REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NGEC
National Gender and Equality Commission

REIMAGINING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

UNDER THE COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION FRAMEWORK



2026





THE NATIONAL GENDER AND EQUALITY COMMISSION

REIMAGINING INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

UNDER THE COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION FRAMEWORK

Rapid Assessment of the Placement and Admission of

Grade 10 Learners with Disabilities

A study of selected schools in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties

October 2026

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KENYA VISION 2030

TOWARDS A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE AND PROSPEROUS NATION

NGEC National Gender and Equality Commission

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

VISION

An inclusive society free from gender inequality and all forms of discrimination

MISSION

To promote and protect gender equality and freedom from all forms of discrimination in Kenya, especially for Special Interest Groups through ensuring compliance with policies, laws and practice

CORE VALUES

- Dignity
- Equality
- Teamwork
- Integrity
- Inclusivity

Published by

The National Gender and Equality Commission

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
CBE	Competency-Based Education
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
KJSEA	Kenya Junior School Education Assessment
KNEC	Kenya National Examinations Council
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KISE	Kenya Institute of Special Education
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCPWD	National Council for Persons with Disabilities
NGAO	National Government Administration Officers
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
OPDs	Organisations of Persons with Disabilities
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNE	Special Needs Education
TSC	Teachers Service Commission

FOREWORD



Education is the foundation on which many other rights are built. For learners with disabilities, it is also one of the surest routes out of the exclusion that too many still face. The Constitution of Kenya and the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025 are clear: every learner with a disability has the right to be admitted to a learning institution, to be assessed and placed where their needs can be met, and to receive the support they need to learn on an equal basis with others.

The Competency-Based Education reform reached a defining moment in January 2026, when the first cohort of more than one million learners moved into Grade 10. Senior school is where the reform's promise of choice and pathways takes shape. For learners with disabilities, this transition tests whether that promise reaches every learner, or only those whom the system finds easy to accommodate.

Within days of the first learners reporting, the Commission's inquiry at Lenana School found 118 learners with diverse disabilities placed in a school without the facilities and specialised staff to support them. In fulfilment of its constitutional mandate to promote equality and freedom from discrimination, the Commission followed up with a rapid assessment of seven schools in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties.

The assessment established good practices. School leaders and teachers are committed to inclusion, special schools have built real expertise, and mainstream schools are opening their doors to learners with disabilities. But it also found placement decisions that did not reflect schools' capacity, special schools stretched beyond their means, and mainstream schools relying on goodwill, donors and the dedication of individual teachers rather than on systems, trained personnel and accessible facilities. Learners and their families had little say in decisions that will shape their futures.

These are not failings of individual schools. They are gaps in the system, and they can be closed. Placement must follow assessment. Schools must be accessible by design. Specialised teachers, assistive devices and accessible learning materials must be funded as a matter of right, not left to charity. The Commission calls on the Ministry of Education, the Teachers Service Commission, the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, the Kenya Institute of Special Education, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities, Boards of Management and partners to act on the recommendations in this report. With the next cohort preparing to join senior school, the time to act is now.

Hon. Rehema Jaldesa
Chairperson

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



This report is the result of the cooperation and openness of many people. On behalf of the Commission, I am grateful to all of them.

I thank the management and staff of Thika High School for the Visually Impaired, Joytown Secondary School, Upper Hill Secondary School, Moi Girls Secondary School, Moi Forces Academy, Ngara Girls High School and Aquinas High School. Their principals, deputy principals, admission teachers, teachers and support staff received the assessment team during a demanding first month of the school year, and spoke candidly about both their achievements and their challenges.

I am grateful to the Ministry of Education and the Kenya Institute of Special Education, whose officers worked with schools and parents to resolve placement challenges and supported the assessment.

I also recognise the learners with disabilities and their families, whose right to education is at the heart of this report, and the partners whose support sustains inclusive education in many schools, among them health and rehabilitation providers, foundations, corporate partners and organisations of persons with disabilities.

Finally, I thank the Commissioners for their guidance, and the Commission's technical team, who designed the assessment, carried out the fieldwork and prepared this report.

Purity Ngina, PhD, MBS
Commission Secretary/Chief Executive Officer

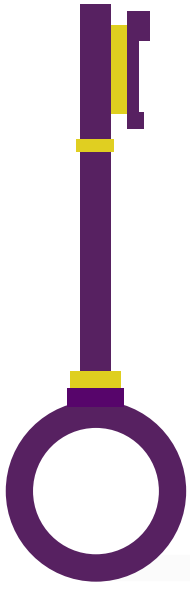
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2026 the first cohort of Competency-Based Education learners joined Grade 10. Days later, an inquiry by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) at Lenana School found 118 learners with diverse disabilities placed in a school that lacked the facilities and specialised staff to support them. To establish whether the problem extended beyond one school, the Commission assessed the placement and admission of Grade 10 learners with disabilities in seven public schools in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties, two special and five mainstreams, between 28th and 30th January 2026.

