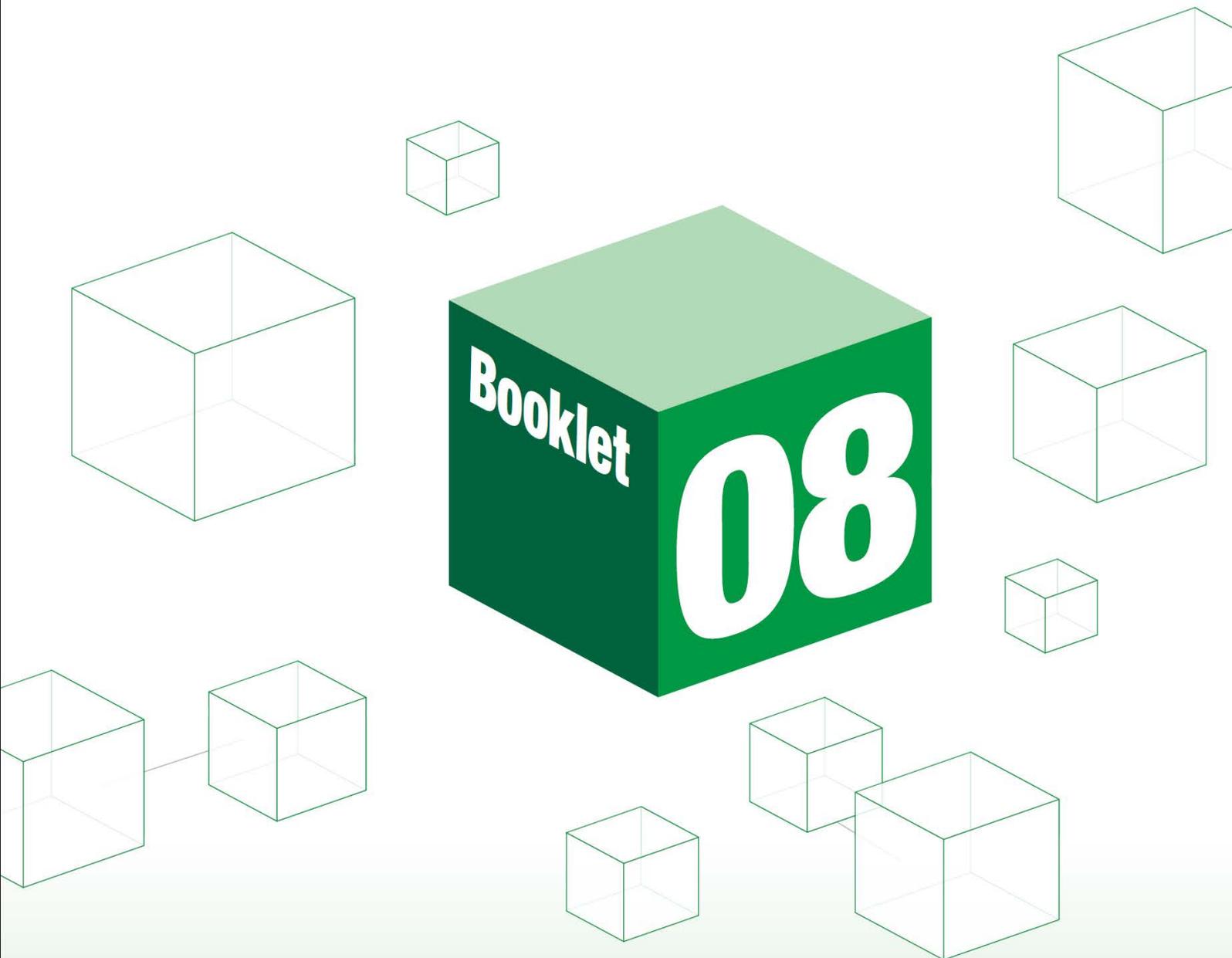


Interfaces between Key Stages 2 and 3 and Key Stages 3 and 4



Booklet 8 Interfaces between Key Stages 2 and 3 and Key Stages 3 and 4

This is one of the 11 Booklets in the *Secondary Education Curriculum Guide*. Its contents are as follows:

