

Why private outperform UPE schools

Performance. The just released PLE results show that 4.1 per cent of candidates in UPE passed in Division One compared to their private counterparts with 22 per cent.

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KAMPALA. Private primary schools countrywide have continued to outshine their government-aided counterparts in the national examinations.

The just released Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) results showed that 95.5 per cent of pupils who registered in private schools passed compared to 89.1 per cent of those in Universal Primary Education (UPE).

According to statistics from Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb), 466,235 UPE candidates registered for PLE against the 179,955 non-UPE candidates.

Out of the total, only 18,363 UPE candidates passed in Division One representing 4.1 per cent, while 38,819 (22 per cent) of all those who registered under private schools passed in the same division.

Government-aided schools had 199,222 candidates in Division Two showing 48.1 per cent while their private counterparts had 94,704 (75.7 per cent) candidates in the



Jubilation. Some former pupils of Special Plan Kindergarten Primary School in Tororo Town who scored Aggregate 9 each in PLE celebrate last Friday.

PHOTO BY JOSEPH OMOLLO

same division. In UPE schools, 49,647 candidates did not obtain any grade, representing 11 per cent compared to 7,702 candidates under non-UPE schools (4.4 per cent).

Recent studies by different actors in the education sector such as the Uwezo report have showed glaring differences in literacy and numeracy between government and private schools.

For instance, a Uwezo report released last year says in rural areas, nearly three-quarters of students in Primary Three could not

“Our parents have left everything to the government, including provision of lunch and other basic necessities. How do you expect a child who is very hungry to concentrate? A child who goes to school without scholastic materials cannot learn,” ROSEMARY SENINDE, STATE MINISTER IN CHARGE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

solve a two-digit subtraction and by Primary Five, half still could not do so.

While releasing the PLE results last Friday, the Uneb executive secretary, Mr Dan Odongo, said most private schools are located in the urban centres, giving them an edge over their government counterparts.

“The number of non-UPE candidates is only one quarter of the total number of all the registered candidates. Besides, we also observed that most of the non-

UPE schools are located in urban areas,” Mr Odongo said.

He added that UPE schools that are located in urban areas had similar performance with private ones located in the same areas.

The State minister in charge of Primary Education, Ms Rosemary Seninde, blamed the disparity on absenteeism by teachers, particularly in UPE schools.

Ms Seninde said while private schools closely supervise teachers and ensure that they deliver, most UPE schools, particularly in rural areas, do not monitor teachers' performance.

Ms Seninde also blamed parents for renegeing on their responsibilities like providing lunch.

Ms Seninde also urged teachers to change their attitude towards work to improve performance in government-aided schools.

“We pay our teachers better than most of these private schools. In some private schools, teachers go without pay for three months, but they continue to teach well. What is the problem with government-aided teachers?” she asked.

Ms Seninde urged school inspectors and head teachers to ensure that teachers deliver the right materials to the pupils.

Most government-aided schools have huge teacher-pupil ratio burden. In some schools, the ratio is one teacher to 130 pupils, making teaching and learning difficult.

Other issues include poor infrastructure, remuneration and lack of education materials.