

PM pleased with new programme

NST 3 NOV 1984

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. — It was a very ordinary morning for the pupils of Standard One K of the **Setapak** National Primary School here until a very important person walked in.

Even so, seven-year-old **Asri Tajuddin** (see picture) remained oblivious to the flurry of activity that surrounded him.

In quiet abandon, he continued working on his puzzle game. He managed a shy smile as the special visitor, Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad**, stopped to give a helping hand.

For a good 15 minutes, **Dr Mahathir** patiently helped **Asri** "fix" his clown.

The **Setapak** National Primary School was one of the two schools **Dr Mahathir** went to check on the progress of the primary school's new programme, manipulative skills, which

By **NURAINA SAMAD**

is conducted on a trial basis in selected schools in the country. The Prime Minister had earlier visited the **Jalan Peel** National Primary School.

He was accompanied by Education Minister **Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi** and senior officials of the ministry including the **Director-General** of Education, **Tan Sri Murad Hashim**, and the director of schools, **Datuk Idris Tain**.

Practical

He told the senior education officials after the visit that he was quite pleased with the progress, but reminded them that the aim of the programme was to teach the children the basic skills in everyday life, and the use of simple tools.

Dr Mahathir said that while the subject might appear to be fun and games to the pupils, the manipulative skills programme was more than that.

He said the need for children to understand, learn and, use 'simple' tools which were relevant to everyday life had now been recognised. Therefore, it was important that the programme be implemented effectively.

He also spoke of the need to have trained teachers when the programme is fully implemented in 1986.

In 1982, **Dr Mahathir** recommended the incorporation of the manipulative skills programme in the primary and secondary school curricula.

The programme was introduced on a trial basis in selected primary schools in the third term.

Five schools in every State have been conducting

the programme for 30 minutes a week.

The Education Ministry's Curriculum Development Centre will evaluate the trial programme next year.

The programme, will teach pupils to understand the functions of basic tools and the necessary safety measures when using the tools.

The programme, in the long run, is aimed at expanding technical literacy and creating a society that is knowledgeable in the use of tools and simple machines which are relevant in daily life.

According to the Education Ministry, the programme has been well received by pupils because it is a practical subject that is not bogged by abstract theories.

Teachers of this subject too have enjoyed conducting the classes