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8.1 Background

- Interfaces between the upper primary (KS2) and junior secondary (KS3) levels, as well as between the junior secondary (KS3) and senior secondary (KS4) levels are the key concerns to parents and schools as students may encounter various challenges in adaptation and learning. Since the Learning to Learn curriculum reform introduced in 2001, schools have been implementing a variety of strategies and programmes and have accumulated professional experience in strengthening the interface between different key stages.
- Schools are encouraged to further strengthen the transitions from S3 to S4 as well as from S6 to multiple pathways for further studies and career development through developing a solid knowledge base and learning to learn capabilities among students. Guidance on decision-making and effective strategies for preparing students at each interface is conducive to a smooth transition and success in student learning.

8.2 Purposes of the Booklet

- To discuss issues involved in the interfaces between KS2 and KS3, KS3 and KS4 as well as KS4 and beyond
- To recommend a whole-school approach and suggest strategies to bring about effective transition into each interface

8.3 Overall Considerations for Interfacing between Different Key Stages

- Careful handling of transition can foster positive self-esteem and motivation in learning, and promote healthy growth and development in students. A successful transition strengthens students' foundation for independent learning, fosters their physical and psychological well-being, whole-person development, and enhances their capability in self-directed and lifelong learning.

- Schools have to take the following into account to enhance the interface between key stages and plan holistically for a coherent curriculum in addressing students' concerns before and during the transition:

- Vertical continuity of curriculum which builds on students' previous learning experiences and leads to a gradual increase in curriculum complexity;

- A broad and balanced curriculum with lateral coherence which ensures a sufficient knowledge base for students' progression to the next key stage of learning;

- Learning-teaching-assessment strategies appropriate to different key stages and coherent with previous learning experiences;

- Development of generic skills, positive values and attitudes which are fundamental to helping students learn to acquire and construct knowledge, to apply knowledge to solve problems, and to develop learning to learn capabilities;

- Learning experiences outside the classroom pertaining to the achievement of learning objectives (e.g. life-wide learning (LWL) activities);

- Social, psychological and emotional needs of students for their whole-person development and lifelong learning; and

- Effective home-school partnership enhancing communication between schools and parents, and enabling schools to tap more fully into the resources provided by parents to consolidate students' development in each transition.

“Teachers, policy makers and researchers are increasingly aware of the importance of giving greater priority to transitions if pupils are to sustain their commitment to learning at difficult moments in their school careers.”

Galton, Gray and Ruddock, 1999

Reflective Question

- ✧ Taking into account your students' learning needs and the school contexts, what are important considerations for enhancing transition in your school?

8.4 Strategies for Interfacing at Primary 6 and Secondary 1

8.4.1 Considerations

Students moving from primary six (P6) to secondary one (S1) may experience problems with adaptation to the new school life as they have to face a different learning environment with a new school setting and new subjects to learn. When planning for a smooth transition from P6 to S1, schools are encouraged to take the following into considerations:

“The importance of effective and appropriate arrangements for the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary schools as a means of ensuring curriculum continuity and progression in pupils’ education is now widely recognised as a crucial factor in school improvement.”

Powell et al., 2006

- To understand what students have to learn in secondary schools, and how to build on their learning in primary schools;
- To provide students with opportunities to revisit and strengthen the knowledge and skills acquired at the primary level;
- To consolidate the development of generic skills such as self-management skills, and help students learn to take more responsibility for their own learning at the secondary level;
- To use the Four Key Tasks as strategies for Key Learning Area (KLA) and cross-curricular learning to enhance students’ interests and motivation in learning, to develop their independent learning capabilities and to continue their progression along the key stages of learning (*please refer to Booklets 6 – 6D for details of the Four Key Tasks*);

- To provide adequate opportunities for experiential learning through a variety and progression of life-wide learning experiences at the junior secondary (JS) level to nurture students' interests, positive values and attitudes for wholesome development, active and sustainable participation to achieve whole-person development beyond the classroom;
- To make good use of resources and settings available at the schools and in the communities;
- To adopt holistic measures for developing students' competence in both Chinese and English, and in particular their literacy skills in both languages for application in the contexts of different KLAs to construct knowledge and facilitate their development into lifelong learners; and
- To plan and implement the whole-school language policy including school-based medium of instruction (MOI) arrangements through:
 - organising extended learning activities (ELA) in some non-language subjects and English summer bridging programmes for pre-S1 students; and
 - providing school-based support measures to safeguard students' learning effectiveness and increase students' exposure to the English language under diversified MOI arrangements.

