



NET Deployment Guidelines

Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) Scheme
in Primary Schools

Guidelines for NET Deployment in the NET Scheme in Primary Schools

Introduction

Based on the 2012 edition of the NET Deployment Guidelines, this 2018 edition addresses the recommendations of the research team commissioned to conduct the second evaluation of the NET Scheme in Primary Schools (Primary NET Scheme). It also addresses the schools' views collected through the annual Advisory Teaching Team School Survey conducted by the NET Section since 2012, in particular the one in the 2016/17 school year, which included a section specifically about NET deployment. The focus group meetings held by the NET Section with Principals, English Panel Chairs (EPCs), local English teachers (LETs), Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) and Advisory Teachers (ATs) in December 2017 also provided insight and fresh perspectives regarding the more practical aspects of NET deployment, prompting deeper thoughts and further revision relevant to different school situations.



One focus of the 2018 edition is the intricate relationship between 'hiring, keeping and achieving the best' and NET deployment. It is hoped that with the revised Guidelines, schools will be better guided and encouraged to see NET deployment as a determining factor in maximising the benefits of the Primary NET Scheme.

Below is a brief outline of the points central to the revised Guidelines for schools' general quick reference:

- In Part B 'Deployment Principles', a new highlight, 'Hiring, Keeping and Achieving the Best - Maximising the Benefits and Potential of the Primary NET Scheme', is introduced. With this more encompassing principle is advice on NET recruitment, and a strong emphasis on the establishment of a collaborative culture to allow the NET and the LETs to work effectively together.
- In Part C 'Guidelines for NET Deployment', the scope of professional duties to be undertaken by a NET is updated to better reflect the latest developments in the curriculum reform and contemporary school situations. Apart from collaborative teaching, collaborative planning, which is instrumental in school-based curriculum development, is considered a main part of a NET's professional duties. To support school-based curriculum development, NETs are expected to contribute to the professional development of the English Panel.
- Throughout this edition, survey data and quotes from stakeholders taking part in the said focus group meetings, as well as the views of the research team conducting the second Primary NET Scheme evaluation, are used to illustrate different authentic contexts, share good practices, and give suggestions as to how the guideline in question can be implemented effectively.

"When hiring and retaining teachers, stakeholders should ensure that the candidates have the ability, experience, and qualifications to teach, but also that they respect each other's cultures, remain open to learning from each other, and are flexible."
Research Team conducting the 2nd Primary NET Scheme Evaluation

A. Objectives of the Primary NET Scheme

Under the Primary NET Scheme, it is expected that NETs can bring into the language classrooms of local schools their professional experience, different teaching styles and ideas, and cultural literacy that can help enrich students' literacy experiences and the language learning environment. Playing a complementary role as resource teachers, NETs collaborate with our local teachers to achieve the following Scheme objectives. They are:



To provide an authentic environment for children to learn English



To develop children's interest in learning English and establish the foundation for lifelong learning



To work with local teachers to develop the curricula, innovative learning and teaching methods, materials, and activities suited to the needs of local children



To disseminate good practices in language learning and teaching through teacher development programmes such as inductions for NETs, workshops, seminars, experience-sharing cluster meetings and networking activities



B. Deployment Principles

Hiring, Keeping and Achieving the Best – Maximising the Benefits and Potential of the Primary NET Scheme

Hiring the Best

Deployment planning should start as early as when a primary school, including the primary section of a special school, considers recruiting a NET. In the recruitment process, it is important to identify the attributes, expertise and experiences that are needed for the NET to best serve the school.

With respect to NET recruitment and appointment matters of schools, schools are advised to refer to, among others, the following three circulars / circular memorandum:

-  Education Bureau (EDB) Circular No. 5/2005 (16 June 2005) on Appointment of Staff in Schools – schools are reminded that, inter alia, they should observe the principle of equal opportunities and professional qualifications required by EDB;
-  EDB Circular No. 16/2017 (6 October 2017) on Measures for Strengthening the Protection of Students: Appointment Matters of Schools – schools are reminded, inter alia, to check the relevant candidates' teacher registration status, "Certificate of No Criminal Conviction", and "with the consent of the candidates, the school should consult their previous employers about their performance"; and
-  the annual EDB Circular Memorandum on Appointment and Re-appointment of NETs – schools are to familiarise themselves with the current arrangement.

