

# **Comprehensive Review Report**

The HKMA David Li Kwok Po College

Address of School: 8 Hoi Wang Road, Mongkok (West) Kowloon

Comprehensive Review Period: 2, 3, 4, 8 & 9 May, 2006

**Centre for Educational Leadership**

**Faculty of Education**

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## **Introduction**

### **School Vision and Mission**

- The School aims to provide effective schooling for educating and developing its students with both the knowledge and life skills to become responsible, caring, self-disciplined, adaptable young people, and eventually productive members of the community.
- In this process, the School has a mission to:
  - provide an all-round education for the total development of its students, encompassing moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects.
  - develop its students to the fullest with the beliefs that each student has worth, and is endowed with potential.
  - help each student become an effective and independent learner by learning to accept responsibility for his or her learning.
  - educate and develop every student to his or her full potential so that he/she will grow up to become an all-rounded person with the following characteristics: international outlook, computer literacy, bi-literate and tri-lingual language abilities, a civic conscious and ethical mind, physical fitness, independent and creative thinking, a life-long learning attitude and pride in their cultural heritage.

### **Basic Information about the School**

- The School started its operations in September 2000. It is the second school operated by the Hong Kong Management Association (HKMA), an organization established some four decades ago with the objective of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of management in Hong Kong. The School operates under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) of the Education and Manpower Bureau.

- The class organization and student enrolment at the beginning of the school year 2005-2006 are as follows:

Level	S1	S1	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	Total
No. of classes	4	4	4	4	4	2	2	24
No. of students	154	160	124	148	83	53	47	769

- In 2005-2006, in addition to the Principal, there were 55 teachers employed by the school, including 10 expatriate teachers. The teacher-student ratio was about 1: 14. The school also employed one English Language Teaching Assistant, one Information Technology (IT) Coordinator, two IT Assistants, three Laboratory Technicians, one Teacher Librarian, two Library Assistants, one School Social Worker, and one School Counselor.

### **Comprehensive Review Methodology**

- The Comprehensive Review (CR) was carried out in the period from May 2 to 9, 2006. It consisted of a Management Review and a Programme Review. The Management Review examined the domains of Management and Organisation, Student Support and School Ethos and Student Performance, while the Programme Review examined the domain of Teaching and Learning.
- Prior to the CR, the Review Team read documents provided by the School. The leader of the Review Team paid a pre-CR visit to the School on the 25th of April 2006 to explain the purposes and operation of the CR to the teaching staff and answered their questions.
- During the review period, the subject specialists of the Review Team observed lessons, scrutinized a variety of documents including department meeting minutes, schemes of work, examination and test papers and samples of student work, held discussions with department heads, subject teachers and students, and attended a number of subject-related activities.

- The following KLA Groups were reviewed: English Language; Chinese Language and Chinese History; Mathematics and Information Technology; Science; Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE); Arts Education (Visual Arts) and Physical Education. A total of 51 lessons were observed. In addition, the work of Guidance and Counseling was also reviewed.
- The core group of the Review Team also met members of the SMC, the Principal and Deputy Principals, subject teachers, heads of functional teams, PTA members and student representatives. During the review period, both the core group and subject specialists of the Review Team met at the end of each day to discuss their observations. This was supplemented by informal discussions held between the Review Team's leader and subject specialists before the final report was prepared.
- The findings presented in this report were derived from the corporate judgment of the Review Team based on the information gathered through the above-mentioned methods during the review period.

