Quality Assurance Division
Education Bureau

QA

Inspection Annual Report
2009/10

Contents

Acronyms

APASO	Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes
ApL	Applied Learning
ASP	Annual School Plan
BAFS	Business, Accounting and Financial Studies
CDC	Curriculum Development Council
CLP	Collaborative Lesson Planning
DI	Differentiated Instruction
DSS	Direct Subsidy Scheme
ECA	Extra-curricular Activities
EDB	Education Bureau
ESR	External School Review
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IES	Independent Enquiry Studies
IH	Integrated Humanities
IMC	Incorporated Management Committee
IT	Information Technology
IRTP	Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme
KLA	Key Learning Area
KPM	Key Performance Measures
LS	Liberal Studies
MCE	Moral and Civic Education
MCNE	Moral, Civic and National Education
NCS	Non-Chinese Speaking
NSS	New Senior Secondary
OLE	Other Learning Experiences
P–I–E	Planning–Implementation–Evaluation
QAI	Quality Assurance Inspection
SCT	Small Class Teaching
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SDA	School Development and Accountability
SDP	School Development Plan
SHS	Stakeholder Surveys
SLP	Student Learning Profile
SMC	School Management Committee
SR	School Report
SSE	School Self-evaluation
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
TSA	Territory-wide System Assessment

Executive Summary

The purpose of conducting ESR by the EDB is to promote the SDA framework and enhance the internalisation of SSE in schools for continuous development. In the new ESR cycle, a school-specific and focused mode is adopted in assessing school performance. The new ESR cycle for primary schools began in September of the 2008/09 school year and that for secondary and special schools commenced a year later. There are a total of 140 schools taking part in ESR in the 2009/10 school year including 60 primary, 73 secondary and 7 special schools. For details concerning schools undergoing ESR in the 2009/10 school year, please refer to Appendix 1.

This report adopts the P–I–E cycle as the framework in reporting schools' continuous development, planning and implementation of curriculum and the work of student support. In this theme-based report, schools' concerns in recent years, particularly in the implementation of the NSS curriculum, assessment for learning and catering for learner diversity, are elaborated and presented in individual chapters. Gists of this report, from Chapters 2 to 5, are highlighted below.

<u>Major Findings of ESR</u>
(1) Schools' Sustainable Development

The performance of primary, secondary and special schools, as indicated by the key ESR findings in this school year, is generally good. Schools show a good grasp of the key concept of underpinning SSE and can implement the cycle of P–I–E to sustain the continuous development of schools. Almost all schools are able to closely align planning with their vision and mission to formulate their major concerns of the development cycle in order to achieve the goals for student learning and development. Most schools have formulated clear procedures, adopting some major elements for evaluation, such as evaluation tools, success criteria and evidence collected to evaluate their work collaboratively.

The culture of self-evaluation in schools is now taking root. In order to achieve greater success, some noticeable areas could be taken into consideration. These include schools being more focused and specific in the formulation of major concerns, consistently implementing the major concerns with concrete plans and avoiding setting too many aims. During the evaluation stage, considerable emphasis could be placed on the focus of major concerns and problems encountered. Moreover, more attention

could be paid to the cycle of P–I–E, particularly from the evaluation to the planning stage, so as to formulate appropriate strategies in the coming school development cycle.

(2)　School-based Curriculum

Rich and diversified school-based curricula that give sufficient emphasis to student learning inside and outside the classroom are implemented.　This extends student learning, develops their potential and nurtures their generic skills, values and attitudes. Schools promote various professional development activities for teachers so as to enhance the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning and teaching.　Some common practices that schools usually adopt are seeking support from different external professional organisations, making use of CLP and peer lesson observation to facilitate professional exchange among teachers.　Most subject panel heads and committee chairpersons are able to respond to their schools' major concerns by devising concrete objectives and strategies for development.　However, significant variation is observed during the implementation and monitoring stages.

School-based curricula in primary schools are distinctive in nature, such as integration of reading and writing in language subjects, and emphasis on different problem-solving strategies in the Mathematics curriculum.　Curriculum planning in secondary schools is fully addressed to nurture students' knowledge, skills and attitudes.　Schools, in general, provide students with broad and balanced school-based curricula.　The school-based curricula at junior secondary level accord much emphasis to fostering students' generic skills, such as communication, enquiry, multi-perspective and critical thinking, as well as consolidating the foundation knowledge of students.　Quite a number of schools have put effort into implementing the "Bi-literate and Trilingual" policy.　However, there are variations in the effectiveness of creating an English learning environment in schools.

Assignments in primary and secondary schools are quite diversified.　They help consolidate student learning, cultivate enquiring minds and develop the abilities to process and analyse data.　Schools place due emphasis on both summative and formative assessments.　Both primary and secondary schools attach importance to the use of assessment data.　However, on the whole, students' assessment data are not sufficiently analysed in detail so as to devise plans to improve learning performance and review the curriculum and teaching strategies accordingly.

(3) Learning and Teaching Performance

In the schools reviewed in this school year, more than 5300 lessons have been observed, around 2000 lessons in primary and 3300 lessons in secondary schools.   Students are generally receptive, respectful and willing to learn.   They are mostly attentive in listening and willing to respond to teachers' questions.   They can follow teachers' instruction to accomplish learning activities, work cooperatively and engage in group discussion and presentation.   The main learning strategies employed are listening, reading and observing.   Some of them, especially at senior secondary levels, can make use of assessment rubrics to facilitate peer comments or suggestions, exchange ideas and, therefore, inform their learning.

Teachers are approachable and friendly.   They have a good rapport with students. Classroom routines have been well-established.   It is evident in primary schools that teachers make flexible use of different means of communication to maintain classroom order.   Some schools formulate students' self-directed learning strategies in order to promote self-directed learning and self-reflection.   However, some primary and secondary teachers over-rely on the design of lessons and teaching materials provided by textbooks, and they are not able to adjust the teaching strategies and pace in accordance with students' learning progress.

In classroom teaching, lesson objectives are clear and learning focuses are manifest. The delivery of lesson content by teachers is clear and concise, with appropriate use of IT and subject resources, to arouse students' learning interests and facilitate understanding.   Some teachers are able to conduct lively presentations with sharp focuses, and adopt everyday life examples to enhance students' learning interests and initiate discussion.   Lessons are generally well-organised.   Some teachers try to exploit students' prior knowledge or make use of everyday life examples as an introduction to activate learning.   They also consolidate and extend student learning at the end of the lesson.   Nevertheless, there are still some teachers who rush to teach the lesson content and cannot help students consolidate their learning at the end of the lesson. Some teachers adopt strategies other than lecturing and questioning in their teaching. For example, they arrange activities such as group discussion or learner presentation to facilitate peer interactive learning.   However, there is a variation in the effectiveness of actual implementation.   (For details concerning the implementation of different teaching strategies, please refer to the following paragraphs 'Assessment for Learning' and 'Catering for Learner Diversity' on pages vi and vii respectively.)

(4) Support for Student Development

Both primary and secondary schools formulate clear directions for student support, and implement the related measures progressively. Most schools attain good outcomes in this area. The major concerns related to student support in primary and secondary schools focus much on nurturing students' moral disposition, and creating a caring and harmonious school culture. Schools accord emphasis to cultivating students' spirit of serving others by providing ample opportunities for them to serve their fellows, arranging various community services for them to participate, in order to enrich their learning experiences and develop their leadership potential. However, when formulating the holistic plan to provide support for student development, some schools are unable to give due consideration to the use of information or data collected from different sources in setting priorities and focuses for the work. This weakens the effectiveness of the activities conducted. When carrying out evaluation, attention is paid to evaluating individual work or activities only, instead of conducting a holistic evaluation of the major concerns and progress towards development targets. Moreover, there is a need to improve the coordination and collaboration of different student supporting teams in schools.

(5) Utilisation of Resources and Support

Schools accord much emphasis to parental education. They organise talks and seminars to cater for parents' needs. These parental education programmes aim at better equipping parents with the appropriate knowledge and skills required for nurturing their children. Parent volunteers, especially in primary schools, are valuable assets in effectively providing help for carrying out various activities. To broaden students' learning experiences, an increasing number of schools arrange students to participate in activities organised by the districts or community. Students are also provided with many opportunities to participate in Mainland and overseas learning exchange programmes to broaden their horizons. Schools maintain close ties with the alumni or alumni associations and solicit their support for school development. For details, please refer to Chapter 2.

The Development of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum
Nearly all schools started their preparation work several years ahead of the implementation of the NSS curriculum. Over 50% of the secondary schools participating in ESR have included preparation for the NSS curriculum as one of the major concerns in their development plans. As the duration of schooling for most of

the students in special schools is extended, special schools are committed to reviewing the school curriculum. However, the development of the NSS curriculum in individual schools is behind schedule, as they are still at the initial stage of development or working towards consensus building among stakeholders.

Schools flexibly deploy resources to cope with the diversified NSS curriculum. Various changes are made in school facilities, including alteration to classroom setting, enriching library resources and so on. Most schools effectively plan and coordinate the human resources for the various KLA, and encourage teachers to participate in teachers' professional training, particularly on the areas of catering for learner diversity, questioning techniques, OLE and career planning.

Schools started to revise their timetables for subject choices in 2008, forming groups flexibly or creating blocks in the timetable for students' choice of subjects. Schools have formulated a clear subject selection mechanism and provided appropriate guidance for students on subject choices. Schools duly consider different views from students in providing reasonable subject combinations for students. Only a limited number of schools provide rigid subject combinations, without giving due consideration to students' needs.

The transition from junior to senior curriculum in the schools that underwent ESR is considered to be generally smooth. In preparing students for the NSS curriculum, over half of the schools offer school-based LS, or incorporate foundation knowledge of LS into the IH curriculum in junior secondary forms. A small number of schools have put too much emphasis on preparing junior secondary students to learn NSS LS, thus adversely affecting their mastery of sufficient foundation knowledge in different KLA. Some schools provide diversified subject choices for students by offering ApL subjects to cater for their varying interests, needs and abilities. Most schools have formulated a holistic plan for OLE. Based on the past experiences of life-wide learning, schools make good use of community resources and external professional support to provide students with learning activities both inside and outside the school. A small number of special schools actively devise an "experiential curriculum" for students and provide opportunities for them to have practicums so as to foster their independent life skills, pre-vocational skills and to cultivate their positive attitude towards work. For details, please refer to Chapter 3.

Assessment for Learning

As a whole, a noticeable change has occurred in the design of assignments. Other modes of assessment have been adopted in both primary and secondary schools, including students' performance in lessons, talks, project work and oral presentation to assess students' daily performance. Schools promote the involvement of different parties, such as students themselves, peers, parents and teachers, in different modes of assessment, so that students see the ways to improve from different perspectives. Teachers also give feedback on students' assignments, particularly on the progress in project learning assignments. Teachers give specific guidance and suggestions to students at different stages, according to their learning progress, to inspire them and enhance their learning through teacher-student interaction. Parent assessment is more commonly found in primary schools which can yield a better understanding of student learning. There are still a very small number of schools using drilling as the major assessment method. In these schools, diversified modes of assessment and the involvement of different parties are yet to be established.

Teachers actively implement different strategies to enhance the effectiveness of student learning. The teaching strategies that are mostly used are lecturing, questioning, group discussion and student presentation, with the first two commonly adopted in 80% and 70% of the primary and secondary schools respectively. Teachers actively implement different strategies to enhance their interaction with students and that among students. In this way, an encouraging atmosphere among peers is fostered and students' participation during lessons is increased.

Questioning is frequently used in class. Through questioning, students' understanding and the mastery of learning content is checked. However, some questions are quite simple and direct, focusing on obtaining pre-set answers from students, and inadequate 'wait-time' is given for students to consider before answering. Moreover, it is not common for teachers to probe or seek to extend students' responses or raise a range of questions to stimulate in-depth thinking. Furthermore, in the matter of group discussion, there is a great variation among teachers in their use of different techniques, particularly in setting discussion topics, adjusting discussion time, teaching content, strategies and pace.

Teachers in primary schools are able to give timely feedback and praise students' with good performance and, thus, strengthen teacher-student interaction. This helps students consolidate concepts and construct knowledge. In secondary schools, teachers are able to give concrete feedback on students' views, correct their

misconceptions, guide them to think from different perspectives, construct knowledge gradually and grasp the learning points.   However, only a small number of teachers state the learning objectives clearly in class, check students' understanding of learning objectives before end of the lessons, or check the learning points during lessons.   More consideration could be given to making use of assessment for learning in feedback, so as to enhance the effectiveness of student learning.   For details, please refer to Chapter 4.

<u>Catering for Learner Diversity</u>
Schools place great emphasis on catering for learner diversity.   In recent years, they have actively explored various strategies to cater for learner differences, devoting a considerable amount of human and financial resources to meet students' diverse learning needs.