Reflective Questions

- ✧ What are the considerations for strengthening the continuity between primary and secondary school curricula in your school?
- ✧ What is the whole-school language policy or MOI arrangements in your school?

8.4.2 Strategies

Secondary schools can enhance communication with primary schools on curriculum and assessment developments and practices, teaching approaches as well as learning activities through organising various events and visits. The following strategies are recommended for schools' reference:

- **Develop a school policy and formulate an action plan**

- To set up a working group comprising key school personnel such as a vice principal, KLA co-ordinators, counselling/guidance teachers and S1 class teachers to formulate the school policy and develop action plans, e.g. how to share among teachers essential information of students who need extra guidance and support for early intervention and guidance
- To enhance collaboration with the school social worker and parents and to encourage support from the senior form students through training them to act as mentors to help new students adapt to new school life and learning in a secondary school

“The definition of a successful transition for children is that they have:

- *developed new friendship and improved their self-esteem and confidence*
- *settled so well in school life that they caused no concerns to their parents*
- *shown an increasing interest in school and school work*
- *got used to their new routines and school organisation with great ease*
- *experienced curriculum continuity.”*

Evangelou, et al., 2008

- **Organise an induction programme with a variety of activities**
 - To familiarise new students with the school environment and curriculum and to enable schools to obtain a general understanding of the students and build up a warm rapport

Example 1: Orientation Programme for S1 Students during the Summer Vacation

- ✧ A secondary school organises a 3-day Orientation Programme for the S1 students during the summer vacation. A whole-school approach is adopted effectively.
- ✧ The school administrators, guidance teachers, school social worker, class teachers, guidance prefects, teachers of the discipline committee and the co-curricular activities committee, and the teacher-librarian are actively involved in organising activities for students and parents.
- ✧ Community resources from a non-governmental organisation are also tapped to support the teachers in providing ideas and organising a variety of activities for students.
- ✧ The programme comprises thematic talks, guided school tours, video shows, orienteering activities, taster lessons, competitive games, experience sharing, etc. to ensure that students could have a smooth transition to the secondary school life. Students know more about the new learning environment, foster relationships with their teachers and peers, and experience what is expected in secondary subjects.
- ✧ The programme is concluded with evaluation activities, including questionnaires and discussion sessions to assess the effectiveness of the programme and to invite suggestions for improvement.

- **Maintain close ties with primary schools**

- To develop mutual understanding between primary and secondary schools of each other's pedagogical practices, curriculum continuity through various activities such as professional development days, peer lesson observations, visits, seminars and open days

Example 2: Maintaining Close Ties with Primary Schools under the Same Sponsoring Body

- ✧ A secondary school has been collaborating closely with two primary schools over the years to ensure coherence of the curricula as there is usually a large intake of S1 students from these two primary schools.
- ✧ For a long time, the Chinese, English and Mathematics teachers of the three schools have been working closely to refine the curricula and align their pedagogical practices. Active steps have also been taken to facilitate similar collaboration in other subjects. Good understanding of the two primary schools' students resulting from teachers' collaboration enables the secondary school to tailor the S1 bridging programme to address students' specific learning needs and prepare them for learning at the secondary level. Teachers' efforts have also effectively strengthened the interface between the primary and JS curricula.
- ✧ Besides, the secondary school has gone to great lengths to make the primary students' transition to secondary school a positive experience. A wide range of programmes and activities have been meticulously planned and arranged to strengthen the relationship and facilitate exchange among the three schools.
- ✧ These programmes and activities not only enable the students and parents of the primary schools to be more familiar with the school life and culture of the secondary school, they also enable the school to obtain useful information about the needs and potential of the two primary schools' students for better planning of support measures.

