

The background of the page is a photograph of a group of children, mostly of Asian descent, playing and laughing with large, colorful balloons. The image is slightly faded and serves as a backdrop for the title text.

MAJOR FINDINGS

Subjects

Chapter 3

MAJOR FINDINGS : Subjects

In the course of QA inspection, assessment of the quality of the learning and teaching of individual subjects was made. *Figure 24* shows the number of schools covered for the subjects inspected at both primary and secondary levels in the 2001/02 academic year:

Figure 24:

Subjects	Number of schools covered		
	Primary	Secondary	Total
Chinese Language	47	26	73
Chinese Literature	-	7	7
Putonghua	8	3	11
English	46	28	74
Mathematics	48	28	76
Physics	-	21	21
Chemistry	-	9	9
Biology	-	25	25
Science	-	30	30
General Studies	50	-	50
Computer	-	16	16
Chinese History	-	10	10
History	-	14	14
Economic and Public Affairs	-	9	9
Economics	-	12	12
Geography	-	19	19
Social Studies	-	5	5
Art and Design /Art and Craft	31	17	48
Music	16	9	25
Physical Education	46	28	74
Business-related Subjects	-	13	13
Technology-related Subjects	-	11	11

Findings pertaining to the effectiveness of the learning and teaching of individual subjects at the primary and secondary levels of the schools inspected in 2001/02 are presented in the following sections.²

The subjects inspected in the primary schools are reported first, followed by those in the secondary schools.³

Primary Schools


3.1 Chinese Language

Key Strengths

- In most of the schools inspected, the operation within the subject panel was smooth. Panel meetings were regularly convened and guidance notes on Chinese Language teaching or handbooks for teachers were provided to facilitate teachers' work. Some schools promoted peer lesson observation or collaborative lesson preparation to enhance the quality of learning and teaching.
- Schools placed due emphasis on the four skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. Besides, the elements of cultural knowledge, moral and civic education, etc., were infused in the subject curriculum. Some schools also introduced materials like classical poetry and prose, and implemented various language programmes such as "Effective Teaching of Chinese Characters" and "Whole Language Writing Project".
- Various kinds of extra-curricular activities, e.g. verse-speaking contests, essay-writing competitions and Chinese calligraphy contests were organised by most of the schools to supplement their formal

² As only four special schools were inspected in 2001/02 and in view of the very different nature of the four special schools, no attempt has been made to present the findings with respect to the performance of individual subjects in these special schools.

³ Since the number of schools covered was two or less for the subject of Travel & Tourism, it would be misleading to infer the general quality of learning and teaching of these subjects from the inspection findings. Hence, no attempt has been made to present the findings pertaining to the effectiveness of learning and teaching of this subject.



curriculum and promote pupils' interest in the subject. Pupils actively took part in such activities and achieved good results in recitation contests.

- Generally speaking, teachers had a good grasp of subject knowledge and teaching methodology. They were conscientious in teaching and well-prepared for lessons. Most of the lessons were delivered systematically with specific learning objectives. Learning activities in general aligned with the learning objectives. Exposition was clear and smooth, and diction was properly used. Appropriate encouragement and praise were given to pupils to reinforce their good learning behaviour. Teachers were good at maintaining class discipline. They were caring and amiable and had a harmonious relationship with pupils.
- Most of the pupils were attentive and class discipline was good. They were interested in learning and willing to participate in class activities. A small number of senior class pupils were capable of self-learning. It was commendable that they would do preparation before class as required by teachers, and take notes in class on their own initiative.
- In most of the schools inspected, assignments were designed according to the learning focuses with suitable frequency and quantity to enhance pupils' language proficiency. Most of the pupils were serious in doing their assignments and making corrections. Similarly, most of the teachers were conscientious in marking pupils' assignments and able to follow up on pupils' corrections.
- Most of the schools had put in place clear assessment policies for teachers' reference. Assessment contents were in line with the teaching focuses. They covered all teaching areas and were effective in assessing pupils' language proficiency.

Areas for Improvement

- Some panel heads did not play their roles effectively in leading and monitoring curriculum development. Programme plans generally lacked a clear focus of development and success criteria were vague. Findings of the review had not been effectively used for revising the work plans. Items discussed at panel meetings were largely on reporting routine matters, with inadequate attention paid to curriculum development, teaching strategies or pupils' learning.

