## Maldives 2015 National Assessment of Learning Outcomes in English and Mathematics

Grades 4 & 7



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## **Foreword** by Minister of Education

National Assessment is an integral component of the education system which guarantees the quality of education delivered nationwide. Given that the aim of the present government is to ensure that no child is left behind, with the vision of preparing every child for life and producing successful, productive and responsible citizens, it is imperative that student learning outcomes are assessed regularly. Apart from the provision of information about the quality of education offered in the nation, National Assessment



of Learning Outcomes (NALO) paves the way to enhance the essential changes to be brought in order to enable a better future for the Maldivian students.

This is a 5 year project (2014-2018) funded by the World Bank in which the subjects English Language, Mathematics and Dhivehi Language for grades 4 and 7 students are administered across a representative sample of Maldivian public schools. The skills assessed remain essentially the same from year to year, which permits NALO to illustrate a clear picture of students' academic progress over time. In addition to the administering of the tests in the given subjects, survey questionnaires are given to students and teachers who participate in this assessment. The assessment mainly aims to collect additional information with regard to students' language and numerical skills and to determine the speed at which these skills are being developed. Finally, the result of the test administered would provide valuable insights on the standard at which teachers are able to impart the curriculum to students in Maldivian public schools.

It is vital to note that national assessments would certainly enable the educational stakeholders as well as the general public to develop a national perspective on how well the schools are performing. Furthermore, the outcomes of NALO not only facilitates consistent and welldeveloped measures for student achievement but also could be useful in informing future policy development, allocation of resources, planning the curriculum as well as the required intervention programs.



I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the World Bank for funding this project and also the staff of Quality Assurance Department for their effort in maintaining the educational stability and prosperity in the nation.

Dr. Aishath Shiham Minister of Education



## **Foreword** by the Minister of State for Education

The National Assessment of Learning Outcomes (NALO) 2015 in Mathematics & English has provided the Quality Assurance Department with a better understanding of the impact we are making as a system towards our targeted interventions in improving numeracy and literacy in Grades 4 and 7 of the primary schools in Maldives. It has also provided us with a measured picture of levels of the students' performance in learning outcomes in each school throughout the country.



QAD is committed to continue the NALO with a particular focus on the critical and non-negotiable outputs to improve the quality of school education in Maldives. The key outputs are to ensure high quality of teaching and learning, improved literacy and numeracy, better secondary school examination performance as well as strengthening early childhood development programmes.

The aim is to provide a world-class school education for all students under the No Child Left Behind policy, and personalised teaching and learning are at the heart of making this aim a reality. We all know what a difference it would make to students' learning outcomes when they and their teachers have a good understanding of where students are in their learning, where they need to go next and how best to get there – which is what the national assessment is all about.

Many schools are already seeing the importance of national assessment for maintaining the standards, but I want all schools to make sure that they gain the professional development training and support so that the national assessment can be embedded in all level of schooling. That is why the Government has committed to invest in upgrading all teachers and continue with the professional development programmes for teachers.

I am very pleased to know that the schools are making use of the resources available to them, and I look forward to seeing the results.

Dr Abdulla Nazeer Minister of State for Education



# **Executive** Summary

The objective of this study is to carry out a national assessment of learning outcomes of grade 4 and 7 and to find out the factors that are associated with student results.

A stratified random sample of 2567 students from grade 7, 2535 students from grade 4, 219 teachers from grade 7 and 205 teachers from grade 4 were selected for the survey from 112 schools. The English and Mathematics achievement tests, and the student questionnaires, were then administered to all students in Grades 4 and 7 in the sampled schools. The teachers' questionnaires were simultaneously administered to all the teachers who taught English and Mathematics in 2015 in these schools for the selected students.

As the national average of grade 4 and 7 English and Mathematics results are low compared to many other countries, strategies need to be developed to increase the academic scores. A disaggregation of the results by the atolls shows that Laamu Atoll performed lower than all the other atolls. Greater Male', Seenu and Gnaviyani Atoll have the highest results. These results indicate that special attention needs to be given to low performing atolls and schools.

The results show that there is no clear distribution in the results of the different competencies that were assessed. It is important to explore the type and level of questions that were assessed from each competency to make sure that each competency in the new curriculum is assessed. Competency achievement levels also need to be identified based on the new curriculum so that the national assessment can identify the percentage of students who have achieved the required competency level and the percentage of students who have not achieved the required competency level.

Student confidence and student interest in subjects are significantly related to student performance. Hence, these values need to be improved in students using innovative teaching methods.

Generally parental involvement is good as perceived by students and teachers. However, what parents buy for kids need to be chosen wisely since the results have shown that owning PlayStations has a significantly negative relationship with academic results whereas books and



computers have significantly positive results. Further research is needed to identify how and to what extent these devices affect studies.

Hours spent on homework not exceeding 4 hours per day for grade seven students has a significantly positive relationship with academic scores. Hence, students need to be encouraged to spend some time on studies at home daily.

The analysis has shown that bullying is evident in the schools. Further studies need to be undertaken to learn about the nature of bullying and ways to prevent it.

Even though the majority of the teachers have qualifications above bachelor's degree, still there are some teachers whose qualifications are below diplomas. Training needs to be upgraded for these teachers in order to facilitate high student results.

Some of the items on the questionnaires were a little vague hence more clarity of these items are needed for the next national assessment. This can be achieved by defining some of the terms such as 'tuition' (whether tuition includes Quran lessons) and 'number of books students own' (whether these books include text books).