## **Management Review**

### **Management and Organization**

- The School is sponsored by the Hong Kong Management Association which attaches great importance to providing the School's students with an all-round education through the use of English as the medium of instruction.
- The educational aims of the School are in line with current local curriculum reform and social expectations, with the School making good progress in realizing them. These aims are shared also among the members of the senior and middle management and teachers.
- Since 2002, under the leadership of the current Principal, a systematic management framework has been developed. The management process begins by building up specific annual plans for each individual school year. The first step is to involve all academic departments and functional teams by conducting a review of the work of the current year. Having collated all the information, the Principal, in consultation with the School Executive Committee (SEC), proposes the major concerns for the coming year. For example, the focus upon moral and civic education in the 2004-2005 academic year was a result of a staff concern expressed through a review of the work of the previous year by the Principal. Having identified this as a major concern, the departments and functional teams worked to incorporate this into their own annual plans for the coming year. The school then made use of a range of methods to address this concern. These included: Friday morning thematic assemblies to elaborate on different themes, monthly themes for the whole school, department-based initiatives and form-based initiatives. These activities were carried out according to plan and were reviewed at the end of the year for the following year. This showed the School has made use of a "planning-implementation-evaluation" cycle to coordinate its work at school, department, and committee levels.

- The Principal of the School adopts an open-door policy. All proposals are communicated to teachers by the Principal or his Deputies in person, by email or at weekly staff briefing sessions. Teachers are invited to respond either in person or via email. Teachers are, as reflected in the teachers' stakeholder surveys, generally satisfied with this arrangement. However, in the School's planning work, the Principal and his Deputies are the main instigators of major policies. This is understandable as the School is new and has many young teachers who tend to look for direction and guidance. While this is unavoidable at this stage of the School's development, it may be appropriate for the management to consider how they can involve their young teachers more in policy participation and decision-making.
- Both the SMC and the Principal attach great importance to working with parents. A two-way communication process between the School and parents has been established. The School's PTA organises regular gatherings where parents can raise issues which are then taken back to the Principal who will send an initial reply. Some of these issues are presented to staff at the Friday morning briefings for information or discussion. The teacher representative of the PTA will then reply formally to the questions raised. Parents have also opportunities to obtain information and raise questions to staff via different channels throughout the school year. The School maintains a close working relationship with parents.
- School administration is well organised and its daily routine runs smoothly. The School publishes a Staff Handbook detailing practices and procedures, and with the help of the school's full-time Counselor, it has also put in place a crisis management plan and procedures. The School complies with all relevant Government ordinances and follows safety guidelines set up by the EMB. It also maintains its fixtures and equipment regularly and frequently to create a good standard of overall safety, hygiene and comfort. All classrooms are well equipped with modern IT facilities to aid teaching and learning. Students have ample opportunities to access these computer facilities.
- The School has built up a good two-tier filing system: central administration files and student files are kept in the General Office, while department and committee files are

kept by the respective heads in the staff room. These records are clearly kept and easily located. The school has also transformed its filing towards the Government's computer system which makes information easier to access.

- At present, the SMC members are all appointed by the Hong Kong Management Association. An SMC member who is also a senior staff of HKMA works closely with the Principal to ensure adequate communication between the School and the School Sponsoring Body. The SMC is currently preparing the constitution for an Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) model, a new Government legislative initiative. The proposed IMC would extend its membership to include both parent and teacher representatives and community leaders.
- The school Principal is an experienced educator. Since 2002, he has helped establish a management framework with a focus on educational objectives. He is currently assisted by three Deputy Principals (Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Human Resources) with each having a clear mandate and a separate area of responsibility. Together, they supervise and oversee the work of all academic departments, functional teams, and ad hoc committees, and are assisted by the heads of departments and functional teams. The School is keen to promote experienced and capable teachers to head subject departments and functional teams.
- A number of curriculum initiatives have been introduced since 2002 under the leadership of the current Principal. These include in the junior forms, the creation of ability groupings in the three core subjects to meet the diverse needs of its students through small class teaching. However, in actual operation, the ability groupings were only implemented in English Language and Mathematics. Since the implementation, there has been an overall rise in the standard in these two subjects. The School could also consider implementing ability groups and small class teaching in Chinese Language.
- Other curriculum initiatives include the infusion of IT teaching within different subject areas, the development of a school-based Integrated Humanities curriculum in the junior forms, the setting up of an English Language Centre for both regular teaching and extra-curricular work in English, an Early Identification and Remediation Scheme (EIS) for



students at risk academically, and other remedial teaching programmes. A balanced curriculum that focuses on both academic and personal development has also been implemented. All these have created the image of an improving school.