- Although schools had adapted their curriculum, they failed to plan the curriculum as a whole and did not take account of the development and continuity of curriculum across different levels. More systematic guidance in reading skills and strategies should be provided to pupils. The Chinese extensive reading and other reading activities should be promoted so as to enhance pupils' reading ability and interest. With respect to essay writing, specific learning objectives to enhance pupils' writing ability by stages should be set.
- Class teaching was mainly teacher-oriented. Although questioning techniques were used, teaching was mainly unidirectional and textbook-based. Most of the teachers needed to improve their questioning techniques since they failed to follow up on pupils' responses, ask probing questions or go further into the topic to stimulate pupils' thinking. The questions they raised were too simple to provide opportunities for pupils to analyse, generalise or evaluate, thus failing to develop pupils' thinking skills. Some teachers failed to organise a variety of learning activities to cater for pupils' needs, nor did they adjust the pace and strategies of teaching according to pupils' responses. Some teachers were unable to grasp the main points of the learning materials and provide detailed guidance on reading. Teaching of handwriting and word/phrase explanation at junior levels should be strengthened.
- Interaction in class learning was inadequate. Pupils seldom took the initiative to ask questions. They needed to be more active and inquisitive in learning.
- The assignments given by some schools failed to develop pupils' thinking and self-learning skills effectively as they were mainly reinforcement exercises on basic knowledge of language. In nearly half of the schools inspected, pupils performed unsatisfactorily in essay writing. Their work generally lacked rich content, and the organisation of paragraphs as well as expression of phrases and sentences had yet to be improved.
- The composition tasks in examination papers in some schools were heavily guided and thus could not accurately assess pupils' writing ability. Teachers often failed to utilise the assessment information to provide a basis for revising the curriculum and adapting teaching strategies.
- On remedial teaching, most of the teachers were unable to adapt

teaching materials and strategies to provide appropriate guidance to address pupils' weaknesses in the learning of the subject.

Priorities for Action

- Teachers should provide more opportunities for pupils' active learning. Pupils' needs and learning objectives should be considered when organising class activities. Activities such as discussion, sharing and collaborative learning could be used more extensively to enhance pupils' generic skills. Teachers should also encourage pupils to foster their self-learning ability through leisure reading, project learning and extra-curricular activities.
- With regard to curriculum adaptation, due attention should be given to the development and continuity of the curriculum across different levels. On the basis of the extensive reading schemes, more guidance on reading and a great variety of reading activities could be provided to encourage pupils to read widely so that they will enrich knowledge and get ideas for writing. Consequently, their writing ability could be enhanced.
- With regard to the marking of pupils' essays, apart from correcting words, phrases and sentence structures, concrete feedback should be given on such aspects as content text, structure and expression of ideas through the use of suitable phrases and sentences, so as to help pupils make improvement.
- The use of IT in the teaching of the subject needed strengthening. Teachers should formulate specific strategies according to the development and needs of the subject to promote IT in teaching.

3.2

Putonghua


Key Strengths

- With regard to the curriculum development, most schools had organised various kinds of extra-curricular activities to enhance pupils' interests in learning Putonghua. Pupils were encouraged to take part in external verse-speaking or speech contests in Putonghua. A quarter of the schools inspected got good results in the solo verse-speaking contests of the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival.

- Schools attached importance to the professional development of the subject teachers. Besides encouraging the teachers to attend training courses relevant to the subject, professional exchanges among teachers were promoted. About 40% of the schools inspected conducted peer lesson observation.
- Teachers were amiable and conscientious in teaching. Lessons were well prepared and teachers were able to make good use of teaching aids to facilitate teaching. Positive reinforcement was used to bolster up pupils' confidence in learning. Classroom management was good. Some teachers were able to make use of pupils' life experiences in teaching and organise various activities to facilitate learning. As regards classroom language, Putonghua was used as the medium of instruction. Teachers were able to use the language to give clear presentations and instructions in a natural tone.
- Pupils had positive learning attitudes and were well-behaved in class. They were attentive and followed teachers' instructions. Most of the junior class pupils were quite responsive to teachers' questions. Some senior class pupils were able to apply their prior knowledge in learning. Pupils possessed good listening skills and could understand teachers' instructions and presentations. Their performance in recitation was satisfactory.
- A majority of the schools inspected were able to work out assessment items in accordance with the teaching objectives and subject content. Clear guidelines for setting assessment papers were available for teachers' reference. The assessment papers were quite comprehensive with appropriate distribution of marks.
- Schools could generally make good use of the subject grant for Putonghua and provide sufficient resources for the development of the subject. Individual schools inspected had allocated additional resources from the Capacity Enhancement Grant to organise Puthonghua classes in verse-speaking, story-telling and drama outside school hours to provide pupils with more opportunities for learning the subject.

Areas for Improvement

- In curriculum planning, teachers in some schools had tailored their teaching materials to cater for pupils' varied learning abilities, yet there was a lack of a comprehensive set of tailoring principles and



teachers failed to consider pupils' interests and needs when selecting teaching materials. There were also no specific learning targets for the listening and speaking skills for different levels for teachers' reference. Coverage of the curriculum review was not comprehensive enough. Neither were there any suggestions for improvement and follow-up plans after the review.