# Background

National assessments are administered uniformly using the same sets of test papers across the nation. The objective of national assessments is to assess performance against national standards and learning goals, and provide feedback to policy makers and key stakeholders. The results of such assessments serve as a common metric for all the atolls, islands and schools. One of the important areas of the World Bank is also to continually and rigorously focus on results and on the assessment of effectiveness (Greaney and Kellaghan 2008). To achieve this, it was ensured that quality educational assessment exercise was carried out with quality instruments which are outlined by Greaney and Kellaghan, 2008. If these instruments are poorly designed, the assessment can be a waste of time and money (Graney and Kellaghan, 2008). For this assessment Ministry of Education has used rigorous methodology and validated questionnaires with high reliability. First, the framework for the national assessment was prepared by a team consisting of the team leader, test development manager, members from the Ministry of Education, stakeholders and policy makers. The table of specifications were then developed and the relevant stakeholders were consulted for approval. After the approval the test development manager, subject specialists, item writers and key stakeholders developed the test and questionnaire items. These test papers and questionnaires were first administered as pretests in the schools selected for piloting. The items were then hand-scored, pretest data was entered and analyzed. After analyzing this data, items were selected for the final tests and questionnaires (student questionnaire and the teacher questionnaire). To administer the test papers and questionnaires rigorous sampling methods were used. The sampling frame that was used as a guide for the study was developed in May 2014 and is published in Appendix A of the report, "The Estimated Accuracy of Three Possible Sampling Options for the ESQID 2015 National Assessment." The schools and enrolments were obtained from the Ministry of Education publication titled, "School Statistics 2013." It was ensured that the sampling frame was accurate for 2015 before proceeding.

The sampling frame was identified (i.e., all the Grade 4 and 7 students of the Republic of Maldives enrolled in English and Mathematics) and schools were organized into strata (all atolls plus 4 strata in the Male area, for a total of 23 strata) [See Appendices A and B of the May 2014 report].



Schools within every stratum were selected by random sampling. The number of students in Grade 4 English, Grade 4 Mathematics, Grade 7 English, and Grade 7 Mathematics in the sampled schools were counted.

For any stratum, if the number of students enrolled in English and Mathematics at each grade level is not equal to the number specified by the desired sampling option, random sampling schools were continued until the desired number of students for that stratum is reached. In this way, 2567 students from grade 7, 2535 students from grade 4, 219 teachers from grade 7 and 205 teachers from grade 4 were selected for the survey from 112 schools. The English and Mathematics achievement tests, and the student questionnaire, were then administered to all students in Grades 4 and 7 in the sampled schools for the selected students. The teachers' questionnaire was simultaneously administered to the teachers who were teaching English and Math in the year 2015 in these schools. Special training was given to the invigilators who were supervising the tests.

The test papers and the questionnaires were then hand-scored and the data was entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). The data was then cleaned, outliers were adjusted and missing values were replaced. The mean scores and the score distributions for the nation and the atolls were generated. Several factors that can influence academic performance were also considered at the planning and data collection stage. These include student interest, things students own, teachers' qualification, teachers' experience, parental involvement and school safety. All this information was collected from students and teachers and the results were then correlated and compared with student performance. For clarity only the statistically significant factors are shown in the report and hence the factors might not be same for different subjects and different grades.

The atolls, islands and the schools that were selected for the survey are shown in the Appendix.

## The Map of Maldives showing all the atolls included in the sample



**Results** Mathematics for grade 4

The analysis of the data shows that the average marks of grade 4 Mathematics for the whole nation is 57.5. The lowest score is 8.8 and the highest score is 91.2. The following table (Table 1) shows the mean scale scores, the minimum scores and maximum scores of students from Male' and the atolls.

Location	No of students	Mean Scale Score	Std. Dev	Minimum	Maximum
All Maldives	2289	57.5	15.6	8.8	91.2
HA	92	54.3	14.3	20.6	85.3
HDh	90	59.9	14.5	23.5	88.2
Sh	94	55.5	14.8	20.6	82.3
N	93	52.6	14.6	20.6	82.3
R	100	52.4	17.7	17.6	82.3
В	108	61.7	16.7	14.7	88.2
Lh	120	59.1	14.7	23.5	88.2
К	74	55.4	15	11.8	82.3
AA	103	55.4	15.7	20.6	85.3
ADh	135	51.2	14.9	23.5	88.2
V	20	65.7	12.4	41.1	85.3
М	73	58.8	14.1	29.4	88.2
F	86	55.8	15.3	23.5	85.2
Dh	90	60.1	14.8	23.5	85.3
Th	96	51.6	16.8	14.7	91.2
L	81	50.7	15.8	17.7	88.2
GA	118	55.5	14.7	26.5	85.2
GDh	104	58	17.5	23.5	88.2
Gn	95	57.7	15.9	8.8	88.2
S	114	62.6	15.7	23.5	88.2
Male'	403	60.2	14.3	14.7	88.2

Table 1: Mean scale scores for Mathematics results grade 4



Figure 1 shows that only 4.7% of the grade 4 students got above 80% in Mathematics. The majority of the students got higher than a 50% in Mathematics.

## Mathematics Results grade 4



The data also indicates that Seenu Atoll, Vaavu Atoll and Baa Atoll have higher mean Mathematical scores compared with other atolls (figure 2).



## Atoll Average Marks, Mathematics Grade 4



It is an interesting fact that the average Mathematics score for female students are significantly higher than that of male students (figure 3).

Gender Average Marks, Mathematics Grade 4



Figure 3: Gender and Mathematics score

The question which most students answered right was question 22, in which 88.9% of the students got the answer correct (figure 4).



Figure 4: Highest scored question



The question which most students answered incorrectly was question number 3. Only 14.3% of the students answered the question correctly (figure 5).



Figure 5: Lowest scored question

## Mathematical competency skills

The mathematical competencies on which grade 4 students were assessed included:

- 1. Number Sense {related to concepts and basic number competency}
- 2. Arithmetic Operations {four basic operations, properties and shortcuts}.
- 3. Fractions {concepts and applications}.
- 4. Basic Shapes {geometry and visual estimation}.
- 5. Measurements, Data Interpretation, Analysis and Graphs
- 6. Application in daily life {commercial Maths, word and visual problems}.



### National average grade 4 Mathematics competency

Figure 6: Mathematical competencies, national average

#### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS, 4 & 7

Figure 6 shows the national mean scores for different mathematical competencies of grade 4 students. Students scored best on competency three which is concepts and applications of fractions. Students scored least in competency one (Number Sense {related to concepts and basic number competency}). An example of such a question is question number 3 which is shown above in Figure 5. When this competency is disaggregated by atolls, HDh, B, Lh, V, M, Dh, GDh, Gn, S and Male' are above the national average (figure 7). Other atolls are below national average line. The national average is 42.2%. Figure 8 shows achievement levels in different competencies.



