



**Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group**

# **ADHERENCE TO THE NATIONAL COSTED SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION**

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**A CASE STUDY OF SHEEMA, NAMAYINGO AND YUMBE DISTRICTS**

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**REPORT ON ASSESSING ADHERENCE TO PRIMARY EDUCATION  
NATIONAL COSTED SERVICE DELIVERR STANDARDS (NCSDS) IN  
SELECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the adherence to the Primary Education National Costed Service Delivery Standards (NCSDS) in selected local governments in Uganda, aiming to evaluate the effectiveness of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program. The NCSDS were introduced in 2024 to set minimum standards for service delivery in education, with the goal of ensuring equitable access to quality education. The study, conducted across eight districts and **43 primary schools**, combines both qualitative and quantitative methods to generate insights into improving UPE services.

While Uganda has made substantial progress in expanding access to education, with enrollment increasing from 3.1 million in 1997 to 9.2 million learners by June 2024 (EMIS June 2024), this growth has not been accompanied by proportional improvements in infrastructure, teacher capacity, and learning outcomes. The introduction of the NCSDS aims to address these gaps by establishing benchmarks to ensure that education services meet a certain minimum standard. However, the study finds significant challenges in the effective implementation of these standards.

Awareness and understanding of the NCSDS vary widely. Although many education officials and school leaders are aware of the standards, grassroots knowledge remains low, particularly among School Management Committees (SMCs), suggesting a need for greater communication and training at the community level. Infrastructure remains a critical issue, with overcrowding prevalent in many schools, especially those with high enrollment. Only 24% of schools have enough classrooms, and **22%** provide sufficient desks, leading to poor learning conditions. Compliance with safety and health standards is also inconsistent, with a lack of basic safety equipment like fire extinguishers and emergency exits in many schools.

Teacher shortages are another major concern, with the teacher-pupil ratio exceeding the national standard of 1:53 in **74% of schools**. Despite regular performance evaluations, teacher absenteeism remains high due to various factors, including health issues and external commitments. Learner outcomes are also concerning, with attendance rates **below 70%** in over **40% of schools**, and girls facing significantly higher dropout rates compared to boys.

Financial management remains a challenge as well, with schools facing delays in the disbursement of funds, hindering the effective implementation of their annual plans and budgets. Community involvement in supporting schools financially is also limited, largely due to economic constraints. The report identifies several key challenges: inadequate funding, insufficient infrastructure and learning materials, high pupil-teacher ratios, and limited community engagement. To address these challenges, the report makes the following recommendations:

- i. For the Central Government: Increase capitation grants, accelerate teacher recruitment, and prioritize investment in infrastructure development.
- ii. For Local Governments: Allocate more resources to education, prioritize school infrastructure in local budgets, and encourage stronger community-government collaboration.
- iii. For Schools and Communities: Strengthen Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), promote community support, and explore income-generating activities to supplement school resource

# INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on assessing adherence to the Primary Education National Costed Service Delivery Standards (NCSDS) in selected local governments. Recognizing the pivotal role that NCSDS play in promoting efficient, equitable, and quality service delivery, the study seeks to generate actionable evidence to inform policy and budget advocacy for improved delivery of Universal Primary Education services. The study acknowledges that the NCSDS are new, and this research serves as a critical baseline assessment of the initial state of adherence, which is essential for tracking future progress. Consequently, the study also recognises that while the NCSDS were officially launched in 2024, they are based pre-existing ministerial guidelines and standards. The study is assessing adherence to these benchmarks, which have been in effect in various forms for longer, under the new, unified NCSDS framework. A mixed-methods approach combining both qualitative and quantitative techniques was adopted to ensure a comprehensive and contextually grounded evaluation.

## 1.1 THE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

In Uganda, the delivery of primary education is anchored in the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme, introduced by the Government in 1997 as a flagship initiative to provide free and compulsory basic education to all children aged six years and above. The programme aims to increase equitable access to quality education and ensure that every child acquires essential literacy, numeracy, and life skills. Under UPE, the government covers tuition costs for pupils in government-aided schools and supports educational operations through two key funding mechanisms: **The Capitation Grant (CG)** and the education development conditional grant. The CG caters for recurrent school expenses such as instructional materials, co-curricular activities, and administrative costs while the SFG focuses on infrastructure development, including the construction of classrooms, teachers' houses, and provision of furniture (MoES UPE Handbook, 1998).

The implementation of UPE is guided by Uganda's decentralization policy, where local governments through the District Education Offices are directly responsible for programme oversight. Schools manage UPE funds under the supervision of School Management Committees (SMCs), following guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES). Funding is channeled through the Poverty Action Fund (PAF) as a conditional grant, with coordination among MoES, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), and the Bank of Uganda. Over time, reforms in fund flow management have improved transparency, reduced delays, and minimized financial leakages. However, challenges such as

inadequate funding, delayed disbursements, and disparities in service delivery persist. These issues highlight the importance of assessing adherence to the National Costed Service Delivery Standards, which serve as a benchmark for ensuring that UPE objectives are met effectively and equitably across all districts.

## 1.2 SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS FOR UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Public Service (MoPS), introduced the National Costed Service Delivery Standards (NCSDS) in 2024 as part of a broader effort to enhance the quality, efficiency, and equity of public services across all sectors, including education. The NCSDS were developed to provide a unified framework for resource allocation, performance monitoring, and accountability, ensuring that Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs) and local Governments deliver services in line with nationally agreed benchmarks. In the education sector, the NCSDS are implemented under the oversight of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the Directorate of Education Standards (DES), which are mandated to set, monitor, and enforce compliance with these standards.

The education and sports sector service delivery standards, as set by (MoPS), aim to ensure universal and equitable access to quality education for all children. These standards specify the minimum requirements for infrastructure, staffing, governance, health, and safety in every primary school. At the core of these standards is the commitment to guarantee that every parish has at least one government-aided primary school, located within a one-kilometer radius of

learners' homes, to minimize access barriers. Each school should cater to children of school-going age (minimum six years), with clear signage, national and school flags, and safe learning environments that are fenced, guarded, and equipped with fire extinguishers, emergency exits, handwashing facilities, and first aid kits (Uganda Ministry of Public Service, 2024).

In terms of infrastructure, the NCSDS require a standard primary school to have at least seven classrooms, an administration block, and adequate sitting space to maintain a pupil–classroom ratio of 1:53 and a pupil–desk ratio of 1:2. Schools must provide gender-segregated sanitation facilities with a latrine pupil to stance ratio of 1:35, teacher accommodation at a 1:1 ratio, and inclusive infrastructure for learners with special needs. Additionally, schools should have a counselling room, kitchen and food store, and a lightning conductor for all buildings.

The NCSDS also emphasizes effective school governance and management, requiring schools to display their vision, mission, motto, and annual work plan, and to operate under functional School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). Regular meetings—once per term for SMCs and PTAs, and annually for general assemblies are mandatory to foster transparency and community participation. Schools must have a designated senior woman and man teacher to address learner welfare and ensure the inclusion of grievance redress and suggestion mechanisms.

On staffing, each school must be led by a head teacher, supported by deputy head teachers for every 500 pupils, with a minimum of seven teachers, a teacher–pupil ratio of 1:53, two security officers, and at least one enrolled nurse. Staff performance should be monitored through monthly and termly evaluations, while annual appraisals for both teachers and head teachers ensure accountability.

In teaching and learning, the standards prescribe that schools maintain a 1:2 textbooks–pupil ratio and a 1:1 teacher–reference book ratio. Lessons must follow approved timetables, displayed in public view, and all teachers are expected to be on task 100% of the time. Accurate records of attendance, curriculum coverage, learner progress, and continuous assessment must be kept.

For health, hygiene, and sanitation, every school must provide safe drinking water, a warm midday meal, separate latrines for staff and learners, and a sickbay or referral mechanism for unwell pupils.

Waste management is also prioritized, with schools required to designate dumping areas and incinerate garbage at least twice a week.

Financially, schools must prepare annual budgets and work plans, with all income and expenditures approved by the SMC. Financial accountability reports should be submitted within 30 days of any activity, and quarterly audits must be conducted to ensure transparency and compliance.

Finally, the NCSDS define clear educational outcome targets, including 100% enrolment & attendance, 80% survival and completion rates to Primary 7, reduced dropout and repetition rates, and improved proficiency in literacy (75%) and numeracy (80%) among Primary 6 pupils. These standards serve as a benchmark for tracking progress toward equitable, high-quality education outcomes.

Despite institutional efforts in dictating the appropriate service delivery standards to improve education delivery, Uganda's primary education system continues to face persistent challenges in providing quality public education. Since the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997, enrolment has grown significantly from 3.1 million learners in 1996 to 9.2 million learners by June 2024 (EMIS June 2024) yet these gains in access have not been matched by corresponding improvements in quality, equity, and infrastructure. Persistent issues such as inadequate classrooms, teacher shortages, overcrowding, high dropout rates, and limited inspection capacity have undermined the effectiveness of education delivery (CSBAG, 2025; UNATU, 2024).

The Directorate of Education Standards, mandated to ensure adherence to National Costed Service Delivery Standards (NCSDS), continues to face constraints including limited funding, insufficient staffing, and irregular inspections factors that weaken accountability and consistency in enforcing standards (Kaweesi, 2023; New Vision, 2024). Consequently, inconsistent adherence, resource limitations, and institutional capacity gaps hinder the full implementation of the NCSDS. Strengthening their enforcement through increased funding, regular inspections, and enhanced local government oversight remains vital to ensuring that every Ugandan child access quality primary education in a safe and conducive learning environment.

### **1.3 LEGAL, POLICY, AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS**

The development and implementation of Service Delivery Standards (SDS) in Uganda are deeply embedded in the country's legal and policy landscape, serving as a cornerstone for improving the quality, efficiency, and accountability of public services. This multi-sectoral reform aligns with Uganda Vision 2040 and Objective 5 of the National Development Plan III (NDP III), both of which emphasize citizen empowerment and strengthened accountability systems. The legal foundation is drawn from key legislation, including the Local Government Act Cap 243 which mandates line ministries to establish minimum national service standards and sector-specific laws such as the 1995 Constitution, the Education Act, and the 1992 Government White Paper on Education. The Ministry of Public Service (MoPS) plays a central role in guiding implementation by issuing standardized guidelines and providing a unified framework for all government institutions.

The **Service Delivery Standards** (SDS) framework is implemented through a sector-specific, collaborative approach involving various ministries and stakeholders. MoPS leads and coordinates the overall reform process, while line ministries such as the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE), Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), Ministry of Works and Transport (MoWT), and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) develop and apply standards relevant to their mandates. Each institution operates within its legal and policy context to ensure effective, inclusive, and accountable service delivery. The implementation process is further supported by Local Governments (LGs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the Private Sector, and Development Partners, who contribute to contextualizing standards, facilitating implementation, and monitoring compliance across all service delivery levels.

### **1.4 GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

The overall objective of this study is to assess the extent to which selected local governments and primary schools have implemented the National Costed Service Delivery Standards (NCSDS) in primary education in Uganda

### **1.5 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- I. To examine the extent to which district local governments and primary schools have integrated NCSDS into their planning, budgeting, and management systems. To assess the level of awareness and understanding of NCSDs among local government actors.
- II. To evaluate the degree of compliance with key education service delivery standards, including pupil-teacher ratios, textbook-to-pupil ratios, teacher attendance, and school inspection frequency.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

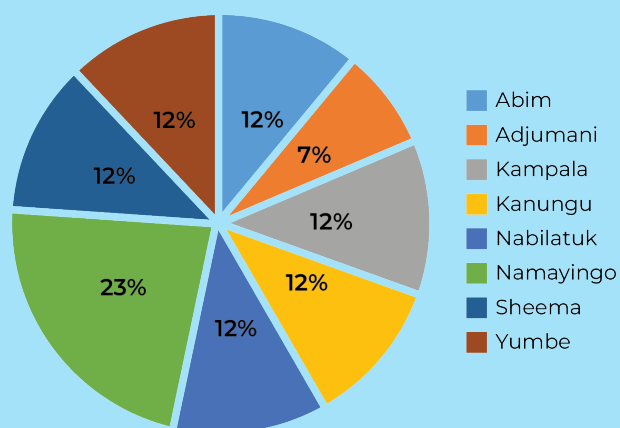
### 2.1 STUDY DESIGN & METHODOLOGY

The study utilized a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to generate a comprehensive analysis of NCSD adherence in the education sector. Quantitative methods involve the use of structured questionnaires administered to school administrators, capturing measurable data on service delivery standards and inputs. Qualitative methods included key informant interviews (KIIs), and document reviews to provide contextual depth and nuance to the quantitative findings. The integration of these approaches enabled triangulation of data sources, thereby strengthening the reliability, validity, and interpretive value of the findings.

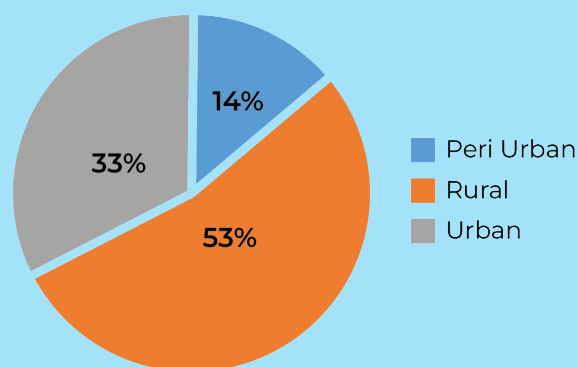
### 2.2 SCOPE

A total of 40 schools across eight districts Abim, Adjumani, Sheema, Yumbe, Kampala, Kanungu, Nabilatuk, and Namayingo participated in the study. From each district, five schools were selected to ensure balanced representation from a variety of geographical contexts. The schools were drawn from urban, peri-urban, and rural sub counties, enabling a comparative analysis of service delivery across these different environments. The districts were carefully chosen to ensure regional diversity, providing a comprehensive view of the educational landscape in both urban centers and rural areas. This strategic selection allowed the study to capture the distinct educational challenges and opportunities faced by schools in different regions of Uganda.