- In class teaching, most teachers practised listening or speaking exercises with the pupils based on the materials in the teaching kits. Oral practices mainly focused on sentence patterns. Teachers failed to use teaching materials flexibly to meet pupils' learning needs and interests. In addition, there were insufficient group activities to provide pupils with more opportunities to speak in Putonghua and cultivate a more lively learning atmosphere. Some teachers failed to assign appropriate homework to reinforce pupils' learning. The oral proficiency in Putonghua of some teachers also needed to be enhanced.
- In answering questions, most of the P4 to P6 pupils could only give simple responses with short phrases. Their skills and confidence in speaking Putonghua needed to be strengthened.
- In assessing pupils' listening comprehension skills, the schools put more emphasis on textual memory for senior class pupils, while assessments in other areas like connotative distinction, textual summary and generalisation, etc., were inadequate. Moreover, most schools did not have specific assessment criteria for oral tests.

Priorities for Action

- In the areas of curriculum planning and development, some of the schools inspected had adapted the curriculum with consideration to pupils' learning abilities and the teaching time available. However, clear principles of curriculum adaptation should be laid down. In specifying such principles, schools should spell out clear learning targets for pupils' listening and speaking skills with consideration to pupils' learning needs and interests. In curriculum review, teachers should conduct a thorough review of such areas as the teaching contents, teaching strategies, assessment items and methods based on the requirements of the subject. Follow-up plans to enhance the quality of learning and teaching should be drawn up.
- In class teaching, teachers should employ teaching materials flexibly

and provide more opportunities for pupils to listen to and speak Putonghua. In junior classes, teachers could organise activities such as singing songs or role-playing to enhance pupils' learning interests. In upper primary classes, teachers could reorganise the teaching materials to cater for pupils' abilities and needs. They could also design oral practice exercises in the form of situational dialogues in daily context and develop pupils' communication skills by simple dialogues based on the words and sentence patterns which they had learnt. Teachers could also organise more group activities to provide more Putonghua speaking opportunities for the promotion of peer interaction and the development of a more lively learning environment.

- In assessing pupils' performance, teachers should work out specific objectives and requirements of assessment. Pupils' performance could be assessed through observation, assignments and listening to the oral practices recorded by pupils, etc. Prompt feedback to pupils should be given so that they could identify their weaknesses and make improvement accordingly.

3.3

English Language


Key Strengths

- In more than half of the schools inspected, the subject panel was properly organised and its work smoothly coordinated. Roles of panel heads were clearly defined. Level coordinators were appointed to facilitate coordination at different levels. Comprehensive documents including Memorandum for English outlining administration procedures and aspects related to teaching of the subject were prepared for teachers' reference in about half of the schools inspected.
- In more than half of the schools inspected, the practices of peer lesson observation and collaborative lesson preparation were exploited to promote experience sharing among teachers.
- English extensive reading schemes were commonly implemented across levels to nurture pupils' interest in reading. The recruitment of Native-speaking English Teachers (NETs) in a few schools helped to integrate the teaching of phonics into the curriculum so as to develop pupils' phonological awareness and promote pupils' learning.

- In more than half of the schools inspected, commendable efforts were made to increase pupils' exposure to English language learning and to complement the formal curriculum by introducing a variety of English-related activities on a regular basis. Pupils were encouraged to participate in the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival and some of them obtained pleasing results.
- Most of the lessons observed were well prepared and systematically conducted with clear teaching objectives. English was used as the medium of instruction, thus providing pupils with more opportunities to use the language in a classroom context. In more than half of the lessons observed, good teacher-pupil rapport was established, which facilitated the management of classroom discipline. Teaching aids were effectively used to facilitate teaching and learning. In general, teachers were patient, responsible and encouraging. Teachers' instructions and demonstrations were clear. Due encouragement and praise were used to reinforce learning.
- Most pupils were attentive in class and were willing to participate in learning activities. In general, they were well behaved and their assignments were neatly done.
- Adequate amount of homework was assigned regularly to consolidate and reinforce classroom learning. Pupil assignments were conscientiously marked and there was proper follow-up on corrections.
- Clear assessment guidelines were drawn up and observed by teachers. Assessment papers adequately covered the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. Good attempts were made to contextualise the assessment papers. In general, questions set were compatible with pupils' abilities.
- A variety of English language teaching resources were available to facilitate teaching. They were systematically kept and a resource list was compiled for teachers' easy reference.