With respect to curriculum planning, a defined core curriculum, or adjusted teaching content across year levels, can be found in some secondary and primary schools.   Such practices enable teachers to cater appropriately for the needs of students with different abilities.   In primary schools, remedial classes are organised, before or after school, to cater for the less able students.   However, there is still a need for most primary schools to use diversified teaching strategies in remedial classes.   In secondary schools, a range of subjects are provided in order to cater for students' different interests, needs and abilities.   There are schools that promote class-based curriculum adaptation. However, the effectiveness varies according to the practices implemented.

Schools adopt various strategies to cater for learner diversity, such as adopting split-class teaching in the core subjects, offering a wide range of after school learning support measures and organising various enhancement programmes for the more able students. Compared with secondary schools, primary schools have made more effort in promoting gifted education and devising a school-based gifted education curriculum.   Special schools also accord emphasis to students' unique conditions, adopting a variety of strategies to cater for individual student's needs.   Different types of therapies and training are offered to students with specific needs in order to help them solve their learning problems.   Furthermore, assignment designs tend to be more diversified and a variety of assessment methods are adopted by schools.

With respect to the mode of classroom teaching, schools can make use of group learning activities to promote peer interaction, providing opportunities for students with different abilities to engage in class learning.   Among the schools reviewed, the

teaching strategies implemented to cater for learner diversity are, comparatively, explicit in primary schools.   Cooperative learning has been promoted in most primary schools. It is intended to engage the more able students in helping their peers, thereby enhancing individual support at classroom level through the employment of more heterogeneous grouping.   However, as observed, there are variations in the effectiveness.   In secondary schools, teachers are able to assign group tasks according to students' different abilities during group activities.   Teachers also make use of a range of questions, graded worksheets, to help students of different abilities to learn and stimulate the more able to extend their learning.

There is a need for schools to actively explore holistic curriculum planning, classroom teaching and performance assessment at school level so that teachers can assess students' performance or responses well.   Activities and assignments, devised with tasks of different levels of challenge, are needed to cater for students' different abilities and needs, and to extend their learning.   Moreover, there is a need for schools to step up the evaluation and conduct regular reviews of the overall effectiveness of the related measures.   This will also entail effective use of the evaluation findings to inform planning, so that the measures can be refined and the impact improved and sustained. For details, please refer to Chapter 5.

The new ESR cycle has been implemented for two years and the overall implementation has been effective.   It is well-received by most schools.   With reference to the experience accumulated, the EDB will continue to improve the SDA framework as well as reflect on the future direction of ESR.

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1   Since the implementation of the SDA framework in 2003, the EDB has been promoting continuous improvement and sustainable development of schools through SSE and ESR which emphasise the effectiveness of student learning. Subsequent to the completion of the first cycle of ESR in the 2007/08 school year, the new ESR cycle began in primary schools in September of the 2008/09 school year.   ESR of secondary and special schools was deferred for one year so that more time was allowed for the preparatory work in implementing the NSS curriculum.   Starting from the 2009/10 school year (hereafter referred to as "this school year"), secondary and special schools were involved in the new cycle of ESR.

1.2   With the aim of enhancing school improvement and development, ESR continues to place emphasis on the promotion of SSE and its embedding as part of schools' daily work.   ESR in the new cycle is school-specific and -focused.   In conducting ESR, special consideration is given to schools' unique contexts, focusing more on their development priorities and the actions taken as follow-up to the recommendations made in the previous QAI or ESR report.

1.3   There are 140 schools taking part in ESR this school year including 60 primary, 73 secondary and 7 special schools[1] as listed in Appendix 1.   Nearly half of the primary schools underwent the first cycle of ESR, another 30% received QAI and the rest have undergone neither.   Of the 73 secondary schools, approximately 16 % and 70 % underwent ESR and QAI respectively, with the remainder undergoing neither.   Regarding special schools, all have undergone QAI, except one which has never participated in either ESR or QAI.   Of the participating primary schools, eight were government schools and the rest were aided.   Most of the primary schools were whole-day and six were half-day schools.   Two schools were operating in a mixed mode, comprising an AM and a whole-day section.   Among the participating secondary schools, five were government schools, two were under the DSS and the rest were aided.   As regard to special schools, in addition to special schools for Children with Intellectual Disability and special schools for Children with Physical Disability, there are also schools for Social Development which cater for students with emotional and behavioural problems.

1.4   As indicated by the key ESR findings in this school year, the performance of primary, secondary and special schools is generally good.   Schools that underwent

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[1]   As the number of special schools inspected is relatively small and their situations vary, it is inappropriate to compare their performance with those of mainstream primary and secondary schools.   Major findings of External School Review analysis concerning the 60 primary and 73 secondary schools are reported in individual chapters. For the performance of special schools, the analysis is presented in different paragraphs of individual chapters.

QAI or the first cycle of ESR generally show a good grasp of the key concept of P–I–E and formulate concrete procedures for self-evaluation. They employ a variety of evaluation tools to collect data and evidence and, hence, conduct an internal review of effectiveness through whole school participation. They can implement the P–I–E cycle appropriately to sustain their development. To align with the trend of curriculum development, the schools promote reform and implement the NSS curriculum. To cater for students' needs and abilities, they launch different school-based curricula, adjust learning and teaching strategies and provide a diversity of life-wide learning activities and opportunities for students' holistic development. This school year, the schools maintain good standards in the areas of "Curriculum and Assessment" and "Student Learning and Teaching". They place appropriate emphasis on nurturing students' positive values and attitudes, dedicating good effort to promoting MCNE by making learning more relevant to daily life and society. A variety of learning activities is arranged for students to cater for their development needs and to enable them to put into practice what they have learnt. As with previous ESR findings, schools' overall performance in the domain of "Student Support and School Ethos" is particularly good.

1.5 This report takes the P–I–E cycle as the framework, placing much emphasis on reporting schools' continuous development, planning and implementation of curriculum and the work of student support so as to enable stakeholders to acquire a better understanding of the development of schools. In this theme-based report, schools' concerns in recent years, particularly in the implementation of the NSS curriculum, assessment for learning and catering for learner diversity, are elaborated and presented in individual chapters. There are six chapters in this report. Chapter 1 briefly reports on the information and overall performance of the schools that underwent ESR this school year. Chapter 2 describes generally the schools' sustainable development, including the progress of SSE, learning and teaching, and support for student development. Chapters 3 to 5 are reports on the themes of implementation of the NSS curriculum, assessment for learning and catering for learner diversity, respectively. Good practices observed in schools are exemplified for reference. Chapter 6 summarises the areas of concern and necessary follow-up action identified by ESR this year.

1.6 The EDB has been collecting the views of school stakeholders through various channels. An independent professional organisation has been assigned to evaluate the effectiveness of the first cycle of ESR. Issued in 2008, the 'Impact Study on the Effectiveness of ESR' (Impact Study) ensures that ESR can give impetus to the cultivation of SSE in schools, promote the use of data and evidence as a basis for SSE, and create a greater sense of openness, transparency and collaboration within

schools.   The Impact Study also indicates that the new cycle of ESR builds on the strengths developed in the first cycle.   These strengths include the establishment of self-evaluation mechanisms and tools and an enhanced awareness of self evaluation in teachers.   Self-evaluation can, therefore, be internalised through the new cycle of ESR for the continuous self-improvement of schools.   The EDB, aiming to achieve continuous improvement, has appointed the independent professional organisation to, once again, study the effectiveness of the SDA framework in the new cycle.

1.7   From the results of the post-ESR questionnaires (Appendix 2), it can be seen that the overall comments by teachers involved in ESR are positive.   During the ESR, if it is feasible, a post-lesson sharing with the teacher concerned is arranged.   It facilitates the teacher in reflecting on the learning and teaching of the lesson and to what extent they support the school's work on its major concerns.   The post-lesson sharing is well-received by teachers.   The EDB will continuously help schools to optimise the work on the internalisation of SSE and enhance the effectiveness of student learning by taking the views of school stakeholders and experts into account.

Chapter 2   Key Findings of External School Review

2.1   Schools' Sustainable Development

2.1.1   Successive Planning for Development

- Since the implementation of the SDA framework by the EDB, schools have been critically analysing their own conditions, students' background, schools' vision and mission, education policies and development trends, to strategically formulate short to mid-term development priorities.   In general, SDP is based on a triennial cycle. This school year, most schools have completed a whole development cycle and are implementing their first year plan of the 2009-2012 development cycle.

- The school's development cycle is in succession to the previous one.   In order to formulate appropriate work priorities and promote sustainable development, there is a need to have a clear self-evaluation mechanism, good use of data and evidence to evaluate effectiveness, due consideration of professional views, and a complete understanding of the school context.

- Through annual review, schools can gauge their own pace of development.   Taking the opportunity afforded by the new development cycle in this school year, schools can generally review how the major concerns identified in the previous school development cycle have been accomplished.   They examine their performance in different areas, with reference to "Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools 2008".   They conduct a SWOT analysis and take into consideration internal and external factors to map out areas for improvement and optimisation.   Factors may include a change of Principal / School Head and/or middle managers, recruitment of new teaching staff, increasing numbers of students with SEN, catering for learner diversity, promoting academic performance or declining student intake.   Review also helps in the formulation of new development goals and objectives, adjusting strategies and, hence, setting the blueprint for future development.

- Almost all schools are able to closely align planning with their vision and mission to formulate their schools' major concerns of the development cycle in order to achieve the goals for student learning and development.   The schools can also make good responses to the effectiveness or otherwise of the previous development cycle.   Some major concerns are a continuation of tasks not yet completed, some strengthen the effective tasks and others are new.   Whether the concerns are new or an extension of previous tasks, most of them are under careful consideration and are closely related to the school context.

- Schools pay much attention to professional advice.   Schools that underwent QAI and ESR give due consideration to the associated advice for school development. Appropriate strategies and follow up measures are formulated to improve school

performance and the effectiveness is, in general, remarkable.

2.1.2 A Self-evaluation Mechanism to Feed Forward into Planning

- Clear procedures have been formulated by schools to evaluate their own work annually. Although the schedule of the procedures and the means for review are different among schools, the major elements of evaluation, such as evaluation tools and success criteria, are all ready for use. During the end of the development cycle or school year, schools will collect data by stages, organise meetings, analyse information and summarise discussion outcomes. They will discuss the development priorities, adjust the strategies and measures, and prepare the development plans. Upon approval by the school management, the development plans will be implemented accordingly in the coming year. The whole process is clear and smooth.

- If school stakeholders are able to participate in the formulation of school development, through consensus building and making use of views collected from multiple perspectives, it enhances the transparency of the school's operation and promotes ownership by the stakeholders. As a result, the dissemination through different working levels and the implementation of strategies can be strengthened. Most schools invite teachers and specialist staff to review and discuss the major concerns and respective measures by arranging different meetings. It is a common practice of schools to provide sufficient opportunities for teachers to contribute towards decision-making on school policies.

- Most schools formulate their development direction by using collected data and information. They are accustomed to employing evaluation tools, collecting evidence and analysing data to assess the effectiveness of their work. Evaluation tools include SHS, KPM, and APASO, which are provided by the EDB, and school-based questionnaire surveys on the major concerns. Schools also make good use of observation and meetings to keep track of the progress of daily work. Due consideration is given to students' academic performance. To formulate strategies for the improvement of learning and teaching, schools make reference to, and analyse TSA outcomes, as well as the performance of students, in and outside the school. While the schools generally have become accustomed to different assessment tools, there are variations in the efficacy of the selection of data, the depth of data analysis and follow-up action. An effective evaluation is helpful in ensuring accurate planning of development priorities and formulating corresponding measures. Therefore, in addition to conducting an analysis of the evidence collected, more attention could be paid to exploring reasons behind problems, reflecting on rationales and strategies adopted for learning and teaching and caring for student development. A more desirable outcome could be attained

through developing a comprehensive perspective on school context and the planning of corresponding measures.

- The ASP is a specific blueprint for the implementation of the SDP. Schools, in preparing their annual plans, give due consideration to the objectives of the major concerns to formulate concrete strategies and success criteria for the implementation by subject panels and committees. There are variations in the pace of development among schools with respect to inter-school cooperation and collaboration between subject panels and committees. Some ASP duly address the major concerns, with matching success criteria and close coherence between subject panels and committees in implementing work plans. However, there is still room for improvement in the work of dissemination in some schools. Sometimes, there may be an over-emphasis on the work of subject panels and committees, loose linkage with major concerns, implementing major concerns with inconsistent or insufficient effort, formulating ASP by combining various work plans from subject panels and committees, resulting in fragmented strategies and inconsistent assessment standards. The effectiveness and evaluation of schools' implementation strategies are hindered by such shortcomings. SSE could be further improved by an effective dissemination, appropriate implementation targets and strategies at school level, timely monitoring and communication, and the provision of support and guidance.