**FIGURE 1; PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS INTERVIEWED PER DISTRICT**



**FIGURE 2; LOCATION OF THE SCHOOLS INTERVIEWED**



### 2.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The sampling strategy involved both random and purposive selection methods. A total of 40 primary schools were randomly selected from the Ministry of Education and Sports' (MoES) official school registry across eight districts, Abim, Adjumani, Sheema, Yumbe, Kampala, Kanungu, Nabilatuk and Namayingo. Schools were stratified by sub-county to ensure inclusion rural, peri-urban and urban settings. Key informants including District Education Officers, District Inspectors of Schools, representatives from the SMC and SCOs and representatives from MoPS, MoES, MoFPED, MoPS, and NPA were purposively selected based on their roles in NCSD development, implementation, and oversight. Additionally, surveys were administered to the head of the schools targeted for the study.

### 2.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data collection involved four complementary methods. First, a desk review of relevant documents from key MDAs and independent researchers was undertaken. This was

complemented by structured surveys administered to head teachers to collect quantitative data on school-level service delivery inputs and outputs. Key informant interview guides were also used to explore stakeholder perspectives on NCSDS implementation, challenges, and institutional capacity.

### 2.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data were analyzed using **Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)** and excel to explore trends, patterns and relationships in the data to provide empirical evidence of the degree to which NCSD indicators were being met. Qualitative data obtained through KIIs was transcribed and analyzed thematically using ATLAS.ti. Emerging themes were identified, coded, and interpreted to uncover underlying factors influencing NCSD implementation and compliance. Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data further enhanced the credibility and depth of the findings.

### 3. FINDINGS

This section presents the findings from the data collected from primary schools in eight districts of Uganda. Through a comprehensive analysis of various service delivery standards, we explore key indicators that impact the educational experience of students. The data encompasses metrics such as pupil enrollment rates, classroom conditions, teacher qualifications, and learning outcomes, providing a holistic view of the current state of primary education in these districts.

#### 3.1 KNOWLEDGE OF NATIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

There was significant variation in the knowledge and awareness of the education service delivery standards across different respondent groups. Head teachers, Directors of Studies, and Deputy

Head teachers from the schools interviewed displayed a strong understanding of the service delivery standards. Similarly, officials from key ministries, including the **Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development**, the **National Planning Authority (NPA)**, and the **Ministry of Public Service**, were all well-informed about the standards. Additionally, the District Education Officers (DEOs), District Inspectors of Schools (DIS), as well as most of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), School management Committee members and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) engaged in education-related work, demonstrated a solid awareness of these standards.

*I understand them as the basic standardized costs developed by the Ministry of Public Service in Uganda to deliver uniform education services across districts in Uganda. **KII\_ Official from MoFPED***

*We are aware..... we have engaged with NCSDs primarily through tracking compliance and monitoring resource utilization in primary schools with in Sheema District. **KII\_CSO in Sheema District.***

*We have had advocacy engagements with the district leaders on compliance, especially the establishment of primary schools, recruitment of teachers, infrastructural development and creating awareness on the roles of different stakeholders like the parents, guardians, political leaders. **KII\_CSO working in Kapchorwa, Kween and Bukwo***

*I think these are the minimum standards expected from any school be it government or private. **KII\_ Official from MoLG***

*Yes, I am familiar, though cannot be 100% because of the many reviews, many policies, amendments and other new policies that come in to govern and manage the education system in the country and specifically in local governments. **KII\_ DEO***

*.....these are what make a school operate and help the learners have a conducive environment at school, like teachers, support staff, water, and electricity and name it. **KII\_SMC Kampala District***

*Expected minimum standards a school should have for better learning e.g. Safe water, classroom, desk etc. **KII\_ SMC Adjumani District***

Although most respondents were aware of the Service Delivery Standards (NCSDS), there were notable exceptions, particularly among School Management Committees (SMCs), where some members admitted to having never heard of these standards. At the grassroots level, where the standards are intended to empower parents and inform school committees, awareness is critically low

Several SMC chairpersons openly confessed to not knowing about the Standards. “**I think that’s a new concept to me,**” said a Vice Chairperson for one of the schools in Abim District, while another SMC Chairperson in Namayingo District remarked, “**This is my first time to hear about NCSDS.**” Similarly, a chairperson at another School in Namayingo admitted, “**It is quite new to me.**” This lack of awareness can largely be attributed to the limited

training available to SMCs, with the few who have been trained having received support from NGOs rather than the government.

In addition, nearly all five schools visited in Sheema District, the SMC chairpersons had little or no formal understanding of what the NCSDS entail, with most admitting they had never received any orientation from the government on these national standards. This points to a significant gap in the formal dissemination of the NCSDS at the local level.

Interestingly, awareness and training on the standards appeared to be more consistent in schools where Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) had been involved. For example, SMC members from Yumbe District confirmed they had received training from implementing partners such as **ISER<sup>1</sup>**, **USDC<sup>2</sup>**, and

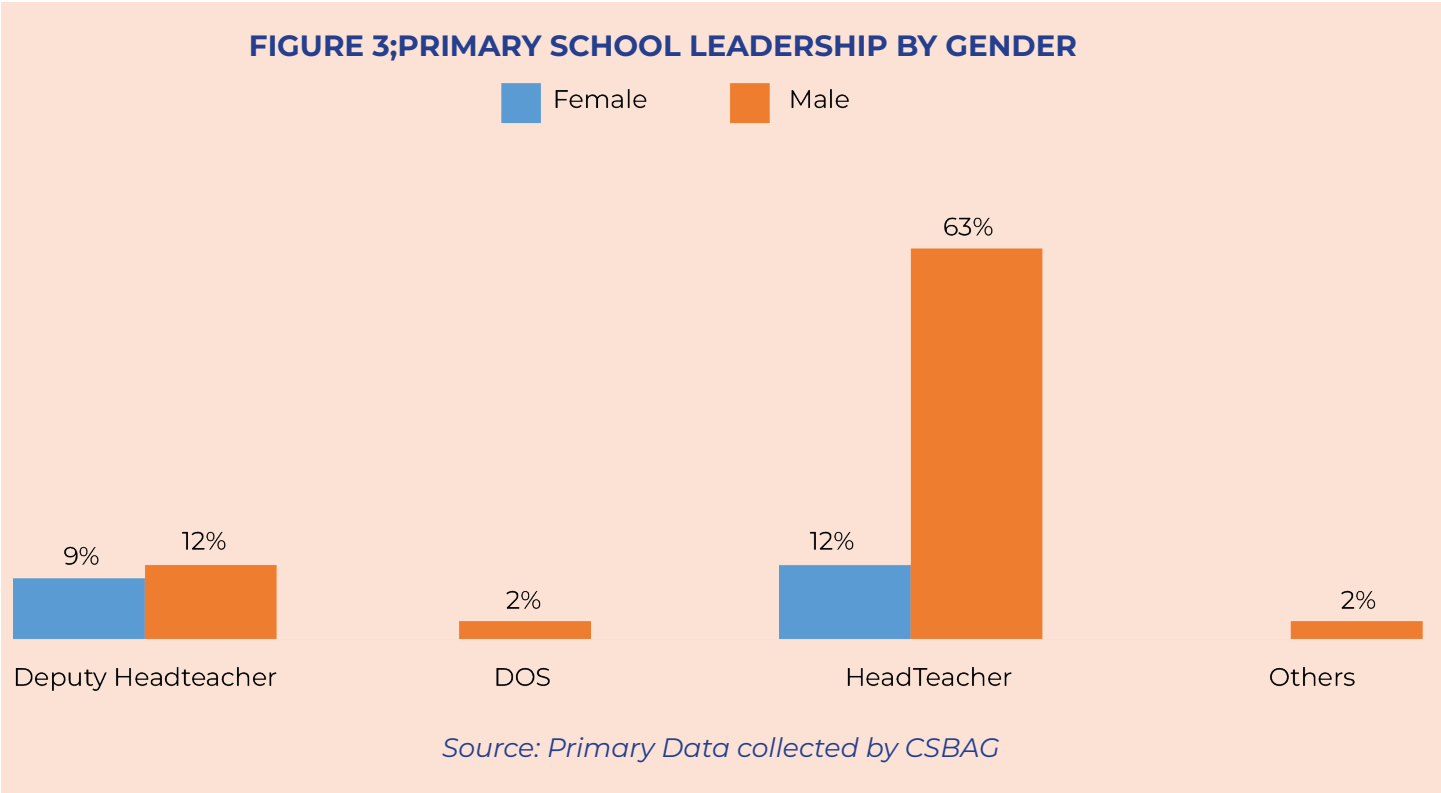
1 Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER)

CSBAG. These findings underscore the critical role that CSOs play in raising awareness and providing the much-needed training on education service delivery standards, especially in areas where government-led initiatives have been limited.

3.2 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP BY GENDER

The data reveals that while women are somewhat represented among Deputy Head Teachers, their presence sharply declines in the more senior role of Head Teacher. Overall, school leadership in the sample is heavily male dominated (almost 80%), with limited female representation (just about 21%),

especially at the highest level of Head Teacher. The limited presence of women in high school leadership positions reinforces gender inequality, weakens gender-sensitive decision-making, and denies girls strong role models to inspire their own aspirations. It sustains patriarchal norms that keep leadership male-dominated, while also depriving schools of the diverse perspectives and inclusive leadership styles that women often bring, ultimately limiting progress toward equitable and responsive education systems.

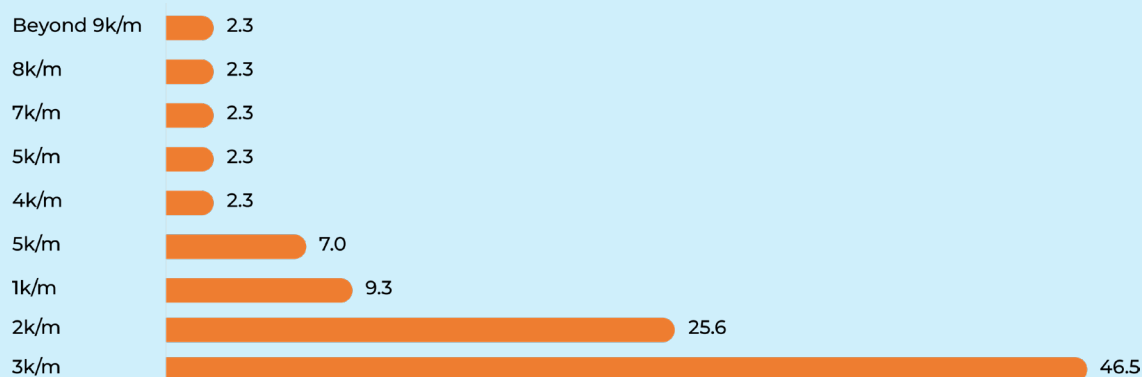


3.3 LEARNER PROXIMITY AND SCHOOL CONDITIONS

This looked at the average distance of learners from school, physical conditions of schools, their safety, and the security of land tenure. Adequate facilities and safe environments are essential for effective learning and equitable access, particularly for girls and learners with special needs. Land ownership also reflects sustainability and government investment readiness.

Looking at the average distance of learners from home to school, only 9.3% of learners live within 1 km of their school, revealing that over 90% of schools don't meet the standard of being with 1KM of the learners. As seen in Figure 3 below, the vast majority live much farther away with 25.6% travelling 2 km to school, and the largest proportion, 46.5% travelling 3 km. This points to the fact that most rural parishes have 3 km radius thus the standard of 1 km may not be feasible. MoPS needs to review policy on acceptable walking distance to school, and distribution of schools based on the size of Parishes

**FIGURE 4; AVERAGE DISTANCE OF MOST LEARNERS FROM SCHOOL IN KM**



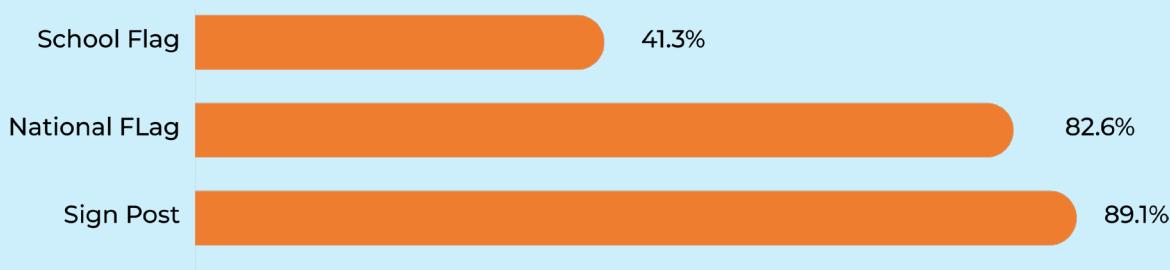
*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

This has significant implications, including learner fatigue, lateness, absenteeism, and reduced concentration in class. It may also increase dropout rates, especially for younger children and girls, who face greater risks walking long distances. While policy prescribes a maximum of 1 km, in practice most learners endure **2–9 km journeys**, underscoring the urgent need to establish more schools to reduce travel distance and improve access to education.

### 3.4 PRESENCE OF SCHOOL IDENTITY FEATURES: SIGNPOST, SCHOOL FLAG, AND NATIONAL FLAG

The chart below shows that **89.1%** have a signpost, making it the most commonly available feature among the surveyed schools. The national flag follows closely, present in **82.6%** of schools, indicating a strong emphasis on national identity in educational institutions. In contrast, although the standards on education require that all schools have a school flag, only **41.3%** schools confirmed the presence of a school flag, making it the least common feature.

