

### **Promoting an Inclusive and Harmonious School Environment through a “Caring Buddies” Scheme**

A school has admitted more Non-Chinese Speaking (NCS) students in recent years, and so it has put emphasis on engaging local students in serving NCS students as a way of building up an inclusive and harmonious school environment to facilitate students’ growth and development. For example, the school held a series of LWL activities with a theme on ethnic inclusion for all S3 students. In collaboration with an NGO in the same district, the school organised some inclusion talks for S3 students to nurture their positive values e.g. respect and care for others, as well as to introduce some approaches to help the NCS students to mingle with their classmates.

Besides, some relatively mature local students were recruited as “Caring Buddies” and provided with training before they were asked to provide one-to-one support to their NCS schoolmates. The school also organised outings during lesson time and school holidays for these “Caring Buddies” to take their NCS schoolmates along and help them know more about the community facilities and learn about using Chinese in authentic contexts during these outings.

To enhance the self-esteem and self-efficacy of these NCS students, the school provided them with opportunities to provide Community Service with their “Caring Buddies” at elderly homes and primary schools. At the end of the school term, the NCS students and their “Caring Buddies” planned and organised an “Asian Cultural Carnival” with the support of an NGO. Taking the Carnival as an opportunity to serve the community and to promote ethnic inclusion, the students set up game and snack booths, and staged a fashion show for their own design works at the community hall.

As a result of these service oriented learning experiences, teachers of the school witnessed significant positive changes in both the NCS students and their buddies.