Areas for Improvement

- In most of the schools inspected, the monitoring mechanism was ineffective. Regular review of the implemented curriculum and evaluation of the effectiveness of learning and teaching was not systematically done to improve curriculum planning. Though channels



of communication including formal and informal panel meetings were employed for professional exchange of information and ideas, there was a lack of in-depth discussion on issues related to teaching methodology, pupils' learning progress and the current trend of curriculum development in panel meetings.

- In more than half of the schools inspected, the curriculum planning for remedial teaching programmes was weak in terms of meeting the interests, abilities and needs of the less able pupils. Adaptation should be made in teaching plans and teaching strategies so as to cater for the varied needs of pupils.
- IT was not widely and effectively used to facilitate teaching and to stimulate pupils' interest in learning in most of the schools inspected. The use of IT to facilitate English language learning in an interactive manner should be strengthened.
- In more than half of the schools inspected, lessons were teacher-centred. Undue emphasis was placed on the mechanical drilling of language forms. There were insufficient opportunities for pupil-pupil interaction thus pupils were deprived of opportunities for purposeful communication with peers. More fun-filled activities such as games, singing songs and group discussions should be introduced to enhance motivation and to encourage pupils to use English in authentic contexts.
- Pupils' speaking skills were generally weak and they lacked confidence in using English to communicate. Project work was rarely assigned to develop pupils' generic skills. More opportunities should be given to help pupils improve their oral communication skills. Pupils' language development strategies and generic skills also needed strengthening.
- In more than half of the schools inspected, too much emphasis was placed on mechanical language drills focusing on the mastery of basic language forms. Opportunities for genuine language use were generally lacking. Equal emphasis should be placed on both language practice and language use when setting assignments for pupils.
- More than half of the schools inspected did not make full use of the assessment information to improve learning and teaching. In some schools inspected, there was too much emphasis on summative assessment for grading purposes. To facilitate learning, formative assessment should be used widely and quality feedback, verbal or written, should be given to inform pupils of their strengths and

weaknesses and how to improve.

- Very few schools inspected made good use of the school premises to set up an English corner and to display English-related learning materials to increase pupils' exposure to English.

Priorities for Action

- In addition to the English extensive reading schemes, various reading programmes and award schemes can be introduced to sustain pupils' interest in reading. Besides story books, a variety of reading materials on different topics embracing different text-types can be provided in the school library or class library to widen pupils' exposure to reading materials. In addition, a reading record can be kept for teachers to monitor pupils' reading and for pupils to review their own progress in reading. In order to create a reading culture, the whole school has to become involved. The role of the teacher librarian is vital in collaborating with teachers in establishing a favourable reading environment within the school.
- To foster independent and lifelong learning, schools should integrate IT into the curriculum and encourage pupils to explore different sources of information on the Internet.
- Schools are encouraged to make good use of project learning in authentic contexts so that pupils can develop communication skills and extend their language learning experiences beyond the classroom. Other generic skills such as collaboration skills can be developed.

3.4

Mathematics

Major Strengths

- In a majority of the schools inspected, the coordination of the subject panel was systematic and panel affairs ran smoothly. These schools had put in place a mechanism of exercise books inspection. They had prepared a memorandum for teachers, giving them guidelines on class teaching, marking of exercise books and vetting of test/examination papers. A number of schools started peer lesson observation and collaborative lesson preparation to facilitate professional exchanges among teachers.


- The schools inspected organised subject-related extra-curricular activities to promote pupils' interest in learning mathematics. Over half of the schools organised mathematics contests and quizzes on speed computation, and the majority of the schools participated in the inter-school mathematics competition.
- A majority of the teachers prepared their lessons well. There were well-defined teaching objectives, clear exposition and systematic teaching steps. Teachers could use teaching aids to facilitate pupils' understanding of the lessons. Teachers were friendly and they exercised effective classroom management, and there was good rapport between teachers and pupils. Teaching performance in the 'Shape & Space' Dimension was relatively better.
- Pupils were attentive and showed interest in learning. They responded to teachers' questions and followed instructions in completing learning activities and assigned classwork. A majority of the pupils had mastered basic computational skills, and in particular, their performance in the 'Shape & Space' Dimension was relatively better.
- Homework assignments, in terms of quantity and frequency, were considered to be appropriate in a majority of the schools. Teachers generally marked homework assignments with care and followed-up on pupils' corrections.
- The frequency of tests and examinations was also appropriate. The scope of test/examination papers could cover most of the teaching contents. Most schools put in place suitable procedures for vetting text/examination papers and prepared guidelines for the setting and marking of text/examination papers.
- A majority of the schools had adequate quantity of teaching aids. Catalogues of teaching aids were prepared for teachers' reference and the teaching aids were properly stored. Some schools even uploaded teaching materials onto the school intranet to facilitate sharing of resources.