**FIGURE 5; FIGURE 54: PREVALENCE OF IDENTIFYING FEATURES IN SCHOOLS**



*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

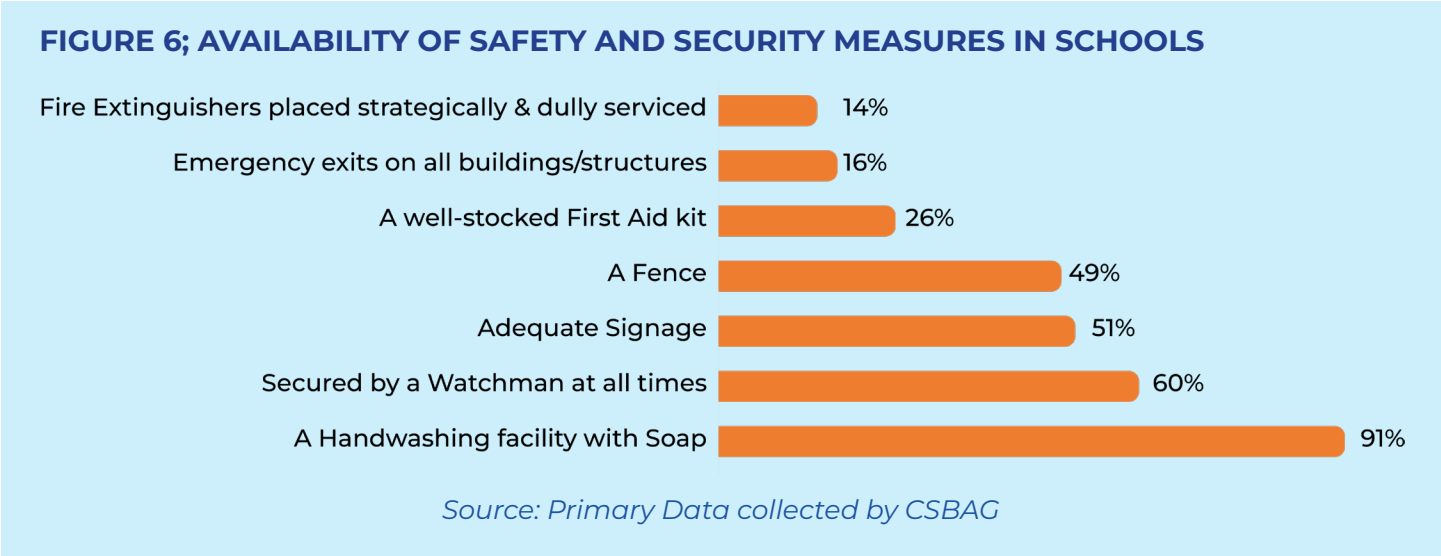
This suggests that while essential or nationally significant identifiers are widely implemented, school-specific symbols like school flags are less consistently adopted.

### 3.5 SAFETY AND SECURITY MEASURES IN SCHOOLS

The data presents the presence of various safety and security measures in schools as required by the education standards and reported by **40 schools** surveyed. The most commonly available measure is the presence of handwashing facilities with soap, reported by **91%** of schools, likely reflecting increased

hygiene practices post-COVID-19. The data shows that compliance to hand washing facilities is high and even some of the officials said that they had asked for these facilities where they did not exist in schools and they were provided. *We made an appeal to KCCA to avail hand washing facilities to all schools which was done and sanitation improved-* KII\_ DIS Kampala.

Secured by a watchman always was reported in 60% of schools, followed by adequate signage in 51%, and fencing in 49%, indicating moderate attention to basic physical security and communication measures. However, only 26% of schools have a well-stocked first aid kit, 16% have emergency exits, and a mere 14% have strategically placed, serviced fire extinguishers.



The issue of school fencing was also frequently highlighted by the **School Management Committees (SMCs)**, **District Education Officers (DEOs)**, **Inspectors of Schools**, and **Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**. They noted that the absence of fences leads to vandalism of school property, makes it easier for students to leave school premises prematurely, and increases the risk of undesirable behaviors infiltrating the school environment.

*The school is not fenced, so pupils tend to escape before departure time, **KII\_SMC Chairperson –Namayingo District***

*The school has no fence, which exposes it to dangers of trespass and loss of property, **KII\_ SMC Adjumani***

*School is not fenced and people with unscrupulous behaviors easily enter the school premises. **KII\_ SMC Yumbe***

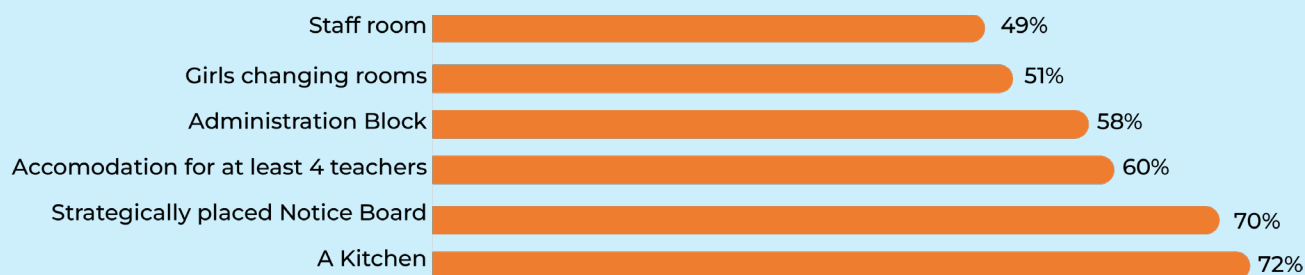
*Most primary schools are not fenced and cows graze in school, goats sleep in classrooms and sometimes neighboring communities vandalize the school properties, **CSO Gulu-West Acholi***

These findings suggest that while hygiene and basic security are relatively well addressed, critical emergency preparedness and life-saving equipment are severely lacking in many schools, posing significant safety risks. In addition, none of the standard is 100% adhered to by all the schools indicating a gap in Education standards related to safety and security measures.

**3.6 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

According to Uganda’s Education Service Delivery Standards, schools are required to have certain infrastructures in place and ensure they are accessible to all learners, including those with special needs. However, the data from 43 schools reveals significant gaps in compliance. While kitchens (72%), noticeboards (70%), and teacher accommodation (60%) are relatively common, essential facilities like staff rooms (49%), counselling rooms (30%), and food stores (37%) are lacking in many schools. Notably, only 44% of schools reported that all buildings are accessible to learners with special needs, indicating a major shortfall in inclusivity.

**FIGURE 7; PRESENCE OF CRITICAL SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURES**



*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

In terms of land ownership, just **35%** of schools have surveyed and titled land, raising concerns about long-term security and planning for infrastructure development. Safety features are also lacking, with only 14% of schools having earthing or lightning conductors, posing risks to students and staff.

The picture of inadequate infrastructure painted in figure 6 above was further enhanced by the response from the Key informant interview with SMC, CSO and the district officials. Generally, Schools across various districts face significant infrastructure challenges, including overcrowded classrooms, dilapidated buildings, and inadequate facilities. Many SMCs reported about schools with classrooms of **300 pupils**, far exceeding the **National Costed Service Delivery Standards (NCSDS)**. Teachers often lack proper accommodation, and many schools lack fencing, leaving property vulnerable. Sanitation facilities, particularly for girls, are insufficient, with some schools lacking separate latrines for boys and girls. Additionally, a lack of desks, and poor learning conditions hamper the learning environment. In some areas, students study under trees or in unsafe classrooms said respondents.

*There is a big problem with infrastructures at schools where over 200 pupils share a classroom while others study under trees- **KII\_CS0 Soroti***

*Overcrowded classrooms are common, particularly in lower grades, **KII\_DEO***

*We face a severe shortage of classrooms for nearly a thousand pupils. The number of teachers is also insufficient for the large student population, and there aren't enough desks for everyone. While an NGO recently built new sanitation facilities, they are still inadequate for the number of children. The boys' latrines are insufficient. We urgently need additional support from the government to address these critical infrastructure gaps. **KII\_SMC Chairperson Namayingo***

*One classroom block with three classrooms is okay but the six classrooms are dilapidated with rough floors which need renovation and a construction of new classroom block. **KII\_SMC Chairperson Yumbe***

*More than 300 learners are squeezed in one classroom as compared to NCSDs. **KII\_SMC Chairperson Nabilatuk***

### **3.7 GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP, AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

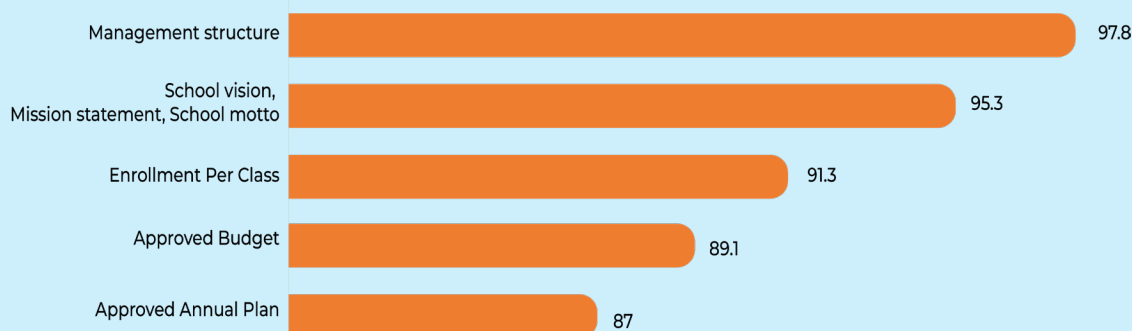
This section examines the functionality of school governance structures, leadership, and decision-making practices. Strong governance ensures accountability, community participation, and alignment with service delivery standards. The balance of male and female representation, frequency of meetings, and feedback loops from inspections reveal the inclusivity and effectiveness of leadership.

### **3.8 DISPLAY OF VITAL INFORMATION IN AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE**

The findings show that most schools comply with the NCSDS requirement to display key information, with over **85%** adherence to the standard across all indicators. Management structures (**97.8%**) and school vision, mission, and motto (**95.3%**) are the most consistently displayed, reflecting strong accountability practices. However, fewer schools display approved work plans (**87%**) and budgets (**89.1%**), creating gaps in transparency and limiting stakeholder oversight. Enrollment per class (**91.3%**) is also widely displayed, though not universal.

Overall, the data underscores that while some progress has been made, many schools fall short of meeting national infrastructure, accessibility, and land security standards, which could negatively impact the delivery of quality and safe education.

**FIGURE 8; DISPLAY OF VITAL INFORMATION IN AN ACCESSIBLE PLACE**



*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

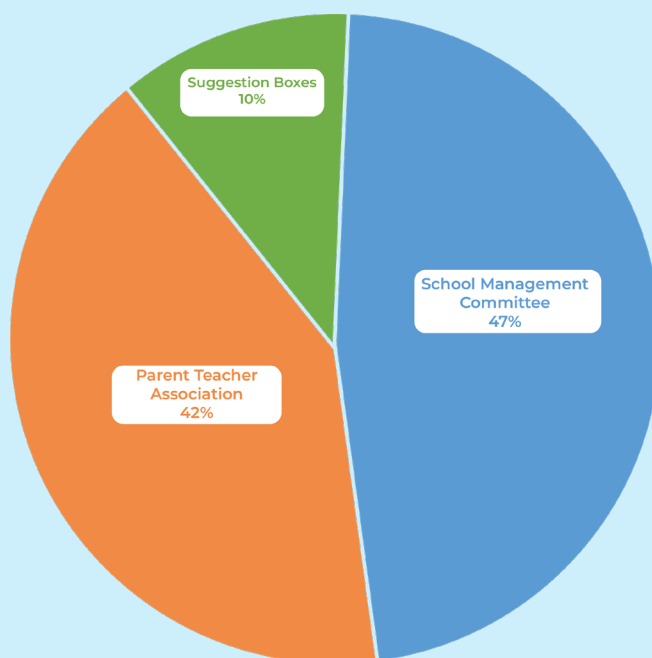
Overall, while compliance is generally high, the weaker performance in displaying work plans and budgets points to the need for stronger enforcement and support to achieve full adherence.

### 3.9 AVAILABILITY OF FUNCTIONAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND FEEDBACK MECHANISM

The findings reveal that while school governance structures are generally strong, feedback mechanisms remain weak. All schools (100%) reported having functional **School Management Committees** (SMCs), reflecting full compliance with NCSDS requirements and ensuring proper oversight and decision-making. Similarly, **Parent-Teacher Associations** (PTAs) are present in 89.1%

of schools, indicating active parental engagement in school governance, though gaps remain in some schools where parental involvement may be limited. In contrast, only **21.7%** of schools have **suggestion boxes**, highlighting a significant weakness in feedback mechanisms for learners, parents, and other stakeholders. This suggests that while formal governance structures are well established, channels for bottom-up communication and accountability are inadequate, limiting opportunities for communities to voice concerns and influence school management.