Key findings

- Placement does not always match capacity. Both special schools reported receiving more learners, including learners with high support needs, than their facilities and staff could support. Placement decisions did not consistently take account of a school's specialisation, and disability assessment reports often did not accompany learners at admission.
- Learners with disabilities are concentrated in special schools. The two special schools reported 487 learners with disabilities, while the five mainstream schools reported between one and ten each, 23 in total.
- Special schools have the expertise but are overstretched. They run continuous assessment, therapy and peer support and have strong partnerships, but face overcrowded dormitories, classrooms and laboratories, unsafe ramps and pathways, and shortages of braille, large-print and assistive technology.
- Mainstream schools are willing but under-equipped. They have added ramps, adapted desks and ground-floor rooms, but most lack accessible washrooms and dormitories, teachers trained in special needs education and a structure for coordinating inclusion. Aquinas High School, for example, had ten learners with visual, physical and hearing disabilities and no teacher trained in special needs education. Only one of the five, Ngara Girls High School, had a disability mainstreaming committee.
- Inclusion depends too heavily on goodwill and donors. Schools rely on partners for therapy, devices and learner welfare, and teachers sometimes use their own resources to support learners.
- The data needed for planning is missing. Information on learners with disabilities was not consistently recorded by type of disability, support need or sex, and the voices of learners and parents were largely absent from placement decisions.

Key recommendations



1. The Ministry of Education should base placement on assessed needs, school capacity and specialisation, consult learners and parents, and provide a clear and timely way to review unsuitable placements.
2. The Ministry and the Kenya Institute of Special Education should ensure that every learner with a disability is assessed in good time, and that assessment reports travel with the learner to the receiving school.
3. The Ministry should fund accessibility improvements, assistive devices and learning materials in both special and mainstream schools, and ease overcrowding in special schools.
4. The Teachers Service Commission should recruit and deploy teachers trained in special needs education according to need, and train all teachers in inclusive practice.
5. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development should provide accessible and adapted CBE materials in braille, large print and accessible digital formats on time.
6. Schools and Boards of Management should set up disability inclusion committees, carry out accessibility audits and work with organisations of persons with disabilities and health and rehabilitation partners.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background

The Competency-Based Education reform

Kenya began replacing the 8-4-4 system with a competency-based curriculum in 2017, under the Basic Education Curriculum Framework developed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). The reform, now referred to as Competency-Based Education (CBE), shifts the focus of schooling from examinations and content coverage to the competencies, values and talents of each learner. It recognises that learners have different abilities and interests and aims to give each one a route to further education, training and work that suits them.

CBE organises basic education in a 2-6-3-3 structure: two years of pre-primary education, six years of primary school (Grades 1 to 6), three years of junior school (Grades 7 to 9) and three years of senior school (Grades 10 to 12), followed by tertiary education and training. Learners are assessed continuously in school and through national assessments administered by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC): the Kenya Primary School Education Assessment at the end of Grade 6 and the Kenya Junior School Education Assessment (KJSEA) at the end of Grade 9.

Transition to senior school

Senior school is where CBE's promise of individual choice is meant to take shape. Learners specialise in one of three pathways (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM); Social Sciences; or Arts and Sports Science), each with its own tracks and subject combinations. Before placement, each learner chose a pathway, a subject combination and twelve schools. The Ministry of Education then placed learners on the basis of their choices, their KJSEA results, regional balance and school capacity. The Ministry's guidelines state that no school is to be allocated learners beyond its capacity.

The first CBE cohort made this transition in 2025–2026. A total of 1,130,459 learners sat the first KJSEA in late 2025, and results were released in December 2025. Placement results followed on 19th December 2025, and the Ministry then opened a short window for placement reviews and transfers. It processed about 183,000 requests, approving some 116,000 and declining about 66,000, mainly because the schools requested were already full. Grade 10 learners began reporting to senior school on 12th January 2026.

Learners with disabilities under CBE

CBE is designed to be inclusive. Learners with disabilities who can follow the regular curriculum do so with adaptations to content, materials, assessment and the learning environment, and KICD has developed a stage-based curriculum for learners with severe and multiple disabilities who need a different route. KNEC provides adapted assessments, and Kenyan Sign Language is among the subjects assessed in the KJSEA. The senior school guidelines recognise special needs schools for learners with hearing, physical and visual impairments, and schools offering vocational programmes for learners with autism, cerebral palsy, cognitive difficulties and other disabilities, alongside the integration of learners with disabilities into regular schools.

