TEACHER PERCEPTIONS ON ACCESS TO SCHOOLING IN GHANA
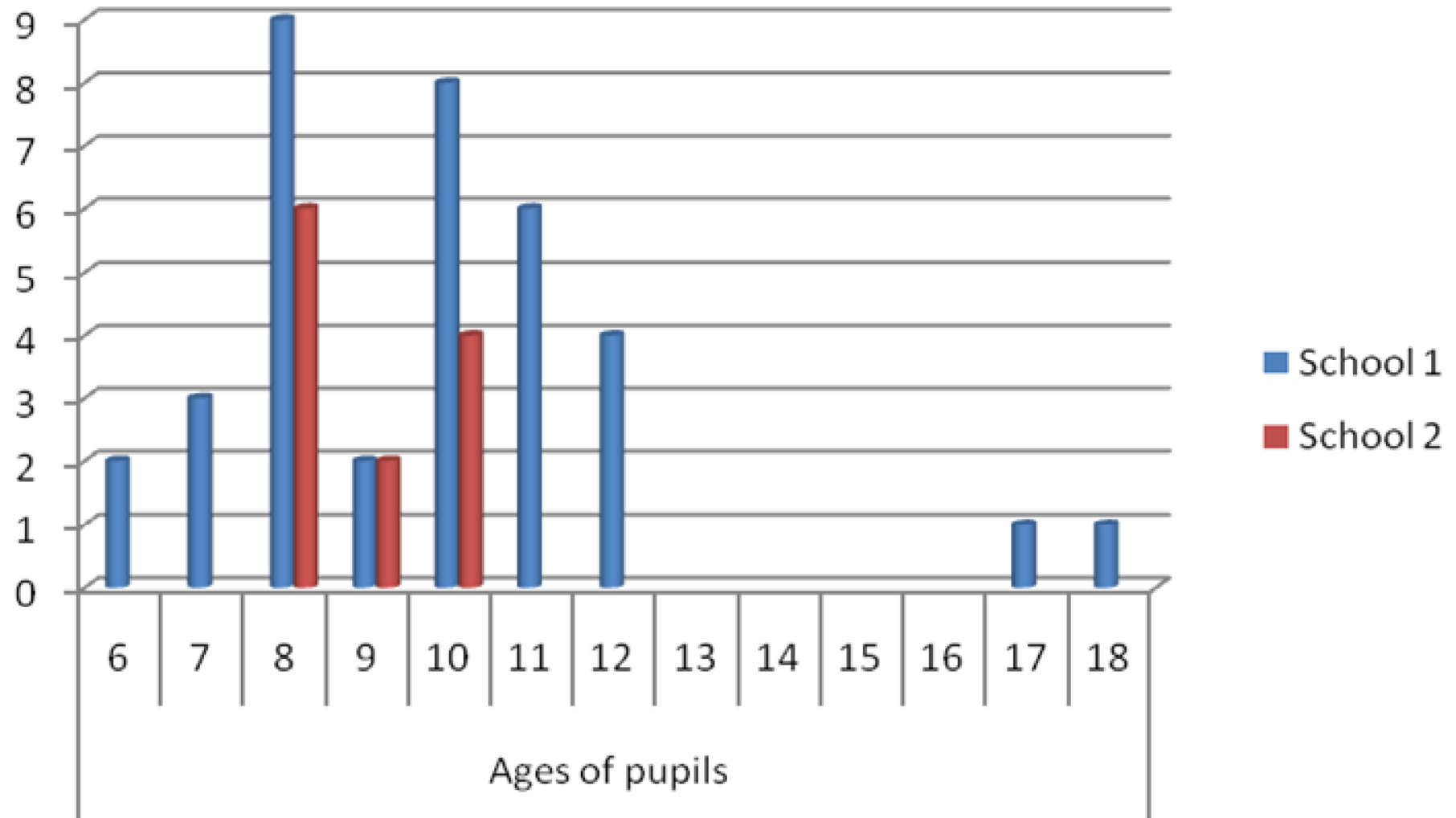
National Centre for Research into Basic Education
University of Education, Winneba

Commissioned by CREATE, SUSSEX as part of thematic papers on access to basic education

Statement of the Problem

- What do teachers perceive as contributing to pupils' lack of access to schooling in the Winneba Municipality?

