

External School Review Report

Po Leung Kuk Ngan Po Ling College

School Address: 26 Sung On Street, Tokwawan, Kowloon

Review Period : 22, 24, 25 and 29 February 2016

**Quality Assurance and School-based Support Division
Education Bureau**

June 2016

Notes on the External School Review Report

1. This report covers the current development of the school and the key External School Review (ESR) findings. Suggestions for improvement are also given for reference of the school.
2. The report is intended for the key stakeholders of the school, including members of the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC), teachers, parents and students.
3. The school should release the content of the report to the key stakeholders by making the ESR report available in the school premises for their easy access. Alternatively, the school may upload the report to its homepage for the reference of the stakeholders.
4. The IMC should lead the school to follow up the suggestions made in the report, in order to facilitate its self-improvement and enhance its continuous development.

**Education Bureau
The Government of the Hong Kong
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Contents

	Page
1. External School Review Methodology	1
2. Current Development of the School	1
3. External School Review Findings	2
4. Suggestions for Improvement	9

1. External School Review Methodology

- 1.1 The ESR team conducted the review in February 2016 to review the school's self-evaluation and its impact on the school's development. Suggestions are made to facilitate the school's continuous improvement and development.
- 1.2 The ESR team employed the following methods to understand the situation of the school:
 - Scrutiny of documents and data provided by the school before and during the school visit;
 - Observation of 35 lessons taught by 35 teachers;
 - Observation of various school activities, including assemblies, morning reading sessions, English forum, lunch time activities and swimming team practice; and
 - Meetings and interviews with the Supervisor, School Managers, Principal, Vice-principal (VP), panel chairpersons, heads of functional committees, teachers, school social worker and students.

2. Current Development of the School

- 2.1 The school was established in September 2003. It is the first Po Leung Kuk secondary school operating under the Direct Subsidy Scheme. The school aims at providing students with a happy, harmonious and positive learning environment conducive to moral, academic, physical, social, personal and artistic development. The school also aims at sharpening students' language skills, developing their critical thinking skills and cultivating active learning among them.

- 2.2 The class organisation approved by the Education Bureau and the number of students in the current school year are as follows:

Level	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total
Number of Classes	3	3	3	5	5	5	24
Number of Students	159	153	157	146	131	142	888

- 2.3 More than 10% of the students admitted are non-Chinese speaking students. A majority of the students continue their studies after their graduation. The school starts offering the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme in the 2015/16 school year. Classes are split into small groups at junior levels. The school has one VP in recent years. The school appoints three senior teachers as the Prefects of Studies.

- 2.4 In the previous Comprehensive Review (CR) report (November 2009), recommendations were given on two aspects: (1) sustaining school development through distributed and collaborative leadership and (2) enhancing school self-evaluation to improve learning and teaching.
- 2.5 The major concerns (MC) of the current school development cycle (2013/14 – 2017/18 school years) are: (1) promoting staff development, and enhancing team spirit and professionalism, (2) equipping students with global perspective through quality exchange programmes and international exposure, (3) maintaining good language and learning environment with more advanced facilities, (4) cultivating students' active reading habits and learning skills, and elevating their learning motivation, (5) strengthening sense of belonging among different stakeholders, (6) nurturing appreciative and principled students with good sense of morality, discipline and courtesy, (7) enhancing academic achievements in local and international curriculum and examination and (8) promoting non-academic achievements in sports, music, art and aesthetic education with better inter-school competition results.

3. External School Review Findings

3.1 The school has sustained to provide quality education according to its mission.

3.1.1 Under the visionary leadership of the school management and the dedicated effort of the team of teachers, the school has continued to provide a harmonious and positive learning environment conducive to all-round development of students. Teacher-student relationship is good. Students, in general, enjoy school life and have a strong sense of belonging to the school. The school management, middle managers and teachers all work committedly to provide an extensive range of learning experiences to students and help them to attain academic and non-academic achievements.

3.1.2 To excel further and to align with the school's belief of adopting differentiation as a pedagogical practice, more differentiated instructional strategies could be employed in classrooms to stretch the more able students as well as to enhance learning of the less able.