Keeping and Achieving the Best

The deployment should allow the NET to collaborate well with the English panel to:

-  develop an enriched English Language learning and teaching environment in local primary schools;
-  facilitate the implementation of the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) English Language Education (ELE) Key Learning Area (KLA) Curriculum Guide (2017);
-  address the professional development needs of English teachers; and
-  adopt and promote innovative learning and teaching practices.

To achieve the above, it is crucial that there is a collaborative culture developed in the school where the NET is well integrated as a valued member of the school community.

Effective communication, mutual respect, timely feedback, due recognition and professional development opportunities are essential building blocks for such a culture.

Effective deployment of the NET within this framework will lead to the successful realisation of the Primary NET Scheme objectives. Schools participating in the Scheme are expected to take responsibility for deploying the NET effectively.

"...the NET being an integral part of the staff and contributing what skills they have." NET

"Encourage School Heads to provide a plan to support and evaluate the impact of the Scheme at their school. This plan might include a brief description of how the work of the Scheme was supported, including time for co-planning and professional development."
Research Team conducting the 2nd Primary NET Scheme Evaluation

C. Guidelines for NET Deployment

As indicated in the last two system-wide evaluations of the Primary NET Scheme, collaboration is the cornerstone of the Scheme. In this connection, effective NET deployment is instrumental in fostering a professional partnership between the NET and the LETs and in maximising the benefits and potential of the Scheme.

"...before a panel meeting, I will list one of the agenda items for the NET to reflect on or to share good practice... we see the NET as part of the English panel... and make her feel like she is one of our members. I think it is important." EPC

"For me, I think it is really important to develop a personal relationship with the teachers that you work with. So it is all about building trust and having that flexibility and understanding what the teacher needs are..." NET

Professional Duties

NETs are expected to collaborate with local teachers in the development, implementation and review of the school-based English Language curriculum with reference to the CDC ELE KLA Curriculum Guide. They also contribute to resource development and the building of the capacity of the English panel. As far as classroom teaching is concerned, it is recommended that NETs are assigned to teach 15 to 17 hours per week, with a minimum of 14 hours of collaborative teaching to appropriately combine with co-curricular activities. The recommendation takes into consideration NETs' role in curriculum and resource development.



1. Collaborative Planning	2. Collaborative Teaching	3. Co-curricular Activities	4. School-based Curriculum and Resource Development	5. Professional Development
Regular and timetabled collaborative lesson planning with LETs for each grade level involved	14 hours..... 15 hours..... 16 hours..... 17 hours.....	1 to 3 hours 0 to 2 hours 0 to 1 hour Nil	NETs collaborate with LETs to develop school-based curriculum and resources over three levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● in the classroom ● outside the classroom ● beyond the school 	Attending professional development activities, such as those organised by the NET Section Disseminating good practices through collaborative planning and teaching, school-based sharing sessions or networking activities

"It is all based on timetabling... and why it is successful. So when we have co-planning during the scheduled school hours, everyone is focused, probably on the same page... it is involving everyone and everyone has a say..." NET

"...schools that don't have a co-planning culture, often the meeting is not timetabled, it may be ad hoc... So it is just sort of a general discussion... but when schools have to be good, they have an agenda and the meeting is better structured." AT

1. Collaborative Planning

To allow quality time for professional exchange and collaboration, it is preferable to schedule collaborative lesson planning meetings within the school timetable. However, there may be school-specific factors that make it not feasible, such as there being no common free slots for the English teachers concerned. In such cases, individual schools may find alternative time slots in consultation with the teachers concerned. Where needed, they can seek advice from their ATs.

“...co-planning is not just in the staff room... You talk to each other, even if it is before the class...in 1A something went wrong, in the 10-minute recess break, I went straight to the teacher of the next lesson and said, ‘Let’s swap this part, let’s try to just focus on this more.’ That is great, this dissemination of good practice, of what was working well.” NET

“We have a fixed timetable for collaborative planning sessions... I think having teachers who are well-prepared is really important, no matter whether they are the NET or the LETs. And putting these sessions in the timetable is crucial because sometimes teachers may go out together to observe lessons in another school.” PRINCIPAL

“We include all the planning sessions in the timetable... so they have a fixed time slot... everyone is happy because they have the time.” EPC



2. Collaborative Teaching

- To allow quality time for innovative learning and teaching, it is preferable to assign NETs to conduct 3 to 4 thirty-five minute lessons, or the equivalent, per class, which includes at least 1 double lesson per week.
- Given the diverse backgrounds of both the schools and their NETs, NETs can be deployed in Key Stage 1 (KS1) and/or Key Stage 2 (KS2) as considered appropriate by individual schools. Where needed, schools can consult their ATs.
- To foster professional collaboration, it is important to identify a focus and provide adequate space and time for the teachers concerned. In this regard, it is advisable for NETs to work at not more than 3 grade levels. However, this recommendation may not apply in schools where there are only one or two classes per level.
- Schools taking part in one of the NET Section's primary literacy programmes, i.e. PLP-R/W, Space Town, KIP, Keys2 and DTS, should as far as possible deploy the NET in the key stage where the programme is being taught to support its implementation.