Areas for Improvement

- Panel meetings were mainly for allocation of duties and reporting purposes. Schools had not made good use of panel meetings to review the curriculum and the teaching process in order to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Furthermore, the annual

programme plans in more than half of the schools inspected were not forward looking and lacked concrete evaluation criteria.

- On the whole, curriculum planning was not satisfactory. Schools mainly used the teaching schemes provided by the textbook publishers and rarely adapted the curriculum to suit the standards and interests of their pupils. Besides, schools seldom introduced curriculum initiatives to train and develop pupils' reasoning and problem solving skills. A majority of the schools needed to improve their curriculum adaptation and adopt appropriate teaching strategies for remedial teaching. Teachers seldom used diagnostic tests to find out the weaknesses of pupils, but simply 're-taught' the lessons again. Support for the less able pupils was not adequate.
- A majority of the lessons were teacher-centred and opportunities for pupils' interactive learning were not sufficient. The questioning techniques of some teachers needed improvement. These teachers did not effectively use open-ended questions to guide pupils to think and to encourage pupils to express their ideas. Furthermore, a majority of the teachers needed to develop their IT skills in teaching, and there was also room for improvement in the teaching of the 'Algebra' Dimension.
- Pupils were passive in their learning. They seldom raised questions or expressed their opinions during lessons. Their skills in problem solving, project learning and the use of IT needed to be developed, and their performance in the 'Measures' Dimension was weaker than other Dimensions.
- Homework assignments lacked variety. The homework of most schools mainly concentrated on the use of computational problems. Project work or inquiry activities were seldom used to evaluate pupils' learning of mathematical concepts. Besides, teachers generally emphasised the correctness of answers when marking pupils' assignments and overlooked pupils' accurate application and presentation of mathematical concepts.
- Assessment methods also lacked variety. Schools tended to use paper and pen tests and rarely used other assessment modes, such as observation or project work to assess pupils' learning outcomes. Over half of the schools inspected put much emphasis on the assessment of computational skills in the 'Number' Dimension. In addition, more than half of the schools could not make use of assessment



information to review teaching effectiveness so as to enhance the quality of learning and teaching.

- Subject-related reference materials for teachers were not sufficient. References available in schools were mainly supplementary exercises and textbooks from different local publishers. Reference books on teaching pedagogy were very limited. Also, schools had not acquired enough interesting and recreational subject-related reading materials to promote pupils' interest in learning mathematics and to develop their reading habits.
- The extra-curricular activities organised by schools were mainly related to computational skills. It was advisable for schools to run a variety of interesting activities to cater for the varied needs of the pupils, including those not good at calculation.

Priorities for Action

- When devising the annual programme plan, the implementation measures should target at the needs of pupils apart from addressing the school's major concerns. There should be clear and concrete evaluation criteria in the annual programme plan. Schools are also advised to review at the end of the school year the effectiveness of the programme plan and use the evaluation results to plan the development of the subject in the next school year.
- For curriculum planning and organisation, schools need to adapt the curriculum to suit the interests and abilities of the pupils, and to incorporate the elements of reasoning and problem solving. Furthermore, teachers should devise suitable teaching strategies and provide opportunities for pupils to express their understanding.
- To develop pupils' abilities in using IT, schools need to incorporate IT into the mathematics curriculum and make use of the available IT facilities for interactive learning.
- Regarding the variety of homework assignments, schools should replace part of the computational practice with project work so that pupils could be encouraged to read relevant books and develop their IT skills in gathering information and compiling reports.

Key Strengths

- Compared with previous years, panel management had shown improvement in more schools. Strong leadership, good division of duties and a shared sense of purpose supported with clear documentation and procedures characterised the successful subject panels of a few schools.
- Many schools enriched their formal curriculum suitably with a variety of out-door learning activities and hence contributed to all-round development of their pupils.
- Teachers were generally keen on teaching and they had a good command of subject knowledge. Lessons were planned with clear and appropriate objectives. Teaching approach in those effective lessons was heuristic, fostering the spirit of enquiry. Relevant teaching materials and teaching aids were used to enrich the instructional activities and facilitate pupils' understanding. Resources on IT were used more frequently for learning and teaching than before. Instructional activities always provided opportunities for group and individual work including hands-on and minds-on experience. Most of the teachers were able to establish classroom rules. Some teachers were also able to create and maintain a good atmosphere for effective learning.
- Pupils were attentive and disciplined in class. Many of them were enthusiastic in responding to teachers' questions. The majority of pupils showed good skills in observation and classification when enquiring the topics being learnt. Generally, pupils demonstrated curiosity and interest in the natural world. They displayed a positive attitude towards the environment and respected the Chinese culture. Pupils showed mutual respect for one another in group discussions and were willing to share their views and experiences with peers. Most of the pupils produced work of good quality. Some senior class pupils were able to apply IT in information search.
- Comprehensive guidelines on setting assignments were usually produced for teachers' reference. Assignments were carefully marked and returned to pupils promptly in most of the schools inspected.