- Team work and support is strong in a number of subject areas including Chinese Language, Science and Mathematics where teachers collaborate in curriculum design and implementation. For example, the Mathematics department organises co-teaching between an experienced teacher and new teachers. In the Science department, teachers collaborate on activities such as student science journals, science-based ‘fun competitions’, laboratory open days, field trips and talks by science experts. The Principal has also provided curriculum leadership by helping to launch a “lesson study” project within the Chinese Language department to encourage curriculum development and teacher collaboration.
- The School has employed a relatively large number of expatriate teachers (10 in 2005-2006). While their presence has enabled the School to realize its educational objective, they have also posted a challenge to the local staff in terms of mutual understanding and working as a group. By and large, the School has been able to maintain a harmonious staff atmosphere. However, concern is raised about the relatively high turnover rate of teachers over the years, particularly among young teachers and expatriate teachers. The School has been trying very hard and with some success to retain teachers and expatriate teachers who are committed to students or who have an appreciation of Chinese culture. Other measures should be explored for its continuous improvement.
- The School has a clear policy on staff development. This includes a requirement of continuous professional development, yearly staff development days and educational visits once every two years. The School’s Staff Development Team is also responsible for the induction of new teachers and the organization and management of a Peer Support Scheme in which new and experienced teachers are paired as mentors and mentees. Teachers who undertake professional development related to ECA’s or specific topics, or who are mentor teachers can obtain financial support from the School.

- A staff appraisal system tailored to the needs of the School has been used and modified over the past few years. The system has clear objectives, procedures, forms to be used, and criteria for judgment. The teacher stakeholder surveys show that most are satisfied with the appraisal system. The next stage of development could be a closer linking of staff development needs with appraisal results. The development of an appeal mechanism would further strengthen the appraisal system.
- Teaching allocation is basically assigned in line with teachers' subject expertise. Proper procedures have also been established to assign teachers to various non-teaching duties, which are running satisfactorily. Teaching loads and non-teaching duties are generally reasonable. In addition, the School also makes use of its funds to employ additional clerks, teachers and professional personnel to create space for teachers.
- The School is in a sound and healthy financial situation and is well resourced. The annual school budget is prepared by consolidating the individual budgets developed by the school's academic departments and functional teams. It is presented at the beginning of every year to the SMC and it also contains an income and expenditure statement and balance sheet of the previous year for approval. The School budget is strictly followed. All accounts have clearly designated account holders, and recurrent expenditure can only be made against budgeted items. There are also proper guidelines and procedures for purchasing, tendering and accounting. The financial management of the School is thorough and prudent.
- The School library is quiet and spacious. The School has purposely extended the opening hours of the library from 8:30 a.m. until 10:00 p.m. on weekdays and from 9:00 a.m. until 7:00 pm on Saturday and from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Sunday for students. Similarly, the English Language Centre, equipped with multimedia resources and a variety of materials, is also a suitable and convenient place for students to carry out self study and group work.

## **Student Support and School Ethos**

- The school's vision is to provide an all round, balanced education for all its students. To achieve this aim, the School adopts a whole school approach in providing adequate student support services. This is done through the creation of school-wide major concerns which then flow into the work of individual teams and departments, including those involved in student support.
- The work of student support is coordinated by a Student Affairs Committee headed by a Deputy Principal. The work of the Committee encompasses: counseling and case work directed at individuals in need; pastoral care at class level using materials prepared by the Guidance and Counseling Team and house-based sports, activities and competitions. The students, in particular those in the junior forms, have ample opportunities to take part in a wide range of sports, musical, uniform-group and curriculum-related activities. They have also engaged actively in inter-school sports competitions.
- Other types of student support activities include the Drop Everything and Read (DEAR) morning reading programme, the Early Identification and Remediation Scheme (EIS) for academically weaker students, the creation of a Reading Task Force and a homework detention scheme.
- Since 2002, the School has established outstanding guidance and counseling services for its students. The School in its early years encountered some difficulties with student discipline, caused by a combination of factors such as a mismatch of school and parental expectations and the quality of the students. The Guidance and Counseling Team approached individual students having behavior problems with understanding and care. The Team shares a common purpose and is capable of developing activities to meet the needs of students. It has set up an effective referral network which is aided by the close partnership between the school counselor and discipline teachers where students at risk are identified and supported. Guidance and counseling services do not only focus on problems. The Team also works closely with subject departments and manages to incorporate developmental guidance principles into other school activities. These