**FIGURE 9; AVAILABILITY OF FUNCTIONAL SCHOOL MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND FEEDBACK MECHANISM**

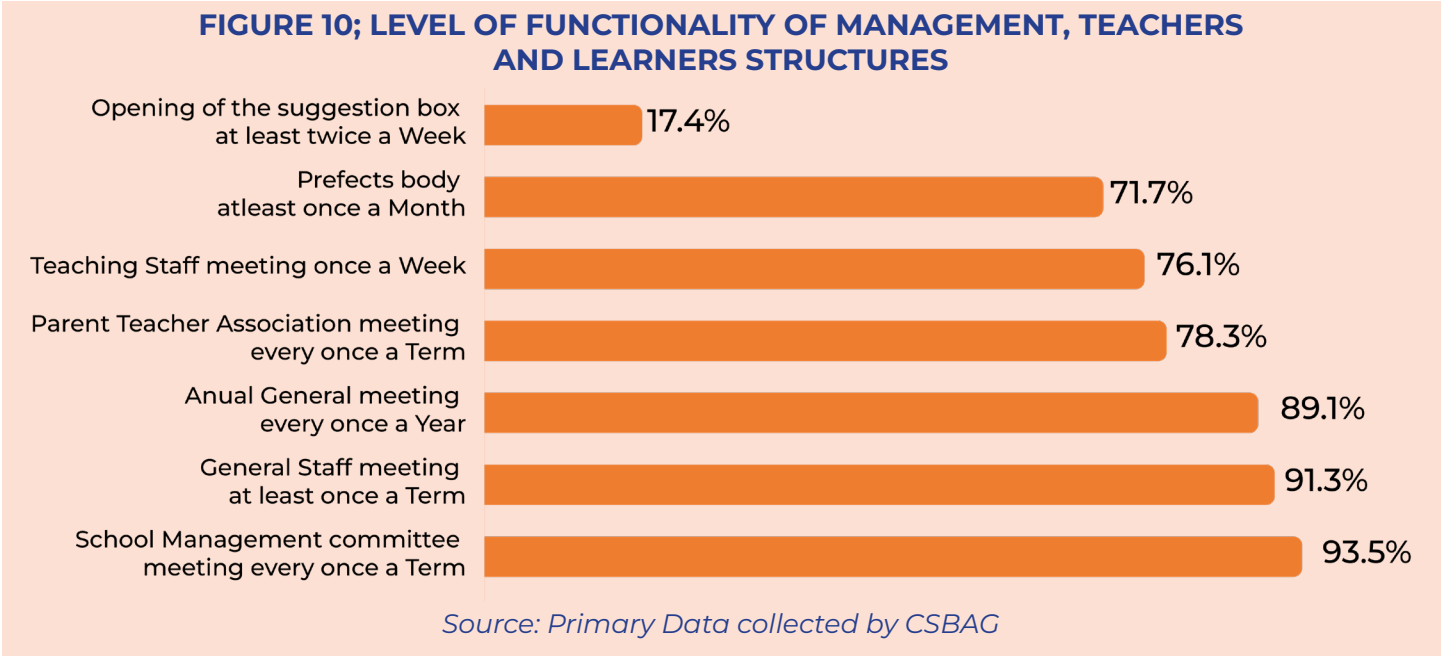


*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

3.10 LEVEL OF FUNCTIONALITY OF MANAGEMENT, TEACHERS AND LEARNERS STRUCTURES

The findings indicate that most schools have established and functional management and teaching structures, though the level of functionality varies across components. At the governance level, School Management Committees (93.5%) and Annual General Meetings (89.1%) demonstrate strong compliance, ensuring oversight and accountability. General staff meetings (91.3%) are also widely held,

supporting effective coordination among teachers. On teaching and learning, weekly teaching staff meetings (76.1%) are common, though a notable share of schools fall short of the standard, potentially affecting collaborative lesson planning and professional development. Similarly, prefects' body meetings (71.7%) show that while student leadership structures exist, their functionality is not fully optimized, limiting learner participation in governance.



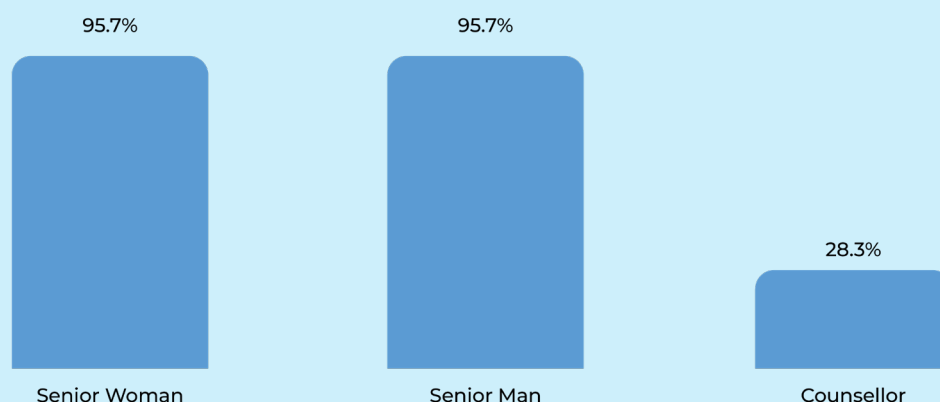
Parental engagement is moderately strong, with PTA meetings (78.3%) occurring at least once a term, though this remains weaker than SMC and staff structures, suggesting room to strengthen parent-school collaboration. Feedback mechanisms are the weakest area, with only 17.4% of schools opening suggestion boxes at least twice a week, highlighting a significant gap in inclusive communication and responsiveness to student and parent concerns.

3.11 DESIGNATED STAFF FOR PERSONAL AFFAIRS

The presence of designated staff for learners' personal affairs is crucial for guidance, mentorship, and psychosocial support in schools. The findings in figure 10 show that nearly all schools have Senior Women (95.7%) and Senior Men (95.7%), reflecting strong compliance with NCSDS requirements and ensuring that both female and male learners have dedicated support figures. On the standard of school counsellors, this standard has not been effected as government has not recruited counsellors for schools. Teachers however continue to perform this role since guidance and

counselling is part of their training. Some schools have School Family Initiatives (SFI) where learners are divided into families headed by a teacher for career and psychosocial support. Assessing the teacher counsellors, only 28.3% of schools have a counsellor, exposing a major gap in professional psychosocial support services. While Senior Men and Women play an important role in guidance, it is important to note that they are often teachers with additional responsibilities and may lack specialized training in counseling. This limits the ability of schools to adequately address complex learner needs such as mental health, trauma, and career guidance.

**FIGURE 11; AVAILABILITY OF DESIGNATED STAFF FOR PERSONAL AFFAIRS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**



*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

### 3.12 EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION OF STAFF

In line with the NCSDs, effective staff management in primary schools requires clear leadership structures, adequate staffing, and regular performance evaluations. Each school should have key personnel including a head teacher, deputies, teachers, security officers, and a nurse. Adherence to institutional procedures and functional committees ensures accountability and staff welfare. This section

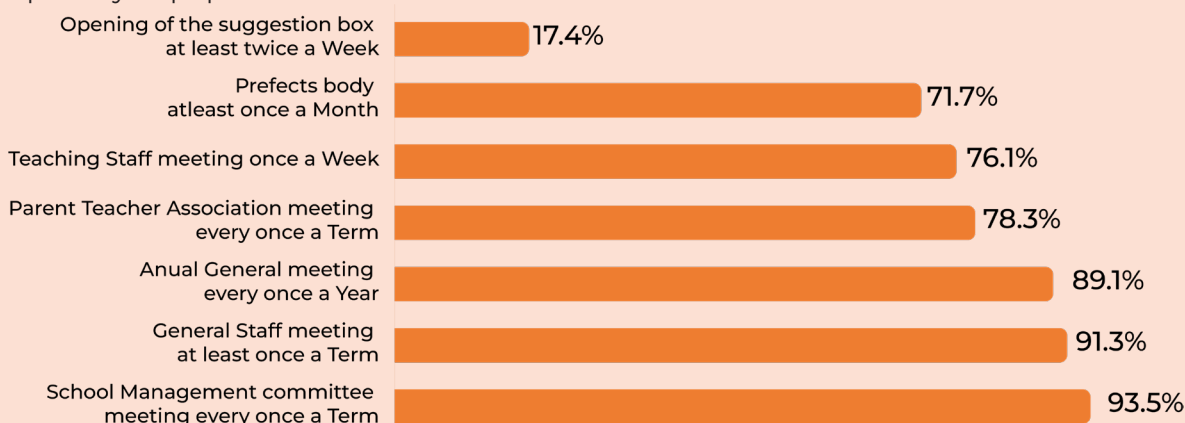
examines the presence and implementation of these key components.

### 3.13 STAFFING LEVELS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The data in figure 10 indicates that the majority of schools meet basic staffing requirements, with **84.8%** having a substantive head teacher and the same percentage having at least seven teachers. This suggests that leadership and teaching capacity are generally well-established in most institutions. However, only **70%** of schools have at least one deputy head teacher, indicating a gap in administrative

**FIGURE 12; MINIMUM STAFFING LEVELS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

support, especially as pupil numbers increase.



*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

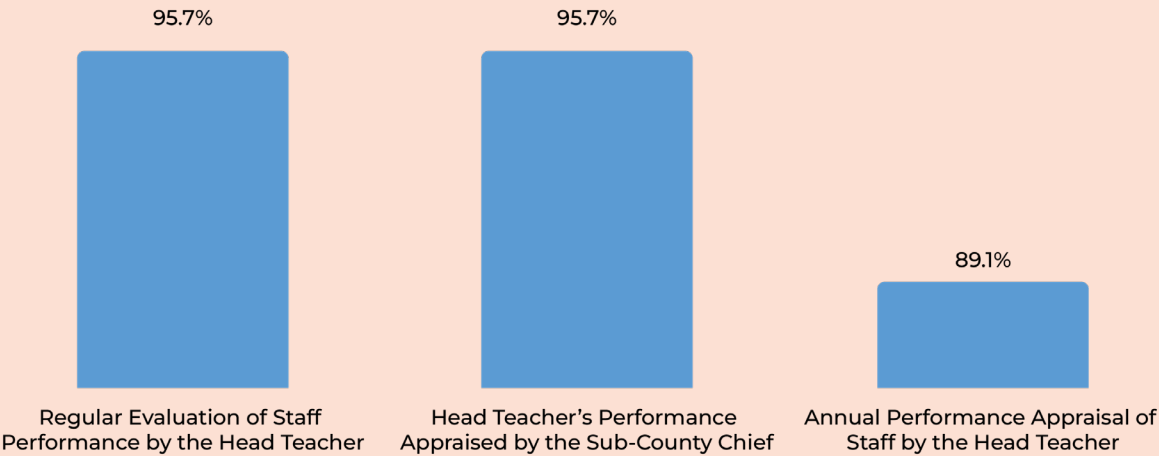
Furthermore, while **69.5%** of schools have a security guard, a critical role for ensuring safety, this figure still leaves a significant portion unprotected. The most concerning gap is in health support, with only **15.2%** of schools having an enrolled nurse on staff. Generally, this standard on school nurses has not been formally effected by government because government has not yet recruited nurses for schools, it's mainly schools with boarding sections that have Nurses recruited by parents. This reflects a serious shortfall in addressing student health and emergency care, highlighting the need for improved investment in school health services to meet the standards of comprehensive school staffing.

3.14 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF TEACHERS AND HEAD TEACHERS

The data shows a strong commitment to performance evaluation within primary schools. A high percentage (95.7%) of schools' report that the head teacher regularly evaluates staff performance, indicating that ongoing monitoring and support for teachers is widely practiced. However, a discussion with officials from the Ministry of education indicated a contrasting image, they indicated that from their experience Support supervision by head teachers of government aided primary schools is

usually low. Additionally, 89.1% of schools conduct annual performance appraisals of staff, reflecting a structured approach to reviewing and improving teacher effectiveness over time. Notably, 95.7% of head teachers are themselves appraised by the Sub-County Chief, demonstrating accountability at the leadership level and ensuring that school heads are also held to performance standards. These findings suggest a well-established evaluation framework that promotes both instructional quality and leadership accountability across most schools.

FIGURE 13; PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF TEACHERS AND HEAD TEACHERS

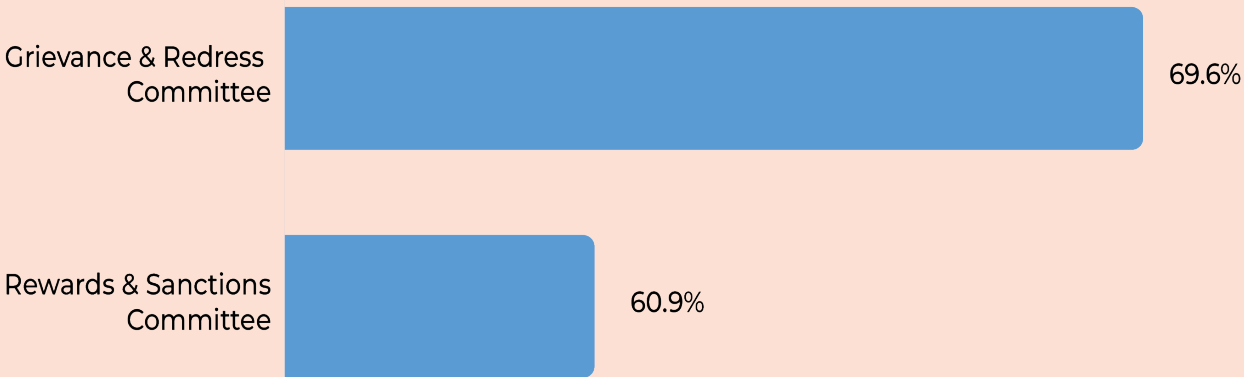


Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG

3.15 EXISTENCE OF DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The data indicates that the presence of disciplinary structures in primary schools is moderate but not yet universal. About 60.9% of schools have established a Rewards and Sanctions Committee, suggesting that more than a third still lack formal mechanisms for enforcing discipline and recognizing positive behavior. Similarly, 69.6% have a Grievance and Redress Committee, which is essential for addressing staff and pupil complaints in a fair and structured manner.