For these learners, placement is about more than merit and choice. A school must be able to provide the accessible facilities, specialised teachers, assistive devices, learning materials and support services that a learner needs in order to learn on an equal basis with others. Where a placement does not take this into account, the learner may be admitted to a school that cannot support them, or turned away, and the first weeks of senior school may be lost.

The Lenana School inquiry

On 15th and 16th January 2026, days after the first Grade 10 learners reported, the Commission carried out a preliminary inquiry at Lenana School, where 118 learners with diverse disabilities, many of them with high support needs, had been placed. The school worked with the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), the Ministry of Education and parents to arrange assessments and, where needed, alternative placements. But it did not have the accessible infrastructure, specialised staff or support services to accommodate so large and diverse a group. The case pointed to a gap between placement decisions and the capacity of receiving schools, the very gap the capacity rule in the placement guidelines was meant to prevent.

To find out whether this gap extended beyond one school, the Commission undertook a rapid assessment of the placement and admission of Grade 10 learners with disabilities in selected schools in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties. This report presents its findings and recommendations. It is intended for policy makers, education managers, schools and partners working to make senior school accessible to every learner as CBE moves into its next phase.

The report has four parts, followed by two annexes:

- Part 1: Introduction and background;
- Part 2: Objectives and methodology;
- Part 3: Findings;
- Part 4: Recommendations; and
- Annexes: school profiles and the assessment tool.

1.2 Mandate of the Commission

The National Gender and Equality Commission is a constitutional commission established under the National Gender and Equality Commission Act, 2011 (No. 15 of 2011), pursuant to Article 59(4) and (5) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Its mandate is to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination for all persons in Kenya, with a focus on special interest groups: women, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older members of society, and minority and marginalised groups.

Section 8(a) of the Act requires the Commission to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination in line with Article 27 of the Constitution, and Section 8(m) requires it to conduct audits on the status of special interest groups, including persons with disabilities and children. This assessment was carried out under these functions.

1.3 Legal and Policy Framework

The right of learners with disabilities to inclusive, quality education is well established in Kenyan law and in the international instruments Kenya has ratified. The provisions most relevant to placement and admission are summarised below.

a) The Constitution of Kenya, 2010

- Article 27 prohibits discrimination on any ground, including disability, and requires the State to take measures to redress disadvantage.
- Article 43(1)(f) guarantees every person the right to education, and Article 53(1)(b) guarantees every child free and compulsory basic education.

» Article 54(1) entitles persons with disabilities to access educational institutions and facilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with their interests, to reasonable access to all places, to use sign language, braille or other appropriate means of communication, and to access materials and devices to overcome constraints arising from disability.

b) The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025

The Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025 (No. 4 of 2025), which came into force on 27th May 2025 and repealed the earlier Persons with Disabilities Act, sets out the clearest obligations for this assessment. Section 20 provides that:

» Persons with disabilities have the right to admission to any institution of learning, and no person may be excluded from the education system on the basis of disability;
» Every learner with a disability has the right to assessment and to placement in an appropriate institution, and the Ministry responsible for education must establish at least one assessment centre in every county;
» Learning institutions must take the needs of learners with disabilities into account and provide individualised support, appropriate equipment, assistive devices and adaptive technologies, and learners are entitled to support services within the general education system; and
» Denying a person admission on the basis of disability is an offence.

The Act also defines reasonable accommodation as the necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that allow a person with a disability to enjoy rights on an equal basis with others.

c) Other laws and policies

The Basic Education Act, 2013 provides for special needs education and for special and integrated institutions, and the Children Act, 2022 protects the right of every child, including children with disabilities, to education and to special care. The Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018) guides assessment, placement, curriculum adaptation and support for learners with disabilities and promotes inclusive education across all levels. Placement into Grade 10 is governed by the Ministry of Education's guidelines on senior school selection and placement.

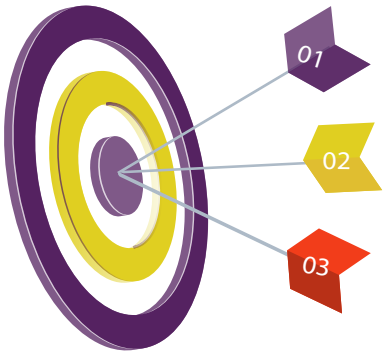
d) International commitments

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) requires States to ensure an inclusive education system at all levels, reasonable accommodation of individual needs and the support required within the general education system. Article 23 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises the right of children with disabilities to effective access to education. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 commits Kenya to equal access to education for persons with disabilities (target 4.5) and to education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive (target 4.a).