activities include the moral and civic education programmes in both 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, the Friday morning assemblies, monthly/yearly school themes, department-based and form-based projects, and community service. The Team actively seeks feedback from students, teachers and parents in order to improve their work. These programmes have begun to bear fruit. One example is that the Agency for Volunteer Service gave the School a Caring School Award in 2005 in recognition of the community services conducted by the students.

- The School believes in a two-way communication approach in working with its students. It has established many channels to enable the students to share their feelings about their teachers. They are also encouraged to write journals to their form/class teachers or personal notes to their class teachers. Teachers are encouraged to work with students in community service projects and in sports. The teacher-student relationship is both good and positive.
- The School has a sizable group of students coming from different cultural backgrounds, which could create difficulty in the building of harmonious relationships. The School has deliberate measures to encourage the mix of students with different cultures and been quite successful in these measures. Such activities include a big brother/sister scheme that encourages the pairing of peers between senior and junior form students; variety shows, singing contests and lately, international days with a multi-cultural emphasis; and the 'Always Cheer You On' campaign organized by the Guidance and Counseling Team where classes were encouraged to write letters of encouragement to their peers and the letters were then posted on bulletin boards for all to read.
- The School also believes that the School should be a place where students are happy to spend time at, and hence has developed a number of measures to welcome students to come back to school. Students are allowed to use the School's facilities both after school and during holidays. The Library as mentioned above opens until 10:00 p.m. each school day as well as on weekends. Different campaigns are also organized each year to promote students' participation in school life.
- The students we interviewed were all supportive of the School and praised highly their

teachers. Those sixth form students who came from other schools particularly treasured the liberal atmosphere and the support they received from their teachers. However, there were a sizeable number of students in each level who failed to meet the promotion criteria each year as the School tightened its academic requirements over time. The discussions with junior form students showed that some thought that they did not need to work hard academically, and thought that their parents sent them to this School because they believed it had pledged a less pressured academic environment. These students thought therefore that they did not need to apply themselves. Some of them may have equated 'happy learning' with 'learning without expectation' or 'without efforts'. The School is aware of this and has introduced programmes including the EIS and the homework detention scheme to support these students. To cultivate a good learning habit, the School could consider expanding these initiatives to all students in the junior forms.

- With the support of the HKMA, the school has developed links with several public utilities and companies. Through these links, internship placements are organized each summer for S5 and S7 students. The School has also established links with a number of outside bodies through projects. An example is the initiative with both the Hong Kong Institute of Education and Oxfam Hong Kong in a QEF project on Integrated Humanities. The School has also established close relationships with a number of social service organizations to enable students to take part in both uniform-based activities and charitable work.
- Since 2004, the school has established a sister-school relationship with the Shanghai World Foreign Language Middle School. As a result, groups of teachers and students from the two schools have made many visits to their respective sister school, attended regular classes and engaged in exchange programmes.

## **Student Performance**

- The average attendance rate in the year under review for S1 to S3, S4 to S5 and S6 to S7 are 98.3%, 97.2% and 96.4% respectively. The percentages are largely in line with but slightly lower than the Hong Kong averages. Students are generally well behaved, interested in studying and attentive in class, although some students in the junior forms are less motivated to learn.
- In 2005, the percentages of students with five or more passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE) were lower than the territory averages of day-school students, though in comparison with schools of similar S1 intakes, the School performed well in the three core subjects (Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics) in the HKCEE. As for the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE), the percentages of students awarded the minimum university entrance requirement were slightly lower than the territory average in 2005. A long-term objective of the School is therefore to raise the overall quality of teaching and learning and to obtain better examination results.
- In the pursuit of its objective to provide an all-round education for its students, the School has, through the coordination of its ECA committee, developed a programme of extra-curricular activities for its students. The students are able, particularly those in the lower forms, to take part in a wide range of sports, music, uniform-group and other curriculum-related activities. The students are also engaged in inter-school sports activities and have won a number of prizes.
- In the Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes (APASO) in which the School took part, the students gave higher ratings than their sampled counterparts in other schools in a number of areas including 'self-concept' and 'attitude towards school'. In interpersonal relationships, the students' ratings showed that they had better social skills and a lower level of inappropriate assertiveness than their peers in other schools.