Overage Pupils

Purpose of the Research

- To investigate teacher perceptions about pupils' lack of access to schooling in Winneba Municipality.

- To explore teachers views about what they see as their primary roles and responsibilities and what that means to them in terms of responding to problems of access

- To discover what teachers do to discourage drop out and encourage re -enrolment

Research Questions

- What do teachers see as contributing to pupils' lack of access to schooling?

- How do teachers contribute to pupils' lateness, irregular attendance and dropout?

- To what extent do teachers' classroom interaction with pupils' impact on exclusion or retention after initial access?

Research Questions

- How do teachers identify children at risk of dropping out and in what ways do they respond to this risk?

- How do teachers organise teaching and learning in classrooms with over-aged children and children who attend irregularly? – How does this impact on the organisation of teaching and learning?

Research Questions

- Does teacher training and continuous professional development (CPD) prepare teachers to recognise vulnerability to drop out?

- What school management policies and practices relate to problems of access?

Target Population and Methodology

Target Group	Number of respondents	Methodology
1. Head teachers	Head Teachers (Max. 4)	Interview and study of school records
2. Teachers	Teachers (6 Trs. x 4 schs) Max 24	Observation, interview and study of records
3. Pupils	2 pupils per class (P1, 4 & 6) (Max 24)	Interview and study of exercise books

Sampling

- purposive (schools and teachers)
- random sampling (pupils)

Summary of Findings

- Teachers did not perceive themselves as contributing to pupils' lack of access.

- Teachers and Headteachers associated pupils lack of access to challenges associated with parental and community attitudes towards education.

- Teacher attitudes and behaviour contributed to pupils' lack of access.

Pupils Perceptions on access problems

- Teachers' irregular attendance, lateness and absenteeism as well as misuse of instructional hours and indiscriminate use of corporal punishment were concerns pupils particularly noted as contributing to irregular attendance, lateness and drop out.

- Irresponsible parenthood, poverty and hunger

Findings

- Headteachers did not see monitoring and controlling school attendance as key elements in achieving school objectives.

- Pupils and teacher attendance records were haphazardly kept.

- Teachers' attendance records showed no reality with practice.

- Pupils in all classes were overage, yet the teachers taught these classes as homogeneous.

Findings

- Drop out rate was very high:

A study of class registers over a six year period for class six pupils showed in one school that only one (1) out of the original fourteen (14) pupils who started P1 was present in P6, though enrolment had increased to 17.

2 out of 19chn. (P1-P6)

2 out of 18 girls & 10 out of 28 boys (P1-P6)

8 out of 46 chn. (P1-P5)

Teacher Practices that led to access problems

- Teachers use of certain punishments (scrubbing urinals, toilets, and weeding)
- Headteachers' poor supervision of teacher attendance, punctuality and regularity
- Schools failing to respect the religious rights of pupils
- Teachers refusing to acknowledge that pupils drop out
- Teachers and heads haphazard dropout prevention strategies

Teacher Practices improving access

- Punishment for unauthorised absenteeism (sickness)
- Schools kept first aid and designated teachers to administer first aid
- Visits to irregular attendees and dropout parents
- Not embarrassing overage children in class

Recommendations

- Teachers should not see corporal punishment as a way to attain educational goals

- Teachers need to use alternative behaviour modification methods such as Positive Behaviour Intervention and Support (PBIS) and restorative practices.

Recommendations

- Over age problem be addressed through sensitization of parents and teachers.

- Over age children, particularly, the 'adult pupils' who have been rescued from child traffickers be provide separate school.

- Teachers and their heads should stop the practice of punishing pupils to scrub urinals and toilets.

Recommendations (cont.)

- District Education Authorities to step up supervision of schools with respect to teacher attendance, punctuality and regularity.

- A more detail study of the drop out rate is also recommended.

Thank you