Achievement in different competencies, grade 4 Mathematics





## Factors associated with grade 4 Mathematics scores

## Stationaries/equipment students have at home and the association with Mathematics scores

Providing the right support and guidance from parents to their children is an important factor in determining the results of the children. The analysis has shown that the group of students who said they have books of their own scored significantly higher in Mathematics compared with students who said that they do not have books of their own (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Having books and mathematical scores

It is important to note that the group of students who said that they have a PlayStation at home scored significantly lower in Mathematics compared to the group of students who said they do not have a PlayStation at home (Figure 10).



## PlayStation and Mathematics score

Figure 10: PlayStations and mathematical scores



However, unlike PlayStation, the students who have computers at home scored significantly higher than students who do not have computers (figure 11). Similar significant associations with computers were seen for the English results as well.

## Computers and mathematical results



Figure 11: Computers and Mathematics scores



## English for grade 4

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The national average for English is lower than that of Mathematics (52.9%). Table 2 shows the mean scale score of grade 4 English for Male' and the atolls. In addition, the percentage of students who scored above 80 marks are lower for English compared with that of Mathematics (figure 12).

Location	No of students	Mean Scale Score	Std. Dev	Minimum	Maximum
All Maldives	2357	52.9	21	7.1	97.6
HA	93	46.1	16.7	7.1	85.7
HDh	100	54.1	22.1	14.3	97.6
Sh	94	41.6	18.6	9.5	90.4
Ν	107	43.3	17.7	11.9	85.7
R	102	43.9	18.9	11.9	90.5
В	121	54.9	19.7	11.9	97.6
Lh	108	54.8	19.8	11.9	92.9
К	79	52.2	18.5	14.3	90.5
AA	106	47.1	18.8	11.9	90.5
ADh	134	43.8	17.6	11.9	88.1
V	21	62.8	17.1	19	88.1
М	73	52.2	19.6	19	88.1
F	88	43.3	20.7	9.5	95.2
Dh	93	51.1	18.9	19	88
Th	101	44.5	18.4	14.3	95.2
L	76	38.9	19.1	9.5	88.1
GA	127	48.8	18.4	9.5	92.9
GDh	106	55.5	20.4	16.7	92.9
Gn	90	63.3	19.5	23.8	97.6
S	121	67.2	18.8	16.7	92.9
Male'	417	65.9	19	9.5	97.6

Table 2: Mean scale scores for English results grade 4





Figure 12: Grade 4 English results

Further analysis of the data shows the mean scores of English are higher for Male', Gn and S Atoll compared with other atolls (figure 13).



Figure 13: Grade 4 English results by atolls

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The results also have shown that there is a statistically significant relationship between gender and English scores. The mean English scores for female students are higher compared with that of male students (figure 14).



## Gender Average, English Marks Grade 4

Figure 14: Grade 4 English results by gender

An analysis of the items on the test paper has shown that the easiest question in Grade 4 English paper is question number 27, with 87.1% of the students getting the answer right.



Figure 15: Highest scoring question in English



The item which students scored least was question number 12 with only 18.5% of the students getting the answer correct.

12. Choose the correct answer to the question given below What did John like to do?

- a) He likes to eat.
- b) John liked eat.
- c) To eat john liked.
- d) He liked to eat.

Figure 16: Lowest scoring question in English

## English Competency Skills

The English Language skills of grade 4 students which were assessed consisted of the following.

- 1. Knows names of objects, birds and animals not seen in daily life
- 2. Knows meanings, spellings, and opposites of words used in daily life
- 3. Correct sentence formation, punctuation, and sequencing
- 4. Comprehends very simple sentences or a simple paragraph
- 5. Parts of speech, gender, number, tense, etc.
- 6. Comprehends passages of intermediate difficulty
- 7. Comprehends complex passages of high difficulty

A comparison of the mean score for different skill sets showed that the highest mean scores were found for skill five which is Parts of speech, gender, number, tense, etc. Students scored least in skill number 7, which is comprehension of complex passages of high difficulty (figure 17).



National English average of grade 4 students

Figure 17: Grade 4 mean English competency scores

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A disaggregation of the skill set for atolls shows that students generally scored well in the first skill which was (knows names of objects, birds and animals not seen in daily life). The atolls which were above national average (represented by the green dotted line) were greater Male', S, Gn, GDh, M, V, K, Lh and B (Figure 18). Table 3 shows that the same atolls scored highest in other competencies although students from all the atolls score fairly low in skills 3 (Correct sentence formation, punctuation, and sequencing) and 7 (Comprehends complex passages of high difficulty).

Knows names of objects, birds and animals not seen in daily life



Figure 18: Grade 4 mean English competency scores by atolls



#### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS, 4 & 7

Location	Skill1	Skill2	Skill3	Skill4	Skill5	Skill6	Skill7
HA	57.2	39.6	41.3	47.1	54.8	48.7	26.3
HDh	59.1	55.0	41.2	58.7	62.6	55.2	37.4
Sh	51.0	36.5	37.4	42.7	45.9	42.7	26.3
Ν	54.6	37.5	35.2	43.7	53.6	41.4	31.1
R	49.5	36.7	35.0	46.2	55.6	48.5	25.2
В	63.4	47.3	46.4	56.6	69.1	56.4	36.5
Lh	65.0	51.7	44.8	58.7	65.2	52.1	32.2
К	63.7	35.4	38.7	52.9	60.7	49.1	35.0
AA	55.5	45.2	39.1	47.3	57.7	46.3	29.4
ADh	50.7	37.5	33.4	47.1	55.6	45.7	26.4
V	70.5	53.4	52.7	72.3	69.4	65.6	37.5
М	64.0	47.4	45.1	53.1	63.4	49.6	33.0
F	54.2	38.2	30.0	46.5	50.8	43.3	30.8
Dh	60.4	42.8	39.8	53.0	61.3	48.5	30.1
Th	57.1	38.1	35.6	42.6	54.3	46.4	29.7
L	49.2	35.6	33.6	35.5	47.8	40.9	28.0
GA	56.1	40.2	36.6	52.4	59.2	48.7	33.1
GDh	64.3	45.1	46.2	60.1	62.5	57.4	40.3
Gn	71.2	59.3	45.6	69.8	72.0	62.7	50.5
S	73.8	63.5	49.8	73.6	74.0	65.6	53.5
Male'	70.0	65.0	48.5	72.6	74.1	67.1	48.7
National Average	61.0	47.8	41.4	56.0	62.1	53.3	36.2

Table 3: Mean scores for grade 4 English competency by atoll

As shown in figure 19 more than 50% of the Students scored above 65 in competency number one which is, 'knows names of objects, birds and animals not seen in daily life'. Contrarily, more than 60% of the students scored between 0 and 40 in competency 3 which is correct sentence formation, punctuation, and sequencing.