PART 2: OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Objectives

The overall objective was to assess the equity, inclusiveness and responsiveness of the Grade 10 placement and admission process for learners with disabilities in selected public schools. Specifically, the assessment sought to:



Assess schools' preparedness to support inclusive education, including the adequacy of infrastructure, specialised personnel and support services;

Identify the challenges faced by learners with disabilities, their parents and caregivers, and schools during Grade 10 placement and admission;

Document good practices and make evidence-based recommendations to strengthen inclusive education.ssion;

2.2 Approach and Methods

The assessment used a qualitative design and four methods:



Key informant interviews with principals, deputy principals and admission teachers on placement and admission, institutional experience and challenges in supporting learners with disabilities;



Site visits to each school to understand its preparedness and the facilities and services available to learners with disabilities;



Direct observation of infrastructure, accessibility features and learning environments to identify barriers;



Desk review of the laws, policies and guidelines on inclusive education and placement.

The same assessment guide (Annex B) was used in every school so that findings could be compared.

2.3 Coverage and Selection of Schools

The assessment took place between 28th and 30th January 2026 in seven public schools in Nairobi and Kiambu Counties (Table 1). The schools were selected purposively to include both special schools and mainstream or integrated schools, to cover the two counties, to reflect a range of learner populations and experience in supporting learners with disabilities, and on the basis of accessibility and willingness to take part.

Table 1: Schools assessed

No.	School	Type of school
1	Thika High School for the Visually Impaired	Special school
2	Joytown Secondary School	Special school
3	Upper Hill Secondary School	Mainstream/integrated
4	Moi Girls Secondary School	Mainstream/integrated
5	Moi Forces Academy	Mainstream/integrated
6	Ngara Girls High School	Mainstream/integrated
7	Aquinas High School	Mainstream/integrated

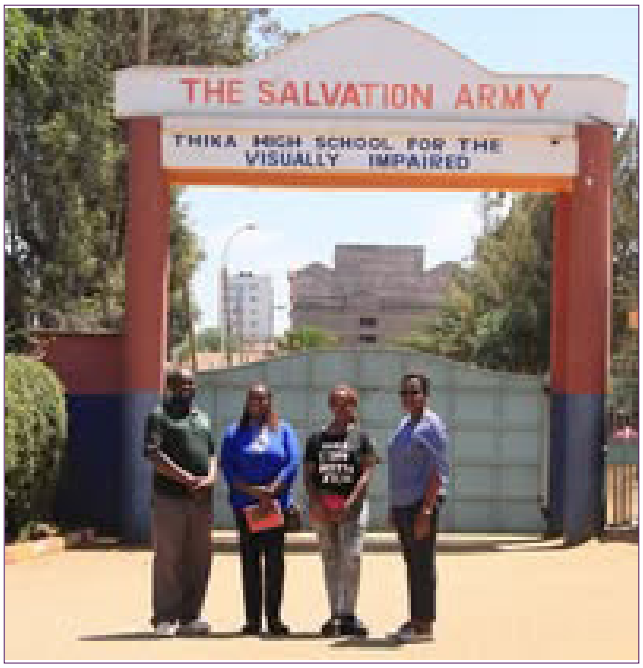


Figure 1: The assessment team at Thika High School for the Visually Impaired



Figure 2: Interview with the principal, Thika High School for the Visually Impaired

2.4 Limitations

The findings should be read with the following limitations in mind:

- Limited coverage. Seven schools in two counties were assessed, so the findings cannot be generalised to all senior schools in Kenya.
- Limited voice of learners and parents. The assessment relied mainly on school administrators. Learners with disabilities and their parents or caregivers were not interviewed directly, so their experience of placement is reported second-hand and objective (b) was only partly met.
- Data not disaggregated. Schools did not report learners with disabilities by sex, age or level of support need, which limits analysis of how gender and other factors shape learners' experience.
- Short timeframe. The three-day assessment limited the depth of engagement with each school.
- Possible response bias. Administrators' accounts may reflect their own perspectives or institutional interests.
- Timing. Fieldwork took place in January 2026, soon after admission. Some conditions may have changed since then.

PART 3: FINDINGS

This part presents the findings school by school and across schools, organised by the areas covered by the assessment guide. Each section ends with the main issues arising.

3.1 Profile of the Schools and Learners

The seven schools differed widely in size, in the number of learners with disabilities they served and in their specialised staffing (Table 2). The two special schools reported 487 learners with disabilities between them: 391 learners with physical disabilities at Joytown Secondary School and 96 learners with visual impairments or albinism at Thika High School for the Visually Impaired. The five mainstream schools reported between one and ten learners with disabilities each, 23 in total.