## **Programme Review**

### **Teaching and Learning**

- As referred to earlier, the work of the eight KLA Groups and Guidance and Counseling was reviewed. These individual KLA reports are attached separately.
- The school follows the curriculum guides and policies issued by the Curriculum Development Council and the Education and Manpower Bureau. The school's main goal is to help its students to develop into independent life-long learners through a careful design of teaching and learning programmes catering for differences in abilities and learning needs.
- Overall, the curriculum framework designed by the school is broad, balanced and in line with the above aims. A differentiated curriculum has been created in English Language and Mathematics for junior form students. The students are re-grouped according to their abilities in these two subjects where smaller class sizes are organized. The School also organizes Learning Support Groups for students facing particular difficulties in these two subjects. A school-based enrichment programme in Mathematics at S.3 has also been implemented which caters for students with potential. This arrangement, together with the Early Identification Scheme and after-school tutorials given to academically weaker students, constitutes a useful framework for addressing the need of individual differences.
- Students are encouraged to read and write. To achieve this aim, a morning reading programme has been implemented where all students are required to read silently for about 20 minutes three times a week before the first lesson begins. The Reading Award Scheme also encourages students to read but has attracted only a small number of students. Students are also required to submit weekly journals to their class teachers, both as a way of improving their written skills and for pastoral care purposes. The Science and IT department, for example, requires all junior form students to write a "Science Journal". Although variation was found in both student writing and teacher

feedback, the purpose of brushing up students' communication skills has largely been achieved.

- One of the School's major concerns is to further develop students' literacy skills. To this end, the School has formed a Literacy Team, which organises a variety of activities aiming at developing greater competency in both the English and Chinese languages. It supervises the morning reading programme, publishes a bilingual student magazine (6 issues a year), prepares students for speech festivals, gives seminars to parents on how to promote reading at home, and organises drama productions. The School's effort in this area is notable.
- Another of the School's current major concerns is to enhance students' moral and civic values through a whole-school approach. To achieve this aim, the school plans activities in advance with an aim of linking practical application with positive values. For example, in 2004-05, a Friday Morning Assembly and Class Teacher Period to address a specific theme related to moral and civic education was followed by another activity such as a Saturday flag-selling event for a charitable organization.
- A salient feature of the School is that it has employed a relatively large number of expatriate teachers. Together with local teachers, they provide opportunities for students to be exposed to a multitude of language varieties as well as good language models. The presence of a sizable number of students from mainly South Asia has also contributed to the school's international outlook. The fact that students and teachers from a range of cultural backgrounds who relate to each other amicably adds to the School's colour.
- Curriculum leadership is quite strong at the department level. Most heads of departments are experienced and well-qualified and are able to lead the teachers within their departments. Some good common practices are found in a number of departments. These include, mentoring of new and young teachers, sharing of resources and teaching materials, and organising peer observation and collaboration. Some heads of departments are able to design and organise activities which enhance learning beyond the classroom in their subject areas.