3.2 Collaborative instructional leadership is gradually materialised to guide school development.

3.2.1 The Principal is a visionary instructional leader who steers the school development with clear focuses on enhancing pedagogical practices and team spirit for the improvement of the quality of learning and teaching as well as student development. The school management suitably positions enhancing effective teaching and active learning as one of the priority tasks of the school in recent years. The Prefects of Studies work together to oversee

the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) and take the lead to guide, monitor and refine the implementation of the school-based curriculum. Close cross-subject collaboration is evident in curriculum mapping and the planning of cross-subject co-curricular learning activities.

3.2.2 Teacher professional development is strategically planned to enhance curriculum leadership as well as learning and teaching effectiveness. External consultants are aptly invited to elevate teachers' awareness and skills on curriculum planning and teaching strategies. Focuses of peer lesson observation and collaborative lesson preparation are in line with the school's MC with ample opportunities for teachers to exchange ideas on key strategies such as the design of pre-lesson preparation tasks and the incorporation of thinking skills into the curriculum. Given that the school is admitting students with special educational needs, a small number of them at the moment though, the school could formulate a school-based teacher training plan to enhance the capacity of teachers in this aspect.

3.2.3 Communication in the school remains good. The school has established a participatory approach in school development planning since the last CR. There is a high transparency in the decision making process. The MC of the 5-year school development plan (SDP) are drawn up as a result of several rounds of meetings and discussion among teachers. The MC of the current SDP cover a range of development tasks to broaden student learning experiences, enhance student learning, self-management and achievements, which are, in general, addressing students' needs. The MC are refined annually, which again, is a result of participatory decision making process. While most MC have been refined with clearer focuses, the identification of individual MC have little connection with those of the SDP. For example, promoting healthy lifestyle, which is not included in the SDP, has been a MC only for one year in the 2014/15 school year. At present, the school level intended outcomes and success criteria of the MC are not specified. The committees and subject departments draw up their respective targets of the MC in their programme plans and the targets are different across committees and departments. Most committees and departments can evaluate the progress and effectiveness of implementation of their respective programme plans. However, the evaluation results of committees and departments have not been consolidated to reflect the progress and the effectiveness of the MC at the school level.

3.3 Middle managers are empowered to drive changes in the school.

3.3.1 The school has taken effective measures to follow up the suggestions made in the last CR report. The school management identifies the right persons to share duties and responsibilities through delegation and empowerment. Their expertise is wisely tapped and they are fully supported to develop students to exhibit their potentials with teachers' devoted extra

effort, such as in the areas of scientific exploration and debate. Committees and subject departments are keen to use data to feed back into planning. The CDC takes the lead to review rigorously the implementation of the school-based 4C curriculum which emphasises creativity, critical thinking skills, communication and awareness of current issues. Student performance in learning has been carefully analysed to refine curriculum content and instructional materials to cater for their diverse learning needs. Focuses are duly attached by different subject departments to strengthening students' knowledge foundation and developing their generic skills.

3.3.2 Middle managers, in general, work with a sense of ownership. They demonstrate their leadership through analysing data to identify students' learning and developmental needs, devising strategies, monitoring progress through lesson observation and regular review as well as mentoring new teachers. For example, cross-subject collaboration to promote reading has been initiated resulting in a rising lending rate of library books and a greater exposure to different genres of books for different levels of students. Some of the middle managers are particularly effective in delivering the school's learning and teaching policy in classroom practice.

3.4 A wide range of learning experiences is thoughtfully provided to support student learning and development.

3.4.1 The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, offering a wide variety of learning opportunities both within and outside the campus, including those abroad, which contributes to the whole-person development of students as well as broadening their horizon with global perspectives. The biennial cultural collage, with students coming from different places of the world, provides an authentic learning environment for cultural and language exchange. The interface between the junior and the senior curricula is on the whole smooth. A wide range of elective subjects, including French, is offered in the senior secondary curriculum to meet the needs of students. The recent operation of IB Diploma Programme can provide a further choice for students with alternative pathway of study.

3.4.2 Learning facilities, such as the Chinese Medicine Research Centre, the Astronomy and Planetarium Centre and an indoor swimming pool, are purposefully used to develop students' interest in pursuing knowledge and to extend their potential. Among others, the Chinese Medicine related researches conducted by students are very unique and impressive. The student hostel serves well to develop resident students to be independent and self-disciplined.

3.4.3 Good attempts have been made to enlist support from the alumni, including work experience sharing, leadership and competition training and also concert performance. This serves as additional resources to help students to widen their perspectives and it is also an appropriate strategy to

develop their sense of belonging to the school.