## Achievement in different competencies, grade 4 English

28



Figure 19: Achievement in different English competency scores for grade 4

## Factors Associated with English Results

## Relationship with English Results and the frequency of English spoken at home

The results for English depend a lot on how much a student uses English and reads books written in English. Figure 20 shows the percentage of students who 'always', 'almost always', 'sometimes' and 'never' speak English at home. The percentage of students who never speak English is highest in ADh atoll. There is a relationship between English being spoken at home and student results.



The analysis also showed that the percentage of females who never speak English at home is higher than the percentage of males who never speak English at home (figure 21).



Figure 21: Frequency of English speaking at home by gender

It is an interesting fact that more than 20% of the students said that they have more than 100 books at home and more than 50% of the students said they have less or equal to 15 books at home (table 4). The analysis however, did not show whether these include text books or not.

Amount of books at home					
	Frequency	Valid Percent			
None or very few (0-10 books)	544	21.9			
Enough to fill one shelf (11-25 books)	795	32.0			
Enough to fill one book case (26-100 books)	592	23.8			
Enough to fill one book case 101-200 books)	285	11.5			
Enough to fill three or more book cases	269	10.8			
Total	2485	100.0			

Table 4: Amount of books students have at home

#### Relationship with English Results and student interest in English

Student motivation and student interest in English are important factors in determining student performance. The table below shows the average marks of students who find English boring. Those who agreed a lot that English is boring scored a significantly lower average marks for English. The students who strongly disagreed with the statement scored the highest average English marks. The following figure shows that there is a significant difference between the average marks for students who agree that English is boring and for those who disagree that English is boring. There is a strong relationship between student interest in English and performance in the subject English (figure 18).





Figure 22: Relationship between student interest in English and English scores

#### **Computer Use**

30

Another interesting fact is that the percentage of students who have computers are almost similar to the percentage of students who have their own books (Table 5). A disaggregation of data by atolls shows that most of the students use computers every day (figure 23). However, the main purposes of everyday use are for playing computer games and watching movies (figure 24).

Things students have at home					
	Yes	No			
Computer	79.1	20.9			
Own books	81	19			
Own room	37.9	62.1			
Study desk	81.3	18.7			
Encyclopedia	64.1	35.9			
DVD/ Blu ray	64.9	35.1			
IPad/ Tablet	56	44			
Play station	70.5	29.5			
Internet connection	55.1	44.9			

Table 5: Devices students have at home



Computer use at home in different atolls

Figure 23: Computer use in different atolls



Figure 24: How students use computers



### Parental Involvement

The majority of the students in the Maldives reported that parental involvement is high. The students indicated that, everyday their parents ask them about what they learn at school and also make sure that they set aside time for their homework. In addition, their parents check if they do their homework and discuss their school. There are no differences seen between atolls when the data is disaggregated (figure 25).



### Parental involvement

Figure 25: Parental involvement

## Students who get help from a tuition teacher

A large percentage (50%) of the students of grade 4 in the whole country stated that they get help from a tuition teacher daily. Only 29% of the students stated that they never or almost never get tuition. A similar trend in tuition is seen in each atoll when the data was disaggregated by the atolls (figure 26).



### Students who get help from a tuiution teacher

Bullying at School

Although the majority of the students indicated that they like being in school and feel safe at school, more than 20% of the students have said that they were made to do things they do not want to do. For instance, they were hit or hurt by other student(s), something was stolen from them, someone spread lies about them and they were made fun or called names. This shows that there is some level of bullying in the schools which can be related to social problems and low results in studies (figure 27).



### Safety at school



## Safety at school

Figure 27: Bullying at schools

## Characteristics of grade 4 teachers

The majority of grade 4 teachers are Maldivians (60.2%). However, there are foreign teachers who are mostly Indians (figure 28). As shown in the table 6 below, the majority of foreign teachers work in the atolls. Thaa Atoll has got the highest number of foreign teachers.



## Nationality of grade 4 teachers

Figure 28: Nationality of grade 4 teachers



#### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS, 4 & 7

	Maldivian	Indian	Sri Lankan	Other	Total
HA	4	9	0	0	13
HDh	0	2	0	0	2
Sh	5	5	0	0	10
Ν	10	5	1	0	16
R	5	5	0	1	11
В	9	6	0	0	15
Lh	7	0	0	0	7
К	4	1	1	0	6
AA	7	1	1	0	9
ADh	9	9	0	0	16
V	3	3	0	0	6
М	9	2	0	0	11
F	7	3	0	0	10
Dh	4	6	0	0	10
Th	6	12	0	0	18
L	5	2	0	0	7
GA	5	4	0	0	9
GDh	5	6	0	0	11
Gn	5	0	0	0	5
S	5	0	0	0	5
Male'	16	1	0	0	17
Total	130	82	3	1	216

Table 6: Nationality of grade 4 teachers

## 20.5 % 13.5 % 11.2 % 1 year 1-2 years 3-5 years 6-10 years 11-20 years 21 or more years NUMBER OF YEARS

## Years of experience of grade 4 teachers

Figure 29: Years of experience of grade 4 teachers







Figure 30: Qualification of grade 4 teachers

Most (37%) of the grade seven teachers who filled the teachers' questionnaire reported that they put a heavy emphasis on Mathematics. More than 35% of the teachers said that they lay great emphasis on Education and 25% indicated that the major emphasis was laid on English. Although the highest percentage of teachers are trained in Mathematics in grade 7 the results of Mathematics were low (Table 7).

	%
Had a major emphasis on	25.6
reading, language arts, literacy education	37.0
mathematical education	7.3
other language related subjects	35.2
education	4.1
special education	12.8
statistics	

Table 7: Subjects teachers have emphasis on



## Mathematics for grade 7

The analysis shows that national average for grade 7 Mathematics is below 50 percent (44.6%) in the Maldives (figure 31). Table 8 shows mean scores of grade seven Mathematics in each atoll, the minimum scores and the maximum score in each atoll (figure 32). Out of the total student population who participated in the assessment, less than half of the students score above 50. Similar to grade 4 Mathematics results the mean score for female students is higher which shows that there is a statistical significant difference in Mathematical results between gender (figure 33).