- The teachers are on the whole dedicated, and knowledgeable about their subjects. Though variation existed, these lessons were generally well planned and prepared. Teachers displayed enthusiasm and are well respected by their students. As observed, teachers were able to conduct lessons according to plans and classes were relatively free from discipline-related issues. The teachers were also able to organise activities outside of the classroom in promoting learning in their subject areas. Teacher-student relationships are cordial and warm.
- As observed, students were attentive, well-mannered, cooperative and generally engaged in their learning tasks. The atmosphere within classrooms was good and conducive to learning. Teacher questioning was used for classroom interaction. However, students were passive in their responses. This was caused, in some cases, by their lack of confidence or ability in expressing themselves in English and in the case of Chinese Language, a possible lack of motivation to learn Chinese. Some of the lessons observed were ‘teacher-centred’ or ‘teacher-led’. The effectiveness of teacher questioning could be improved by the more frequent use of probing questions which require students not just to give a short, correct answer but to engage them in more extensive explanations.
- The policy of using English as the medium of instruction was closely adhered to, and most teachers were able to use English effectively in a classroom situation. However, some students, mostly from the Emergent Set within the English curriculum, have apparent difficulty in adapting to the genuine English language environment. This can be seen in some Science and Social Science lessons in which a minority of the students had difficulty in following English in class. How to implement the EMI policy and at the same time take care of the variation of student abilities is an issue the School has to deal with. An exception was observed with classes that possessed mostly near-native English speakers, where students were able to fully express themselves within a challenging English curriculum.
- The School has implemented a wide range of tasks for assessing student learning. Continuous assessment has been established and takes up a higher weighting in the

junior forms than at senior levels where public examination pressure is high. Tasks such as quizzes, uniform tests, major and minor assignments, projects, and class presentations are used both as assessment and motivation. Project work features prominently in all KLAs, particularly in PSHE. Students enjoy their project assignments for a variety of reasons. However better coordination across KLA's is required to help students complete their assignments without rushing them.

- As mentioned previously, the School does not offer IT as a separate subject in the junior secondary curriculum but has infused it into all subject areas. The School believes that learning IT should be both practical and content-based. The Integrated Humanities department is charged with the task of ensuring that the IT knowledge and skills of students are covered across all KLA's in the junior forms. This is done by monitoring the coverage of IT concepts with a content matrix as the students progress from S.1 to S.3.
- The use of IT in teaching varies across KLAs. In terms of classroom teaching, it was largely confined to teaching demonstrations; seldom did students use IT as a learning tool. The use of IT for learning outside of the classroom deserves more consideration.

## **Concluding Remarks**

The School has made great improvement in a number of areas since its inception six years ago. A sound management framework and processes are in place. The division of labour among the staff in the senior management is clear and effective. The SMC, the Principal and the three Deputy Principals are capable of providing leadership in their own areas of responsibilities. The school's curriculum is balanced and broad, and curriculum planning is in line with the School's vision and mission. Subject departments are working hard to nurture new and young teachers. The performance of the Guidance and Counseling Team is outstanding. Staff development and appraisal are regularly conducted. The School is in a sound and healthy financial situation and the management takes meticulous care in up-keeping facilities and premises. The School has delivered and is delivering quality educational experiences and student achievements which are commensurate with its initial proposal in securing Direct Subsidy Scheme status.

While a number of suggestions have been put forward in this Report, three are highlighted below for closer attention.

### **Enhancing the quality of classroom teaching and learning**

- The School needs to continue to aim at enhancing the quality of classroom teaching. This is particularly important in the junior forms in building up a good foundation. In line with the School's aim to promote independent learning, teachers as part of their daily teaching should seek a balance between teacher-centred strategies and alternative teaching strategies. Such strategies include, for example, organizing suitable activities to actively involve students in the learning process, and engaging students' interest in discussions led by either teachers or their classmates. To facilitate this change, the School could organize more professional development activities in support of these strategies.

### **Building a Strong Teaching Force**

- With a focus on teaching and learning, the School is fully aware of its need to build an experienced teaching force. Both the School and department heads have been doing a fine job towards this educational aim. It would therefore be a great loss if the staff turnover rate remains high. On top of what have been done, the School could also create more opportunities to involve its teachers, particularly the younger ones in policy participation and decision making

### **Building Good Learning Habits**

- Another key factor in enhancing the quality of classroom learning concerns the learning attitude of students. The School has tried very hard to provide support to its students and for them to develop good learning habits. However, such support has been targeted mainly at those students who have been identified as having learning difficulties. While this is necessary, the School could explore the possibility of developing additional measures to cultivate good learning habits, for example, to provide homework assistance and supervision to all students in junior forms on a regular basis. This kind of support could be adopted in conjunction with the EIS and other intervention measures.