

The School's Response to the Comprehensive Review Report

The HKMA David Li Kwok Po College

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

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The Setting Up of the Comprehensive Review Process

The School was given the option of having the Comprehensive Review conducted either by the EMB or an independent qualified review body. As the School was one of the first established within the Government's Direct Subsidy Scheme, created with the aim of better meeting the needs of parents who were looking for alternative choices, we therefore felt that it would be appropriate to appoint a review body which was not bound by existing models of evaluating schools.

In 2005 a review team was formed under the leadership of Dr. A.K.C. Wong, with members drawn from the Faculty of Education at the University of Hong Kong. An officer from the Quality Assurance Division also joined the core team to act as the EMB's representative in monitoring the review process.

Overall, we are gratified that the Review Team has described the school as "[having] delivered and is delivering quality educational experiences and student achievements which are commensurate with its initial proposal in securing DSS status." We feel that the findings of the report are comprehensive, the judgments are fair in reflecting the school's many achievements, and that its comments are useful for the School's further improvement.

Management and Organization

The School recognizes the review team's finding that the School's management framework is systematic, sound and focuses on educational objectives. It has also commented on the School's management as having good communication with its stakeholders. The review report similarly makes reference to the School's efforts in developing a strong school-based curriculum. Furthermore, initiatives undertaken by

various academic departments have been quoted as being examples of effective curriculum leadership.

While the report recognizes that the School's management practices an "open door policy" and that the teachers are satisfied with the existing arrangement, it also points out that the School in the future may need to consider a greater degree of participation by younger staff as regards policy formation and decision-making. We do not disagree with this view, though are awaiting the most appropriate time during which to implement such an initiative. The School is keen to build a strong teaching force, and views that this can be best achieved by developing a core group of experienced staff that have grown with the School.

Teaching and Learning

The School is glad of the Review Team's recognition that it has worked hard to provide a "genuine English language environment" for its students. The report has also referred to the School's curriculum as being "broad and balanced", and that its students are "attentive, well-mannered, cooperative and generally engaged in their learning tasks." These judgments reflect the extent to which the School has been successful in implementing its mission and vision.

Amongst the constructive comments made regarding this area, the review report points out that the school could move away from the use of "teacher-centred" strategies towards other, alternative teaching styles.

This is a comment that can perhaps be applied to almost any local school in Hong Kong. Whilst we do not dispute the validity of such a statement, we feel that this comment should also take into account the fact that the School, though progressive, is at the same time forced to adhere to a curriculum that is conservative in nature. Furthermore, the distinction between "teacher-centred" and "student-centred" methods of teaching is unclear even in educational research literature, especially as regards the contextual nature of Asian classrooms where they are often described as being "minds-on" rather than "hands-on".

However, we also feel that the spirit of the New Senior Secondary curriculum will allow the School in the future to be able to move towards more innovative teaching styles that allow for increased student autonomy in learning.

The review report also makes the suggestion that the School should organize more “homework assistance and supervision” for its students “on a daily basis”. Although we do not find this suggestion to be particularly progressive, the review team may be pleased to note that as from 2006/07, the School has instituted regular “after-school” tutorials (and even homework detention classes) so as to help students to build better learning habits. However, we consider the use of such methods only as temporary, and that our eventual success will lie in being able to remove such scaffolds.

Student Support and School Ethos

The report describes the School’s strategy in this area as being a genuine “whole school approach” to providing support for students. Particular mention is made of the outstanding guidance and counseling programmes that the School provides. The report also highlights the fact that our students are given ample opportunities to take part in extra-curricular and sports activities, and that the school has established strong links with external agencies in providing learning experiences outside of the classroom.

The review team is insightful in the sense that it is able to both recognize and appreciate the effort that the School has made in creating a harmonious, multicultural environment, where students and teachers of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds can interact with each other in a productive manner. This is an achievement which makes us proud as it is something that we consider is lacking in many Hong Kong schools.

Student Performance

Whilst the review report makes specific mention of the School’s 2005 public examination results and indicates that some areas were below territory averages, the team would be pleased to learn that both our HKAL and HKCE results in 2006

improved, and were at par with, and in many areas, were higher than corresponding Hong Kong averages. As examples, in 2006 the percentage of the School's HKAL students having obtained a University Entrance Requirement stood at 63% (versus the Hong Kong average of 47.5%). At HKCE level, the percentage of students with 5E's or better was at 66.7% (versus the Hong Kong average of 67.1%). We anticipate further improvements in public examination results to be possible due to improved student competency in the junior forms (as the School's results from the Territory-wide System Assessment indicate).

However, the School has refrained from using public examination results as the sole indicator of its students' academic success or the only objective to be maximized. It should be noted that the School also emphasizes other dimensions such as cultivating appropriate learning styles and creating a positive academic affect. Results in these areas have been highly positive, as the data from the School's APASO surveys consistently indicates. This information was also heavily referred to in a separate report on Guidance and Counseling. Given the depth and range of data made available to the core team from the outset of this review, we therefore feel that its evaluation of student performance could have been more complete and holistic if greater attention had been given to such important data.