

WHY THE BAD ENGLISH?

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LABIS: Are teachers incompetent, or school books unsuitable?

The Education Ministry will look at these factors to determine why students continue to have a poor grasp of the English language.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, who is

also education minister, said the ministry would review the curriculum with regard to the teaching of English as well as identify the reasons behind students' poor command of the language.

Muhyiddin said even after learning the language for 13 years at primary, secondary and matriculation levels, some

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students still could not master English.

"I have no answers for this problem. I will ask the (Education) director-general to review the English curriculum to find out the reasons behind the problem.

"Is it because the teachers are not competent or there are not enough teachers, or because the books are not suitable? We can't ignore this anymore."

He said this during his visit to SMK Maokil here yesterday. Present were Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan, Bukit Serampang assemblyman Tahir Taat and school principal Noor Hashimah Hassan.

He said many parents were worried when the ministry changed its policy from the Teaching of Mathematics and Science in English (PPSMI) to the Upholding the Malay Language, Strengthening Command of English (MBMMBI) policy.

"They were concerned that English would be ignored and considered as unimportant.

"This is a wrong assumption. As the education minister, I have always stressed the importance of mastering English as a second language as it is a language for international trade."

He said students must be given the opportunity and exposure to speak and understand both languages.

During the visit, Muhyiddin presented awards to the school's top Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia students of last year.



Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin (second from left) and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Ahmad Maslan (left) being briefed by Bukit Serampang assemblyman Tahir Taat at SMK Maokil, Labis, yesterday. With them is school principal Noor Hashimah Hassan. — Picture by Shahrul M. Zain

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