FIGURE 14: EXISTENCE OF DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

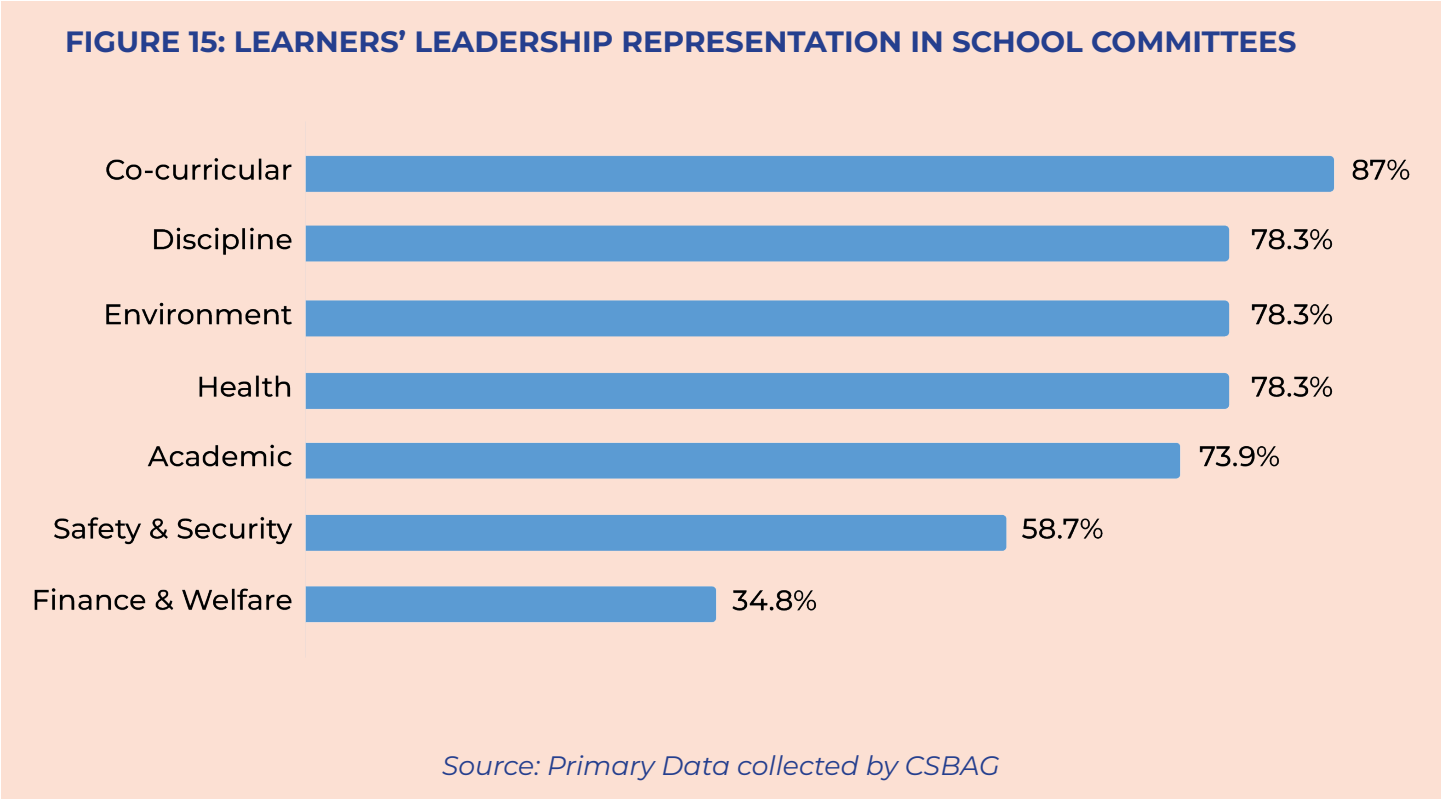


Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG

While the existence of these committees in most schools is a positive sign, the gaps highlight the need for policy enforcement and support to ensure that all schools adopt and maintain functional disciplinary frameworks.

**3.16 ANALYSIS OF LEARNERS’ LEADERSHIP REPRESENTATION IN SCHOOL COMMITTEES**

The data reveals varying levels of learner leadership representation across different school committees. Representation is strongest in the Co-curricular (87.0%), Discipline (78.3%), Health (78.3%), and Environment (78.3%) committees, indicating that learners are actively involved in areas that directly impact on their daily school experience and well-being.



Academic committees also show relatively high involvement at 73.9%, reflecting a positive effort to include pupil’s voices in learning matters. However, representation drops significantly in the Safety and Security (58.7%) and especially in Finance and Welfare (34.8%) committees. This suggests that learners are less involved in critical decision-making areas that affect school resources and their protection. Strengthening learner representation in these lower-scoring committees would promote inclusivity, accountability, and a stronger sense of ownership among pupils in school governance.

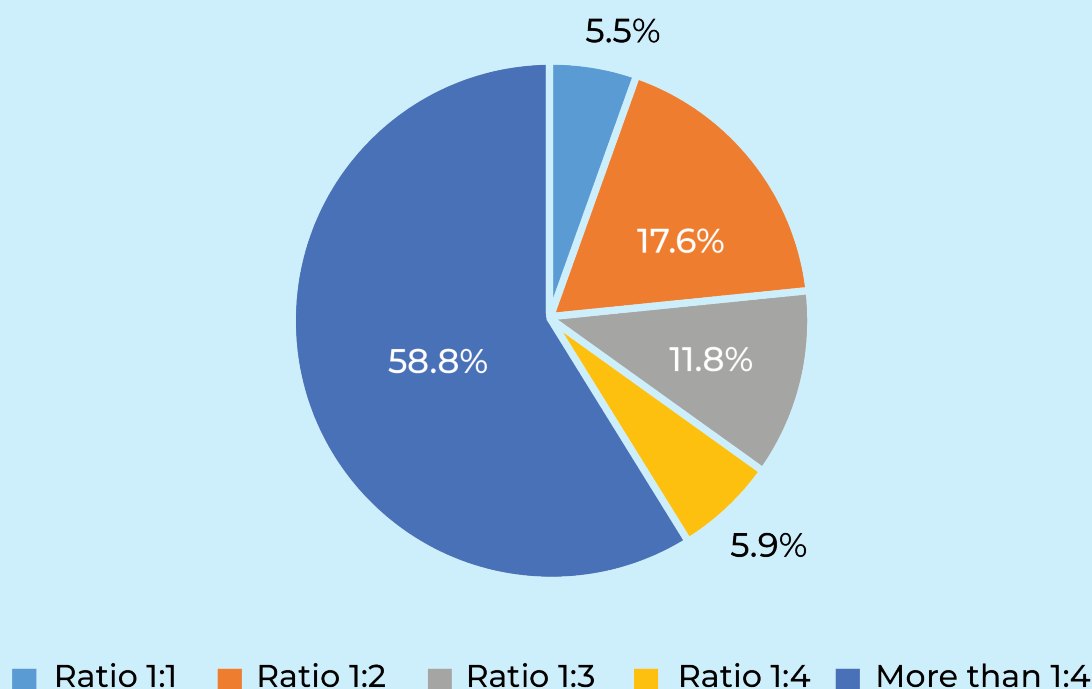
**3.17 MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESSES FOR IMPROVED OUTCOMES**

Effective management of teaching and learning processes is central to achieving quality education outcomes. It involves coordinated planning, supervision, and support to ensure that curriculum delivery is aligned with national standards and learner needs.

**3.18 ACCESS TO TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS**

The findings highlight a notable gap between the National Curriculum Service Delivery Standards (NCSDs) and the actual access to teaching and learning materials in schools. According to the NCSDs, each teacher should have their own instructional textbook (1:1 ratio), and the textbook-to-pupil ratio should be at least 1:2 to support effective learning.

**FIGURE 16; ACCESS TO CORE TEXTBOOK TO PUPIL RATIO**



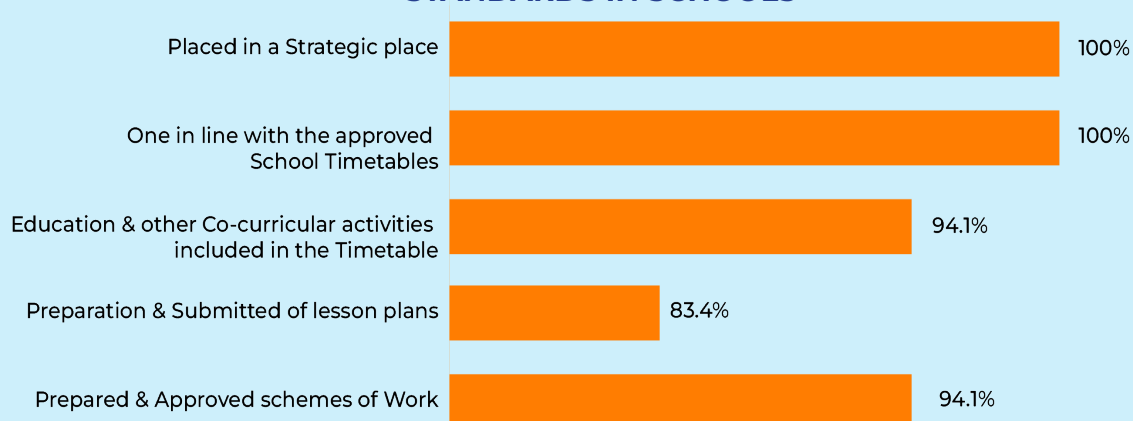
*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

Encouragingly, the data shows that **100%** of teachers have access to their own instructional reference books, fully meeting the NCSDs standard. This indicates strong support for teacher preparedness and the capacity to plan and deliver lessons effectively. In contrast, access to core textbooks for learners falls significantly short of the required standard. Over 58% of pupils sharing textbooks among more than four learners, independent study, class participation, and comprehension are likely to be negatively impacted.

### **3.19 COMPLIANCE WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING MANAGEMENT STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS**

The data indicates strong overall compliance with key aspects of teaching and learning management in schools. Notably, **100%** of schools reported that teaching is conducted according to the approved school timetable, timetables are visibly displayed, and both teacher and learner attendance is consistently tracked. This reflects a high level of operational discipline and adherence to basic administrative protocols. However, from the KII, the Ministry of education official revealed that timetable adherence is usually lower than that reported by head teachers and teachers.

**FIGURE 17; COMPLIANCE WITH TEACHING AND LEARNING MANAGEMENT STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS**

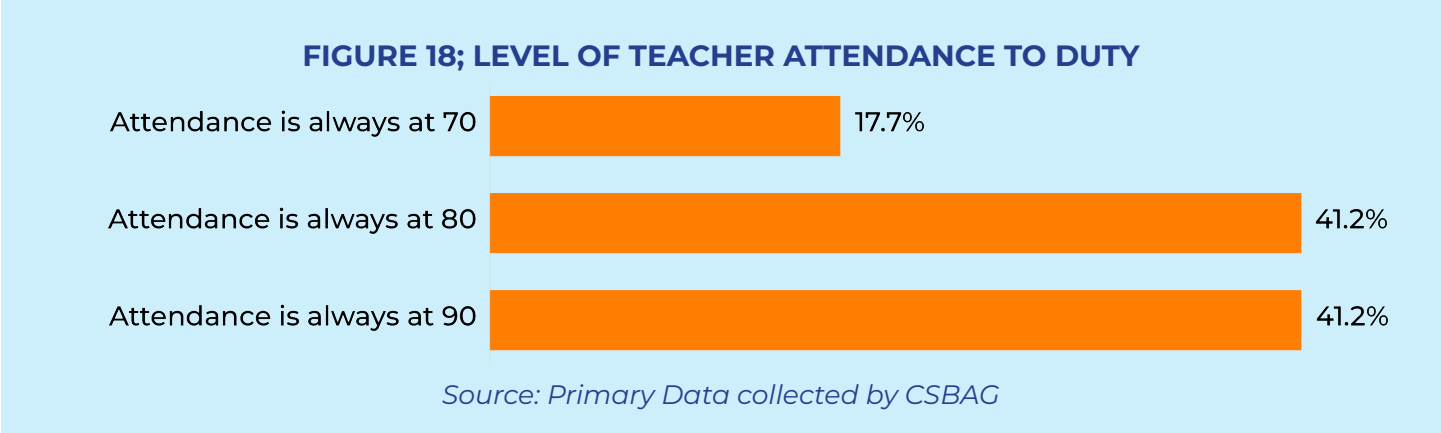


*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

Furthermore, 94.1% of teachers had prepared and obtained approval for their schemes of work, and an equal percentage incorporated physical education and co-curricular activities into their timetables, reflecting a commitment to holistic education. However, while still relatively high, only 83.4% of teachers regularly prepare and submit lesson plans, indicating a potential gap in instructional planning that may affect lesson quality and consistency. This area may require targeted support or monitoring to ensure full compliance. Overall, the data reflects a strong foundation in instructional management, with room for improvement in lesson plan preparation and submission.

**3.20 LEVEL OF TEACHER ATTENDANCE TO DUTY (IN PERCENTAGE TERMS)**

The data reveals that teacher attendance to duty is generally strong but not optimal across all schools. Specifically, 41.2% of schools reported that teacher attendance is consistently at 90%, indicating a high level of staff presence and reliability. Another 41.2% of school's report attendance levels at 80%, which, while still acceptable, suggests occasional gaps in teacher availability that could impact lesson delivery and continuity.



However, 17.7% of schools indicated that teacher attendance is consistently at 70%, a figure that raises concern. Persistent attendance at this level may point to systemic issues such as low morale, lack of supervision, or external challenges affecting teacher punctuality and commitment.

**3.21 KEY DRIVERS OF TEACHER ABSENTEEISM**

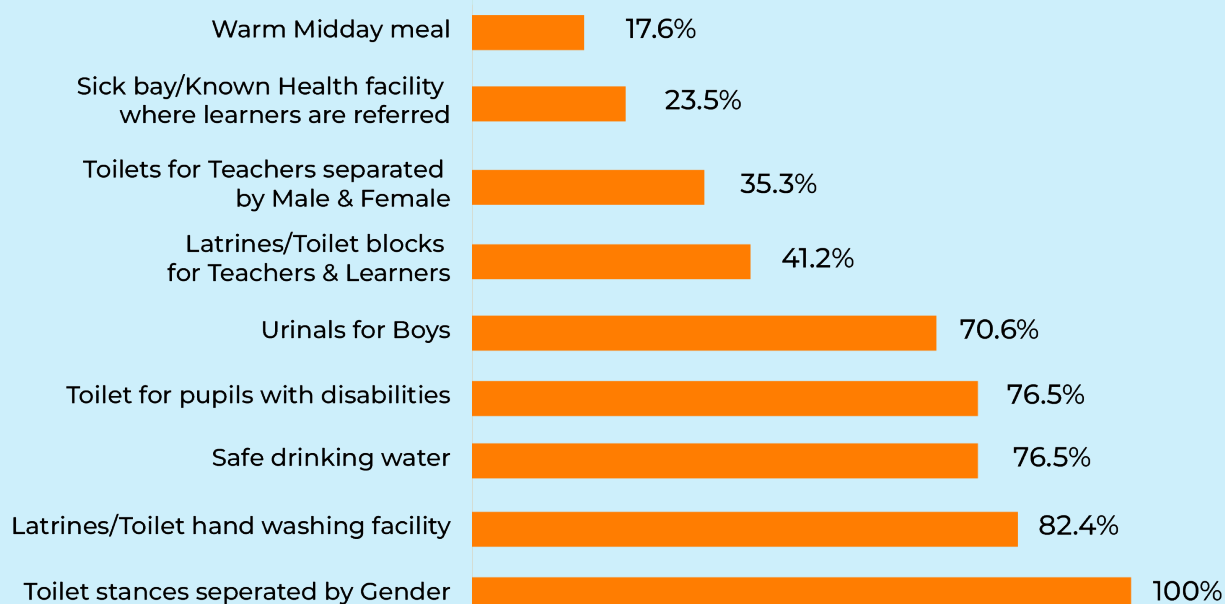
An attempt at understanding the main cause of teacher absenteeism from the respondents revealed a range of interconnected factors, with health-related issues emerging as the most prominent. Frequent cases of illness, both personal and familial combined with bereavement-related absences, were reported by the schools. Housing and distance challenges also play a significant role, especially in rural areas where long commutes, poor roads, and lack of nearby teacher accommodation hinder consistent attendance, particularly during the rainy season. Additional contributors according to the respondents include personal and family responsibilities, such as caring for children or urgent home matters, which tend to affect female teachers more. Professional obligations like workshops and co-curricular activities, while important, often pull teachers from their core teaching duties in the absence of structured substitution plans. Moreover, staffing shortages mean that when teachers are absent, there's often no backup to maintain lesson continuity. Lastly, community and cultural commitments, such as participating in burials or traditional events, further impact attendance, underlining the need for clear

policies to help teachers balance professional duties with societal expectations.