The learners had a wide range of needs: visual impairment and albinism, physical disabilities including cerebral palsy and scoliosis, hearing impairment, multiple disabilities and neurodevelopmental conditions. Some of these, such as low vision or neurodevelopmental conditions, are not always visible and are easily missed without proper assessment.

Table 2: Learners with disabilities and specialised staff in the schools assessed

School	Learners with disabilities	Main types of disability	Teachers trained in SNE	Inclusion committee
Thika High School for the Visually Impaired	96	Visual impairment, albinism	Not specified	No
Joytown Secondary School	391	Physical disabilities	20 of 27	Rehabilitation committee
Upper Hill Secondary School	1	Neurodevelopmental condition	1 of 62	No
Moi Girls Secondary School	6	Visual impairment	Yes (number not given)	No
Moi Forces Academy	1	Physical disability	Not specified	No
Ngara Girls High School	5	Physical disabilities, scoliosis, cerebral palsy	3 of 58	Yes
Aquinas High School	10	Visual, physical and hearing disabilities, albinism	0 of 53	No

Source: School data collected during the assessment (see Annex A).

3.2 Placement and Admission

Special and mainstream schools handled the placement and admission of learners with disabilities in very different ways.

The **special schools** had clearer and more disability-responsive admission systems, built on years of specialisation. Both carried out continuous assessment and involved parents, caregivers, therapists, learners and Ministry of Education officials in planning placement and support. At Joytown Secondary School, physiotherapists and occupational therapists assessed learners on an ongoing basis to decide on interventions and accommodations. Thika High School for the Visually Impaired assessed learners who arrived without disability documentation and then followed up with parents to complete formal assessment.

Both special schools reported, however, that national placement decisions did not always take account of their capacity or their area of specialisation. The result was over-enrolment and further strain on facilities and services that were already limited. Joytown Secondary School, which specialises in learners with physical disabilities, reported overcrowding after receiving more learners with high support needs without a matching increase in facilities or staff.

The **mainstream and integrated schools** relied on the standard Ministry placement process and had few internal mechanisms for responding to disability. All were willing to admit learners with disabilities, but their preparedness varied considerably. Some had little experience of diverse disability needs and no framework to guide admission and support. Aquinas High School admitted learners with visual, physical, hearing and multiple disabilities although none of its teachers was trained in special needs education (SNE). Moi Forces Academy admitted learners with disabilities through the standard process but had no formal structure for inclusion or specialised support.

Issues arising

- National placement decisions were not consistently aligned with schools' capacity and specialisation.
- Disability assessment documentation was inconsistent at admission, leaving schools to assess learners after they had arrived.
- Delayed admissions and unsuitable placements disrupted learning in the critical first weeks of senior school.



Figure 3: Learners at Joytown Secondary School



Figure 4: Dormitories at Upper Hill Secondary School, reached by stairs

3.3 Accessibility of Infrastructure and Services

The **special schools** had the most disability-responsive environments: ramps, adapted pathways, specialised learning spaces, and physiotherapy, occupational therapy, counselling and medical support integrated into school life. Yet their infrastructure was under severe pressure from rising enrolment. At Joytown Secondary School, dormitories, classrooms, laboratories and the dining hall were overcrowded, and the computer laboratory was only partly equipped despite growing demand for assistive and digital learning technology. At Thika High School for the Visually Impaired, the team observed steep and narrow ramps, uneven cabro pathways and ongoing construction, all of which create mobility risks for learners with visual impairments. The school also reported shortages of braille materials, large-print resources and assistive technology.

The **mainstream schools** had begun to adapt. They had introduced ramps, adapted desks and accessible classrooms and allocated ground-floor accommodation to learners with disabilities. Moi Girls Secondary School provided assistive devices such as talking calculators and adapted learning spaces for learners with visual impairments. But accessibility was partial and rarely planned according to universal design. At Ngara Girls High School some ramps were too steep for learners with physical disabilities to use safely. Aquinas High School had made separate sleeping cubicles and accessible classrooms available but lacked fully accessible washrooms. At Upper Hill Secondary School most dormitories were upstairs, which limits access for learners with mobility impairments.

Accessible and private sanitation matters to every learner, and particularly to girls with disabilities, who need safe facilities to manage menstruation with dignity. Learners with albinism, present at two of the schools, also need low-vision support and protection from the sun in outdoor spaces.