- It has been one of the daily routines in schools to think deeply about strengths and areas for improvement during annual evaluation, so as to improve strategies adopted and objectives set. Nevertheless, in the annual SR of most schools, emphasis is placed on summarising the work, recording the number of events conducted and the completion of tasks. Evaluation of the effectiveness of major concerns, achievement of student learning or collecting views from subject panels and committees on major concerns, are not common. Nearly half of the secondary schools and only a small number of primary schools achieve deep reflection on the effectiveness of their work. They can, based on this reflection, provide feedback on planning and adjust the strategies adopted in the following school year.

2.1.3 Diversified Strategies to Aim at Similar Directions

- Most schools include three major concerns in the SDP. These major concerns are closely related to the school context and formulated after dedicated deliberation. A few primary schools set transition to whole day schooling as their own major concern. Most primary schools take catering for learner diversity, developing students' self-directed learning abilities, promoting reading and cultivating caring, moral and affective attributes among students as their major concerns. In secondary schools, the development of the NSS curriculum, enhancing students'

academic achievement, catering for learner diversity and developing students' positive values and attitudes are the main emphases. Obviously, the major concerns have reflected the similarities and differences between different school context. These major concerns, with similar emphases, indicate the common and urgent areas which schools need to deal with. Given the current direction of Hong Kong's overall education development, the areas of catering for learner diversity, promoting the effectiveness of learning and teaching, exploring diverse pedagogies and making arrangements for the NSS curriculum are recognised as priorities. Although similar major concerns are chosen by schools, the breadth and depth of the objectives set and the formulation of strategies also depend very much on schools' vision and mission, teaching staff, specialist staff, intake of students and the resources available. On the whole, the strategies employed and resource allocation among schools are diversified and specialised.

- Most senior and middle managers formulate the school development directions with reference to the schools' vision and mission. They are open, and always ready to accept views from different stakeholders. Schools have specific guidelines on daily work for the reference of teaching staff. They also arrange an induction plan or mentor system for new teachers and provide timely support, such as professional training for teachers. Diverse communication channels are provided by schools to deliver school information to the stakeholders and collect their views. A good relationship between the schools and stakeholders is maintained.

- To enhance the performance of learning and teaching, schools are keen to strengthen the professional development of teachers. Measures include attending seminars on aspects of subjects, KLA, student support and management. Internal professional sharing among teachers, in the forms of CLP, peer lesson observation and post lesson discussion, is flourishing. These sharing activities are more productive when they have specific focuses and are well-connected. Specific aims, such as concrete strategies on learning and teaching, are formulated. Through CLP, teachers discuss learning and teaching strategies. By peer lesson observation, they focus on the effectiveness of the strategies used. Demonstrations and meetings are also arranged, in accordance with the needs, to share the experience gained from each other. Both the preparation and sharing activities are focused, have favourable recognition by teachers and can enrich the effectiveness of professional sharing.

- To develop school-based curricula, a comprehensive plan and appropriate matching facilities and allocation of resources are necessary. Schools appropriately deploy both internal and external resources to promote major development tasks. Such good practice includes the use of school development grants to recruit teaching assistants and coaches to enhance teachers' capacities to develop curriculum,

learning and teaching materials and to conduct students' activities. The schools also make good use of various kinds of subsidies and the Quality Education Fund to support the development work of their major concerns. They also arrange collaborative programmes by inviting school-based support from the EDB and other professional support teams. Some of the schools clearly recognise the connection between teachers' professional development and their major concerns. They arrange professional training and sharing opportunities, in and outside the school, for teachers to enhance their professional knowledge and skills for the promotion of school-based curricula and the implementation of major concerns.

- On the whole, the culture of self-evaluation in schools is now sprouting, with self-evaluation mechanisms established and rationales understood and in place. Schools have formulated specific self-evaluation mechanisms and procedures, are accustomed to the use of evaluation tools and are building upon school strengths for further improvement. The rationale for self-evaluation is becoming embedded in the thinking and practice of school staff, from whole-school to subject and committee levels, as well as with individual teachers. Nevertheless, to make full use of the P–I–E cycle, there is a need for more deliberation on the detail and stages of every step involved, in order to achieve greater success. During this growing period, for primary, secondary and special schools, there are common areas for improvement, including being more focused and specific in the formulation of major concerns. There can be many aims set without focuses, such that they are difficult to follow, and inadequate matching between success criteria and objectives. The implementation of major concerns among subject departments and committees is, sometimes, not clear or consistent, often focusing on evaluating procedures, frequency and progress of measures and programmes and a lack of an integrated evaluation of overall performance at school level.

2.2 Planning for and Implementation of School-based Curriculum

- Both primary and secondary schools that underwent ESR in this school year are actively responding to the curriculum reform, promoting the four key tasks, fostering students' self-directed learning and generic skills, as well as advocating life-wide learning. With reference to the curriculum framework recommended by the CDC, schools develop their curriculum with their own features. In line with their vision and mission, flexible arrangements are made by the schools in accordance with students' needs and abilities, teachers' expertise and readiness, resource deployment and allocation, experience accumulated and strengths developed. Different entry points are adopted in developing school-based curriculum, with a diversified mode and extensive coverage.

- Varying approaches are adopted to implement school-based curricula. There are

schools that determine developmental focuses at subject level, choosing language policies or learning and teaching strategies as the entry point. Some schools place emphasis on broadening students' learning experience and providing them with diversified life-wide learning activities, whilst some are keen on promoting moral education to cultivate students' positive values. Rich and diversified school-based curricula that give sufficient emphasis to student learning inside and outside the classroom are implemented. This extends student learning, develops their potential and nurtures their generic skills, values and attitudes.

- Schools have a lot of challenges in tackling learning and teaching, such as a diversified curriculum, enhancement of the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of learning and teaching, and promoting various professional development activities. Some common practices that schools usually adopt are seeking support from different external professional organisations, such as the School-based Professional Support Programmes offered by the EDB and tertiary institutions, seed projects, exchange and collaboration programmes with Mainland teachers and lesson study projects. Individual schools have a clear rationale for planning their school-based curriculum, strategically tapping external professional support. The middle managers of such schools, using an incremental approach, take the initiatives of providing school-based training to equip teachers. Moreover, individual schools hold joint school academic exchanges by networking with partner schools or forming a learning circle with other schools under the same sponsoring body.

- Schools usually make use of CLP and peer lesson observation to adapt learning content, designing teaching materials and learning activities. It helps facilitate professional exchange among teachers. A small number of schools have started to promote professional development by organising activities such as lesson study, lesson observation, demonstration lessons and self-evaluation video recording to help teachers reflect on teaching effectiveness. There are other schools, with an emphasis on the development focus of teaching and learning, arranging peer lesson observations, lesson exposition, lesson evaluation and parallel lesson study. All these arrangements are flexibly designed in accordance with the school context.

- The key practices to achieving the expected outcomes of the planned curriculum are formulating clear objectives, devising practicable implementation strategies, strengthening communication and collaboration among subject panels and teachers, consensus building, wise use and analysis of assessment data to inform teaching and curriculum, as well as strengthening curriculum leadership at school level. In meeting these challenges, some schools still have room for improvement.

- Most subject panel heads and committee chairpersons are able to respond to their schools' major concerns by devising concrete objectives and strategies for

development. Some of them devise development focuses in line with subject development. However, significant variation is observed during the implementation and monitoring stages. Some middle managers do not pay due attention to the implementation of work, neither conducting focused evaluation of its effectiveness nor completing a feedback loop for planning. Some of them have been in their current post for a relatively short period, with inadequate leadership experience to inform their work. In general, there is room for improvement in the leading and monitoring performance by subject panel heads and committee chairs.

- Schools with effective implementation of the school-based curriculum are supported by a team of dedicated teaching staff, sharing a strong consensus on the rationale for, and direction of, curriculum development and detailed strategic plans. These schools have also chosen appropriate entry points in line with development priorities and teachers' expertise, well complemented by sufficient supporting measures and professional backup. During the implementation process, the schools give due attention to students' performance, and continuously evaluate, review and improve their work.

2.2.1 Implementation of School-based Curriculum in Primary Schools

- Distinctive school-based curricula are formulated according to the developmental needs of schools. Some schools develop their curricula to align with their major concerns, such as catering for learner diversity, enhancing learning and teaching effectiveness and building a healthy school. There are schools that choose certain subjects, such as languages and Visual Arts as the developmental focus. Furthermore, some schools adopt a thematic approach in formulating their curricula, such as promoting the key tasks of the curriculum reform, providing students with mind training and learning support. Based on the curricula developed, schools outline concrete strategies and set up task groups, such as lesson study committees, cross-curricular learning groups or learning enhancement groups, to coordinate and manage the curriculum development tasks.

- School-based curricula in primary schools are distinctive in nature and different in context. Chinese Language teaching focuses on enhancing students' language abilities, particularly in the integration of reading and writing. Other developmental focuses include teaching Chinese Language in Putonghua, promoting the reading of literature, drama education, learning classical Chinese poetry and training in speaking and writing. The school-based curricula of English Language mainly place emphasis on the Primary Literacy Programme – Reading and Writing, with other focuses, including drama education, phonics and story telling. The curriculum for Mathematics mostly emphasises different problem-solving strategies. An innovative technology curriculum and enquiry learning activities are included in

General Studies. Meanwhile, cross-curricular approaches are promoted in some schools by using thematic activities to link different subjects with the integration of project learning elements. Different themes, such as MCNE and community and culture, are used in the activities arranged.

- Approximately 30% of the primary schools adopt other themes in developing their school-based curricula. Some schools place emphasis on mind training, teaching students to analyse data and construct writing frames by the use of mind maps, so as to promote higher-order thinking abilities. Individual schools, according to students' learning stages, nurture creativity and higher-order thinking in different subjects. Some also integrate spiritual and moral education to complement religious education. By using moral education as a core element, individual schools arrange different activities for the students, such as adopting "serving the community" as the emphasis and launching a year-based curriculum in which cross-curricular thematic study is included. In accordance with specific contexts, there are schools tailoring and adapting the Chinese curriculum to suit the learning progress of NCS students. Some schools arrange programmes on current affairs and activities outside the school for the newly arrived students, helping them to understand more about local issues and culture.

- In order to cater for students' needs and to provide a diversified curriculum with extensive coverage in life-wide learning, schools flexibly plan lesson time and schedule designated periods for integrated learning activities. These can include integrated lessons, activity lessons, talent lessons and other life-wide learning or co-curricular activities. Individual schools adopt block time-tabling for single subject or subject groups in order to facilitate the arrangement of diversified ECA. Some schools defer lesson time each day to cater for the needs of cross-border students. Schools make good use of different time slots to launch various performances and competitions. Such activities include English Day, Science and Technology Day, Life-wide Learning Week, International Culture Day, Healthy Life Day as well as Personal and Social Education lessons held at weekends. Individual schools even broadcast audio-visual programmes through Campus TV and organise online interflow programmes with other schools.

- Schools have, over recent years, accumulated experience in promoting the four key tasks. There are quite a number of schools in which the key tasks are implemented as discrete curriculum initiatives, aiming to foster students' generic skills and self-directed learning. Nonetheless, it is heartening to note that more schools adopt a thematic approach to link MCNE with reading, information technology and project learning. With respect to reading to learn, morning reading sessions are commonly found in schools. In some schools, language subject teachers are mainly responsible for teaching reading strategies and the school librarians assist in

promoting reading. Schools, in general, organise a variety of reading programmes and award schemes, either cooperating with subject panels separately or collaborating across panels to promote reading. There is a school, for example, adopting an approach of "Large Quantity, Broad Coverage, Deep Context". Apart from launching regular programmes, the school organises a thematic learning week, supplemented with a range of extended reading strategies, to foster students' higher-order thinking. In a small number of schools, reading strategies should be further promoted, and the role of the school library needs to be strengthened in supporting subject panels to organise reading activities and project studies, as well as fostering students' reading habits. In most of the schools reviewed, promotion of project learning is either led by the General Studies panel or conducted through cross-subject collaboration. There are various study themes available, such as "Chinese Culture", "Children's perspectives of Our Nation" and "EatSmart@school.hk". The emphasis is placed on students' authentic experiences. In addition, students' generic skills are mostly fostered by means of project learning. A small number of schools construct "Study Skills Framework", "Study Skills Infusion Table" or "Project Learning Performance Indicator" to systemically develop students' study skills.

- In comparison with the other three key tasks, less effort is directed towards the use of IT in facilitating interactive learning. However, some schools have launched self-directed learning websites, self-directed learning centres and e-learning platforms to enhance learning. A small number of schools have introduced electronic whiteboards to facilitate classroom interaction. Some schools set up online diaries to encourage self-directed learning. There is a school placing emphasis on the development of the IT curriculum. By choosing Chinese Language, English Language and Mathematics as entry points, the school has established a school-based e-curriculum, and electronic textbooks and assignments are developed. In this school year, two schools have introduced a "Web-based Distance Learning" programme to facilitate academic exchange between Mainland China and Hong Kong as well as to enrich students' learning experiences through video conferencing activities.