"...I think the effectiveness of the lesson does not just come from the NET but also from better collaboration between different people." PRINCIPAL

"Professional development is a daily process, through co-planning and co-teaching. It's an ongoing process of people learning from each other... that has led us to many NET-style activities being done in the GE classrooms, and also vice versa." NET

3. Co-curricular Activities

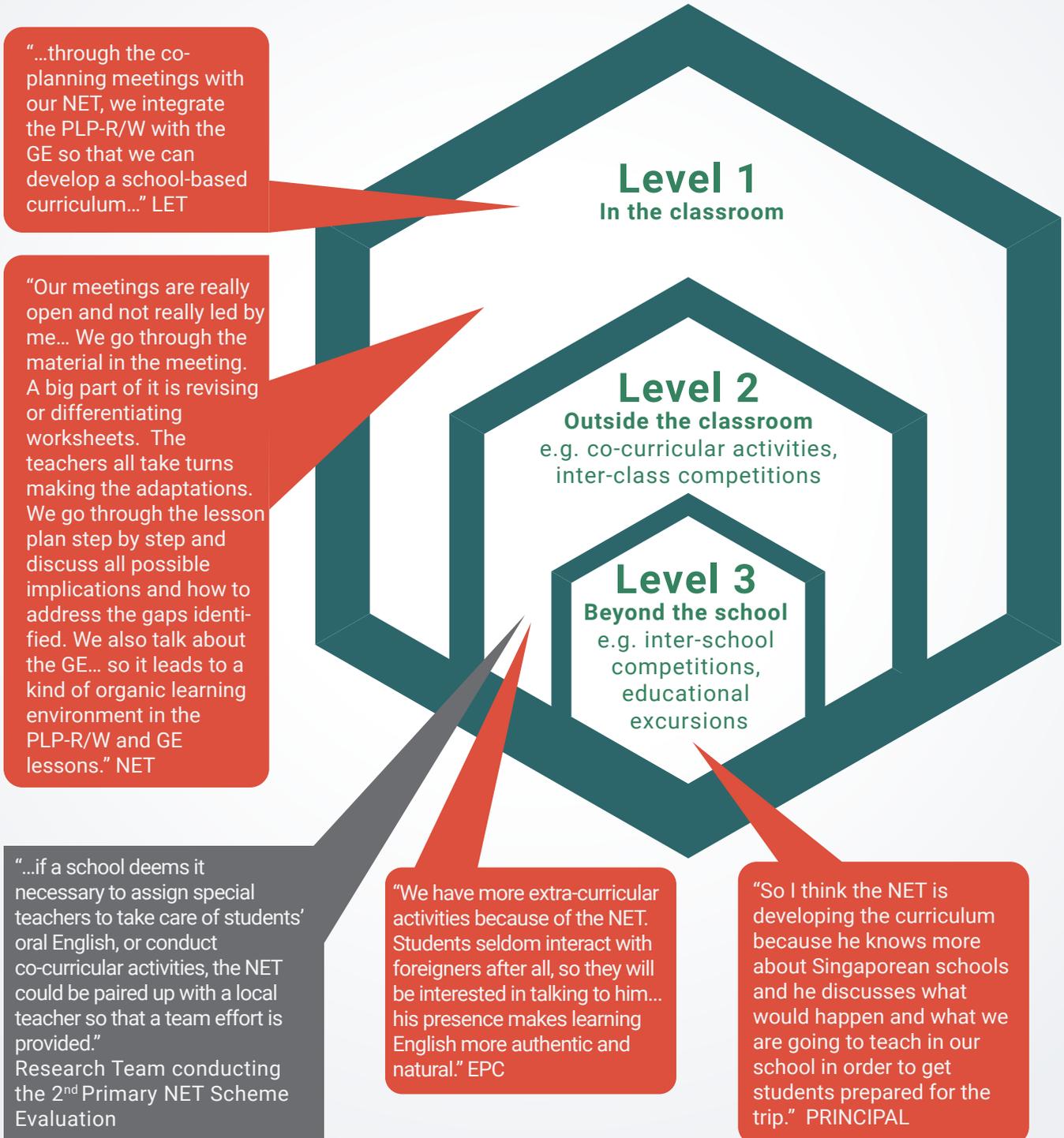
- Co-curricular activities are activities that provide students with learning experiences to be gained inside or outside the classroom, including the actual environment in the community and work places. Traditionally known as extra-curricular activities, they form an integral part of the school curriculum complementing the formal classroom learning. (Basic Education Curriculum Guide, 2014)
- Co-curricular activities such as those conducted with the engagement of NETs should be carefully planned to broaden students' exposure to English. Examples include recess, lunchtime or after-school English-related activities, such as drama, puppetry, debating, and storytelling.