**3.22 ACCESS TO WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE (WASH) AND WELFARE FACILITIES IN SCHOOLS**

The data reveals a mixed level of compliance with essential WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) and learner welfare standards in schools, with strong performance in some basic areas but significant gaps in others especially those affecting staff and vulnerable learners. On a positive note, 100% of schools have gender-separated latrine/toilet stances, indicating strong adherence to basic sanitation standards that support dignity and privacy. Additionally, 82.4% of schools have handwashing facilities near latrines, promoting hygiene practices among learners. However, the availability of safe drinking water is slightly lower at 76.6%, suggesting that nearly a quarter of schools lack this essential health requirement. Similarly, toilets adapted for learners with disabilities are available in 76.5% of schools, pointing to growing but still incomplete inclusivity.

**FIGURE 19; AVAILABILITY OF SCHOOL WATER, SANITATION, AND HEALTH HYGIENE (WASH) AND WELFARE FACILITIES**



*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

Some areas show more significant gaps. Urinals for boys are present in only 70.6% of schools, and even more concerning is the low availability of separate sanitation facilities for teachers. Only 41.2% of schools have separate toilet blocks for staff and learners, and just 35.3% provide gender-separated toilets for male and female teachers. This not only compromises staff hygiene and privacy but may also affect teacher retention and morale, particularly for female teachers. Welfare-related services are particularly lacking. Only 23.5% of schools have a sickbay or a referral health facility, and a mere 17.6% provide warm midday meals to learners. Information from the KII on the school feeding program shows that even the few that offer food to pupils, coverage is inconsistent and faces several challenges. In some districts, pupils from P1 to P7 receive meals, while in others, only certain pupils are provided with meals, with others bringing food from home. Again, in some schools, the feeding program is limited to higher grades, and there is inadequate parental response to support feeding for younger children. Additionally, the quality of meals varies, with some students receiving poor meals due to resource constraints.

*Selected pupils have meals in school from P1 to p7 as agreed by their parents, **KII\_ SMC Chairperson Adjumani district***

*....not all pupils have a warm meal during lunch time, some pupils pack food from home, others eat from school. **KII\_ SMC Kampala***

*Feeding is only for Primary Seven. The lower classes—P1, P2, P3—are not feeding. The parents are not well sensitized, and they are not responding. We are trying to tell them to bring food for their children, but they are not responding properly. **KII\_ SMC Namayingo***

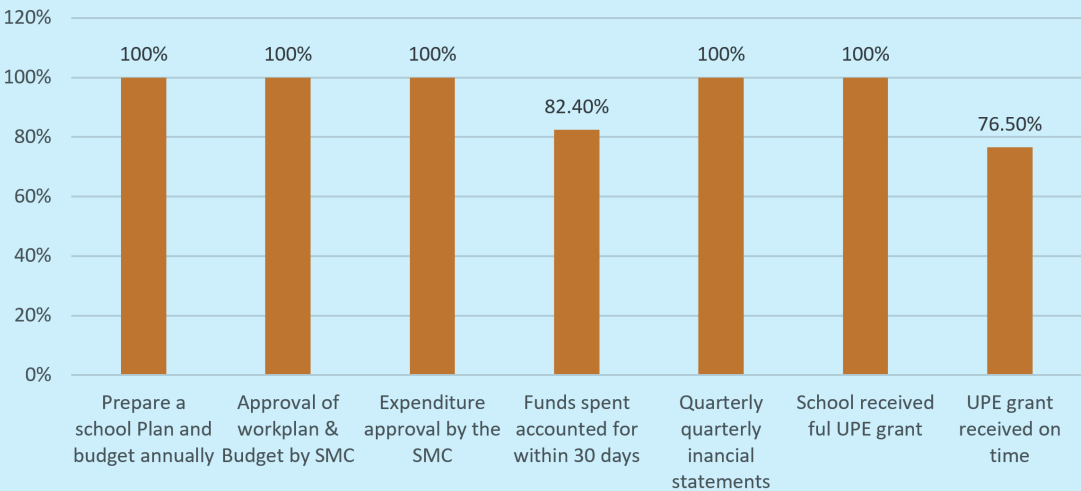
*In some schools, learners are served poor meals—like watery sauce with only a few beans—not because school management prefers it that way, but because they have no other option. **KII\_DIS Kampala***

3.23 ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL PLANNING, BUDGETING, AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

There are strong compliance and effective practices in school planning and financial management. All schools (100%) prepare an annual school plan and budget, and these are consistently approved by the School Management Committee (SMC), reflecting sound governance and stakeholder involvement. Similarly, expenditure approvals and the preparation of quarterly financial statements are uniformly upheld at 100%, demonstrating a high level of financial accountability and transparency. While 82.4% of schools account for funds spent within 30 days, there is room for improvement to ensure more timely financial reporting across all institutions. Additionally, although all schools receive the full Universal Primary Education (UPE) grant, only 76.5% receive these funds on time, which could affect timely

implementation of planned activities. Overall, the data reflects robust financial systems with some delays in fund disbursement and expenditure reporting that need addressing to enhance operational efficiency. In contrast, the insights from the KIIs reveal deeper contextual challenges that affect the financial landscape of primary education. Informants emphasized that adequate funding and timely disbursement of financial resources are foundational for the successful implementation of the NCSDS. They pointed out that delays in capitation grants and budget shortfalls severely undermine planning, service delivery, and adherence to established standards. In addition, even when budget frameworks exist, allocations from the Ministry of Finance are often insufficient as noted by an Inspector of Schools,

FIGURE 20; SCHOOL PLANNING, BUDGETING, AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG

*“Our schools cannot meet the infrastructure standards because the funds allocated for infrastructure are always insufficient to finance the required activities.” This situation is exacerbated by local communities struggling with poverty, which limits their ability to supplement government resources, “As an SMC, we struggle to supplement government funding because our community is poor and cannot afford to supplement government efforts.”* **Chairperson SMC Nabilatuk District.**

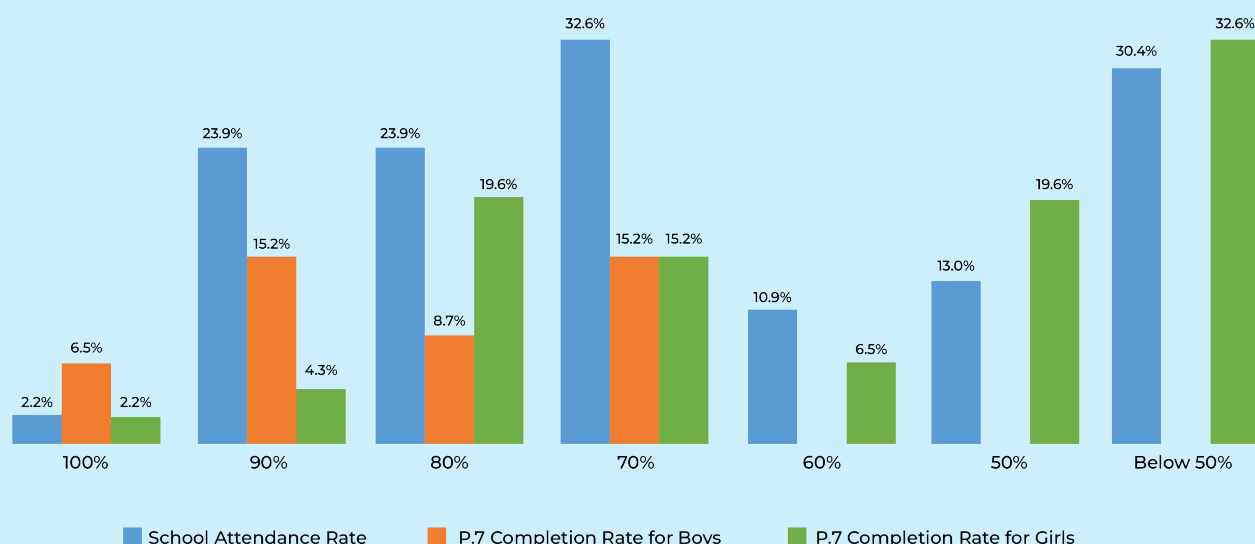
3.24 EDUCATION OUTCOMES AND LEARNER PROGRESSION

The ultimate measure of service delivery is in learner outcomes. This section tracks attendance, progression, completion, and examination performance, disaggregated by gender, to assess whether schools are meeting their core mission.

3.25 LEARNER ATTENDANCE AND COMPLETION RATES

The data highlights significant challenges in school attendance and completion rates, particularly among girls, indicating critical areas for policy and programmatic intervention. School attendance is alarmingly low. Only 2.2% of schools report a 100% attendance rate, and just 23.9% report attendance at 90% and 80% levels respectively. The largest share, 32.6%, falls within the 70% attendance range, while a concerning 13% operate at 50%, and 30.4% of schools report attendance rates below 50%. This indicates that over 40% of schools experience serious absenteeism issues among pupils, which can directly undermine learning outcomes and progression rates.

**FIGURE 21; ANALYSIS OF LEARNER ATTENDANCE AND P.7 COMPLETION RATES**



*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

Completion rates for boys show a slight clustering in the mid-range, with 6.5% of schools reporting 100% completion, and others distributed across 90% (15.2%), 80% (8.7%), and 70% (15.2%) bands. While still far from ideal, these rates suggest that more boys tend to remain in school through P.7 compared to girls.

In contrast, the P.7 completion rate for girls is more dispersed and significantly lower at the top levels. Only 2.2% of schools report 100% completion for girls, and a staggering 32.6% report rates below 50%. Combined with 19.6% at both 50% and 80% completion, the data clearly indicates that girls are disproportionately affected by dropout rates before completing the primary cycle. The analysis reveals low and inconsistent attendance across most schools and gender disparities in completion, with girls particularly vulnerable to dropping out before completing P.7. These trends highlight an urgent need for targeted interventions such as school feeding programs, community sensitization, menstrual health support, and conditional transfers, especially for girls. Strengthening attendance monitoring and addressing the root causes of absenteeism and dropouts—like poverty, early marriage, and long distances to school is crucial to improving learner retention and completion in Uganda's primary schools.

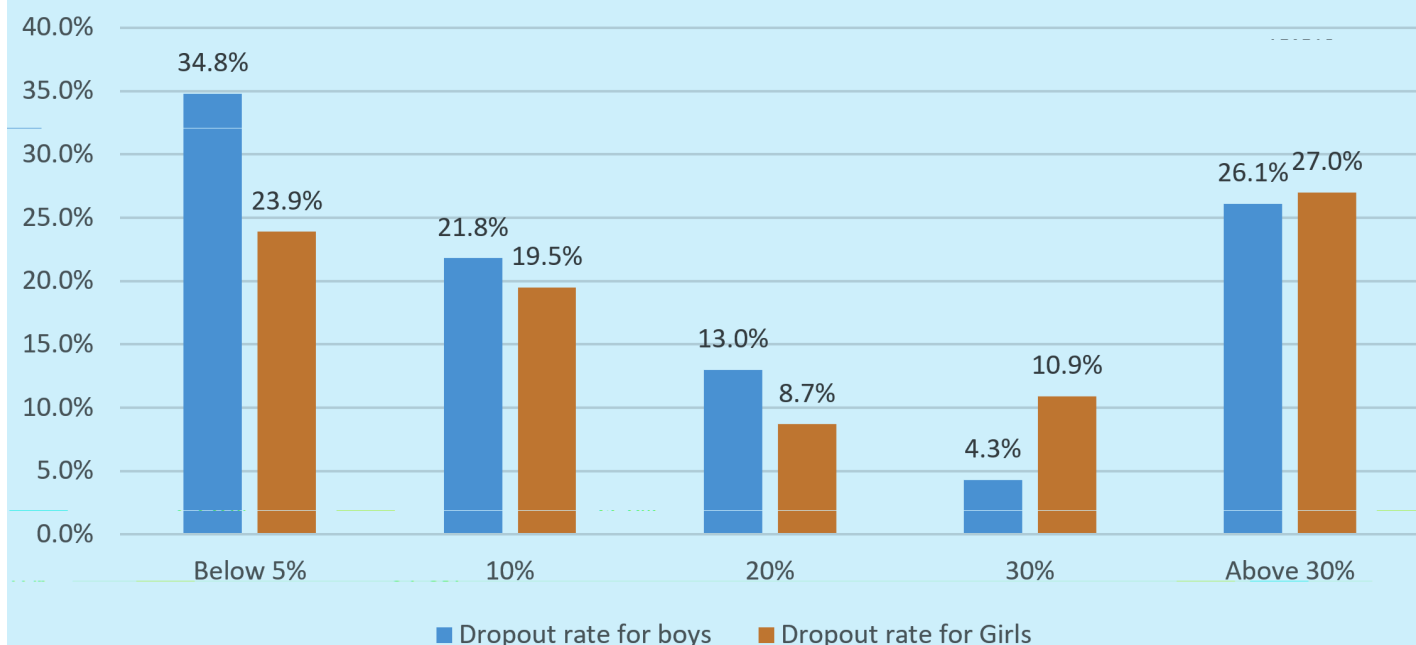
### 3.26 LEARNER DROPOUT RATES BY GENDER

Figure 23 provides insight into dropout rates for boys and girls, revealing both high levels of school attrition and notable gender disparities. A significant proportion of schools report high dropout rates. For boys, 26.1% of schools indicate dropout rates above 30%, and an additional 4.3% report rates at 30%, meaning over 30% of schools experience extremely high male dropout rates. Similarly, for girls, 27% of schools report dropout rates above 30%, and 10.9% at 30%, putting nearly 38% of schools in the high-risk category for female dropouts.