2.2.2 Implementation of School-based Curriculum in Secondary Schools

- Curriculum planning in secondary schools is fully addressed to nurture students' knowledge, skills and attitudes. Schools, in general, provide students with broad and balanced school-based curricula which are distinctive in nature. On the whole, the junior secondary curriculum places emphasis on fostering students' generic skills, such as those of communication, enquiry, multi-perspective and critical thinking, as well as consolidating the foundation knowledge of students. Schools have striven hard to develop students' study, thinking and generic skills by

conducting, for example, school-based project study, providing IH and LS lessons and hiring of services. To consolidate students' learning foundation in junior secondary levels, schools have adopted different approaches, such as offering Geography, Science and History, integrating Mathematics with Computer Literacy, or linking IH, Integrated Science and Mathematics to generate a complementary effect. The majority of schools, in accordance with the development needs of their school-based curricula, aptly arrange learning time to help teachers implement the curriculum and employ related teaching strategies in class. They also schedule time slots in the timetable to develop students' OLE.

- A small number of schools develop their school-based curriculum with their own features. For instance, one school has adopted an Arts Education curriculum that includes different art forms, such as Dance, Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Digital Arts. Students learn all the above art forms by rotation and their arts knowledge is enriched. In another school, the school-based curriculum for Arts Education is aptly designed in accordance with the attributes, abilities and skills which are needed when students join the workforce in future. Another school develops a distinctive "extended curriculum", which includes activities and programmes, such as junior secondary physical and aesthetics training, annual English musical performance and the "Sense of Nature", which is a compulsory programme for all S4 students. Teachers record and assess students' participation and achievements and actively enlist external resources to provide students with opportunities to develop their potential. In another school, the school-based curriculum for Arts Education contains two levels. While the introductory level enhances students' understanding of different art forms and cultivates their abilities in art appreciation, the advanced level provides choices for students to gain in-depth development in accordance with their needs and interests, and to demonstrate their creative work under teachers' guidance. One school adopts a thematic approach which integrates Computer Studies, Home Economics, and Design and Technology to enhance students' abilities in learning technology.

- In line with their mission, some schools with religious backgrounds offer school-based subjects such as "Religious Education" and "Bible Study" to instil positive values and attitudes in students through spiritual education. Through spiritual education, some schools enhance moral education by the mode of subject collaboration. They also make use of religious activities after school to build up students' positive attitudes towards life.

- Quite a number of schools have put effort into implementing the "Bi-literate and Trilingual" policy. Some of them even include this target in their major concerns or focused development tasks. Ample resources are deployed to raise students' language standard by promoting various kinds of measures. Schools, in general,

make good use of the funding under the "English Enhancement Scheme" to reinforce teachers' training and recruit additional teachers so as to strengthen the school-based English curriculum. Schools have made good effort in creating an English learning environment, such as by displaying posters with slogans and idioms, promoting English Days, "English Morning Ambassadors", "English Zone", broadcasting English programmes through campus TV and conducting oral practice in class. However, there are variations in the effectiveness of creating an English learning environment in schools. More effort is needed to create an appropriate language environment, or to provide more opportunities for students to use English both inside and outside the classroom. In a small number of schools, where English is used as the medium of instruction in senior secondary forms, teachers do not consistently conduct lessons in English. Nonetheless, there are a very few schools which have succeeded in creating a favourable English learning environment through a number of measures. Such measures include enhancing reading aloud training, introducing drama and language art elements in English storytelling or other co-curricular activities. Moreover, Saturday English Programmes are launched by making use of current affairs programmes to strengthen students' foundation in reading, writing, listening and speaking. Corresponding teaching modes are also embedded in English lessons, and a "Cross-curricular English Enhancement Curriculum" is introduced in junior forms to support subjects that adopt English as the medium of instruction. On the whole, strategies adopted by schools are not executed to their full effect, due to reasons such as lack of planning and continuity, adopting inappropriate approaches or securing insufficient consensus among teachers. Quite a lot of students lack confidence and competence in English communication. In a small number of schools, Putonghua is adopted for the teaching of Chinese in junior secondary levels. However, this becomes a learning hurdle for some of the students who have limited proficiency in Putonghua. There is a need for schools to provide appropriate support for such students so as to ensure that they can learn Chinese Language with a solid foundation in Putonghua.

- At this stage of the curriculum reform, schools actively promote the four key tasks, so as to foster students' generic skills and independent learning abilities. The four key tasks are, mainly, integrated into different curricula, linked with each other by relevance, or promoted at subject levels. The most common practice is to link the key task of promoting reading to learn with language subjects to develop students' reading strategies. Other strategies include linking project learning with school-based LS or IH and infusing IT for interactive learning into Computer Studies. Among the four key tasks, schools achieve relatively good progress in promoting reading to learn, project learning and MCNE.

- Schools, in general, actively promote reading. During morning reading sessions and reading lessons, they arrange various activities or award schemes, such as book sharing or recommendations, to enhance students' reading interests and to create a prevailing reading atmosphere within the schools. In some schools, there is good cooperation between the school librarians and subject panels, whereby they collaborate to teach reading strategies and organise reading-related learning activities. These include promoting theme-based or subject-based reading programmes and preparing subject-based reading materials for students, so as to enable them to have a broad exposure to different types of readers. Moreover, some schools also promote online reading to enrich students' reading experiences. Students' reading interests is enhanced and significant improvement in creating a favourable reading atmosphere in schools is evident.

- In a small number of schools, external resources are tapped to enrich library collections, enhance library facilities and introduce systems and devices for book and information searching, so as to facilitate student learning in the NSS curriculum. However, there are still quite a lot of schools which need to strengthen the communication and collaboration between library personnels and subject panels, and to infuse reading elements into different subjects. School librarians have to play supportive roles in learning and teaching by providing more self-directed learning materials, enriching learning and teaching reference resources and multi-media resources, to cater for the different learning needs of students. This promotes the role of the library as a learning and teaching resource centre.

- Schools, in general, conduct subject-based or cross-curricular project learning in junior secondary levels. It serves as the main strategy to foster students' independent learning abilities. Schools can mostly foster students' study skills and generic skills systematically. The learning themes are connected to different types of knowledge and daily life experiences. From the samples of assignments scrutinised, it is evident that students are able to collect, process and present data, design questionnaires, conduct surveys and write reports. However, there are still a small number of schools where less attention is given to nurturing students' generic skills, leaving it to individual subject panels without any holistic planning or coordination. This fails to develop students' generic skills in a systematic manner.

- The development of MCNE is more mature and distinctive. Schools generally have school-based Personal and Social Education lessons, Life Education lessons, Moral Education lessons, Religious lessons and weekly assemblies, systematically cultivating students' positive attitudes and values, and supporting their whole-person development. Schools can organise relevant activities to facilitate curriculum implementation, such as talks on moral education, green cleaning days,

national flag hoisting ceremonies and Mainland China study trips.   Life events are adopted to engage students in discussion and moral values are instilled.   At the same time, with the integration of Chinese History and other subjects, students' sense of national identity is enhanced.

- Schools actively develop IT and upgrade IT facilities.   They also build up e-learning platforms to facilitate students' self-directed learning.   In addition to providing online self-directed learning materials and internet links for students, teachers make use of IT to assist teaching.   Students, in general, make use of IT in learning and, particularly, to conduct project learning.   However, in a small number of schools, the learning resources available on their intranet could be further enriched and more fully used by subject panels.   The subject panels should encourage students to make more use of those resources for the development of self-directed learning.

2.2.3 School-based Curriculum Assessment

- On the whole, assignments in primary and secondary schools are quite diversified. They help consolidate student learning, cultivate enquiring minds and develop the abilities to process and analyse data.   Some schools purposely incorporate elements of collaboration, data collection and investigation into the assignments of scientific exploration or project learning, so as to foster students' generic skills, such as those of creativity and critical thinking.   The design of assignments can generally set the learning focus, and themes are linked with real life experience and current affairs, providing students with opportunities to learn outside the classroom and conduct learning in the community.   In some instances, learning themes are linked with the life-wide learning activities, allowing students to apply their learning in authentic situations.   Some schools pay due attention to learner diversity.   They are keen to design assignments with different levels of difficulty or adapt appropriate assignments according to students' abilities.   Schools mostly implement assessments that involve different parties, including self and peer assessment.   Some schools make use of the "Physical Education Learning Profile" and "Visual Arts Diary" to record students' learning progress and life-wide learning experience, respectively, so as to strengthen students' abilities to reflect on learning.

- Schools place due emphasis on both summative and formative assessment.   A variety of assessment methods is adopted, for example, model making, book reports, projects and newspaper clippings as daily assignments.   Both students' learning attitudes in classroom and pre-lesson preparation work are used to assess daily learning performance in knowledge, skills and attitudes.   A small number of schools act in alignment with the major concerns or developmental focuses.   They adjust the proportion of difficult questions, set challenging questions for the high

ability students or prepare two to three sets of assessment papers with different levels of difficulty to cater for learner diversity. However, assessment such as analytical or open-ended questions to assess students' multi-perspective thinking is still not very common.   In general, special arrangements are provided for students with SEN, such as extending examination time, magnifying texts in the assessment papers and conducting separate invigilation.

2.2.4   Use of Assessment Data

- Both primary and secondary schools attach importance to the use of assessment data.   In general, schools analyse internal and external assessment data to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and, thereby, propose follow-up plans.   These include adopting streaming and split-class teaching, designing learning materials such as graded worksheet which target students' weaknesses, drawing teachers' attention to the areas where students still have room for improvement and drilling for public examinations based on the predicted results.   However, on the whole, students' assessment data are not sufficiently analysed in detail so as to devise plans to improve learning performance and review the curriculum and teaching strategies accordingly.

2.2.5   An Experience Sharing on School-based Curriculum

- One secondary school has planned well for different levels of work, such as curriculum design, classroom teaching and performance assessment, all of which are fully in line with the well-defined learning and teaching policy, and are achieving the desired impact.   The school has considered carefully the individual differences among students, in terms of cognitive development, abilities and modes of learning.   A task group has been set up to analyse students' learning styles.   DI is actively promoted and is well-integrated into the curriculum, teaching pedagogies and performance assessment.   The school attaches great importance to enhancing students' self-directed learning, which is effectively implemented by means of project learning, reading and classroom teaching.   Considerable effort has been directed towards the development of independent learning to facilitate the change of learning paradigm, helping them to take responsibility for their learning and maximising their potential.   A reading culture has been created, with a solid foundation and more effort has been directed towards reading across the curriculum. Such practices cater for students' diverse learning interests and abilities.   A well-established programme for systematic coverage of project learning skills is developed, enabling students to proceed according to their own interests and abilities.   In the course of implementation, strategies are adopted to mobilise the senior secondary students in offering assistance to their juniors.   Furthermore, with the provision of strong manpower and rich resources, the Self-access Learning

Centre has been effective in supporting the curriculum so as to promote students' online and self-learning. In the classroom, teachers are active in employing the strategies of cooperative learning, as well as encouraging pre-lesson preparation and online learning. The school, at the same time, concerns itself with the corresponding strategy of performance assessment, and is placing equal emphasis on both assessment for, and assessment of, learning. A wide range of assessment modes, such as class participation and course work, is adopted to assess students' performance in learning. Challenging tasks are also incorporated to promote self-directed and extensive learning. Classes at junior secondary level are streamed for Chinese, English and Mathematics, appropriately supported with curriculum adaptation. Various learning support programmes, during or after school, are adopted to cater for diverse learning needs. In line with the school's promotion of learner autonomy, students are given an enhanced role to take responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, being encouraged to conduct self-reflection on their learning progress, students can also evaluate class learning and teaching. This, in turn, helps teachers reflect on, and adjust, their teaching strategies in order to better cater for students' diverse learning styles and needs. There is also a sharp focus on DI and independent learning. Professional exchanges are enhanced by means of various professional development activities, such as overseas training, CLP, peer lesson observation, lesson evaluation and sharing sessions. Teachers have a better understanding of the underlying principles of DI, as well as the opportunity for self-reflection on the curriculum, teaching strategies and performance assessment which have been implemented. To cater for learner diversity, apart from there being ample and diversified opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom, the school is able to facilitate students to participate actively and take part in organising activities. Through strategies devised and implemented at different levels, the school has succeeded in helping students maximise their interests and potential.

2.3   Learning and Teaching Performance in Primary and Secondary Schools

- In the schools reviewed in this school year, more than 5300 lessons have been observed, around 2000 lessons in primary and 3300 lessons in secondary schools. Students are generally receptive, respectful and willing to learn. They are, mostly, attentive in listening and willing to respond to teachers' questions. They can follow teachers' instruction to accomplish learning activities, work cooperatively and engage in group discussion and presentation. The main learning strategies employed are listening, reading and observing. Some students can apply learning strategies, such as using mind maps or concept maps to organise content during group discussion, to construct a writing framework or present brief talks. A small number of students take the initiative to raise questions, make use of peer

questioning and take notes.   When making group presentations, students adopt a serious attitude.   Some of them, especially at senior secondary levels, can, under the guidance of teachers, make use of assessment rubrics to facilitate peer comments or suggestions, exchange ideas and, therefore, inform their learning. However, students are still not able to manage learning strategies skilfully.   Some students lack confidence when answering teachers' questions.   In some of the primary and junior secondary English lessons, students tend to communicate among themselves in Cantonese when conducting group activities.   To enhance their communication skills and confidence in using English, more encouragement and efforts are needed.