Issues arising

Common gaps across the schools were:

- Inaccessible washrooms and dormitories;
- Steep or poorly designed ramps and uneven pathways;
- Limited assistive learning materials and adaptive laboratory facilities; and
- shortages of assistive ICT equipment.



Figure 5: A ramp at Ngara Girls High School



Figure 6: The assessment team at Upper Hill Secondary School

3.4 Staffing, Learner Support and Partnerships

The **special schools** had stronger specialised staffing and wider networks of support. Joytown Secondary School reported 20 teachers trained in SNE out of 27, as well as therapists and rehabilitation staff. Its partnership with BethanyKids provided physiotherapy, occupational therapy and rehabilitation for learners with complex physical disabilities, and the Safaricom Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, KCB Bank and Special Olympics Kenya supported learner welfare, sponsorship and sport. Thika High School for the Visually Impaired worked with Thika Level 5 Hospital, the Directorate of Social Development, the National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD) and the local National Government Administration Officers (NGAO), which strengthened referral, medical support and social protection for its learners.

Most **mainstream schools** had no structure for coordinating inclusion, few or no specialised staff and few technical partnerships. Only Ngara Girls High School had a disability mainstreaming committee, and it also worked with the IBUKA programme on skills development for learners with disabilities. At Aquinas High School, with no teachers trained in SNE, regular teachers and fellow learners filled the gap. Moi Girls Secondary School worked with Kikuyu Hospital, the Mt. Kilimanjaro Trust and the Kenya National Library Service to improve access to assistive devices and learning materials.

Issues arising

- Schools rely heavily on donors and philanthropic partners for services that should be part of core provision, such as therapy and assistive devices.
- Teachers and support staff sometimes use their own resources to support learners.
- Specialised staffing falls well short of learners' needs, especially in mainstream schools.



Figure 7: Interview with the principal, Moi Forces Academy

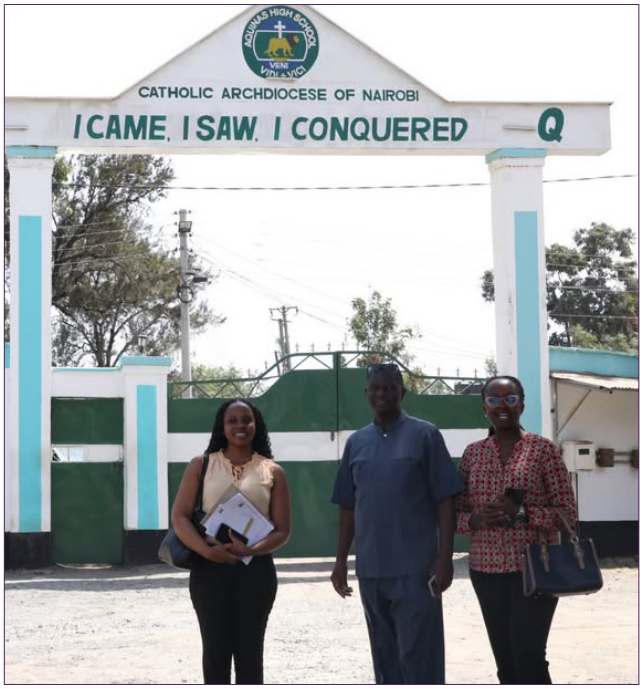


Figure 8: The assessment team at Aquinas High School

3.5 Special and Mainstream Schools Compared

Table 3 summarises how the two groups of schools compared. Special schools have the expertise, systems and partnerships for inclusion but are overstretched. Mainstream schools are willing to include learners with disabilities but lack the systems, staff and facilities to do so consistently. Neither group, on its own, can absorb the growing number of learners with disabilities entering senior school.

Table 3: Comparison of special and mainstream schools

Area	Special schools	Mainstream and integrated schools
Placement and admission	Structured, continuous assessment involving parents, therapists and the Ministry; strained by placements beyond capacity	Standard placement process; few internal mechanisms; preparedness varies widely
Infrastructure	Purpose-built features but overcrowded; some unsafe ramps and pathways	Ramps, adapted desks and ground-floor rooms added; washrooms, dormitories and laboratories often inaccessible
Specialised staff	Teachers trained in SNE, therapists and rehabilitation staff	Few or no teachers trained in SNE; reliance on regular teachers and peers
Inclusion structures	Inclusion built into daily routines; rehabilitation committee at Joytown	Disability committee in one of five schools; no formal guidelines in most
Partnerships	Strong links with hospitals, rehabilitation providers, foundations and NCPWD	Limited, with some good examples at Moi Girls and Ngara Girls
Main risk	Quality of support falls as enrolment rises	Learners are admitted but not fully included

3.6 Good Practices

The assessment found practices worth sustaining and sharing between schools:

Special schools	Mainstream schools
» a whole-school approach in which disability inclusion is part of everyday routines; » physiotherapy and occupational therapy integrated into school life; » continuous assessment of learners' needs, including assessment on arrival for learners without documentation; » strong peer support and learner participation in decisions that affect them; » life-skills and independent living programmes; and » partnerships with hospitals, NGOs and rehabilitation institutions.	» accessible classrooms, adapted seating and ground-floor accommodation; » a disability mainstreaming committee at Ngara Girls High School; » assistive devices and adapted learning materials, such as talking calculators at Moi Girls Secondary School; » peer support and counselling; and » collaboration with hospitals and organisations that supply learning support.