Location	Number of students	Mean Scale Score	Std. Dev	Minimum	Maximum
All Maldives	2461	44.6	14.5	10.5	84.2
HA	114	38.4	12.4	15.8	71
HDh	100	49.6	14	13.1	78.9
Sh	97	39.1	12.9	15.8	76.3
Ν	105	38.5	11.7	18.4	71
R	123	43.1	13.3	13.1	76.3
В	128	47.9	14.7	13.1	78.9
Lh	126	39.8	14.3	13.1	76.3
К	81	42.8	13.2	18.4	71.1
AA	85	37.3	14.2	15.8	81.6
ADh	112	42.3	14.3	15.8	76.3
V	21	50.3	11.7	23.7	68.4
М	61	47.5	13.7	18.4	78.9
F	86	44.8	13.9	23.7	81.6
Dh	107	43.8	13.2	8.4	73.7
Th	82	41.1	14.1	13.2	76.3
L	78	35.9	9.4	18.4	71.1
GA	111	41	12.8	15.8	68.4
GDh	96	45.2	14.9	15.8	81.6
Gn	118	43.2	14.9	10.5	76.3
S	111	52	15.3	18.4	81.6
Male'	519	49.7	14.6	13.1	84.2

Table 8: Mean scale scores for Mathematics results grade 7





## Mathematics Results grade 7

Figure 31: Mathematics results grade 7





Figure 32: Mathematics results grade 7 by atolls





### Gender Mathematics Results, Grade 7

Figure 33: Mathematics results grade 7 by gender

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The analysis also shows that in general students answer questions correctly when an illustration of the mathematical problem is shown. The question which most of the students have answered right was question 10, in which 95.9% of the students getting the answer right. However, only 9.3% of the students got number nine correct.



Figure 34: Highest scoring question



## Mathematical competencies grade 7

The mathematical competencies assessed for grade 7 were:

- 1. Number Sense {related to concepts and basic number competency}
- 2. Fraction, Decimal, Ratio and Percentage.
- 3. Basic shape, Geometry and Visual Estimation.
- 4. Algebra {Concepts and application}.
- 5. Mensuration {Area, Volume and Surface area}
- 6. Measurement, Data, Interpretation, Analysis and Graphs
- 7. Application in daily life, Commercial Mathematics, Word and Visual problem.
- 8. Reasoning and Problem solving {advanced or challenging problems}

The test paper consisted of 42 questions and all these competencies were assessed. The results indicate that students did best in competency 6 which is measurement, data, interpretation, analysis and graphs. Students scored least in competency 3 (Basic shape, Geometry and Visual Estimation), competency 4 (algebra, concepts and application) and competency 8 (advanced or challenging problems reasoning and problem solving) (figure 36).





Figure 36: Grade 7 Mathematics competencies

As discussed earlier, students performed less in problem solving and reasoning skills and further analysis showed that only seven (HDh, R, V, GDh, Gn, S and greater Male') out of 21 atolls scored more than the national average on these skills (figure 37). This shows the need to instill critical thinking and reasoning skills in students which are higher order thinking skills needed for great minds.



Figure 38 shows that 60% of the students scored equal to or below 40 in competency 3 of the subject Mathematics (Basic shape, Geometry and Visual Estimation). More than 60% of the students score above 40 in competency 6 (Measurement, Data, Interpretation, Analysis and Graphs)



0-40 41-65 66-100

### Achievement in different competencies, grade 7 Mathematics



Figure 38: Achievement in different Mathematics competencies

# Factors that affect Mathematics results of grade seven students

#### Student perception, confidence and Mathematics results

Student perception and confidence are important factors in determining student results. The analysis shows that students who believe Mathematics is harder for them than others score significantly lower than students disagreeing with the fact that Mathematics is harder for them than others (figure 39).

# Students who believe Mathematics is harder for them than others and their results



## Teacher participation in professional development activities and student results

Apart from having a major emphasis on Mathematics, participating in professional development sessions is an essential factor in delivering the mathematical knowledge and skills to students. Although most of the teachers place major emphasis on Mathematics, more than 40% of the teachers reported that they did not spend any time for professional development in Mathematics. Only 11% of the teachers stated that they spent more than 35 hours for PD in Mathematics (Table 9).

In the past two years how many hours in total did	Frequency	Percent
you spend for PD in Mathematics		
None	96	43.8
Less than 6 hours	21	9.6
6-15 hours	21	9.6
16-35 hours	17	7.8
More than 35 hours	24	11.0
Total	179	81.7
System	40	18.3
	219	100.0

Table 9: Number of PD sessions



## English for grade 7

The National average for grade 7 English is higher than that of Mathematics but with just above 50 percent (51.1%). Table 10 shows the mean English scores for each atoll. More than half of the students in grade seven scored more than or equal to 50% in English (figure 40). The highest English scores, are found in Male', Seenu Atoll and Gnaviyani Atoll (Figure 41). A comparison of the English results of the male and female students shows that female students scored significantly higher than male students (Figure 42).

Location	Number of students	Mean Scale Score	Std. Dev	Minimum	Maximum
All Maldives	2243	51.1	17.5	11.5	88.5
HA	120	44.7	15.4	17.3	86.5
HDh	103	51.8	16.5	17.3	78.9
Sh	95	42.5	15.6	17.3	78.9
Ν	105	42.4	14.9	17.3	76.9
R	124	48.9	16.1	15.4	82.7
В	133	49.4	16.3	15.4	80.8
Lh	118	48.5	16.7	11.5	82.7
К	85	51.4	15.3	25	82.7
AA	87	45.6	15.4	15.4	80.8
ADh	102	49.7	18	13.5	82.7
V	20	55.2	15	26.9	78.8
М	62	50	13.8	13.5	82.3
F	85	45.6	17.3	17.3	82.7
Dh	106	48.8	17.4	13.5	84.6
Th	92	46.9	15.8	15.4	82.7
L	75	37	14.3	13.5	69.2
GA	112	48.1	16.8	15.4	80.8
GDh	97	52.1	16.1	19.2	82.7
Gn	34	56.7	17	17.3	82.7
S	118	62	15.6	11.5	88.5
Male'	369	63.9	15.3	19.2	88.5

Table 10: Mean scale scores for English results grade 7





## English Results grade 7

Figure 40: English results for grade 7





Figure 41: English results for grade 7 by atoll



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Gender English Results, Grade 7 57.8 % 49.1 %

## MALES FEMALES GENDER

The analysis showed that the highest correct response was made for question18 of the grade 7 English paper (77.2% of the students answered the item correctly).