- Teachers are approachable and friendly.   They enjoy a good rapport with students. Classroom routines have been well-established.   It is evident in primary schools that teachers make flexible use of different means of communication, such as body language, slogans and signs, to maintain classroom order.   Lesson objectives are clear and learning focuses are manifest.   Teachers have good professional knowledge and lessons are well-prepared.   Lesson content is clearly articulated, with appropriate use of IT and subject resources, such as presentation software, video clips or worksheets, to arouse students' learning interests and facilitate understanding.   Some teachers are able to conduct lively presentations with sharp focuses, and adopt everyday life examples to enhance students' learning interests and initiate discussion.   Lessons are generally well-organised.   Some teachers try to exploit students' prior knowledge or make use of everyday life examples as an introduction to activate learning.   They also consolidate and extend student learning at the end of the lesson.   However, there are still some teachers who rush to teach the lesson content and leave insufficient time to consolidate student learning at the end of the lesson.

- Some teachers adopt strategies other than lecturing and questioning in their teaching. For example, they arrange activities such as group discussion or learner presentation to facilitate peer interactive learning.   However, there is a variation in the effectiveness of actual implementation (for details, please refer to Chapters 3 and 4).   Some schools formulate students' self-directed learning strategies, requiring them to undertake pre-lesson preparation, prepare for the learning content, read learning materials, work on pre-lesson worksheets or tasks, search for information in advance, take notes during the lessons or do web-based readings and assignments.   The aforementioned practices can promote self-directed learning and self-reflection.   Individual schools make good use of interactive whiteboards, an electronic interactive platform or a web-based learning platform to explain e-learning materials or conduct learning activities.   Students' learning interests are enhanced and, through the electronic interactive platform, they can conduct

discussion and download electronic assignments immediately. However, some teachers over-rely on the design of lessons and teaching materials provided by textbooks, and they are not able to adjust the teaching strategies and pace in accordance with students' learning progress. Individual primary schools have introduced collaborative teaching and gained rewarding results. Their teachers can lead group activities effectively, guiding students to read, speak and analyse learning content progressively and, therefore, provide sufficient opportunities for students to engage in learning.

2.4 Support for Student Development

2.4.1 Planning on Support for Student Development

- Schools attach great importance to nurturing students' whole-person development and moral disposition. Teachers make use of the information and data collected from daily observation, discussion and analysis from APASO to formulate clear directions for student support, and implement the related measures progressively. About 70% of the secondary and primary schools attain good outcomes in this area.

- Schools set up various task groups to plan for the work of student support. Some secondary and primary schools even assign Vice Principals or Deputy Heads to lead the task groups, with a view to enhancing the coordination and collaboration among them, as well as meticulously formulating whole-school support measures. Some schools deploy additional resources to cater for the needs of students, such as recruiting more school social workers, adjusting lesson time, implementing a dual class teacher system and utilising community resources. In some secondary schools, discussions are held among teachers, particularly on students' performance, plans for career preparation and OLE, so as to meet the change to the NSS curriculum. During the implementation of support measures, schools monitor their work and, through continuous evaluation, improve the strategies adopted. In addition, the majority of schools make good use of school-based questionnaires at the end of school year, to collect data and information on the support for student development from different stakeholders and evaluate the targets of the major concerns. In so doing, they identify areas for improvement and plan for the following year.

2.4.2 Implementation of Support for Student Development – Primary Schools

- The major concerns related to student support in primary schools are divided, mainly, into two categories; nurturing students' moral disposition, and creating a caring and harmonious school culture. About 20% of the schools have the same major concerns in two consecutive school development cycles. In line with the major concerns, the task groups, including the Discipline and Counselling, and

Moral and Civic Education Team, are able to plan holistic support measures. By means of a whole-school approach, the task groups are able to break through the boundaries between subjects and groups to infuse related MCE elements into various subjects. They can also, based on an annual theme, organise various school-based guidance activities to foster students' growth and development systematically and progressively. Schools often make use of school assemblies, recess and time after school to organise various activities, such as MCE talks, "One Student, One Job", "Big Brothers and Big Sisters Programme", service groups and voluntary services teams. Such arrangements help students to develop their sense of responsibility, cultivate their spirit of serving others and their sense of belonging to the school. In line with the theme of school-based guidance activities, some schools incorporate MCE elements, such as caring and moral disposition, into Moral and Civic Education periods or Personal Growth Education curriculum. Teachers deliver the related MCE messages through current issues, expositions, classroom activities and group discussion. All these can deepen student learning. Individual schools design a "Moral Cultivation Journal" and encourage students to write journals for self-reflection and self-evaluation. In addition, some schools put much effort into creating an appropriate school environment. They make good use of IT to produce short films with themes on MCE and broadcast them through campus TV so as to enhance students' understanding of the targeted themes by various kinds of exposure. Individual schools put effort into creating a religious atmosphere by nurturing students through religious periods and activities, as well as by daily contact between clergy and students.

- There follows a good example of a primary school making a holistic plan for the work of student development. The school concerned gives due consideration to the needs of student development and identifies the development of students' resilience as the focus of the work on student support. Clear strategies are adopted and appropriate guidance programmes are set. The school has not only formulated "Developing Resilience Culture" as its focus for development but also set "Live healthily for Prosperous Life" as the theme for school-based guidance activities. Through various cross-curricular activities organised by subjects and groups, focuses for development are highlighted. Various resilience elements, such as problem-solving and optimism, are incorporated into school-based Personal Growth Education to progressively enhance students' understanding. The school deploys resources from external organisations to strengthen students' ability in problem solving, as well as improving their resilience attributes. A counselling group has been set up during the ECA period to cater for students' needs. Moreover, workshops are organised for parents and teachers to help them work coherently with the school's development theme. With concerted effort over the years, the effectiveness of "Developing Resilient Culture" within the school is very promising,

not only because of successfully instilling positive attitudes in students and improving their problem-solving skills, but also by allowing teachers and parents to have a better understanding of students' needs during growth and development. Moreover, the school attaches great importance to national education. With regard to the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the founding of our country, the school has set "Caring for the development of the Motherland" as its major concern to strengthen national education. The school has formulated a holistic plan to foster coordination among subject panels and groups to implement cross curricular activities as well as suitably select activities outside the school for students to participate in, so as to cultivate a caring attitude for our Motherland. This year, the school organises exchanges and mutual visits with its sister schools in Mainland China and sharing is arranged among students.

2.4.3 Implementation of Support for Student Development – Secondary Schools

- About 70% of the secondary schools identify nurturing students' moral disposition as one of their major concerns. Around 20% of the schools take creating a caring and harmonious school culture as the focus for school development. The rest of the schools are keen on devising a work plan for MCNE, despite the fact that they may not identify students' moral disposition as a major concern. Schools stress the importance of carrying out the work of student support through a whole-school approach. The task groups appropriately devise whole-school support measures, which are closely aligned with the major concerns or focus of development. Although the task groups plan their work in different ways, most of them start to plan at school level. They then coordinate with subject panels and groups to incorporate related elements of MCE through classroom teaching and organising various school-based guidance activities. In view of students' needs and social concerns, schools also make good use of different time slots, including morning, weekly or afternoon assemblies, to organise talks and activities related to anti-drug, friendship and sex education to raise students' awareness.

- The schools place emphasis on creating a suitable learning environment for delivering messages on MCNE. Some schools make good use of the campus TV to upload relevant current news to enhance students' understanding. Moreover, appropriate teaching materials on "Paths to Adulthood" for junior secondary students, or school-based curricula are adopted and "Life Education" and "Moral Education" lessons are provided. Through teachers' and students' interaction and sharing, schools provide support and guidance to facilitate students' growth. Individual schools put effort into creating a religious atmosphere. They organise religious activities and infuse elements of MCE into "Religious Education" lessons to nurture students. Furthermore, schools accord emphasis to cultivating students' spirit of serving others by providing ample opportunities for them to serve their

fellows. Schools also set up uniform groups and arrange various community services for students to participate, in order to enrich their learning experiences and develop their leadership potential. A small number of schools even expect junior secondary students to participate in service activities or uniform groups on a compulsory basis. With supervision and support from class teachers or teachers in charge, students are fully involved and reflect on experiences learned.

- There follows a good example of a secondary school making a holistic plan for the work of MCE. The school concerned strategically provides students with appropriate support in growth and development through cultivating positive values and nurturing a caring and harmonious school culture. The development of students can be well-balanced in the psychological, physical social aspects as well as caring for society. The school implements MCE through weekly assemblies, afternoon gathering, activities and competitions. The meaning of "Judgment", "Commitment", "Caring", "Knowledge" and "Contribution" and the attitudes to exercising these attributes are also successfully delivered which can reinforce students' understanding and deep reflection. This year, the school has newly set up a task group on health education, focusing on promoting students' balanced diet during lunch and organising various thematic talks on, for example, anti-drug and making friends, so as to develop a healthy campus for the students. The school accords emphasis to nurturing students' awareness of the community by providing various opportunities for students to serve others. Such arrangements enhance students' awareness of the community, and the sense of serving others, as well as self-confidence.

2.4.4 Improvement in the Work of Support for Student Development

- Schools place emphasis on nurturing students' moral disposition. The success of attaining effective outcomes depends on a strong consensus on the focus for student support among teachers. Through meticulous planning, schools put tremendous effort into implementation and monitoring, continuously reviewing and improving on their work. Some noticeable issues have been identified in the planning for student development in some secondary and primary schools. Schools are reminded to put more effort into the following areas for future development of student support services.

  - When formulating the holistic plan to provide support for student development, schools are generally unable to give due consideration to the use of information or data collected from different sources in setting priorities and focuses for the work. This weakens the effectiveness of the activities conducted.

  - Schools have set up various task groups to carry out the work of providing support for student development. However, the groups tend to devise support

measures separately, with insufficient collaboration and communication with other groups. There is a need to improve the coordination and collaboration of different student supporting teams in schools.

- When carrying out evaluation, most schools evaluate individual work or activities only, instead of conducting a holistic evaluation of the major concerns and progress towards development targets. Schools are advised to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of various tasks as a reference for future development.

- Teachers play important roles in nurturing students' moral disposition. However, some teachers are inexperienced or have little understanding of the curriculum. They are unable to grasp and deliver effectively the main concepts of the school-based moral curriculum.

2.5 Utilisation of Resources and Support

- To arrange various learning activities for students inside and outside the classroom, schools need to seek support and tap external resources. Schools are able to develop appropriate links with external organisations and parents. This is very important for maintaining the healthy growth and development of students. Schools regard parents as significant partners in school development and maintain good relationships with them. Schools are keen to maintain close communication with parents through various channels, such as parents' days, open forums, school newsletters, school web-pages and Parent-teacher Associations. Through phone calls and home visits, both parents and teachers have a better understanding of the physical and mental development of students. With such mutual understanding and enhancement of home-school cooperation and communication, the healthy growth of students is further reinforced. Parent-teacher Associations serve well as a bridge between parents and schools by organising interest groups and parent-child activities, helping with fund raising and setting up funds to sponsor school reading programmes. In recent years, schools have been putting more emphasis on parental education. They organise talks and seminars to cater for parents' needs, such as "How to address the youngsters' emotion" and "How to address the problem of internet addicts" for primary schools, and "Workshop on the growth of adolescents" and "Plan for the growth of Secondary 1 students" for secondary schools. These parental education programmes aim at better equipping parents with the appropriate knowledge and skills required for nurturing their children. In addition, with parents' participation in the IMC of schools, parents' views are able to be conveyed and taken as reference in devising school policies. Parent volunteers, especially in primary schools, are valuable assets in effectively providing help by different means, such as making teaching aids and acting as lunch

helpers, story-tellers and lesson assistants.

- Schools maintain close liaison with external organisations and tap resources from them to implement various activities and programmes, in line with the development of their major concerns. Such arrangements provide students with various learning experiences and supporting services. Schools further tap resources from the EDB, tertiary institutions and sponsoring bodies to address their needs in developing the school-based curriculum, as well as providing professional training for teachers. To broaden students' learning experiences, an increasing number of schools arrange students to participate in activities organised by the districts or community, including training in voluntary or community services, as well as performing in festive and community events. Students are provided with many opportunities to participate in Mainland and overseas learning exchange programmes to broaden their horizons. A small number of schools arrange exchanges and mutual visits with their 'sister schools' in Mainland China, thus enhancing students' understanding of different cultures and gaining of diversified experiences. Schools also maintain close ties with the alumni or alumni associations and solicit their support for school development. Apart from participating in SMC to devise school policies, some alumni serve as homework tutors, activity instructors, and give talks to fellow school-mates on further studies and future career, sharing their personal successes and career-related learning experiences.