3.7 Key Challenges

Taken together, the findings point to the following systemic and institutional challenges:

» Misalignment between placement decisions and schools' capacity and specialisation;
» Over-enrolment in special schools;
» Gaps in disability assessment and in the documentation that accompanies learners;
» Inadequate accessible infrastructure, especially washrooms, dormitories, laboratories and pathways;
» Shortages of teachers trained in SNE and of therapists;
» Limited assistive devices and adapted learning materials;

» weak structures for coordinating inclusion in mainstream schools;
» Inadequate public funding and heavy reliance on donor support;
» Financial pressure on parents and caregivers; and
» Negative attitudes and stigma in some learning environments.

3.8 Gender and Inclusion Considerations

Looking at the findings through a gender and inclusion lens brings out several further points:

- **The learner's voice is missing from placement.** Decisions were made largely by the Ministry and schools. Learners and parents had little say, although the CRPD and the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025 place the learner's needs and choice at the centre of placement.
- **Data is not disaggregated.** Without data by sex, age, type of disability and level of support need, the education system cannot see whether girls and boys with disabilities are being placed and supported equally, or plan for learners with the highest support needs.
- **Some disabilities are less visible.** Learners with low vision, albinism, hearing impairment or neurodevelopmental conditions can be overlooked where schools lack trained staff and assessment reports, and may struggle without the accommodation they need.
- **Girls with disabilities face particular risks.** Inaccessible washrooms and dormitories affect privacy, safety and dignity, and boarding environments need safeguarding arrangements that take disability into account.
- **Inclusion should not depend on charity.** Where therapy, devices and learning materials rely on donors and the goodwill of teachers, support is uneven and can stop when funding ends. These are rights that require sustained public provision.

PART 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are addressed to the institutions responsible for placement, staffing, curriculum, assessment and school management. They aim to make placement follow assessed need, to make schools accessible by design, and to ensure that support for learners with disabilities is a matter of right rather than goodwill.

4.1 Ministry of Education

a) **Make placement responsive to need.** Base placement on learners' assessed needs, school capacity, specialisation and available support, and consult learners and their parents or caregivers before placement. Provide a clear and timely mechanism to review placements where a learner's needs are not being met.
b) **Strengthen assessment and referral.** Working with KISE, ensure every learner with a disability is assessed before transition, establish the county assessment centres required by the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025, and make sure assessment reports accompany learners to the receiving school.
c) **Finance inclusion adequately.** Provide adequate and equitable funding for special and inclusive education based on learners' needs, covering assistive devices, accessible learning materials, infrastructure and specialised support services, so that schools do not depend on donors for essential provision.
d) **Make schools accessible and safe.** Prioritise the upgrading of inaccessible washrooms, dormitories, laboratories, ramps and pathways, ease overcrowding in special schools, and apply accessibility and universal design standards to all new construction and rehabilitation.
e) **Improve data and monitoring.** Track placement outcomes and the support provided to learners with disabilities, with data disaggregated by sex, age, type of disability and level of support need, subject to data protection requirements.
f) **Coordinate across sectors.** Strengthen coordination with the health sector, the National Treasury, county governments, TSC, KICD, KISE, NCPWD and organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) in planning, financing and delivering inclusive education.

4.2 Teachers Service Commission

a) **Recruit and deploy specialised teachers according to need.** With the Ministry, assess staffing gaps and deploy enough teachers trained in SNE, including specialists in braille, Kenya Sign Language and orientation and mobility, taking account of learners' needs and enrolment.
b) **Build every teacher's capacity for inclusion.** Provide continuous professional development in inclusive teaching, reasonable accommodation and the identification of less visible disabilities for teachers in special, integrated and mainstream schools.

4.3 Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development

a) **Provide accessible learning materials on time.** Develop and review adapted CBE materials, including braille, large print and accessible digital content, so that they are available to learners with disabilities at the same time as to their peers.