Looking at the lower end, 34.8% of schools report dropout rates for boys below 5%, suggesting that while some schools manage to retain male learners well, the situation is highly polarized. For girls, 23.9% of schools fall under the same category. However, fewer schools report moderate dropout rates (10–20%) for both genders, indicating that schools tend to fall into either very high or very low dropout bands, rather than maintaining stable mid-range rates.

While slightly more boys (34.8%) are retained in schools at the below 5% dropout level compared to girls (23.9%), girls tend to have higher dropout rates at the extreme end, with 27% of schools reporting over 30% dropout, compared to 26.1% for boys. This suggests that while boys may be more evenly distributed across dropout categories, girls face more acute dropout challenges in certain schools.

**FIGURE 22; ANALYSIS OF LEARNER DROPOUT RATES BY GENDER**



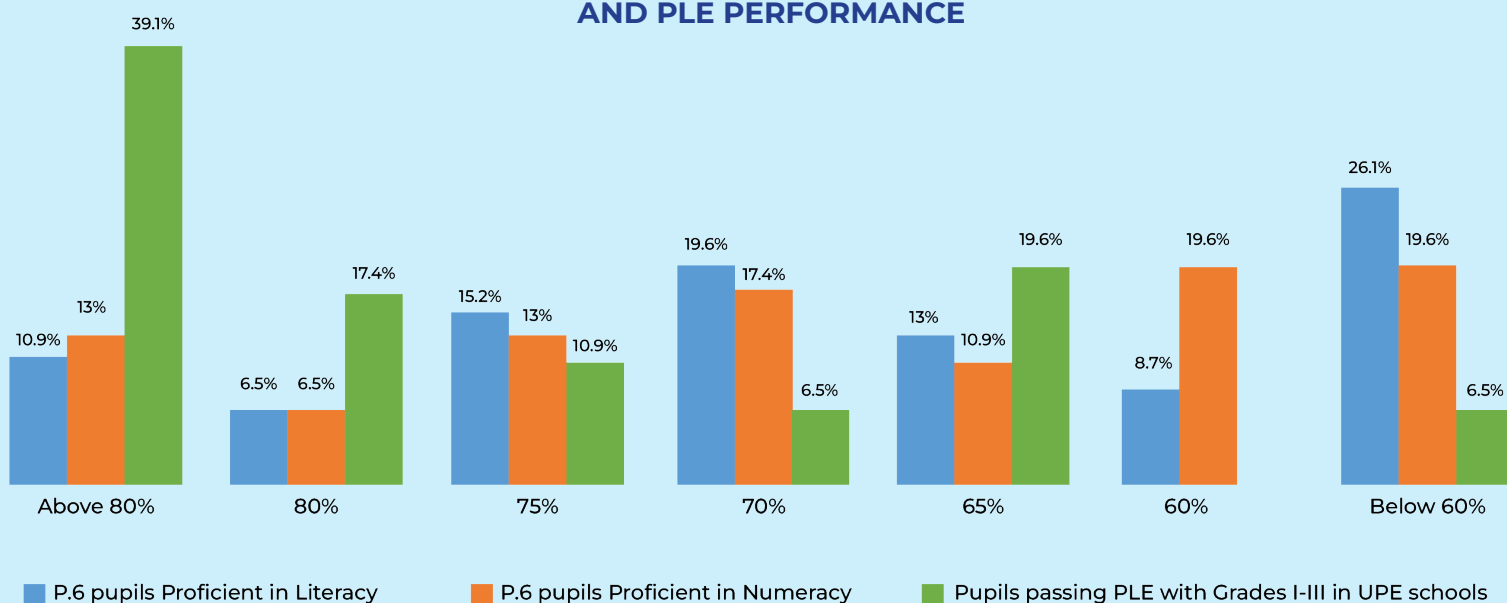
Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG

### 3.27 LEARNING OUTCOMES IN LITERACY, NUMERACY, AND PLE PERFORMANCE

Figure 21 provides insight into the academic proficiency of P.6 learners in literacy and numeracy, as well as PLE (Primary Leaving Examination) performance in UPE schools. The data highlights both areas of achievement and significant performance gaps that require attention.

Proficiency in literacy among P.6 learners shows concerning trends. Only 10.9% of schools report that more than 80% of learners are proficient in literacy, and 26.1% fall below the 60% proficiency mark, suggesting that more than a quarter of school's struggle with foundational literacy skills. The distribution also shows a significant concentration around the 70–75% range, indicating moderate performance in many schools, but few reaching high proficiency levels.

**FIGURE 23; ANALYSIS OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN LITERACY, NUMERACY, AND PLE PERFORMANCE**



Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG

Numeracy proficiency presents a similar pattern. While 13% of schools report above 80% proficiency, another 19.6% fall below 60%, showing a relatively balanced but troubling spread. A notable proportion (19.6%) is in the 60% proficiency bracket, suggesting a substantial group of schools where learners are falling just short of the expected competence level. The numeracy performance seems slightly better distributed than literacy but still reflects foundational gaps for many learners.

When it comes to actual examination outcomes, performance in the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) is more positive. Close to 40% of UPE schools report that above 80% of pupils are passing with Grades I to III, indicating stronger performance at the summative level than the continuous literacy/numeracy assessments might suggest. However, 6.5% of schools still report that less than 60% of pupils passing in these grades, highlighting pockets of underperformance. The presence of 19.6% of schools in the 65% category also suggests a sizable middle tier that could be improved with targeted support.

### 3.28 TEACHER-TO-PUPIL RATIOS IN RELATION TO NATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY STANDARDS

An analysis of the pupil-to-teacher ratios across 40 schools reveals staffing gaps when compared to the national service delivery standard of 1 teacher per 53 pupils. Based on this benchmark, 31 schools (74%) fall short, meaning they have more pupils per teacher than the recommended ratio. Notably, understaffing is most severe in schools with large enrolments particularly those with over 1,000 pupils, where in some cases, schools require more than double their current teaching staff to meet the standard.

**TABLE 1: A TABLE SHOWING THE NUMBER OF TEACHERS AND PUPILS PER SCHOOL**

| Teachers | Pupils Per School |         |           |       |       |
|----------|-------------------|---------|-----------|-------|-------|
|          | Pupils 0–499      | 500–999 | 1000–1999 | 2000+ | Total |
| 5–9      | 9                 | 4       | 0         | 0     | 13    |
| 10–14    | 0                 | 3       | 1         | 0     | 4     |
| 15–19    | 0                 | 0       | 6         | 0     | 6     |
| 20–29    | 0                 | 0       | 0         | 3     | 3     |
| 30–49    | 0                 | 0       | 0         | 2     | 2     |
| Total    | 9                 | 7       | 7         | 5     | 42    |

Grouped data shows that while small schools benefit from relatively better staffing levels, larger schools are consistently underserved, impacting the quality of education delivery. The findings underscore an urgent need for strategic redistribution of teachers and targeted recruitment in high-enrolment schools to ensure equitable and effective education service delivery. Addressing this imbalance will be critical to meeting educational standards and improving learning outcomes in underserved areas. Staffing levels for government aided primary schools are computed as following a simple formular; there is a minimum staffing (threshold) of 7 teachers plus a head teacher for a school of 371 learners or less and there is an additional teacher for every 53 learners.

**TABLE 2: EXAMPLE FROM THE DATA OF THE NUMBER OF PUPILS, TEACHERS AND TEACHER PUPIL RATIO**

| Pupils | Teachers | Ideal number of Teachers (Pupils ÷ 53) | Status       |
|--------|----------|----------------------------------------|--------------|
| 550    | 8        | 10.37                                  | Understaffed |
| 748    | 7        | 14.11                                  | Understaffed |
| 1208   | 13       | 22.79                                  | Understaffed |
| 1598   | 16       | 30.15                                  | Understaffed |
| 2306   | 25       | 43.53                                  | Understaffed |
| 3459   | 42       | 65.26                                  | Understaffed |

*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

## Analysis of Pupil-to-Classroom Ratios in Lower Primary Classes (Primary One, Two and Three)

### 3.29 PUPIL-TO-CLASSROOM RATIOS IN PRIMARY ONE AGAINST NATIONAL CLASS SIZE STANDARDS

An analysis of the pupil-to-classroom distribution in Primary 1 across 43 schools shows significant crowded classes or High Pupil-Classroom Ratio (PCR) relative to the national service delivery standard of one stream 53 pupils. While a few schools with enrolments under 100 in Primary one appears less crowded, the majority, especially those with pupil numbers exceeding 150 report far fewer streams. In extreme cases, schools with over 500 pupils have only one stream, suggesting that over 500 learners may be accommodated in a single classroom, drastically compromising learning quality and teacher effectiveness.

**TABLE 3; DISTRIBUTION OF SCHOOLS BY P1 PUPIL ENROLLMENT RANGE, EXPECTED VS. ACTUAL NUMBER OF STREAMS**

| Pupils  | Expected Streams | No. of Schools | Actual Streams Reported per school | Observations          |
|---------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 0–52    | 1                | 2              | 1 school had 1 stream,             | Not crowded           |
| 53–105  | 1–2              | 11             | Mostly 1 or 2 streams              | Not crowded           |
| 106–158 | 2–3              | 7              | Mostly 1 or 2 streams              | Slightly crowded      |
| 159–211 | 3–4              | 6              | Most had only 1 stream             | Crowded               |
| 212–264 | 4–5              | 1              | Had 2 streams                      | Crowded               |
| 265–317 | 5–6              | 3              | All had only 1 stream              | Crowded               |
| 318–370 | 6–7              | 3              | 2 had 1 stream, 1 had 4 streams    | Significantly Crowded |
| 371–423 | 7–8              | 2              | 1 stream each                      | Crowded               |
| 424–476 | 8–9              | 2              | 1 stream                           | Crowded               |
| 530+    | 4                | 4              | Mostly 1 stream reported           | Severely Crowded      |
| Total   | –                | 43 schools     |                                    |                       |

*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

### 3.30 PUPIL-TO-CLASSROOM RATIO IN PRIMARY TWO AGAINST NATIONAL CLASS SIZE STANDARDS

The data reveals that most schools interviewed are operating with few streams for primary two than expected. While schools with 53 pupils and below is generally low pupil to classroom ratio, the majority of schools with over 100 pupils have crowded classrooms, having only one stream despite requiring two or more. This results in overcrowded classrooms, especially in the 106–264 pupil range, where multiple schools have just one stream despite needing three to five.

**TABLE 4: DISTRIBUTION OF P2 PUPIL ENROLMENT AND ACTUAL NUMBER OF P2 TEACHERS COMPARED TO EXPECTED STAFFING LEVELS**

| Pupils  | Expected Streams | No. of Schools | Actual Streams Reported per school | Observations     |
|---------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 0–52    | 1                | 4              | 2 had 1 stream,                    | Not Crowded      |
| 53–105  | 1–2              | 7              | Mostly 1 stream                    | Not crowded      |
| 106–158 | 2–3              | 10             | Mostly 1 stream                    | Crowded          |
| 159–211 | 3–4              | 7              | Mostly 1–2 streams                 | Crowded          |
| 212–264 | 4–5              | 3              | 1–2 streams reported               | Crowded          |
| 265–317 | 5–6              | 4              | 1–2 streams                        | Crowded          |
| 318–370 | 6–7              | 2              | 1 stream each                      | Severely Crowded |
| 424–476 | 8–9              | 1              | 1 stream                           | Severely Crowded |
| 477+    | 1                | 1              | 1 stream                           | Severely Crowded |
| Total   | –                | 43 schools     |                                    |                  |

More critically, schools with over 265 pupils, including one with nearly 500 pupils, reported only one or two streams. These schools are severely crowded, with class sizes potentially exceeding 150 pupils per stream, which is almost three times the national standard. Urgent intervention is needed to improve classroom conditions and maintain teaching quality in these high-enrolment schools.

### 3.31 PUPIL-TO-CLASSROOM RATIOS IN PRIMARY THREE AGAINST NATIONAL CLASS SIZE STANDARDS

Table 5 shows that most schools are under-streamed relative to the national standard of 53 pupils per stream. While schools with fewer than 53 pupils are generally well-aligned, those with higher enrolment — particularly between 106 and 317 pupils — often report only one or two streams, resulting in overcrowded classes.

**TABLE 5: ANALYSIS OF P3 PUPIL ENROLLMENT VS. STREAMS**

| Pupils  | Expected Streams | No. of Schools | Actual Streams Reported per school | Observations     |
|---------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 0–52    | 1                | 4              | 3 schools had 1 stream,            | Not crowded      |
| 53–105  | 1–2              | 11             | Mostly 1 stream                    | Not Crowded      |
| 106–158 | 2–3              | 7              | Mostly 1 stream                    | Crowded          |
| 159–211 | 3–4              | 6              | Mostly 1–2 streams                 | Crowded          |
| 212–264 | 4–5              | 3              | 1 had 4 streams, others had 1–2    | Mixed;           |
| 265–317 | 5–6              | 5              | Mostly 1–2 streams                 | Crowded          |
| 318–370 | 6–7              | 2              | Both had 2 streams                 | Crowded          |
| 371–423 | 7–8              | 1              | 1 stream                           | Severely Crowded |
| 530+    | 1                | 1              | Had 3 streams                      | Severely Crowded |
| Total   | –                | 41 schools     |                                    |                  |

*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

This mismatch is more severe in schools with over 265 pupils, where class sizes can exceed 150 pupils per stream. Only a few schools come close to meeting the recommended ratio, highlighting the need for better resource planning and increased stream allocation in larger schools to ensure quality learning environments.