- Most schools inspected had a comprehensive range of teaching resources to support instructional activities.

Areas for Improvement

- Nearly all schools adopted the schemes of work provided by the publishers with insufficient adaptation to meet pupils' needs and abilities. Cross-curricular themes were rarely incorporated into the school-based General Studies curriculum. Not many schools stressed the importance of developing healthy lifestyles for their pupils. The implementation of the school-based curriculum was not well monitored in many schools. Findings gathered from the review of learning and teaching of the subject as well as pupils' assessment were not fully used to produce constructive changes.
- For the lessons which were judged to be less effective, teachers usually adopted a didactic teaching style. Teachers' questions mainly focused on the checking of pupils' understanding rather than on the development of their higher-order thinking skills. Instructional activities overemphasised the acquisition of knowledge at the expense of the development of skills and attitudes.
- More than half of the lessons were characterised with speedy teaching tempo resulting in inadequate pupil participation and the lack of time for consolidation. However, such a phenomenon seldom inspired the subject panels, even in whole-day schools, to review their time-tabling arrangements or teaching schedules.
- Assignments were mainly designed for consolidation purpose. Creative and thought-provoking types were insufficient in a majority of the schools. Assessment of pupils' progress mainly focused on areas of knowledge while assessment of pupils' skills and attitude was not common. Due to the lack of clearly-defined assessment objectives, the quality of questions on current events was generally unsatisfactory in those schools which administered assessment of this type. Only less than half of the schools inspected assigned project learning to foster pupils' self-learning skills and attitudes. However, most of the pupils merely finished their work by collecting information from newspapers or related websites. They seldom received constructive feedback from their teachers.

Priorities for Action


- When drawing up schemes of work, teachers should adapt their curriculum in the light of their school context such as pupils' abilities, needs and interests as well as school facilities and time-tabling arrangements. Teachers should also include appropriate cross-curricular themes and stress the importance of developing a healthy lifestyle in their school-based curriculum.
- To bring about more effective teaching, teachers should adopt a wider range of teaching strategies to foster critical thinking and enquiry skills. Furthermore, there should be more collaboration and professional sharing among teachers.
- Subject panels should establish clearly defined procedures and effective tools to monitor and evaluate the implementation of their school-based General Studies curriculum and assessment policy. Assessment information and findings collected in the review of learning and teaching should be used effectively to produce constructive changes.
- Teachers should set meaningful homework for their pupils. They should de-emphasise rote learning and design interesting and challenging tasks for their pupils. Subject panels should evaluate the effectiveness of their assessment policy. The assessment of pupil learning should cover the three domains of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the subject. Quality feedback should be given to pupils for making improvement. Teachers should reach consensus on the objectives and methods of project learning to help pupils develop a positive attitude towards and capabilities in self-learning.

3.6

Art and Craft

Key Strengths

- All the learning areas of the Art and Craft curriculum were covered with proper integration of cross-curricular elements.
- The teaching objectives were clear. Teachers were conscientious in lesson preparation. Presentation was systematic with clear instructions. Teachers were able to make use of praise and




encouragement to reinforce pupils' learning. Classroom management was satisfactory.

- Pupils were conscientious and attentive in class. They showed interest in the art activities and were capable of mastering the basic techniques of various media in art production. They actively participated in the extra-curricular activities (ECA) of the subject.
- Management of teaching resources was good. Most schools were able to make use of the school campus to display pupils' artworks to cultivate an artistic atmosphere. Some schools uploaded pupils' artworks to the school homepage, thus fostering sharing among pupils.

Areas for Improvement

- The organisation and coherence of the curriculum were generally weak. Some schools failed to adjust the teaching periods flexibly to meet the requirements of different topics. In most of the curriculum plans observed, little effort was made to specify explicit teaching focuses on art appreciation, and the infusion of IT elements in support of learning was also inadequate. Knowledge and application of learning strategies for pupils were not given due attention. Though a variety of ECA were provided for pupils in school, visits and other learning activities outside school were seldom organised.
- There was inadequate review on programme plans in most schools. In-depth discussion on the learning and teaching effectiveness was generally lacking and the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the subject had yet to be formulated in most schools. Curriculum review and monitoring as well as professional development for teachers needed to be strengthened.
- Some of the subject teachers failed to employ a wide range of enquiry-based learning activities to help pupils learn by discovery or exploration on their own. Questioning and discussion were generally adopted in teaching. However, teachers' questioning techniques had yet to be enhanced. In some of the lessons observed, visual materials were either inadequate or not fully utilised. The teaching of art appreciation lacked in-depth guidance.
- Pupils' mastery of basic art knowledge was fair. In painting activities, most of them preferred to use pencils in sketching. Techniques of




using colour and brushwork were not flexibly employed. Pupils' abilities in respect of design and creation were inadequate and their art appreciation ability had yet to be enhanced.