4. School-based Curriculum and Resource Development



School-based curriculum and resource development is a collaborative process. Under the Primary NET Scheme, it is expected that the NET and the LETs contribute to this process over three levels:



- On these three levels, the NET collaborates with the LETs, who are more familiar with the local system and the school context, to design and provide students with rich and varied English learning experiences. Apart from collaborative planning, the preparation of materials and resources is part and parcel of the school-based curriculum development. All of these contribute to the enrichment of the English learning environment of the school and students' learning experiences.
- While school-based curriculum development requires the collaboration between the NET and the LETs, it also fosters their professional growth, which in turn enhances the English panel's capacity and the benefits of the NET Scheme as a whole.



Level 1
In the classroom



Level 2
Outside the classroom



Level 3
Beyond the school

5. Professional Development



Continued professional development is the key to the enhancement of learning and teaching. Every year the EDB organises a range of professional development programmes to cater for teachers' professional development needs and to support curriculum development and implementation in local schools. To foster their professional growth and collaboration, NETs and LETs should be encouraged to attend professional development programmes.



Through collaborative planning and teaching, school-based sharing sessions, as well as networking activities, NETs and LETs are encouraged to share, disseminate and explore good practices to support the promotion of innovative learning and teaching practices in schools, which facilitates their professional growth.



"Continue to encourage teachers to apply what was learned in professional development session soon after the workshop and to continue to reflect on how to adapt their practice in light of what was presented."

Research Team conducting the 2nd Primary NET Scheme Evaluation

"...it is really important to network between schools, to get feedback on your teaching as well as other people's teaching... sharing or professional development doesn't happen just within one school but within many different schools. And it is a really great experience as well, because... it is more of a bonding experience for our English team."
NET

"I guess that one of the things that I do at my school is I conduct some professional development activities for the English team and I do that about three times a year... usually the topics are suggested by the team." NET

"Encourage LETs who have benefitted from professional development workshops to conduct workshops with input/feedback from the NET and other LETs. It is important to create a collegial atmosphere acknowledging that both NETs and LETs have something to contribute."

Research Team conducting the 2nd Primary NET Scheme Evaluation

"I think that co-teaching is a good way to support our professional development... We learn a lot of teaching strategies through these co-taught lessons..." LET

Other Considerations

- NETs may be required to attend special functions outside school/work hours, e.g. events organised by the Parent-Teacher Association, graduation ceremonies, school open days.
- When a NET is required to attend a meeting conducted in Chinese, translation should be provided so that the NET can have a grasp of what is being discussed, thus allowing the NET to make a meaningful contribution during and after the meeting. Alternatively, NETs could be assigned other tasks and briefed about the meeting at a later stage.
- Consideration should be given to NETs' need to return to their home countries to see their families during long holidays such as Christmas and Easter. A continuous block of at least four weeks' holiday is strongly recommended for NETs during the summer break.



D. Key Roles of Stakeholders



The Principal plays a leading role in the implementation and review of the NET Scheme and NET deployment. They support the creation of a collaborative culture within the school through providing administrative and professional support for collaborative planning and teaching.



Principal

"To create a good working environment for the NET and the local teachers, I think we should have a good policy... we should create more room and time for the co-planning meetings within the timetable. It's important to let the teachers know the management team supports the English panel." PRINCIPAL

"The transfer of knowledge can be achieved through mentorship. For example, experienced teachers, either the NET or the LETs, can be deployed to support and collaborate with some less experienced ones at a particular year level for a reasonable period of time, especially in a school implementing a literacy programme." AT



PSM(CD)

The PSM(CD) oversees the development of school-based curriculum and aligns the school-based English Language curriculum and the NET Scheme implementation with the main curriculum goals of the school.