4.4 Kenya Institute of Special Education and National Council for Persons with Disabilities

a) **Assess learners early.** KISE should support the timely functional assessment of learners before transition to senior school and share results with the Ministry and receiving schools.
b) **Expand access to assistive devices.** NCPWD should work with schools to provide assistive devices and technologies to learners who need them, prioritising schools without donor support.

4.5 Schools and Boards of Management

a) **Institutionalise inclusion**. Establish disability inclusion committees, assign clear responsibilities and adopt school guidelines on admission, accommodation, monitoring and accountability.
b) **Audit and improve accessibility**. Identify and address barriers in classrooms, dormitories, sanitation facilities, laboratories and pathways in line with accessibility standards, giving priority to safety.
c) **Strengthen learner support**. Provide guidance and counselling, psychosocial support, reasonable accommodation and referral services, and make sure learners with disabilities can raise concerns through accessible feedback mechanisms.
d) **Promote a culture of belonging.** Strengthen peer support, mentorship and the participation of learners with disabilities in school life, and address stigma among learners and staff.
e) **Build leadership and partnerships.** Train boards and school leaders in disability-inclusive planning, and work with health and rehabilitation providers, OPDs and assistive technology providers.

ANNEX A: SCHOOL PROFILES AND LEARNER POPULATION

The table reproduces the data reported by each school during the assessment.

School	School type	Total Grade 10 learners	Learners with disabilities	Type of disabilities	Teachers	Teachers with SNE training	Support staff	Disability mainstreaming committee
Thika High School for the Visually Impaired	Special school	99	96	Visual impairment, albinism	40	Not specified	22	No
Joytown Secondary School	Special school	392	391	Physical disabilities	27	20	18	Rehabilitation Committee
Upper Hill Secondary School	Mainstream/ integrated	536	1	Neurodevelopmental condition	62	1	39	No
Moi Girls Secondary School	Mainstream/ integrated	857	6	Visual impairment	72	Yes	41	No
Moi Forces Academy	Mainstream/ integrated	950	1	Physical disability	92	Not specified	97	No
Ngara Girls High School	Mainstream/ integrated	668	5	Physical disabilities, scoliosis, cerebral palsy	58	3	33	Yes
Aquinas High School	Mainstream/ integrated	1,150	10	Visual, physical and hearing disabilities, albinism	53	0	35	No

ANNEX B: ASSESSMENT TOOL

Rapid Assessment on the Placement of Grade 10 Learners in Selected Public Schools in Kiambu and Nairobi Counties

A Rapid Assessment Guide

Section A: Background Information

- School name: _____
- Region/County: _____
- Type of school (boys/girls/mixed): _____
- Number of support staff: _____
- Number of teachers (male/female): _____
- Number of teachers trained in SNE: _____
- Total school population: _____
- Total number of learners with disabilities (all grades, excluding Grade 10): _____
- Grade 10 learners with disabilities placed in the school: _____
- Types of disability of learners: _____

Section B: Placement and Admission

1. How are learners with disabilities usually admitted to this school?
   - Through the standard admission process
   - Through a special placement programme
   - Case-by-case decision
   - Other (specify): _____

2. Does the school admit learners without disabilities? Yes / No

3. Did the school receive learners' disability assessment reports at admission?

4. How clear are the admission procedures for learners with disabilities?
   - Not clear at all
   - Slightly clear
   - Moderately clear
   - Clear
   - Very clear

5. How prepared is the school to admit and effectively support and accommodate learners with disabilities?

6. Who is primarily involved in making placement decisions?
   - School administration
   - Ministry of Education officials
   - Parents/guardians
   - Learners themselves
   - Other (specify): _____

7. What challenges are most commonly experienced during and after admission?
   - Lack of infrastructure
   - Limited trained staff
   - Financial constraints

- Social stigma/discrimination
- Other: _____

8. Please describe specific challenges faced by learners, teachers, parents/caregivers and support staff.

9. How often do learners with disabilities miss classes because of accessibility barriers?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

10. Does the school collaborate with external organisations (NGOs, health services, disability associations) to support learners with disabilities?

- Yes, ongoing and formal collaborations
- Yes, occasional collaborations
- No collaborations currently
- Not sure

11. How effective are these collaborations?

- Not effective at all
- Slightly effective
- Moderately effective
- Effective
- Highly effective

12. What support services does the school offer? (Tick all that apply)

- Counselling services
- Health/medical support
- Parent engagement activities
- Feedback/grievance mechanisms

13. Does the school have a disability mainstreaming committee or guidelines?

14. What practices have worked well in supporting learners with disabilities?

15. What would you recommend to improve inclusiveness and transparency in placement and admission, and reasonable accommodation for learners with disabilities?

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