- Undue emphasis was placed on the assessment of pupils' performance in art production. Assessment criteria and post-assessment feedback were inadequate.
- There was a lack of teaching resources in some schools, thus affecting the implementation of the curriculum.

Priorities for Action

- Due attention should be paid to reviewing the curriculum and teaching of the subject. Programme plans should be revised according to the findings of the review. Schools should enhance the monitoring of curriculum implementation as well as the learning and teaching through such measures as scrutiny of assignments and lesson observation. As some of the teachers do not have a good mastery of subject knowledge, schools should organise school-based training to cater for teachers' needs and implement collaborative lesson preparation and peer lesson observation so as to enhance the communication, collaboration and sharing among teachers.
- To develop pupils' generic skills, schools are advised to integrate IT elements into the curriculum and to adopt Reading to Learn and Project Learning as the strategies for learning and teaching of the subject. Teachers' questioning techniques should be improved and more efforts should be made to encourage pupils to express their views and feelings, so as to enhance their communication skills. Teachers should adopt a wide range of teaching activities to inspire pupils' thinking. They should also develop pupils' skills at generating ideas from collection and application of visual information, thus cultivating their creative thinking abilities.
- Teachers should be better equipped for the teaching of art appreciation with explicit teaching focuses and well-prepared materials. Teaching strategies should be appropriately formulated for the teaching of art appreciation. Teaching skills should also be improved with a better use of various audio-visual equipment and visual materials, so as to enhance the quality of teaching in art appreciation. In alignment with the teaching in art appreciation, schools are advised to make more use of the community resources to




organise art-related visits and other learning activities outside schools. Review on the teaching resources should be conducted regularly to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum is well supported with adequate resources both in terms of quality and quantity.

- Learning in visual language should be intensified in the teaching of art production and art appreciation, particularly in the teaching of colour. Pupils should be encouraged to create paintings directly with colours and explore the expressive quality of colours and brushstrokes.
- Schools should adopt various assessment modes in assessing pupils' performance in different aspects of learning. Efforts should be made to promote exchange of views among teachers in respect of the modes, content and criteria of assessment. The information generated from the assessment should be used for providing feedback to learning and teaching. Regular review on assessment of pupils' learning should be conducted.

3.7 Music

Strengths

- Nearly all the schools inspected organised a good variety of extra-curricular activities, including choirs, melodica ensembles, Chinese and Western orchestras, percussion bands, music appreciation groups, and performances in the community. These activities helped develop pupils' potentials in music, cultivate their ability in music appreciation and enrich their learning experiences. In organising these activities, schools were able to make good use of external resources such as the Quality Education Fund and Capacity Enhancement Grant to employ peripatetic teachers for instrumental classes and orchestras.
- Most of the teachers were conscientious, friendly and able to encourage their pupils to reinforce good performances. Some of them demonstrated good singing and accompanying techniques. They were able to make good use of the piano, rhythm cards, lined-music board, classroom percussion instruments and hi-fi systems during lessons. They demonstrated effectively in class, guided pupils in learning and made their lessons musical.
- A majority of the pupils participated actively in class. Some of them



had a good sense of rhythm and showed confidence in participating in music activities. A small number of the outstanding pupils were able to sight-sing accurately and sing two-part songs and rounds with good intonation.

- Half of the schools adopted various modes of assessment, including observation, practical test and written examination. In order to have a fuller understanding of the pupils' abilities, teachers from individual schools assigned pupils to write concert reports, undertake projects and keep records of their own music activities. Teachers were able to give appropriate feedback to pupils for continuous improvement.

Areas for Improvement

- There was room for improvement in curriculum planning for over half of the schools. Teachers were unable to organise the curriculum according to pupils' abilities and interests as well as conditions of the schools. They seldom designed appropriate music activities according to the teaching objectives of the different modules. In addition, curriculum management was weak. Teachers should share their teaching experiences, evaluate the curriculum and discuss problems encountered in learning and teaching during panel meetings so as to design an appropriate curriculum and annual plan to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Pupils' skills in creativity, imagination, collaboration and music appreciation should be strengthened. Teachers should organise different types of music activities, such as listening, music and movement, instrumental playing and sound project in class to further develop these skills.
- It was uncommon for pupils to use information technology for interactive learning in class. Strategic plans for using information technology in learning activities were not incorporated into the scheme of work. Teachers' knowledge on the application of information technology in the teaching of music was generally inadequate.
- More than half of the schools did not have a suitable marking scheme for practical tests. Teachers should set the assessment criteria according to the teaching objectives of each level so as to make a closer relationship between assessment and learning. This would also lead to fairer assessment on pupils' performance.