Chapter 3 The Development of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum

3.1 Planning for the New Senior Secondary Curriculum

- Following the commencement of the Basic Education Curriculum Reform in 2001, the Senior Secondary Curriculum Reform was eventually launched in 2009. The great majority of schools started their preparation work several years ahead of the implementation of the NSS curriculum. Over 50% of the secondary schools participating in ESR have included preparation for the NSS curriculum as one of the major concerns in their development plans, and deployed tremendous effort in the corresponding planning and associated work. As the duration of schooling for most of the students in special schools is extended, special schools are committed to reviewing the school curriculum. On the whole, schools have directed much attention towards the preparation for the NSS curriculum.

- In the course of the preparation work, schools meticulously plan and coordinate the work relevant to the NSS curriculum, including class structure, timetables, teachers' deployment and training, the transition from junior to senior curriculum, curriculum content, subject combinations and choices, as well as allocation of resources, all of which are inter-dependent and closely related. Schools formulate the direction of, and guidelines for, the development of a school-based NSS curriculum for teachers' reference, and some have formed task groups or committees to coordinate the launch of the NSS curriculum. On the whole, a majority of schools give due consideration to their context and students' needs in their orderly and systematic planning for the NSS curriculum. Through timely and effective planning, trial runs are also launched, such as different class structures with two action plans, to properly address the changes. However, the development of the NSS curriculum in individual schools is behind schedule, as they are still at the initial stage of development or working towards consensus building among stakeholders.

- Schools flexibly deploy resources to cope with the diversified NSS curriculum. Various changes are made in school facilities, including alteration to classroom setting, updating equipment, enriching library resources and learning and reading materials, changing special rooms into classrooms, or vacating more premises for holding various activities. Most schools effectively plan and coordinate the human resources for the various KLA, including cautious allocation of manpower, recruitment of teachers for new subjects, such as BAFS and LS. A small number of schools further deploy additional staff, such as professional social workers, teaching and activities assistants, to prepare teaching materials for students with SEN, or to provide additional support for students' personal growth. Individual schools also recruit Chinese, English and Mathematics teachers to flexibly carry out

split-class or group teaching in S4, reinforcing students' acquisition of knowledge in the core subjects. Other schools recruit tutors from outside to conduct music and dancing classes to enrich the aesthetic development of students.

- Schools formulate their own class structures and conduct curriculum work smoothly, based on various factors, such as permitted number of classes, teachers' preferences and expertise, students' interests in elective subjects and facilities available. When special schools are formulating their curriculum, parents' preference on elective subjects is also taken into consideration.

- To cope with the elective modules and various subject combinations, schools started to revise their timetables for subject choices in 2008. A majority of schools lengthened the duration of each lesson, mostly arranging double or triple lessons, forming groups flexibly or creating blocks in the timetable for students' choice of subjects. Some schools fix a weekly period for life-wide learning activities to broaden students' learning experiences. A small number of schools are more cautious in planning. They have conducted trials of new timetables one year ahead to facilitate teachers and students becoming accustomed to changes as early as possible, with a view to ensuring smooth transition. In general, schools are able to implement all subjects under various KLA and OLE, in accordance with the timeframe of the planned curriculum.

- The NSS curriculum consists of three components; core subjects, elective subjects and OLE. In order to foster the whole-person development of students, schools provide them with opportunities to study four core subjects, two or three elective subjects and OLE.

- With the four core subjects of Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and LS as foundation, senior secondary students can select two to three subjects as their electives from 20 NSS elective subjects, more than 30 ApL subjects and six other language subjects according to their interests. Such a diversified NSS curriculum is able to provide students with a wide range of subject choices to cater for their varying aptitudes, interests and abilities. Schools have formulated a clear subject selection mechanism, conducted briefings or consultation sessions on the NSS curriculum for parents and students, provided appropriate guidance for students on subject choices and set up clear guidelines on withdrawal of subject selection. Schools duly consider different views from students and parents, as well as teachers' expertise in providing reasonable subject combinations for students. Allocation of subjects to students is also based on their preferences and with reference to their academic results. Moreover, a small number of schools hold mock subject-selection exercises to familiarise students with these important events, or adjust subject combinations to cope with the needs of parents and students.

Such flexible arrangements, however, vary among schools, due to different school context.   Only a limited number of schools provide rigid subject combinations, without giving due consideration to students' needs.

- In order to successfully implement the NSS curriculum, teachers should master clearly the rationale for the curriculum and understand that the key elements are mutually linked.   In designing curriculum and assessment content, teaching strategies, students' abilities and interests should be well-catered for.   Therefore, teachers' professional development and knowledge management are very important. To cope with the implementation of the NSS curriculum, schools accord much emphasis to teachers' training.   Teachers actively participate in training, including the development trend of the NSS curriculum, subject curricula and related teaching pedagogies.   Other training programmes include catering for learner diversity, questioning techniques, OLE and career planning.   After the completion of training in the basic subject curriculum, teachers continue to participate in curriculum training on elective modules.   Apart from arranging teachers to participate in professional training organised by the EDB, schools will arrange CLP for teachers to explore curriculum tailoring, assessment methods and pedagogies. Individual schools have set up committees to coordinate training and arrange activities for teachers to cope with the schools' major concerns.   School sponsoring bodies organise joint schools' training for some NSS subject teachers to facilitate professional exchange with partner schools.

3.2 Implementation of the New Senior Secondary Curriculum

- Smooth implementation of the NSS curriculum relies partly upon the successful provision of a solid foundation of knowledge, skills and attitude for students, and an appropriate transition from the school-based junior secondary curriculum.   The transition from junior to senior curriculum in the schools that underwent ESR is considered to be generally smooth.   A great majority of schools appropriately provide a comprehensive junior secondary curriculum.   Based on the school context, various KLA have different focuses on learning time and resources. Curriculum is also suitably tailored, with due consideration given to students' learning needs.   On the whole, schools provide a broad and balanced curriculum to strengthen students' foundation knowledge in various subjects and skills for their moving on to the NSS curriculum.   However, individual schools inappropriately adjust the teaching of some KLA or subjects, such as by shortening the teaching time for the Science Education KLA, compressing the one-year curricula of Design and Technology and Home Economics into a half-year curriculum.   Such arrangements adversely affect students' mastery of related learning elements, as well as upsetting the balance in learning.

- In preparing students for the NSS curriculum, over half of the schools offer school-based LS, or incorporate foundation knowledge of LS into the IH curriculum in junior secondary forms. However, a small number of schools have put too much emphasis on preparing junior secondary students to learn NSS LS. They focus on equipping junior secondary students with the respective study skills, thus adversely affecting their mastery of sufficient foundation knowledge in the Personal, Social & Humanities Education KLA. Apart from mastering generic skills and techniques, acquisition of broad foundation knowledge by students in junior secondary forms is very important for preparing them to discuss and analyse current news and issues in the subsequent senior secondary education. Such schools need to review their junior secondary curriculum.

- Schools attach importance to developing students' generic skills. Most schools develop students' generic skills and enquiry abilities through project learning in junior secondary forms, so as to prepare them for conducting IES in senior secondary forms. Students' generic skills cannot be acquired from any single KLA or subject. Rather, through systematic development across subjects, with appropriate collaboration and inter-connection, synergy can be generated for the benefit of students. Schools with better planning set a progressive pace for developing generic skills. They do so, for example by stressing the development of communicative and creative abilities in junior secondary forms, whilst concentrating on training logical and reasoning skills, analytical and application techniques in senior secondary learning.

- Under the New Academic Structure, all students have the opportunity to study up to Secondary 6. To cope with the learners' interests and aptitudes, ApL subjects are provided in the diversified NSS curriculum for S5 and S6 students. They serve as supplements to the core subjects. Such ApL subjects enable students to develop foundation skills, thinking and interpersonal skills, values and attitudes and career-related competencies. Some schools provide diversified subject choices for students by offering ApL subjects to cater for their varying interests, needs and abilities. Individual schools familiarise students with the learning style and the curriculum by providing "Applied Learning Taster Programmes" in advance, and also recommend S4 students to participate in "Applied Learning under Piloting". However, a small number of schools have no plans to offer ApL subjects, notwithstanding their students' demands, interests and abilities.

- Another important part of the NSS curriculum is OLE. It aims to encourage students to participate in five areas, including Moral and Civic Education, Aesthetic Development, Physical Development, Community Services and Career-related Experiences, to supplement other components of the NSS curriculum in achieving whole-person development. Holistic planning has been undertaken for OLE in

most schools, generally covering implementation mode, learning time for different learning experiences and arrangement of appropriate venues. Schools have adopted various strategies in offering OLE by fixing time slots for Physical Education, Music Education and Visual Arts lessons, allocating periods or OLE lessons for all subject groups to plan relevant activities. Such an arrangement enables class teachers to conduct MCNE and schools to run aesthetic and physical curriculum and activities. A small number of schools allocate a week for OLE within the school year, or implement "Other Learning Experiences Achievement Award Scheme" to encourage students' active participation. As formal lessons only cover part of the OLE, schools make use of every opportunity after class to organise subject-related activities, investigation, projects, services, religious activities and interviews for students, with a view to broadening their learning experiences. A small number of schools set up committees to coordinate life-wide learning activities, such as overseas exchanges, research, visits and services. Based on the past experiences of life-wide learning, schools make good use of community resources and external professional support to provide students with learning activities both inside and outside the school.

- Stable and proper development in MCNE is observed in schools. Apart from conveying principal concepts to students, schools also emphasise real life experiences, discussions, thinking and application. Schools make good use of lessons and periods, including Moral Education lessons, Life Education lessons, class-teacher periods, morning or weekly assemblies as well as MCNE activities for students to apply their knowledge in practice, meanwhile nurturing them with appropriate values and attitudes. Some schools with a religious background have acquired good results in promoting and instilling students with active beliefs and values through spiritual education.

- Most schools put much emphasis on providing opportunities for students to learn through serving others. Serving others in school is one of the means. Students are encouraged to participate in various types of service in classes, houses and student unions, as well as serving their fellows by being student leaders. Individual schools strategically arrange various voluntary services for students. Some encourage junior secondary students to join uniform groups for developing the spirit of serving, broadening experience and serving the community. Individual schools have detailed plans for service work, guiding students through participation to the actual organisation of activities, thus enhancing their leadership qualities. Moreover, international exchange activities and meetings are often organised to broaden the global view of students.

- Some schools put great effort into providing lessons on Arts Education, or on a school-based Physical Education curriculum. A small number of schools provide

students with training in Music, Visual Arts and Physical Education through "A Life-long Arts" scheme.　Individual schools design their own school-based curriculum for Arts education, starting with the learning of different art forms and developing students' abilities in the appreciation of art at the elementary stage, ultimately leading to in-depth development in their chosen art forms.　Other schools within the same district share resources in offering Joint School Physical Education under the NSS curriculum.　Generally, schools broaden the Arts Education learning platform for students.

- Schools provide students with appropriate information on further studies and future career by organising related talks, alumni sharing, visits and meetings with parents and students.　In view of the changes in the academic structure, most schools have strategically provided students with career-related experiences, including "School-Company Partnership Scheme" and "Job Shadowing Scheme" through which they may gain authentic working experience.　Other schools introduce a "Workshop on Skills for Achievement" for students to handle management work in a "virtual firm".　Schools give due attention to the career planning of students by providing them with relevant curriculum and activities, as well as with consolidated information.　Some schools have strategic plans to prepare junior secondary students for further development by exploring their interests and abilities, setting up personal goals and helping them choose a suitable path for further studies and career.　A small number of special schools accord emphasis to help NSS school leavers adapt their life after graduation and enrich their life experience.　These schools actively devise an "experiential curriculum" for students and provide opportunities for them to have practicums so as to foster their independent life skills, pre-vocational skills, and to cultivate their positive attitude towards work.

- A traditional report card on the academic achievement of students can no longer comprehensively reflect their whole-person development.　The achievements in whole-person development of senior secondary students will be truly reflected in their SLP.　A majority of schools have already set up SLP in printed or electronic formats, recording students' performance in a holistic manner.　The design of SLP is, however, mostly at an initial stage and the manner of its presentation across schools is diverse.　A small number of schools mainly record students' learning experiences, with some including reflection on activities, so that students may review learning outcomes.　Individual schools introduce SLP in junior secondary forms for students to learn how to record learning experiences and reflect on them.　However, in a small number of schools, the use of SLP is at a preliminary stage, either being trialled, or not yet introduced.

Chapter 4　　Assessment for Learning

4.1　Leadership and Planning

- Because of learning diversity, schools need to develop the multiple abilities of their students in order to fully develop their potential and allow them to demonstrate their abilities. Therefore, it is important for schools to identify students' interests and abilities, address the schools' development priorities, and appropriately make use of evaluation to inform the "Curriculum – Learning and Teaching – Assessment" cycle.