#### Read the paragraph and answer the following questions.

A young man was caught in a daring act of theft and had been condemned to be executed for it. He expressed his desire to see his mother, and to speak with her before he was led to execution, and of course this was granted. When his mother came to him he said: "I want to whisper to you," and when she brought her ear near him, he nearly bit it off. All the bystanders were horrified, and asked him what he could mean by such brutal and inhuman conduct. "It is to punish her," he said. "When I was young, I began with stealing little things, and brought them home to her. Instead of rebuking and punishing me, she laughed and accepted it all. It is because of her that I am here today." "He is right, woman," said the judge.

10. Why did the young man nearly bite his mother's ear off?

- a) to kill her
- b) to tell her he loved her
- c) to apologise to her
- d) to punish her

Figure 43: Highest scoring question in grade 7 English

Figure 42: English results for grade 7 by gender

The correct response was lowest in question 26 with only 11.1% of the students answering the question correctly.

Read the following excerpt and answer the questions below.

He could not see by the slant of the line that the fish was circling. It was too early for that. He just felt a faint slackening of the pressure of the line and he commended to pull on it gently with his right hand. It tightened, as always, but just when he reached the point where it would break, line began to come in. He slipped his shoulders and head from under the line and began to pull in line steadily and gently. He used both of his hands in a swinging motion and tried to do the pulling as much as he could with his body and his legs. His old legs and shoulders pivoted with the swinging of the pulling.

From The Old Man and the Sea by Ernest Hemingway

26. When did the fisherman realise that the fish was circling?

- a) when the line slightly loosened
- b) when the line slanted
- c) when the line tightened
- d) when the line broke

Figure 44: Lowest scoring question in grade 7 English

## English competency skills

Grade seven students were assessed for the following competencies;

- 1. Knows names of objects, birds and animals not seen in daily life
- 2. Knows meanings, spellings, and opposites of words used in daily life
- 3. Correct sentence formation, punctuation, and sequencing
- 4. Comprehends very simple sentences or a simple paragraph
- 5. Parts of speech, gender, number, tense, articles, etc.
- 6. Understands information presented in authentic material
- 7. Comprehends passages of intermediate difficulty
- 8. Comprehends complex passages of high difficulty



An analysis of the national assessment results shows that students scored best on competency three which is, 'correct sentence formation, punctuation, and sequencing'. However, there were only two items in the paper which assessed these competencies. Students also scored fairly well in competency five and eight. Students scored least in competency six (Understanding information presented in authentic material) (figure 45).



National average for English competency skills

Figure 45: National average for grade 7 English competencies

Although competency eight involves comprehending complex passages of high difficulty, the national average for this competency is above 60% which is quiet high showing a good understanding of complex language. A further disaggregation by the atolls shows that average score for students in greater Male' is more than 75%. Laamu Atoll has a mean score of 40% for the same competency (figure 46).



Knows names of objects, birds and animals not seen in daily life

Figure 46: mean scores for competencies eight by atoll



Unlike grade 4, grade 7 students scored very less in competency 1 which is "Knows names of objects, birds and animals not seen in daily life". Most students scored highest in competency 5 (Parts of speech, gender, number, tense, articles, etc.) (figure 47).

### Achievement in different competencies, grade 7 English



Figure 47: Achievements in different competencies

## Factors that affect grade 7 English results

#### Number of hours spent on homework and student results

As shown in Figure, 40 spending time doing homework is important. The analysis of grade 7 results shows that the English scores significantly increase as the number of hours spent on homework increase up to four hours. However, students who spend more than four hours scored significantly less than students who study between 3-4 hours (figure 48).

## Hours spent doing homework per day and student



Figure 48: Reading time and English scores



Reading is an integral part of English and the fluency in English depends highly on the frequency and level of reading. Analysis of the students reading habits shows that only 28.2% of the students read for more than an hour in a normal day (figure 49). The rest of the students read for less than 30 minutes or between 30 minutes up to one hour.



### Reading time outside school on a normal day

Figure 49: Reading time outside school

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Further analysis of the reading habits shows that most of the students read for fun once or twice a week and most of the students read things that they chose for themselves. It is worth noting that most of the students said that they read daily to find out things they want to learn. Only a small percentage of students reported that they read novels or comic books everyday (Figure 50).



## Reading Habits

Everyday or almost everyday 📕 Once or twice a week 🗏 Once or twice a month

Never or almost never

Figure 50: Reading habits



Unlike grade 4 the majority of grade 7 teachers are Indian teachers. Only 36.6% of the grade 7 teachers are Maldivians (figure 51). Disaggregation by the atolls shows that foreign teachers work in all the regions except Gnaviyani Atoll.

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## Nationality of grade 7 teachers

An analysis of the qualification of the teachers shows that the majority of the grade 7 teachers have qualifications higher than master's degree. However, there is a small percentage of teachers in grade 7 who have completed either GCE O level or A' level or a certificate level 3 or 4 qualification (figure 52).



## Qualification of Grade 7 teachers

Figure 51: Nationality of grade 7 teachers

Figure 52: Qualifications of grade 7 teachers

The majority of grade 7 teachers have more than or equal to six years of experience. About 30% of the teachers have more than or equal to 11 years of experience (figure 53).



Figure 53: Years of experience of grade 7 teachers

Similar to Mathematics, most of the teachers said they did not spend any time on professional development in English. However, the percentage of teachers who spent any time on professional development is higher for English compared with that of Mathematics (Table 11).