- **Adopt appropriate curriculum practices in S1 to dovetail with the previous learning experiences of children in primary schools**
 - To create a warm and stimulating classroom environment to meet students' emotional needs and promote a sense of belonging
 - To provide in the timetable a regular class period/meeting time for the S1 students and their class teachers
 - To offer language bridging courses to S1 students who need to use English as the medium of learning
 - To design a variety of tasks for the purposes of assessment for, as and of learning and to provide feedback on learning for improvement in various aspects
 - To use effective strategies such as giving quality feedback and praise, rewarding and exhibiting students' work to increase the incentive for learning and promote desirable learning behaviour
 - To strengthen mental health education in the curriculum and student support services in order to enhance students' self-esteem, positive thinking, resilience amidst adversities and interpersonal relationships
 - To conduct life education programmes in collaboration with other professionals such as educational psychologists and social workers to cultivate students' positive attitude towards life

Reflective Questions

- ✧ How effective are current measures taken by your school to address the learning needs of students promoted to S1?
- ✧ Has your school engaged different stakeholders in supporting students' transition from primary to secondary education?

- **Promote home-school co-operation**

- To establish effective home-school communication channels with parents as valuable human resources in the education of their children to facilitate children's smooth transition to S1
- To encourage parents to face challenges with children and provide timely psychological and emotional support
- To involve Parent-teacher Associations (PTAs) in playing a proactive role to strengthen the communication between parents and teachers and facilitate their discussion on the adjustment of their children, the school curriculum, the quality of education provided at school, etc. with a view to catering for students' learning and growth needs
- To hold a variety of activities for the parents of S1 students to enhance their understanding of the school so that they can provide their children with better support in adapting to the new learning environment
- To strengthen parent education to increase their knowledge and understanding of emotional needs of their children and their parenting skills

Example 3: Home-school Co-operation in Supporting Transition between P6 and S1

- ✧ A secondary school values home-school co-operation and maintained good relationships with parents. Various means are used to keep parents informed of the latest development of the school.
- ✧ An app developed by the school and tea gatherings are used to enhance home-school communication. The PTA works closely with the school in organising a variety of parent-child activities and parenting programmes to strengthen home-school co-operation. The parents are supportive and concerned about the school and participate actively in volunteer services such as accompanying their children and serving as helpers in study tours.

Reflective Question

- ✧ How effective is home-school co-operation in your school?

8.5 Strategies for Interfacing at Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Levels

In general, secondary schools place strong emphasis on enhancing the planning of the SS curriculum and employing data from internal and external assessments to review their curriculum and pedagogical design to enhance the interface between the JS and SS levels. Some effective strategies are suggested as follows for schools' reference:

- **Ensure a balanced curriculum**
 - To provide a balanced JS curriculum with adequate coverage of the eight KLAs to ensure that students acquire sufficient fundamental knowledge and skills for their study at the SS level, considering “age appropriateness” of curriculum content and avoid pre-teaching the SS subject content
 - To co-ordinate interdisciplinary knowledge base and language competence building in JS to cultivate students' interests in the SS core and elective subjects and help them develop adequate fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for studying these subjects
 - To strengthen curriculum bridging and to review the JS curriculum, map and enhance the connections and progression of the concepts/knowledge that students have learnt in different KLAs and the SS curriculum (*please refer to the Appendix for an example on planning the JS curriculum for effective JS-SS interface in LS*).
 - To advocate distributed leadership among KLA/subject panels to enhance collaboration and co-ordination in the interdisciplinary knowledge base and language competence building in JS
 - To promote assessment for and as learning at the JS level to help track students' learning progress, provide timely and quality feedback to them, and cater for students' learning needs
- **Strengthen project learning, enquiry-based learning and generic skills development**
 - To strengthen project learning, enquiry-based learning and discussions on contemporary issues as well as to enable students to equip and apply generic skills in an integrative manner to accustom them to the process of knowledge construction in the JS classroom and prepare

them for Liberal Studies at the SS level

- **Strengthen language proficiency**
 - To take into consideration the MOI arrangements for content subjects at the JS and SS levels
 - To provide support measures to ensure that students from classes using Chinese Language or English Language as the MOI have acquired the necessary language skills even if they wish to change the MOI at the SS level

- **Enhance career and life planning**
 - To provide all-round education at the JS level for cultivating a sense of physical and mental health awareness among students
 - To provide career and life planning education at the junior secondary level to develop students' understanding of themselves in the context of whole-person development

(Please refer to relevant chapters on interfaces between JS and SS in the KLA Curriculum Guides and the Curriculum and Assessment Guides (Secondary 4 – 6) for SS subjects for more information.)