### 3.32 PUPIL-TO-CLASSROOM RATIOS IN PRIMARY SIX AGAINST NATIONAL CLASS SIZE STANDARDS

The data shows that most school with a lower -enrolment in the range of 0–105 pupils in P6 have an appropriate or nearly appropriate number of streams. Schools with pupils' numbers in these ranges generally maintain class sizes close to the required national standard of 53 pupils per stream/ class, with a few slightly over or under as illustrated in the table below.

**TABLE 6: P6 PUPIL ENROLLMENT VS. STREAMS**

| Pupils  | Expected Streams | No. of Schools | Actual Streams Reported per school | Observations |
|---------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| 0–52    | 1                | 11             | Mostly 1 stream; 1 had 0           | Not crowded  |
| 53–105  | 1–2              | 13             | Mostly 1 stream, a few had 2       | Not crowded  |
| 106–158 | 2–3              | 5              | All had 1 stream                   | Crowded      |
| 159–211 | 3–4              | 4              | Mostly 1–2 streams                 | Crowded      |
| 212–264 | 4–5              | 2              | 1 had 1 stream, 1 had 3 streams    | Mixed        |
| 265–317 | 5–6              | 3              | 1–2 streams reported               | Crowded      |
| 424–476 | 8–9              | 1              | 1 had 3 streams                    | Crowded      |
| Total   | –                | 43 schools     |                                    |              |

*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

However, as pupil numbers increase beyond 106, a clear pattern of under-streaming emerges. Schools with over 150 pupils consistently report too few streams, leading to overcrowded classrooms. Notably, even a school with over 400 pupils has only three streams, far below the expected 8–9. This highlights a need for increased infrastructure to meet the higher enrolment in schools to ensure manageable class sizes and quality learning.

### 3.33 PUPIL-TO-CLASSROOM RATIOS IN PRIMARY SEVEN AGAINST NATIONAL CLASS SIZE STANDARDS

By and Large, majority of P7 classes in the schools interviewed have low enrolment, with 20 schools falling under 53 pupils and reporting an appropriate number of streams typically one. Schools with 53–105 pupils also mostly align with standards, though nearly all still operate with a single stream, even when two might be expected. The low enrolment in P7 could be as a result of drop out. In practice most schools administer promotional exams which hinders weak performers from progressing to P7.

**TABLE 7: P7 PUPIL ENROLLMENT VS. STREAMS**

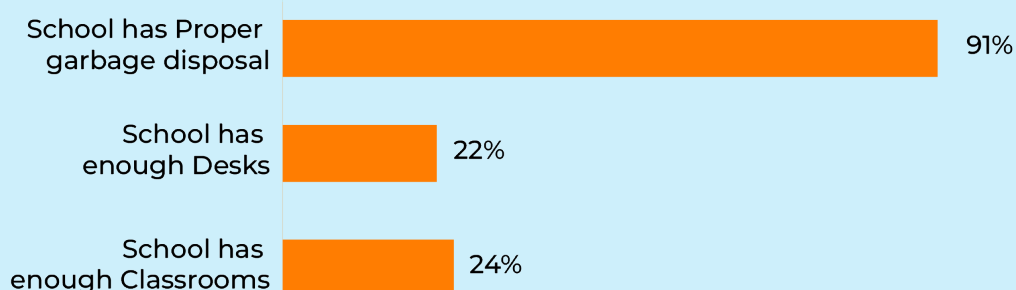
| Pupils  | Expected Streams | No. of Schools | Actual Streams Reported per school | Observations     |
|---------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| 0–52    | 1 or less        | 20             | Mostly 1 stream                    | Not crowded      |
| 53–105  | 1–2              | 9              | All had 1 stream                   | Not Crowded      |
| 106–158 | 2–3              | 5              | Mostly 1 stream                    | Crowded          |
| 265–317 | 5–6              | 1              | 1 school had 4 streams             | Slightly Crowded |
| 371–423 | 7–8              | 1              | 1 school had 3 streams             | Crowded          |
| Total   | –                | 43 schools     |                                    |                  |

*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

### 3.34 PRESENCE BASIC FACILITIES AVAILABILITY IN SCHOOLS- ENOUGH CLASS ROOM BLOCK, DESKS AND GARBAGE DISPOSAL

The data shows significant gaps in essential infrastructure across schools. While 91% of schools report having proper garbage disposal systems, the availability of classrooms (24%) and desks (22%) is critically low. This suggests that although environmental hygiene may be prioritized, the core learning environment remains inadequate in most schools.

**FIGURE 24: AN ANALYSIS OF PRESENCE BASIC FACILITIES AVAILABILITY IN SCHOOLS**



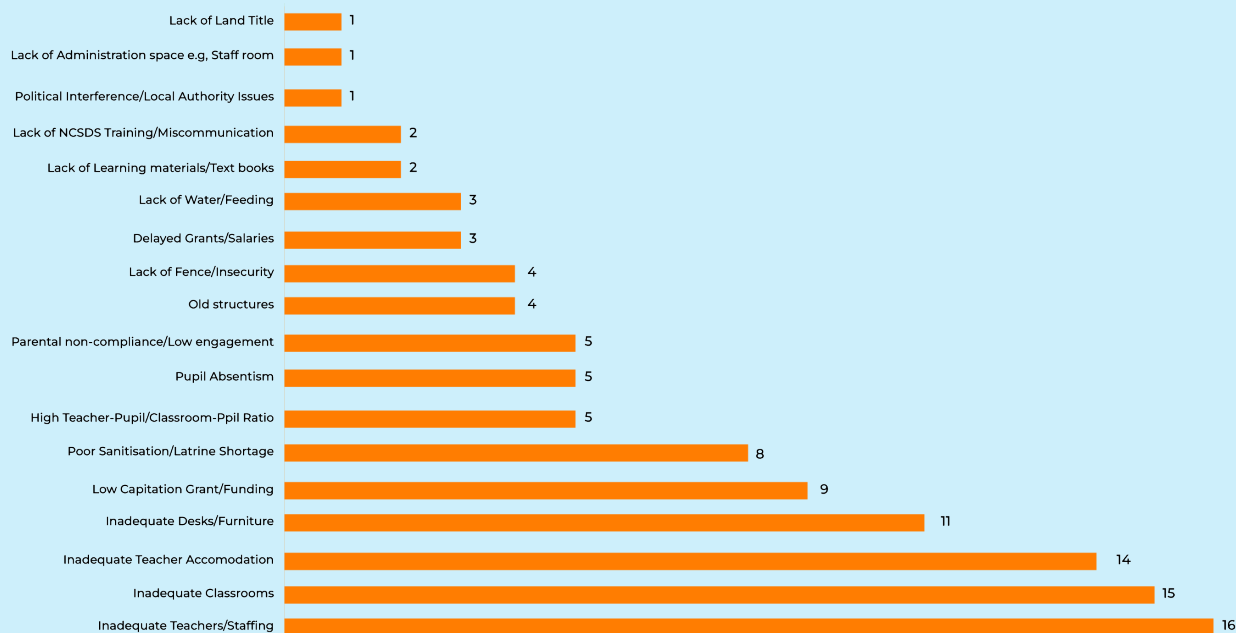
*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

The shortage of classrooms and desks resonates with the analysis of enrollment per class and the number of streams where it was found that most classes seem overcrowded and points to poorly equipped learning spaces in most schools visited. This unchecked can negatively impact learner concentration, participation, and overall education quality and outcomes. Addressing these gaps is essential to improving learning conditions and meeting national education standards.

### 3.35 MAIN CHALLENGES SCHOOLS FACE IN IMPLEMENTING THE NCSDS

Analysis of responses from schools (head teachers and Director of studies) highlight several recurring challenges that hinder effective implementation of the National Costed Delivery Standards (NCSDS). The most pressing issue is the widespread shortage of teachers, resulting in high teacher-pupil ratios and strained instructional quality. Infrastructure gaps were also frequently cited, including inadequate classrooms, dilapidated buildings, and lack of proper teacher accommodation. Many schools reported a severe shortage of desks and other furniture, forcing learners to study in uncomfortable and overcrowded conditions. Compounding these issues is the problem of underfunding, with capitation grants often delayed or insufficient to meet even the most basic operational needs.

**FIGURE 25; MAIN CHALLENGES SCHOOLS FACE IN MEETING IMPLEMENTING THE NCSDS**



*Source: Primary Data collected by CSBAG*

Beyond infrastructure and funding, schools face challenges related to poor sanitation, particularly inadequate or overstretched latrine facilities—which pose health risks to both learners and staff. Parental non-involvement and limited community support further exacerbate the situation, especially where parents are unwilling or unable to contribute to school development or encourage regular attendance. Absenteeism, largely driven by hunger, illness, and domestic responsibilities, remains a concern, as does the lack of school feeding programs. Additional concerns include insecurity due to the absence of perimeter fencing, lack of access to clean water, shortages of instructional materials like textbooks, inadequate training on NCSDS guidelines, and occasional political or administrative interference.

### 3.36 CHALLENGES IN IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING NCSDS

According to the KII with MDAs and CSOs, the effective implementation and monitoring of the National Costed Service Delivery Standards (NCSDS) in primary education face multiple challenges, including inadequate funding for infrastructure, supervision, and teacher recruitment. A lack of resources results in delays in fund disbursement, with insufficient budget allocations for essential components like school facilities, teaching materials, and monitoring activities. Additionally, staffing shortages at both school and district levels impede progress. Weak inspection and monitoring systems, alongside limited community and stakeholder engagement, further exacerbate these challenges. There is also a lack of capacity building on how to effectively cost, develop, and document the standards. Moreover, the absence of essential tools and equipment—such as computers, projectors, and vehicles—hinders the ability to implement and monitor the standards effectively.

High enrolment figures relative to available infrastructure and poor coordination among Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) contribute to uneven implementation. Limited funding for critical areas like teacher recruitment, school infrastructure, and monitoring also stymies progress, leaving many schools with outdated facilities and a lack of essential resources for both students and teachers.

## 4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, while Uganda's public primary education system has established strong administrative and governance foundations, it continues to fall short in providing safe, inclusive, and adequately resourced learning environments. The findings suggest that there is a critical need to shift priorities from procedural compliance to direct investment in infrastructure, staffing, and learner support services. Addressing these gaps through increased funding, better resource allocation, and targeted interventions will be essential in ensuring that every child in Uganda receives a quality education and that the goals of Universal Primary Education are fully realized. A holistic approach to educational reform is necessary, one that not only ensures compliance with service delivery standards but also invests in tangible improvements that directly benefit students and educators alike.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE AND LEARNING CONDITIONS

Improving school infrastructure and learning conditions is critical to delivering quality education and achieving equitable learning outcomes. The findings from this assessment highlight persistent gaps in classrooms, sanitation, teaching materials, and teacher accommodation that hinder effective teaching and learning. The following recommendations are proposed to guide central and local governments, as well as school management, in addressing these challenges and creating safer, more inclusive, and better-resourced learning environments.

### 5.1 TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

- i. Increase and Timely Disburse Capitation Grants: Review and increase the per-pupil capitation grant to reflect actual operational costs, accounting for inflation. Mandate the Ministry of Finance to disburse funds before the start of each term to enable effective planning, as delays severely undermine NCSDS implementation
- ii. Accelerate Teacher Recruitment and Deployment; Address critical teacher shortages by recruiting and deploying qualified teachers, especially in rural and high-enrolment schools, to reduce pupil-teacher ratios and improve learning outcomes.
- iii. Prioritize Crisis Infrastructure to Eliminate Overcrowding: Launch a nationwide emergency program to construct new classrooms, targeting schools where P1-P3 streams exceed 100 pupils per class. The immediate goal should be to achieve the 1:53 classroom - pupil ratio, particularly in lower primary grades where the problem is most acute.
- iv. Equip Schools with Adequate Learning Resources; Supply schools with essential teaching and learning materials, including computers, textbooks, furniture, and digital tools, to ensure learners have access to quality education.
- v. Institutionalize and Support School Feeding Programs; Prioritize funding for school meals in districts and schools with the highest levels of absenteeism and dropout, particularly in early grades (P1-P3) to encourage enrolment and retention to addresses the hunger-related absenteeism.
- vi. Improve Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Services; Provide reliable access to clean water, handwashing facilities, and safe, gender-separated latrines, promoting both hygiene and school attendance particularly for girls.

### 5.2 TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

- i. Prioritize Educational Infrastructure in Local Development Plans; Allocate a significant portion of local budgets to improve school infrastructure, including fencing, classroom renovation, land titling, and provision of lighting, ensuring a safe and conducive learning environment.
- ii. Promote Community - Government Collaboration; Encourage co-funding arrangements with communities for temporary or semi-permanent structures while mobilizing local resources to supplement government efforts.
- iii. Provide Oversight and Technical Support to Schools; Strengthen the capacity of school leaders by supporting them with planning, budgeting, and project implementation, especially for minor infrastructure and staffing improvements.
- iv. Facilitate Partnerships with Development Partners; Actively engage NGOs and other development actors to support classroom renovations, sanitation projects, digital learning initiatives, and resource mobilization.

### 5.3 TO SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- i. Strengthen and Empower PTAs; Reinforce the role of PTAs in school governance by involving them in teacher recruitment (e.g., community teachers), infrastructure initiatives, and school meal planning.
- ii. Leverage Community and Alumni Support: Mobilize parents, old students, and local leaders for fundraising campaigns, volunteer labor, and donations of materials like desks, bricks, or construction tools.
- iii. Initiate Income-Generating Activities; Launch school-based projects such as gardens, livestock keeping, tree planting, or renting out school spaces to generate funds for school improvement and maintenance.
- iv. Maintain and Upgrade Existing Facilities; Establish regular maintenance routines for desks, classrooms, latrines, and staff housing, using both local resources and improvised solutions where needed to ensure safe and functional facilities.

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