In the past two years how many hours in total did	Frequency	Percent	
you spend for PD in English			
None	63	28.8	
Less than 6 hours	25	11.4	
6-15 hours	43	19.6	
16-35 hours	48	21.9	
More than 35 hours	30	13.7	
Total	209	95.4	
System	10	4.6	
	219	100.0	

Table 11: Number of PD sessions

![](_page_50_Picture_7.jpeg)

It is interesting to note that in general teachers' perception about parental support, parental involvement in school activities, students regard for school activity and students desire to do well in school is medium. However, teachers' opinion about their understanding of the school's curricular goals, teachers' degrees of success in implementing school curriculum and teachers' expectation of school achievement is high (figure 54).

![](_page_51_Figure_2.jpeg)

Figure 54: Teachers' perception about Schools, Parents and Students

![](_page_51_Picture_4.jpeg)

# Recommendations

As the national average of grade 4 and 7 English and Mathematics results are low compared to many other countries, strategies need to be developed to increase the academic scores. A disaggregation of the results by the atolls shows that Laamu Atoll performed lower than all the other atolls. Greater Male', Seenu and Gnaviyani Atoll have the highest results. These results indicate that special attention needs to be given to low performing atolls and schools.

• The results show that there is no clear distribution in the results of the different competencies that were assessed. It is important to explore the type and level of questions that were assessed from each competency to make sure that each competency in the new curriculum is assessed. Competency achievement levels also need to be identified based on the new curriculum so that the national assessment can identify the percentage of students who have achieved the required competency level and the percentage of students who have not achieved the required competency level.

Student confidence and student interest in subjects are significantly related to student performance. Hence. these values need to be improved in students using innovative teaching methods.

Generally parental involvement is good as perceived by students and teachers. However, what parents buy for kids need to be chosen wisely since the results have shown that owning PlayStations has a significantly negative relationship with academic results whereas books and computers have significantly positive results. Further research is needed to identify how and to what extent these devices affect studies.

Hours spent on homework not exceeding 4 hours per day for grade seven students has a significantly positive relationship with academic scores. Hence, students need to be encouraged to spend some time on studies at home daily.

The analysis has shown that bullying is evident in the schools. Further studies need to be undertaken to learn about the nature of bullying and ways to prevent it.

![](_page_52_Picture_8.jpeg)

• Even though the majority of the teachers have qualifications above bachelor's degree, still there are some teachers whose qualifications are below diplomas. Training needs to be upgraded for these teachers in order to facilitate high student results.

• Some of the items on the questionnaires were a little vague hence more clarity of these items are needed for the next national assessment. This can be achieved by defining some of the terms such as 'tuition' (whether tuition includes Quran lessons) and 'number of books students own' (whether these books include text books).

![](_page_53_Picture_3.jpeg)

6

# References

Greaney, V and Kellaghan, T (2008), "Assessing National Achievement Level in Education", Volume1.

Greaney, V and Kellaghan, T (2008), "National Assessment", Volume 2.

![](_page_54_Picture_5.jpeg)

![](_page_55_Picture_0.jpeg)

## Appendix (Sampled Schools)

#	Atoll No	Island Code	School No	Atoll	Island	School
1	1	11	2	На	Ha. Dhidhoo	Atoll Education Centre
2	1	5	4	Ha	Ha. Baarah	Baarashu School
3	1	12	6	Ha	Ha. Marandhoo	Maarandhoo School
4	1	7	13	На	Ha. Thuraakunu	Thuraakunu School
5	1	13	15	На	Ha. Vashafaru	Vashafaru School
6	2	15	17	Hdh	Hdh. Kulhud- huffushi	Atoll Education Centre
7	2	24	32	Hdh	Hdh. Nolhivara- mfaru	Nolhivaramfaru School
8	3	29	35	Sh	Sh. Komandoo	Atoll Education Centre
9	3	38	39	Sh	Sh. Feydhoo	Feydhoo School
10	3	34	40	Sh	Sh. Foakaidhoo	Foakaidhoo School
11	3	39	41	Sh	Sh. Goidhoo	Goidhoo School
12	3	40	42	Sh	Sh. Lhaimagu	Lhaimagu School
13	3	36	43	Sh	Sh. Maaun'good- hoo	Maaun'goodhoo School
14	4	47	48	Ν	N. Manadhoo	Atoll School
15	4	45	51	Ν	N. Fodhdhoo	Fodhdhoo School
16	4	44	53	Ν	N. Ken'dhikul- hudhoo	Ken'dhikulhudhoo School
17	4	51	54	Ν	N. Kudafary	Kudafary School
18	4	46	55	Ν	N. Landhoo	Landhoo School
19	4	48	56	Ν	N. Lhohy	Lhohy School
20	4	50	57	Ν	N. Maafaru	Maafaru School
21	4	49	60	Ν	N. Miladhoo	Hidhayaa School
22	5	63	61	R	R. Meedhoo	Atoll Education Centre
23	5	58	64	R	R. Fainu	Fainu School

![](_page_55_Picture_4.jpeg)

#### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS, 4 & 7

24	5	62	68	R	R. Maakurathu	Maakurathu School
25	5	55	71	R	R. Rasmaadhoo	Rasmaadhoo School
26	5	68	72	R	R. Un'goofaaru	Un'goofaaru School
27	5	65	73	R	R. Hulhudhuf- faaru	Hulhudhuffaaru School
28	6	71	76	В	B. Eydhafushi	Atoll Education Centre
29	6	75	80	В	B. Goidhoo	Goidhoo School
30	6	76	81	В	B. Hithaadhoo	Hithaadhoo School
#	Atoll No	Island Code	School No	Atoll	Island	School
31	6	78	83	В	B. Kendhoo	Kendhoo School
32	6	81	86	В	B. Maalhohu	Maalhohu School
33	6	82	87	В	B. Thulhadhoo	Thulhadhoo School
34	7	84	88	Lh	Lh. Kurendhoo	Atoll School
35	7	86	89	Lh	Lh. Hinnavaru	Atoll Education Centre
36	7	83	91	Lh	Lh. Naifaru	Madhrasathul Ifthithaah
37	7	85	92	Lh	Lh. Olhuveli- fushi	Olhuvelifushi School
38	8	88	93	К	K. Kaashidhoo	Atoll School
39	8	87	94	К	K. Thulusdhoo	Atoll Education Centre
40	8	94	95	К	K. Dhiffushi	Dhiffushi School
41	8	89	101	К	K. Maafushi	Maafushee School
42	9	97	103	Aa	Aa. Feridhoo	Atoll School
43	9	96	104	Aa	Aa. Rasdhoo	Atoll Education Centre
44	9	101	105	Aa	Aa. Bodufulhad- hoo	Bodufulhadhoo School
45	9	100	108	Aa	Aa. Mathiveri	Mathiveri School
46	9	99	109	Aa	Aa. Thoddoo	Thoddoo School
47	9	98	110	Aa	Aa. Ukulhahu	Ukulhahu School
48	10	104	111	Adh	Adh. Mahiba- dhoo	Atoll Education Centre