Reflective Question

- ✧ Should my school introduce the SS Science curricula (i.e. Biology, Chemistry and Physics) in S3 so that students can prepare for the study of these subjects in S4?

Suggestion:

- ✧ All SS Science electives are developed from the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, as well as learning experiences acquired by students in the Science Education KLA at the JS level. Schools are advised to ensure that students have acquired the necessary foundation at the JS level through holistic curriculum planning to cater for students' learning needs and abilities. It is not advisable for schools to introduce early specialisation or implementation of SS subjects at the JS level.

Example 4: Preparing JS Students for Liberal Studies at the SS Level through Implementing Project Learning across the Curriculum at the JS Level

- ❖ A secondary school adopts a whole-school approach to curriculum planning and implements project learning across the curriculum at the JS level to enhance the interface between the JS and SS levels with the following objectives:
 - Developing students' knowledge and skills across KLAs through project learning;
 - Nurturing students' generic skills, as well as positive values and attitudes through studying current issues; and
 - Building the foundation of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for conducting Independent Enquiry Study (IES) in Liberal Studies at the SS level.
- ❖ Upholding the curriculum goals to develop students' knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, the school-based curriculum sets clear objectives at both the school and subject levels with careful consideration for vertical coherence in implementing project learning. Their JS students acquire project learning skills in a progressive manner and opportunities are provided for their application of relevant skills in individual subjects and across the curriculum.

8.6 Strategies for Preparing Students for Senior Secondary Education

The SS curriculum and assessment under the New Academic Structure (NAS) aims to provide students with a broad and balanced curriculum with diversified choices to embrace students' diverse interests, abilities and aspirations. It articulates to multiple progression pathways for further studies and employment. Schools can make reference to the following strategies to prepare students for studies at the SS level:

- To offer not fewer than 10 elective subjects covering different KLAs for students to choose from, in order to cater for their diverse aptitudes, interests and aspirations, broaden their knowledge base and develop their potential;

- To consider devising Applied Learning (ApL) courses for students who favour learning through application at S5 and S6 to enable students to explore and make informed decisions of their career pathways in different fields and prepare them for studies through multiple pathways, and providing taster ApL programmes at S4 to facilitate students in making informed choices on ApL (*please refer to the ApL website for more information: <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/cross-kla-studies/applied-learning/index-1.html>*); 
- To consider offering Other Language (OL) courses according to the school context to broaden students' choices of elective subjects, to strengthen their communication skills through using other languages, and to broaden their visions through learning the language and the culture of a country;
- To ensure that students are able to opt for the subjects they wish to choose with a flexible timetabling arrangement (e.g. block timetabling) and to consider collaborating with other schools to offer Network Programmes for SS subjects to broaden students' choices (*please refer to the NAS Web Bulletin (www.edb.gov.hk/nas/en) for examples on how timetabling could help to maximise students' subject choices*); 
- To engage parents in students' choice of elective subjects and exploration of multiple pathways, to encourage them to have an understanding of their children's interests, abilities and aspirations, to set reasonable expectations, to offer support, advice and assistance to students in the selection process to further studies or future careers, and to help them explore career pathways according to their different orientations; and
- To encourage students to make informed choices and adopt a positive attitude in exploring their interests and aspirations which should be seen as a learning process (*please refer to Booklet 9 for details on career and life planning*).

8.7 Exiting before S6 and Articulation to Post-secondary Multiple Pathways

Some students may choose to leave school before completion of S6. Schools are advised to strengthen their life planning education, which plays a significant role in fostering students' self-understanding, personal planning, goal setting, reflective thinking and articulation to multiple pathways for progression.

