

200 to be taken in for Arts school

The Star - 1/12/2006

By KAREN CHAPMAN
educate@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: A pioneer batch of 200 students will be selected for the country's first two Art specialist schools with classes starting next January.

They will be housed temporarily at SMK Mohd Khalid in Johor Baru (75 students) and SMK Tun Abang Haji Openg in Kuching (125 students).

Education Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said both state governments had agreed to the proposal.

"Instead of waiting for the completion of the schools at the end of 2009, the ministry has decided that it is better to start the intake of students earlier so that we can make optimum use of the resources once they are ready," he said when launching a school sponsorship programme at the ministry yesterday.

The ministry was identifying the students and teachers concerned, he added.

Hishammuddin announced the setting-up of the two Art schools in 2004.

"We have worked closely with various parties, including the Culture, Arts and Heritage Ministry, to design the curriculum for the Art schools," he said.

On another matter, Hishammuddin said he had directed his

officers to look at strengthening the teaching and learning of English as a subject.

"In the recent Ujian Pencapaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) examination, some of the students could have obtained straight As if their English had been better.

"We are not saying English is at a critical level, but we can work on any weakness," he said.

According to the analysis of the UPSR results released by the Malaysian Examinations Syndicate, performance in English was the lowest, with 21% scoring Grade A.