- It is very important to provide timely and appropriate assessment. Assessment serves many purposes. Schools are familiar with "assessment of learning" and use different ways to collect students' learning outcomes and understand their standard. "Assessment for learning" is the term used to describe the ways in which teachers diagnose student learning through their daily teaching. Teachers need to provide students with constructive feedback and concrete suggestions, set clear learning objectives, adjust learning content and teaching strategies, and give timely support and reinforcement. In this way, students identify their strengths for further development or weaknesses for improvement. Assessment for learning has an immediate effect which complements "assessment of learning". Teachers can fully grasp data and evidence of student learning and use it to adjust content and pedagogy accordingly. Although assessment for learning has not been chosen as the major concern, respective work is found in the areas of learning and teaching in schools.

4.2　Measures and Strategies

- Every student is unique and each has his own learning capabilities. To collect evidence of students' knowledge, skills and attitudes, diversified modes of assessment have to be used. This is necessary so that students with different abilities and learning styles are provided with opportunities to demonstrate their learning outcomes. A comprehensive picture of a student's abilities and learning progress can be shown by means of different modes of assessment, informing teachers and students and serving as the basis for improvement of teaching and learning.

- Schools, in general, have formulated clear assessment policies and measures. These, mainly, take the form of arrangements for tests, examination schedules and frequency over the school year, setting assessment formats and grading according to the needs of different subjects. Driven by the curriculum reform, a noticeable change has occurred in the design of assignments, in both primary and secondary schools. In addition to pencil-and-paper assessment, such as daily assignments

and reading reports, other modes of assessment have been adopted, including students' performance in lessons, talks, project work and oral presentation. Through various means, teachers are able to assess students' daily performance, understand their learning progress, and give timely feedback and follow-up for improvement.

- Schools promote the involvement of different parties, such as students themselves, peers, parents and teachers, in different modes of assessment so that students see the ways to improve from different perspectives. Schools generally arrange self-assessment or peer assessment in project learning, so as to strengthen students' abilities in self-reflection and self-evaluation. Some schools require students to use self-assessment rubrics or peer assessment of writing exercises, or conduct peer assessment after students' individual oral presentation or group discussion. Teachers also clearly explain the assessment criteria to students. These activities have become part of the student learning. Furthermore, teachers also give feedback on students' assignments, particularly on the progress in project learning assignments. Teachers give specific guidance and suggestions to students at different stages, according to their learning progress, to inspire them and enhance their learning through teacher-student interaction. Parent assessment, which is more commonly found in primary schools, is mostly used in project work and reading reports where it can yield a better understanding of student learning. In addition, some primary schools place emphasis on enhancing students' abilities in self-reflection. They do this by devising different measures, such as sharing views on assignment performance, using learning performance records in Chinese, English and Mathematics, students' learning profiles, self-reflection booklets and feedback weeks or lessons after examination. The students' reflection is influenced according to the feedback given. There are still a very small number of schools using drilling as the major assessment method. In these schools, diversified modes of assessment and the involvement of different parties are yet to be established.

- The characteristics of assessment for learning include quality teacher-student and student-student interaction, student participation and effective feedback. Therefore, the effectiveness of assessment for learning in classrooms is often determined by whether assessment for learning is consciously included in the design of lessons. It is also influenced by teachers' level of awareness, diagnosis of students' learning difficulties and mastery of learning points during the teaching process and appropriate use of relevant strategies to guide learning.

- In order to enhance students' learning performance, schools increasingly put more emphasis on different teaching strategies, particularly in questioning techniques and small group learning. Many professional sharing sessions, internal and external, are arranged. Professionals from external organisations are invited to provide

- support for teachers in improving their questioning techniques and design of group discussion. Teachers actively implement different strategies to enhance their interaction with students and that among students. In this way, an encouraging atmosphere among peers is fostered and students' participation during lessons is increased. In both primary and secondary schools, the teaching strategies adopted are similar, the only difference being in the frequency of use. The teaching strategies that are mostly used are lecturing, questioning, group discussion and student presentation, with the first two commonly adopted in 80% and 70% of the primary and secondary schools respectively.

- Questioning is frequently used in class. Through questioning, students' understanding and the mastery of learning content is checked. However, some techniques used by teachers are too simple and direct. Some questions are quite direct, focusing on obtaining pre-set answers from students, and some demand too little of the students in response. Inadequate 'wait-time' is given for students to consider before answering. It is not common for teachers to probe or seek to extend students' responses or raise a range of questions to stimulate in-depth thinking. Teachers' awareness of using assessment for learning through questioning still needs to be enhanced.

- Teachers put much effort into improving their questioning techniques, and some use them effectively. In primary schools, teachers make good use of the different questioning levels, starting by checking students' prior knowledge, then using probing, re-directing or one-to-many questioning, to enhance students' deeper understanding of the learning content. Through this questioning process, the thinking scope of students is broadened. They also have a more thorough understanding of the learning points and their higher-order thinking skills are effectively nurtured. Most of these teachers demonstrate common characteristics. They are open-minded and supportive of students. Encouragement is always given when students express their views on the learning content. Some of them use questioning to arouse students' learning interests, motivate students to ask questions and encourage them to explore deeply what they have learned, in order to enhance their analytical and evaluation abilities. Similar situations are found in secondary schools. Teachers pose questions which are geared to the learning points. They apply probing, re-directed questioning or different levels of questioning to guide students to supplement or revise their answers, so as to inspire students to think from different perspectives. Such questioning also promotes greater classroom interaction. Some open-ended questions are raised in order to stimulate students' thinking and imagination, supported with teachers' timely guidance.

- Around 40% and 30% of the lessons observed in primary and secondary schools,

respectively, include group discussions. Classroom routines for group working are in place. Students become used to having group activities and giving presentations of findings after discussion. During group discussion, teachers, in general, walk around and observe the progress, listen to students' discussions, give timely advice and provide individual and group support when necessary. In lessons with good performance in group discussion, teachers are experienced in adopting group discussion strategies. In primary schools, some teachers effectively consolidate student learning through group discussion, according to the learning objectives. They design enquiry activities based on students' real life experiences or situations, and provide adequate opportunities for collaboration and discussion, so as to facilitate students' thinking. Teachers also take account of students' abilities in using homogeneous or heterogeneous grouping, and prepare graded exercises to cater for learner diversity. Students become accustomed to group discussion. They understand their roles and exchange ideas within groups. They complete the work with good collaboration and communication. In secondary schools, the design of activities is closely aligned with the learning objectives. Teachers make use of cooperative learning and encourage students to have group discussions at the start. Reporting is then done by a representative of each group to the other groups. Each group finally revises its findings with reference to opinions received from other groups. This practice not only provides students with ample opportunities for oral expression, but also promotes students' interaction and collaboration through listening to others' views, exchanging ideas and complementing each other. Students are able to conduct in-depth analysis of the learning content gradually and have focused discussion, with teacher's guidance. Through monitoring group discussion, teachers are able to understand students' learning processes and difficulties. Students are also able to apply what they have learned in group discussion. Assessment for learning is effectively enhanced.

- Overall, in the matter of group discussion, there is a great variation among teachers in their use of different techniques, particularly in setting discussion topics, adjusting discussion time, teaching content, strategies and pace. In primary schools, instructions given before group discussion are often not clear, the roles of students in the group are not clearly stated, topics for discussion are too narrow, and the focus of activities is, sometimes, too demanding for less able students. Given this situation, the challenge of the activities is weakened and the generic skills of collaboration and critical thinking are not fully developed. For a few group activities, there are too many students in one group, or the activities are dominated by the more able students, reducing opportunities for all students to exchange ideas and take part. All these factors act against the purpose of promoting group discussion. Furthermore, after group discussion, improvements could be made in summarising student learning and in giving suggestions and feedback to students.

In secondary schools, topics of group activities are, sometimes, too simple and reduce the motivation for discussion. After discussion, comments on students' performance are too brief. Therefore, the purpose of peer collaborative learning through group discussion is weakened. Teachers seldom adjust the teaching content, strategies or pace according to students' performance, in order to enhance the effectiveness of group discussion.

- Classroom learning is the major part of school life. Students receive information from different means in the classroom, including reading different types of materials and exchanging ideas with teachers and peers. Therefore, timely and appropriate feedback is very important for the entire learning and teaching process. It helps students clarify ideas, stimulate self-reflection for future improvement, grasp learning points and improve learning attitudes. In primary and secondary schools, encouragement and praise are always given when students achieve good performance in class. Examples include giving clear and concrete answers, active participation and completion of challenges in class activities. Teachers' feedback, mainly, focuses on judging students' answers. Teachers, in general, perform well in the aspects mentioned above. Feedback is not only limited to giving encouragement and praise to students, but also includes the giving of clear and concrete suggestions during the learning process, as well as encouraging self-reflection and peer assessment. Therefore, more consideration could be given to making use of assessment for learning in feedback, so as to enhance the effectiveness of student learning.

- Where there is good practice in this area, teachers in primary schools are able to give timely feedback and praise students' with good performance and, thus, strengthen teacher-student interaction. This helps students consolidate concepts and construct knowledge. Students also think further about the lesson content, according to teachers' feedback. This helps students improve learning through teachers' suggestions, as well as arousing their interest. In secondary schools, teachers are able to give concrete feedback on students' views, correct their misconceptions, guide them to think from different perspectives, construct knowledge gradually and grasp the learning points. Teachers also arrange peer feedback to develop students' analytical and deductive abilities. Before the end of the lessons, teachers consolidate teaching content, prompt students to recall the learning points and reinforce what students have learned. All these practices effectively promote assessment for learning.

- If the learning focuses are clearly stated, with adequate guidance provided, assessment and evaluation of students' performance are continuously conducted during lessons, then students can more easily grasp the learning objectives and understand what they have learned. At present, only a small number of teachers

state the learning objectives clearly in class, check students' understanding of learning objectives before end of the lessons, or check the learning points during lessons. However, the aforementioned situations are not common and teachers need to give due attention to these aspects.

4.3 Reflection and Follow-up

- Schools need not devise extra strategies for assessment for learning in the classroom. They need to consider how the strategies employed, such as questioning, group discussion and feedback, can be fully functional and effective. Schools should promote comprehensive planning at school level, make use of assessment for learning to guide teaching, emphasise immediate follow-up, carefully observe students' learning difficulties and give guidance and appropriate feedback, so as to stimulate students' thinking and improve their learning. Moreover, the setting and sharing of clear learning objectives not only allow students to raise questions or express their views, but also help teachers adjust their teaching focuses, strategies and process in a more efficient way.

Chapter 5   Catering for Learner Diversity

5.1   Leadership and Planning

- Student learning is the core issue of the SDA framework.   All school personnel, including the SMC, the Principals / School Heads and middle managers, work towards student learning while formulating SDP and various measures.   It is, therefore, imperative to include effective leadership and planning for student learning.   Students differ from each other in terms of cognitive and affective development, learning abilities and learning styles as well as interests and potential.   Overall, they present a wide learning spectrum.   Apart from KLA related activities, there could be a rich variety of life-wide learning aligned with the curriculum framework.   In recent years, in order to foster student learning, schools have actively explored various strategies to cater for learner differences.

- In general, schools reviewed in this school year place great emphasis on catering for learner diversity.   Approximately 20% of the schools identify this issue as one of their major concerns.   Whether or not they have done so, they have devoted a considerable amount of human and financial resources to meet students' diverse learning needs.

- The EDB has implemented SCT in public sector primary schools, starting with Primary One students.   Primary schools are generally active in preparing for the implementation of SCT, such as organising school-based training programmes, participating in collaborative research and projects with tertiary institutions.   Due to the professional support from the EDB and tertiary institutions, training courses on SCT and cooperative learning have been duly organised.   These courses help teachers refresh their pedagogical knowledge and, strengthen their professional teaching capacity.

5.2   Measures and Strategies

- With regard to the effective use of various strategies to engage students in active learning and developing their capabilities to construct knowledge, the key lies in how well the curriculum and performance assessment are designed to accommodate students' abilities, and how effective are the teaching strategies, including feedback. With respect to curriculum planning, a defined core curriculum, or adjusted teaching content across year levels, can be found in some secondary and primary schools.   Such practices enable teachers to cater appropriately for the needs of students with different abilities.   In secondary schools, a range of NSS elective subjects and ApL subjects are provided in order to cater for students' different interests, needs and abilities.   There are schools that promote class-based

curriculum adaptation. However, the effectiveness varies according to the practices implemented. Furthermore, in primary schools, remedial classes are organised, before or after school, to cater for the less able students. However, most of the teachers tend to focus on the completion of supplementary exercises and worksheets, as well as repeatedly teaching the lesson content. There is a need for teachers and schools to make better use of the assessment data prior to assigning students to remedial classes. Based on the data collected, the curriculum could be more focused and tailored to assist the less able students to learn more effectively. The IRTP, which is mainly implemented in primary schools, is less effective. There is still a need for most primary schools to examine the learning needs of their students in greater detail and, thereby, adjust the objectives and content of the curriculum appropriately, with the use of diversified teaching strategies and learning materials.