EPC/SET

As curriculum leader in the ELE KLA in school, the EPC assists the Principal in cultivating a collaborative culture where NET-LET collaboration is fostered to enhance school-based curriculum development and students' learning, as well as the reciprocal professional development of the NET and the LETs. Most schools nowadays have more than one EPC and assign one of the EPCs to be the School English Teacher (SET) to work closely with the NET and the AT.

"We see the NET as part of the English panel... and make her feel like she is one of our members. I think it is important." "We have some 'Seed' (experienced) teachers..., because they know what happened last year. So they will tell us this didn't work last year so maybe we have to adapt a little bit." EPC



LET

The LETs collaborate with the NET to implement the NET Scheme and develop the school-based curriculum including resources. They provide advice on the local culture and education context and work with the NET to develop and disseminate innovative learning and teaching practices.

"...when we have our co-planning meetings, we take turns to chair the lesson planning session and to prepare the lesson plan." LET



NET

The NET collaborates with the LETs to provide an authentic English learning environment in the school. Together they develop and review the school-based curriculum and disseminate innovative learning and teaching practices.

"I think the role of a NET is... not to work as an individual but one in collaboration with the team, the people they are all working with, to achieve the objectives and to get the students to learn, understand and experience English." NET



AT

Please refer to Part F (page 14) for details about the support provided by the AT.

E. Good Practices



Good practices that support a collaborative culture leading to the successful implementation of the Scheme include:

- giving regular common collaborative planning time scheduled within the timetable for the NET and the LETs teaching at the same grade level;
- structuring collaborative planning meetings to allow both the NET and the LETs to take turns to lead the meetings;
- promoting collaboration by engaging the NET and the LETs in reflective teaching practices and reciprocal professional development;
- conducting collaborative teaching through assigning specific roles to the NET and the LETs in the lessons;
- enhancing the school-based curriculum development to promote innovative learning and teaching practices that provide rich and varied English learning experiences;
- deploying one of the EPCs to teach at least one grade level with the NET; and
- updating and informing parents regularly about the NET Scheme.

"My NET told me that he has learnt a lot from other teachers, because every teacher has their own teaching style and you learn from them... and the variety of teaching styles makes you more and more effective every day." PRINCIPAL

"Meetings which NETs are required to attend should be conducted in English or translation provided if Cantonese is used." Research Team conducting the 2nd Primary NET Scheme Evaluation

"The meetings themselves should have value. So the people there have to think that it is of benefit to them and they have an ownership of the meeting." NET

"We specify our roles in the lesson plan... We know we have a shared role in co-teaching, not just monitoring the class discipline... We switch roles sometimes. I think it is about 50/50... So switching roles is important for professional development." EPC



F. NET Section Support

The Advisory Teaching Team (ATT) is established under the NET Section to support the implementation of the Primary NET Scheme by:

- designing and running professional development programmes for NETs and LETs;
- providing school-based support to promote innovative and effective learning and teaching strategies;
- developing and implementing literacy programmes and Seed projects to foster collaboration between NETs and LETs and their professional development, as well as students' literacy development;
- giving advice on NETs' deployment;
- developing resources to support curriculum implementation;
- disseminating good practices in language learning and teaching; and
- providing peripatetic support for schools with less than six classes.

For more information, please refer to the NET Scheme e-Platform at: <https://nets.edb.hkedcity.net/>



Scan the QR code

to explore the NET Scheme e-Platform.



Acknowledgement

The NET Section would like to express its gratitude and appreciation to the Principals, EPCs, LETs, NETs and ATs who participated in the consultation process. Their views and opinions have been very helpful in the compilation of the Guidelines (2018 edition).

Abbreviations

	AT	Advisory Teacher
	ATT	Advisory Teaching Team
	CPD	Centralised Professional Development
	DTS	Development of Text Sets
	EPC	English Panel Chair
	Keys2	Keys 2 Literacy Development
	KIP	Key Stage 2 Integration Programme
	KS1	Key Stage 1
	KS2	Key Stage 2
	LET	Local English Teacher
	NET	Native-speaking English Teacher
	PLP-R/W	Primary Literacy Programme – Reading and Writing (Key Stage 1)
	PSM(CD)	Primary School Master/Mistress for Curriculum Development
	SET	School English Teacher
	Space Town	Space Town Literacy Programme for Key Stage 1