3.4.4 Student development services are well coordinated to form an effective support network under the headship of the VP. The Life Education (LE) curriculum, which is comprehensive and well-designed to support student development since the last CR, has been properly reviewed to include elements of life planning education and self-management skills. At present, some of the activities related to cultivating students' positive values and attitudes, for example, the sense of national identity and awareness of civic responsibilities, are arranged in an event-based approach by individual committees without much connection among different values education domains. To achieve synergy based on the teamwork culture, further partnership across committees and subject departments could be strengthened in promoting values education.

3.5 School's curriculum initiatives are effectively implemented.

3.5.1 Appropriate measures, including after-school tutorials, remedial lessons and individual consultation sessions are thoughtfully arranged to support student learning. Core and extended curricula are in place with additional teaching and reading materials to stretch the potential of the more able students. The more able are groomed as student teachers to support the less able peers in marking their test papers and setting questions for them. Some of the more able students are identified and further guided to participate in local and international academic competitions and events with remarkable results. Differentiation is also rightly addressed in the design of assignments, test and examination papers with bonus questions set to challenge the more able students.

3.5.2 With respect to active learning and students' motivation, various pre-lesson preparation tasks are aptly arranged in different subjects to effectively arouse students' interest in learning, to systematically foster their habit of independent learning, and to successfully enhance their participation in the class. Thinking models and tools are also widely promoted to groom students to be active acquirers of knowledge and to equip them with thinking skills and subject-specific learning skills, for example, using mind maps in language subjects and focusing on 'cause and effect analysis' in science subjects. Students display sharp critical thinking skills in their writing and presentations.

3.5.3 A rich language environment is created. The school's endeavours to prepare students to be biliterate and trilingual are making good progress. Most students are able to express themselves clearly, fluently and confidently.

3.5.4 Reading atmosphere in the campus is good. Students read attentively in the morning reading sessions and some of them present the articles eloquently and critically displaying solid grasp of background

information relating to the current issues du jour. Students' interest in reading different genres of print and on-line materials, including academic journals, fiction and non-fiction, has been gradually cultivated. In view of the diverse background of students, there could be differentiated measures to develop students' reading interest. This requires a more focused analysis on the reading habit among different groups of students.

3.6 Good progress has been achieved in nurturing students' self-discipline and leadership.

3.6.1 Theme-based programmes and LE curriculum have been appropriately devised to nurture students to be appreciative and act as principled students. The emphasis of discipline measures, ranging from external control to self-discipline, has well been addressed with good collaboration across committees and among teachers. A student-centred approach has been initiated by involving the student representatives in the Student Self-management Group to suggest improvement measures and set targets for their own class levels. The shared goals owned by students can further reinforce the notion of self-discipline and enhance class ethos. Students' behavioural performance, including punctuality, attendance and politeness, has been improved. The school promotes 'greeting aloud' to develop students' habit to show courtesy. Students, in general, have developed a habit of greeting others, either verbally or by giving a nod, in the campus.

3.6.2 Student leaders display good leadership skills. They have received appropriate training, both inside and outside campus, to acquire and enhance their leadership skills. Students, at various levels, are provided with many opportunities to develop their leadership skills such as planning student activities and hosting assemblies. They are dedicated to serving their peers and show a strong sense of responsibility in carrying out their duties. For example, as observed, the English ambassadors of S5 are taking a leading role to organise English-related activities in the English Corner. They serve as good role models to initiate conversation with younger peers by demonstrating their fluency in speaking English and by giving encouragement to those who are less confident. Student self-reflection is also promoted. For example, the mid-year evaluation of the prefect team is conducted by the student prefects themselves. Having senior students to support their junior counterparts and act as role models can also cultivate a stronger sense of bonding among students.

3.7 Lessons are structured to facilitate class interaction and student involvement. Students are attentive and engaged in learning.

3.7.1 Lessons are structured with clear objectives. Learning activities are, in general, well sequenced to keep students purposefully engaged. Class interaction is promoted through practical tasks, group discussion and

students' peer feedback. Students have sustained motivation to learn. They listen attentively and are keen to accomplish learning tasks. They are self-disciplined in upholding classroom routines and accustomed to discussing and sharing ideas with peers in pairs or in groups. Some of them show the initiative to take notes. Both teachers and students demonstrate proficiency to communicate in English and Putonghua. In the lessons of the content subjects with English as the medium of instruction, students are generally insufficiently supported to apply subject-specific language.

