

## **Supplementary Material S1**

### **Interview and focus group guides**

#### **Personal interview (Instructional head)**

1.a. Can you tell us about the literacy curriculum at present (minutes per day and week, the written curriculum's framework/design and alignment with literacy research, the resources used, assessments used, etc.)

1.b. Was it like this always? If it changed over time, can you explain what changes exactly took place and WHY (minutes per day and week, the written curriculum's framework/design and alignment with literacy research, the letter-sound correspondence sequence prescribed by Jolly Phonics, the resources used, etc.)

1.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

2.a. Can you tell us about the professional development support provided to teachers to help them implement the literacy curriculum at present? (Hours of training per year, nature of training and support, evidence that it is perceived as useful or effective, etc.)

2.b. Was it like this always? If it changed over time, can you explain what changes exactly took place and WHY?

2.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

3.a. Can you tell us about the current teaching and classroom arrangement and how it supports student engagement? (student to teacher ratio per class, classroom structure/size/setup, nature of functioning of teaching team's, etc.).

3.b. Was it like this always? If it changed over time, can you explain what changes exactly took place and WHY? (student to teacher ratio per class, classroom structure/size/set up, nature of functioning of teaching team's, etc.).

3.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

4. What influence do you think the changes made to curriculum, professional development, and the teaching and classroom arrangement, had on student foundational literacy skill building? Which was the most critical? Why do you think so? Are there any other changes that were made (not discussed already) that might have been responsible for the improvement in student foundational literacy skills?

5. If you could go back in time and plan the change or improvement process all over again, would you do anything differently? What? Why?

6. What would you advise other schools similar to your school's context but where a majority of the students in Kindergarten are performing below grade level on foundational literacy?

### **Personal interview (Vice principal)**

1.a. Can you tell us what the literacy curriculum was like before the phonics program was introduced i.e. what it was like in 2017-18 (minutes per day and week, the written curriculum's framework/design and alignment with literacy research, the resources used, assessments used, etc.)?

1.b. We have learned that many changes took place over the years. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

2.a. Can you tell us about the professional development support provided to teachers to help them implement the literacy curriculum at present? (Hours of training per year, nature of training and support, evidence that it is perceived as useful or effective, etc.)

2.b. Was it like this always? If it changed over time, can you explain what changes exactly took place and WHY?

2.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

3.a. Can you tell us about the current teaching and classroom arrangement and how it supports student engagement? (student to teacher ratio per class, classroom structure/size/set up, nature of functioning of teaching team's, etc.).

3.b. Was it like this always? If it changed over time, can you explain what changes exactly took place and WHY? (student to teacher ratio per class, classroom structure/size/set up, nature of functioning of teaching team's, etc.).

3.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

4. What influence do you think the changes made to curriculum, professional development, and the teaching and classroom arrangement, had on student foundational literacy skill building? Which was the most critical? Why do you think so? Are there any other changes

that were made (not discussed already) that might have been responsible for the improvement in student foundational literacy skills?

5. If you could go back in time and plan the change or improvement process all over again, would you do anything differently? What? Why?

6. What would you advise other schools similar to your school's context but where a majority of the students in Kindergarten are performing below grade level on foundational literacy?

**Personal interview (Ex-head of teaching and curriculum - early childhood)**

1. Can you please tell us about:

A. Your Qualifications

B. Prior Experience

2.a. When did you join the school?

2.b. What was your mandate when you joined?

3.a. Can you tell us what the literacy curriculum was like before you joined the school?

3.b. What changes did you identify as essential and WHY?

3.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

4.a. Can you tell us what the professional development support was like before you joined the school?

4.b. What changes did you identify as essential and WHY?

4.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

5.a. Can you tell us what the professional development support was like before you joined the school? (student to teacher ratio per class, classroom structure/size/set up, nature of functioning of teaching team's, etc.).

5.b. What changes did you identify as essential and WHY?

5.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

6. What influence do you think the changes made to curriculum, professional development, and the teaching and classroom arrangement, had on student foundational literacy skill building? Which was the most critical? Why do you think so? Are there any other changes that were made (not discussed already) that might have been responsible for the improvement in student foundational literacy skills?

7. If you could go back in time and plan the change or improvement process all over again, would you do anything differently? What? Why?

**Focus group discussion (2 groups of 4/5 teachers each)**

1.a. Can you tell us about the literacy curriculum at present (minutes per day and week, the written curriculum's framework/design and alignment with literacy research, the resources used, assessments used, etc.)

1.b. Was it like this always? If it changed over time, can you explain what changes exactly took place and WHY (minutes per day and week, the written curriculum's framework/design

and alignment with literacy research, the letter-sound correspondence sequence prescribed by Jolly Phonics, the resources used, etc.)

1.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

2.a. Can you tell us about the professional development support provided to teachers to help them implement the literacy curriculum at present? (Hours of training per year, nature of training and support, evidence that it is perceived as useful or effective, etc.)

2.b. Was it like this always? If it changed over time, can you explain what changes exactly took place and WHY?

2.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

3.a. Can you tell us about the current teaching and classroom arrangement and how it supports student engagement? (student to teacher ratio per class, classroom structure/size/set up, nature of functioning of teaching team's, etc.).

3.b. Was it like this always? If it changed over time, can you explain what changes exactly took place and WHY? (student to teacher ratio per class, classroom structure/size/set up, nature of functioning of teaching team's, etc.).

3.c. Can you tell us some of the challenges faced while implementing the changes? What was done to overcome the challenges?

4. What influence do you think the changes made to curriculum, professional development, and the teaching and classroom arrangement, had on student foundational literacy skill building? Which was the most critical? Why do you think so? Are there any other changes

that were made (not discussed already) that might have been responsible for the improvement in student foundational literacy skills?

5. If you could go back in time and plan the change or improvement process all over again, would you do anything differently? What? Why?

6. What would you advise other schools similar to your school's context but where a majority of the students in Kindergarten are performing below grade level on foundational literacy?