-Nanton English (50)		Mfantseman English (50)	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
P4	15.0	10.4	14.9	9.6
P6	20.6	11.6	27.8	10.5
JHS1	26.3	11.2	33.0	9.3

# Key Finding 6: Achievement in English and mathematics

	Savelugu-Nanton Mathematics (30)		Mfantseman Mathematics (30)	
Grade	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
P4	9.4	6.8	12.0	4.6
P6	13.6	5.3	16.6	4.9
JHS1	15.9	5.2	18.6	4.7

# Predicted increase in English test scores by age and school attendance



--- Age-in-grade      — Over age 2-3  
..... Over age 4+  
Predicted Values

Kofi was born in Abandze in the Mfantseman District of the Central Region of Ghana. He is 10 years old. His father did not send him to school but his mother had promised to send him to school when she gets money. However, his mother had not made any contact with the school at Kormantse where they stay. His parents had divorced and the father had remarried. His father has children with his second wife and they were in school. He does not know and could not imagine what school will be like or what really happens there. He could not say what he hopes or expects to be in future or how he will be affected in future for his lack of schooling. He spends most of the day at the beach helping fishermen to pull their nets. Even when there are no activities at the beach he still hangs around the beach doing nothing.

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# What Implications for Policy and Practice

- Characterisation of poor and marginalised groups cut across official definitions of deprived and non-deprived hence interventions must target groups with similar characteristics and not districts
- Focus enrolment drives on correct-age-in-grade- achievement, attendance and dropout
- School records on attendance, progression and achievement must be monitored systematically and used as key indicators for improving access

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Thank you

Questions and comments



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