3.7.2 Pre-lesson preparation tasks are often purposefully arranged. The pre-lesson learning materials cover a range of resources including videos and extensive reading that can broaden students' horizons. Students mostly completed the pre-lesson tasks well, which can facilitate them to learn new content with the necessary background knowledge. In some lessons, students' pre-lesson preparation tasks and the learning content are well connected, which can effectively promote classroom discourse. In these lessons, students are eager to give comments, raise questions and even challenge others' ideas.

3.7.3 Teachers' explanation is, on the whole, clear and systematic. Teachers frequently ask questions to assess students' understanding. Most students respond confidently and present their ideas clearly. In some lessons, the learning tasks are well designed and questions are sensibly probed by teachers to cultivate students' thinking skills, including explaining concepts and drawing conclusions. Students are generally able to provide reasons and some of them can apply thinking models, evaluate peers' views and generate ideas. They can further elaborate their answers upon teachers' effective prompting. Teachers' feedback is timely and in many cases, specific enough to improve and extend student learning. While, in some lessons, teachers are skilful in guiding students to reflect on and consolidate the learning points, a meaningful round up of the lesson is either in a rush or lacking in some of the lessons.

3.7.4 Students of different abilities have the opportunities to participate in the learning process. Their learning progress is properly monitored and individual support is aptly provided to students in need. Appropriate measures, including suitable adjustment of teaching pace, effective questioning and feedback, are observed in some lessons as well as tiered tasks and purposeful grouping in a few lessons, which rightly address students' learning needs. However, in general, instructional strategies that support differentiation are not diversified enough to maximise the achievement of students of varied learning abilities and styles.

3.8 Students actively participate in an extensive range of activities and competitions with impressive results. Their academic performance is excellent.

3.8.1 Students are pleasant and courteous. They maintain a good relationship with their peers of diverse cultural backgrounds. Students at different year levels participate actively and enthusiastically in an extensive range of activities and competitions, covering areas of different nature such as academic, aesthetics and physical, both locally and internationally. They acquired distinguished individual and group awards in various sports, music and academic competitions, among which, their performance in swimming and handbell is outstanding. They also attained good results in cross-country, table tennis, speech, artworks and various subject-based territory-wide competitions. Some students made remarkable achievements in the World Scholar's Cup. The student Chemistry research team presented their research results in various international symposiums and congresses.

3.8.2 In the past three years, the percentage of students meeting the general entrance requirements for local undergraduate university programmes in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination and the general entrance requirements for sub-degree courses were above the territory averages of day school students. Taking into account the S1 intake, the school attained excellent results in the HKDSE Examination in the past three years.

3.9 Reflective practice is in shape to guide school improvement.

3.9.1 The school management is reflective in setting the direction of development with a focus on enhancing the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Middle managers are, in general, able to lead their committees and departments to formulate annual priority tasks to align with the school-level concerns, conduct regular review using data and suggest appropriate improvement measures. Teachers' self-reflection is gradually promoted through the well-established peer lesson observation and collaborative lesson preparation practices. A self-reflective practice is in shape to guide school improvement.

3.9.2 At present, the intended outcomes and the criteria to measure the degree of achievement of the MC are not specified at the school level. It is difficult for the school management to fully understand the extent to which the MC are achieved by using the individual evaluation results of committees and departments. Without a holistic evaluation finding, it hinders the school to strategically plan the annual priority tasks with better coherence between years and among committees and departments.

4. Suggestions for Improvement

- 4.1 It is desirable to devise and employ more diversified instructional strategies to support differentiation. Differentiation strategies such as differentiation by content, learning activities, pace, grouping and learning outcomes could be considered on the basis of teachers' on-going assessment of students' readiness and performance. Learning tasks, including the pre-lesson preparation tasks, could be designed to extend the learning of the more able and encourage achievement of the less able. A purposeful and systematic consolidation could also help students to reflect on and extend their learning as well as connect to the learning of new knowledge.
- 4.2 School self-evaluation could be further enhanced. There is a need for the school to specify the intended targets of the major concerns and the respective criteria to measure the degree of achievement at the school level. The shared set of targets could also better achieve synergy in the course of implementation and facilitate a holistic evaluation of effectiveness at the school level for an informed planning.