![](_page_56_Picture_3.jpeg)

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#### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS, 4 & 7

49	10	105	112	Adh	Adh. Maamigili	Atoll School
50	10	110	113	Adh	Adh. Dhan'gethi	Dhan'gethi School
51	10	111	115	Adh	Adh. Dhigu- rashu	Dhigurashu School
52	10	113	116	Adh	Adh. Fenfushi	Fenfushi School
53	10	106	117	Adh	Adh. Hang- naameedhoo	Hangnaameedhoo School
54	10	108	118	Adh	Adh. Kun'burud- hoo	Kun'burudhoo School
55	10	109	119	Adh	Adh. Mandhoo	Mandhoo School
56	10	107	120	Adh	Adh. Omadhoo	Omadhoo School
57	11	115	121	V	V. Fulidhoo	Atoll School
58	11	114	122	V	V. Felidhoo	Atoll Education Centre
59	11	116	123	V	V. Keyodhoo	Keyodhoo School
60	12	118	126	М	M. Kolhufushi	Atoll School
61	12	117	127	М	M. Muli	Atoll Education Centre
62	12	120	128	М	M. Dhiggaru	Dhiggaru School
#	Atoll No	Island Code	School No	Atoll	Island	School
63	12	124	129	М	M. Maduvvaree	Maduvvaree School
64	12		130	М	M. Mulah	Mulaku School
65	12	123	131	М	M. Naalafushi	Naalaafushi School
66	12	121	132	Μ	M. Raiymand- hoo	Raiymandhoo School
67	12	122	133	М	M. Veyvashu	Veyvashu School
68	13	126	134	F	F. Feeali	Atoll School
69	13	125	135	F	F. Nilandhoo	Atoll Education Centre
70	13	129	136	F	F. Bileydhoo	Bileydhoo School
71	13	127	137	F	F. Dharan'boo- dhoo	Dharan'boodhoo School
72	13	128	138	F	F. Magoodhoo	Magoodhoo School

![](_page_57_Picture_3.jpeg)

#### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS, 4 & 7

73	14	131	139	Dh	Dh. Meedhoo	Atoll School
74	14	130	140	Dh	Dh. Kudahuvad- hoo	Atoll Education Centre
75	14	132	141	Dh	Dh. Ban'didhoo	Ban'didhoo School
76	14	134	142	Dh	Dh. Hulhudheli	Hulhudheli School
77	14	133	144	Dh	Dh. Rin'budhoo	Rin'budhoo School
78	15	136	147	Th	Th. Thi- marafushi	Atoll Education Centre
79	15	140	148	Th	Th. Burunee	Burunee School
80	15	138	149	Th	Th. Dhiyamigili	Dhiyamigili School
81	15	147	150	Th	Th. Gaadhif- fushi	Gaadhiffushi School
82	15	145	151	Th	Th. Hirilandhoo	Hirilandhoo School
83	15	146	152	Th	Th. Kan'dhood- hoo	Kan'dhoodhoo School
84	15	143	153	Th	Th. Kin'bidhoo	Kin'bidhoo School
85	15	139	154	Th	Th. Madifushi	Madifushi School
86	15	144	155	Th	Th. Omadhoo	Omadhoo School
87	15	148	156	Th	Th. Vandhoo	Vandhoo School
88	16	152	161	L	L. Dhan'bidhoo	Dhan'bidhoo School
89	16	157	163	L	L. Gan	Ihahdhoo School
90	16	162	164	L	L. Hithadhoo	Hithadhoo School
91	16	154	166	L	L. Isdhoo	Isdhoo Kalaidhoo School
92	16	161	169	L	L. Maamend- hoo	Maamendhoo School
93	17	163	175	Ga	Ga. Villingili	Atoll Education Centre
94	17	165	176	Ga	Ga. Dhaandhoo	Dhaandhoo School
#	Atoll No	Island Code	School No	Atoll	Island	School
95	17	167	179	Ga	Ga. Gema- nafushi	Gemanafushi School

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![](_page_58_Picture_3.jpeg)

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#### NATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OUTCOMES IN ENGLISH & MATHEMATICS, 4 & 7

96	17	170	182	Ga	Ga. Maamend- hoo	Maamendhoo School
97	17	171	183	Ga	Ga. Nilandhoo	Nilandhoo School
98	18	175	187	Gdh	Gdh. Thinad- hoo	Thinadhoo School
99	18	178	189	Gdh	Gdh. Hoadhed- hoo	Hoadhedhoo School
100	18	177	191	Gdh	Gdh. Madaveli	Madaveli School
101	18	179	192	Gdh	Gdh. Nadalla	Nadalla School
102	18	180	193	Gdh	Gdh. Ratafan- dhoo	Rathafandhoo School
103	19	183	195	Gn	Gn. Fuahmulah	Fuahmulaku School
104	19	183	197	Gn	Gn. Fuahmulah	Hafiz Ahmed School
105	20	184	199	S	S. Hithadhoo	Atoll Education Centre
106	20	185	205	S	S. Maradhoo	Maradhoo School
107	20	186	206	S	S. Maradhoo Feydhoo	Maradhoo Feydhoo School
110	21	192	211	Male'	Male'	Kalaafaanu School
111	21	192	212	Male'	Male'	Imaduddin School
112	21	192	215	Male'	Male'	Dharumavantha School
113	21	192	227	Male'	Vinlingili	Muhyiddin School
114	21	192	228	Male'	Hulhumale	Ghaazee School

![](_page_59_Picture_3.jpeg)

![](_page_60_Picture_0.jpeg)

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![](_page_60_Picture_3.jpeg)