- It is suggested that effective life planning education has:
 - to be integrated into the school curriculum, through which students are equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to make informed choices in accordance with their interest, abilities and orientations; and
 - to connect students' career/academic aspirations with whole-person development and lifelong learning.

(For details on life planning education, please refer to Booklet 9 and the Guide on Life Planning Education and Career Guidance for Secondary Schools available at:

https://careerguidance.edb.hkedcity.net/edb/export/sites/default/lifeplanning/.pdf/about-careers-guidance/CLP-Guide_full_E.pdf.)

- Schools are encouraged to help students build up their Student Learning Profile (SLP), which records their learning experiences and achievements during their SS years to help them:
 - reflect on their aspiration to plan for further studies or career development; and
 - explore career opportunities or return to study in the future with multiple exit and entry points.

(For details on SLP, please refer to Section 7.5 of the SECG Booklet 7.)

- To facilitate a smooth interface from SS to post-secondary multiple pathways for further studies and work, curriculum leaders and subject teachers at the SS level may make reference to Booklet 9.

8.8 Resources and Support

The following websites provides useful resources and support on enhancing the interfaces for secondary schools' reference:

- Committee on Home-school Co-operation
http://chsc.hk/main.php?lang_id=1
- NSS Subject Choices and the Development of Career Aspirations
http://334.edb.hkedcity.net/doc/eng/Finding_your_color_2010_eng.pdf
- Life-wide Learning
<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/life-wide-learning/index.html>
- Other Learning Experiences
http://cd1.edb.hkedcity.net/cd/lwl/ole/01_intro_01.asp
- Qualification Frameworks
<https://www.hkqf.gov.hk/en/home/index.html>
- Student Learning Profile
http://cd1.edb.hkedcity.net/cd/lwl/ole/SLP/slp_index.asp
- The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – “334” Web Bulletin
<http://334.edb.hkedcity.net/EN/index.php>



Planning of the JS Curriculum for an Effective JS-SS Interface

As Liberal Studies is an interdisciplinary core subject at the senior secondary level that connects the learning experiences of different subjects, a secondary school carried out a curriculum audit by checking, comparing and synthesising how different KLAs/subjects delivered essential LS-related learning elements and implemented whole-school curriculum planning.

Contextual Characteristics

To start with, the school conducted an analysis of the strengths and challenges, the qualities and traits of the students and the school itself with the following considerations:

- Is the junior curriculum planned according to the traits, the uniqueness and qualities of the school and students?
- What are the connections among different disciplines and subjects?
- Is there any missing foundation knowledge of the Liberal Studies curriculum in the JS curriculum?
- Are there any repetitive contents of different subjects?
- Which areas of the foundation knowledge and skills of students need strengthening?
- How can the teaching effectiveness be enhanced through better allocation of resources?

Diversified Strategies Adopted in the Planning of the JS Curriculum

Following the analysis, the school planned the JS curriculum with the following strategies and actions.

Strategies	Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curriculum planning across KLAs/ subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Strengthening students' Chinese writing skills by teaching different genres of writing in the Chinese Language lessons➤ Integrating elements relating to adolescents' personal development and growth in the school curriculum and the

	<p>Ethics and Religious Studies curriculum to avoid overlapping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthening cross-subject collaboration among the panels of Geography, Integrated Science and Liberal Studies in preparing the teaching topic of Environmental Protection
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Strengthening project learning elements in the JS curriculum to build up students' basic research skills for the Independent Enquiry Study (IES) of Liberal Studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building a learning community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Engaging relevant panel chairpersons in the implementation of interdisciplinary planning of the school curriculum ➤ Providing an effective platform for communication and allowing all teachers to share their insights and ideas on the JS curriculum planning on an equal footing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making use of the Other Learning Experiences (OLE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Making use of the morning reading sessions to encourage students to read a range of theme-based materials to enrich their foundation knowledge of different subjects ➤ Organising interdisciplinary learning activities to encourage the whole-school participation, e.g. a theme-based activity called "Life in Hong Kong" (「港一套, 活一套」) organised by the school for introducing students to the cultural development at different stages of Hong Kong

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