Priorities for Action

- Since the majority of the pupils enjoy participating in music activities, teachers should develop their creativity, imagination, collaboration skills as well as music appreciation skills through different learning activities, including listening, music and movement, instrumental playing and sound project in class. Teachers should also pay attention to the learning of music elements and concepts, such as pitch, rhythm, dynamic, metre, and form so as to raise pupils' abilities in singing, music reading, sight singing and instrumental playing.
- In order to apply information technology to music lessons, teachers should attend relevant training programmes and share their teaching experiences. They should design interactive learning activities based on the teaching objectives of the different modules in the scheme of work and take advantage of IT teaching resources, such as music notation software, CD ROMs and information from the Internet. Teachers should also evaluate the lessons and adjust the scheme of work for better accommodation of IT in teaching.

3.8

Physical Education

Key Strengths

- Subject coordination was systematic in most schools. Panel heads and subject teachers generally cooperated well. Their job descriptions were clearly defined and subject management was smooth.
- Nearly all schools organised suitable extra-curricular activities in sports in order to supplement the Physical Education (PE) curriculum. Pupils were encouraged to participate in various kinds of physical activities and sports events inside and outside schools to develop their potentials.
- More than half of the schools made good use of external resources including the Quality Education Fund and the Capacity Enhancement Grant for subject development. Instructors were employed to develop various PE-related activities in schools such as dancing, swimming and various ball games. As such, pupils were given more exposure to different learning experiences.

- All PE teachers observed were subject-trained. Most teachers were enthusiastic. They could effectively adopt group teaching and individual coaching in the lesson. Teaching was delivered systematically. Teachers paid due attention to safety issues to ensure that pupils learnt in a safe environment.
- Almost all pupils enjoyed PE lessons and showed keen interest in class activities. They were attentive, well disciplined and able to follow teachers' instructions. Pupils in the junior levels performed well in fundamental movements.
- Most schools could make good use of their sports facilities. The venues and facilities of more than half of the schools inspected were satisfactory. Adequate supply and regular replenishment of equipment were observed.

Areas for Improvement

- Most schools did not organise and plan the PE curriculum in a systematic manner. The teaching contents were not comprehensive and continuity across levels was weak. Schools should strengthen the motor and sports skills of pupils and develop their generic skills, such as collaboration skills and creativity. IT could motivate and empower pupils to learn. However, the application of IT in PE lessons was still at a preliminary stage in most schools. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum should be strengthened.
- More than half of the teachers failed to grasp pupils' learning characteristics and teach them the knack required for the development of motor and sports skills, thus adversely affecting the learning progress and teaching pace. Schools should encourage teachers to attend professional development programmes including seminars on curriculum development and training on sports skills. Moreover, peer lesson observation was practised in only a few schools. It should be promoted to enhance mutual sharing on teaching and to improve the pedagogical skills.
- Consistent assessment policies and mechanisms had not been established in most schools. Appropriate weightings on various learning elements had not been devised. Assessment of pupils' learning was mainly on the mastery of sports skills. Physical fitness, attitudes and PE knowledge were not given due concern. The assessment mechanism had yet to be improved.

- Schools did not make full use of the assessment information to identify the strengths and weaknesses of pupils so as to adjust their teaching programmes and strategies. Moreover, teachers seldom gave feedback to pupils to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching.
- The physical fitness of senior class pupils was only satisfactory. In order to further develop their physical fitness, schools should open up their sports facilities before school and during recess and provide equipment such as rattan hoops, ropes, shuttlecock etc., for pupils to play with.
- Most schools did not provide pupils with adequate information about current development in sports. Schools were encouraged to inform pupils of the latest sports news and events taken place inside and outside schools.

Priorities for Action

- Schools should develop a balanced school-based PE curriculum in line with the curriculum reform. The curriculum should emphasise cultivating pupils' generic skills, positive values and attitudes.
- Planning and management of the PE curriculum should be strengthened. At present, the duties of panel heads focus mainly on administration. Greater emphasis should be placed on developing the curriculum leadership of the panel heads and monitoring teaching effectiveness.
- Schools should promote various physical activities and introduce the concepts of "life-style physical activities" to pupils.
- Pupils should be encouraged to make good use of the library resources. Various sports websites could be provided in the schools' website for reference. Teachers could guide pupils to collect learning materials from the Internet so as to enhance learning effectiveness.