- Assignment designs tend to be more diversified as a variety of assessment methods are adopted by schools. In addition to summative assessment, students' daily performance in the classroom and their assignments are measured and reflected by various means. Compared with their secondary counterparts, primary schools have given more effort to designing graded worksheets so as to cater for learner diversity. Some schools have started to direct more attention towards developing students' self-directed learning, encouraging them to undertake pre-lesson preparation, such as reading assigned materials, collecting information on a given topic and taking notes. Nevertheless, there could be a better use of students' pre-lesson preparation to facilitate learning in the classroom. Such practices help to develop students' independent learning attitudes and abilities as well as enhancing their learning effectiveness.

- Schools can refer to various kinds of data in devising their policies. Such information includes data from the TSA and the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test as well as various other modes of internal and external assessment. After analysing students' performance, follow-up measures, such as streaming, adjustment of lesson content, design of worksheets and provision of after school remedial support and enhancement programmes are adopted accordingly. However, there is still a need for schools to conduct in-depth analysis of students' assessment data with a view to identifying their learning difficulties. Through school-based professional development activities, such as lesson study, peer lesson observation and discussion, identified learning difficulties should be sharply focused, so as to improve lesson planning and teaching strategies.

- To cater for learner diversity, a range of related administrative measures is adopted. Schools, in general, make reference to students' performance in internal assessment in making arrangements for streaming or split-class teaching, to cater for students of

similar levels.　Increasingly, secondary and primary schools tend to recruit additional teachers and adopt split-class teaching in the core subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics, so as to enhance individual support through lowering the teacher-student ratio.　Moreover, other than offering a wide range of after school learning support measures and various enhancement programmes are provided for the more able students, so as to boost their confidence and more fully develop their potential.　In primary schools, apart from adopting remedial teaching for the less able students, before and after school, small group pull-out programmes of IRTP are arranged for those who are finding it difficult to make progress.　The progressive implementation of SCT[2] at Primary One in primary schools in the public sector commenced this school year.　Around 20% of the schools have already specially deployed their own resources to adopt split-classes or to try out school-based SCT at some year levels, so as to cater for learner differences and enhance the effectiveness of student learning.　Special schools accord emphasis to students' conditions and adopt a variety of strategies, such as Conductive Education, IEP and Sensory Integration Training, to cater for individual student's needs.　Different types of therapies and training are offered to students with specific needs, such as autistic students and/or students with specific learning difficulties, in order to help them solve their learning problems.

- Schools have directed more attention to strategic planning to cater for learner differences.　Besides planning and implementing related administrative measures and strategies at the school level, the issue of catering for learner diversity at the classroom level is also addressed.　Relevant teaching strategies are, comparatively, well-defined in primary schools.　Approximately half of the primary schools reviewed are active in exploring and implementing teaching strategies to cater for learner diversity.　Cooperative learning has been promoted in most of the schools. It is intended to engage the more able students in helping their peers, thereby enhancing individual support at classroom level, through the employment of more heterogeneous grouping.

- With respect to the mode of classroom teaching, there are more opportunities for student participation in classroom activities.　More group discussions are taking place and, thereby, more learning opportunities are provided for students with different abilities and active engagement in classroom learning is enhanced. Teachers employ different teaching strategies, such as exposition of learning content, questioning and group discussion, to facilitate student learning.　More opportunities are provided for students with different abilities to engage in class learning.

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[2] Referring generally to those classes with 25 students or below

- Among the schools reviewed, the teaching strategies implemented to cater for learner diversity are, comparatively, explicit in primary schools. A small number of primary schools define questioning and feedback as strategies to improve classroom learning and to cater for learner differences. More and more schools intend to provide students with diversified learning activities, such as group discussion and student presentation, in order to enhance active participation and develop their potential. In implementing SCT, primary schools are more active in promoting cooperative learning. Teachers, in general, can make use of group learning activities to promote peer interaction. A small number of teachers make good use of more heterogeneous grouping. They engage the more able students in helping their peers so as to promote peer learning and to cater for individual difference. However, there is still room for teachers to bring out the essence of cooperative learning, by incorporating appropriate classroom activities to enhance the effectiveness of peer support and collaborative learning. Individual secondary schools, endeavour to cater for learner diversity. In such lessons, teachers are able to assign group tasks according to students' different abilities and provide them with ample opportunities for participation, through such means as oral presentation and making comments. Furthermore, Individual teachers raise a good range of questions, prepare graded worksheets, arrange group discussions and peer support. These measures help students of different abilities to learn and stimulate the more able to extend their learning.

- Some secondary and primary schools adopt split-class teaching in order to reduce the number of students in the classroom. Although the size of a split-class is relatively small, the learning and teaching effectiveness could be enhanced further. There is a need for schools to make use of small class size by sharply focusing on students' learning difficulties, flexibly adjusting teaching strategies and giving students specific feedback and appropriate support.

- On the whole, teachers provide assistance and individual support by observing students' learning progress. Some make use of strategies, such as designing graded worksheets or group discussions to help students grasp the learning focuses and to cater for learner diversity. However, particularly at classroom level, thorough and comprehensive planning to cater for learner diversity is needed. Practices such as posing questions only to more able individual students, too hasty a completion of the intended teaching content or failing to adjust the depth and level of discussion with reference to students' abilities, are found. There is a need for teachers, by referring to students' performance, to organise the learning content into manageable units. Furthermore, they need to employ teaching strategies, such as questioning and group discussion, to stimulate students' learning interest, to cater for learning difficulties progressively and consolidate what students have learned

before the end of the lessons.   In devising strategies to cater for learner differences, it is recommended that teachers incorporate the underlying principle of assessment for learning into lesson planning so as to strengthen the effectiveness of learning.

- A wide range of after school learning support measures is generally adopted. These include homework remedial classes, bridging courses for children who have newly arrived from Mainland China and Chinese tutorial classes for NCS students. Some of these classes are taught by teachers or teaching assistants, while some are provided through hiring services from external organisations.   This not only creates more space for teachers, but also facilitates student learning.   As for the more able students, ECA and special training opportunities, such as "Little Campus TV Reporter" and training for English drama and the Hong Kong Mathematics Olympiad, are arranged by some schools.   Some students are encouraged and recommended to participate in related activities and training provided by external organisations so as to develop their abilities and widen their exposure.   Compared with secondary schools, primary schools have made more effort in promoting gifted education.   Schools devise a school-based gifted education curriculum, infusing the development of higher-order thinking skills, creativity, personal and social skills into daily classroom teaching.   In addition, "Talent Pools" have been set up.   On the whole, schools are able to implement different tiers and modes of gifted education according to students' abilities and development needs.

- Coordinating committees are generally established to support students with SEN. In general, schools formulate appropriate measures to cater for students with SEN in different ways, such as learning support, socialisation and provision of different therapeutic services.   Also in evidence are the following; arranging teaching assistants to assist teachers in catering for individual needs in class, recruiting resource teachers to conduct co-teaching with subject teachers, inviting parent volunteers to conduct shared reading for students with SEN and training upper primary students as "Little Teachers" to assist lower primary students who have learning difficulties.   Student guidance teachers are able to plan different kinds of support measures for students with SEN.   The measures include, providing small group guidance in the areas of developing student learning, affective and social skills and making use of grants to hire professional services, such as speech therapy, training in reading and writing, and attention training.   To cater for students with SEN, schools devise IEP, as well as tailor-made curriculum and assessment. Meetings are held regularly to discuss their learning progress.

- In the primary and secondary schools reviewed in this school year, two schools have distinctive planning to cater for students with diverse needs.

    - One primary school undertakes comprehensive and thorough planning in

catering for individual differences. Corresponding strategies are effectively implemented and the desired impact is evident. The major concern is well-defined and the school works towards the set targets of catering for learner diversity. Curriculum planning, class teaching and performance assessment are closely integrated and fully aligned with the development focus. In the course of school-based curriculum development, the school refers specifically to the central curriculum framework and makes adjustments according to students' abilities. Core curricula are devised for all year levels and, therefore, vertical continuity is enhanced. The curricula for core subjects are well-planned to address individual differences and subject teachers at the same levels can adjust and design appropriate teaching materials and strategies accordingly. Teachers of remedial or IRTP classes, by working through lesson study, adjust the teaching content and assignments whilst assignments are designed to meet students' learning needs. Moreover, the school deploys resources well. Apart from introducing school-based SCT in Chinese, English and Mathematics, appropriate support programmes are provided, during or after school, for different target groups of students. The strategic planning of professional development activities is drawn up and the external training and support programmes are fully used. These enable teachers to understand the underlying principles and skills of cooperative learning. Lesson study is conducted in the core subjects. Teachers can share the teaching strategies of catering for learner diversity, as well as fostering consensus building among colleagues. Furthermore, the planning and implementation of related strategies are coherent across the school, subject panels and committee levels. The CLP, peer lesson observation and evaluation, as well as the lesson study in the core subjects, are sharply focused on the major concern. The focus of professional exchange, therefore, lies in catering appropriately for learner diversity and group learning.

- One secondary school gives considerable consideration to the planning and implementation of different aspects, such as resource allocation, curriculum planning, class teaching and teachers' professional development. Various measures and strategies have been efficiently implemented. To address the major concern of "catering for the diverse learning needs", the school has deployed a significant level of resources. Apart from splitting five classes into six, according to students' abilities, and allocating two teachers to conduct co-teaching in the classes of the less able, resource teachers are also recruited to co-teach, with the subject teachers, those students with SEN. These measures allow students to participate in the learning activities and to better grasp the learning content. There are core and extended curricula for each junior secondary subject. The more able students are expected to master both

curricula, whilst the less able and those with SEN only need to study the core. Examination papers include three levels; elementary, intermediate and advanced. Special symbols on the questions at the elementary level encourage students to answer, and this practice has considerably enhanced students' confidence in learning. Moreover, the school has clearly defined questioning and classroom interaction as the main strategies to cater for learner diversity at classroom level. CLP periods for subjects, such as Chinese, English, Mathematics, IH and LS, are also scheduled in the formal timetables. Such practice enables teachers to use the above-mentioned strategies to plan the lessons, as well as to design graded worksheets, questions and learning activities, and to conduct post-lesson evaluation. Professional development activities, such as the lesson study launched in the junior secondary forms, demonstration lessons by experienced teachers, peer lesson observation and self-evaluation from video recording, have enhanced the teaching exchange. Professional development, therefore, is fully aligned with the school's major concern. Teachers, in general, can strengthen the individual support to address students' learning needs. Some are even able to organise the lesson content into manageable units in order to assist students to grasp the learning points. With respect to lessons involving group teaching, most teachers collaborate closely with each other to support students with different abilities in learning effectively.

5.3 Reflection and Follow-up

- Curriculum planning, teaching and performance assessment are intertwined. Although schools are becoming more concerned about the issue of catering for learner diversity, only a limited number have carried out a holistic review of overall curriculum planning, performance assessment, teaching strategies and student learning. Apart from providing different administrative measures to cater for learner differences, there is a need for schools to be active in exploring holistic curriculum planning, classroom teaching and performance assessment, at school, subject and classroom levels. Other than enhancing the strategic planning, consensus building among teachers is also needed to enable full implementation of the programmes. Teachers need to assess students' performance or responses well, so as to adjust the teaching strategies, content and pace accordingly. Activities and assignments, devised with tasks of different levels of challenge, are needed to cater for students' different abilities and needs, and to extend their learning. Moreover, there is a need for schools to step up the evaluation and conduct regular reviews of the overall effectiveness of the related measures. This will also entail effective use of the evaluation findings to inform planning, so that the measures can be refined and the impact improved and sustained.

Chapter 6   Concluding Remarks

- Since the 2008/09 school year, the new phase of the SDA framework has been implemented.   It emphasises the auxiliary role of external review to support SSE. Schools are also encouraged to internalise self-evaluation for sustainable development and self improvement.   In the second year of the new cycle of ESR, we continue to emphasise school-specific and -focused review, in which school background and context will be duly considered.   Schools' self-evaluation and formulation of development priorities and major concerns are to be reviewed.   In sum, the overall performance of both primary and secondary schools is good.

- Schools are familiar with the rationale for self-evaluation.   They have formulated clear self evaluation mechanisms and employed different tools to collect data and evidence.   Through group participation, they discuss and analyse the effectiveness of the work.   In formulating SDP of this new cycle, schools generally conduct a holistic review, analyse their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges, and make reference to the suggestions given as an outcome of QAI or ESR.   The major concerns, which are based on data, evidence and observation, match with the development needs of schools and students.   Nearly all schools can appropriately allocate resources to match with the major development tasks, introduce external professional support, apply funding, and provide relevant professional development for teachers.   These are conducive to the implementation of the major concerns. Schools have made clear progress in internalising SSE and are familiar with the use of the P–I–E cycle in their daily routine work.   However, more attention could be paid to the connection between the elements of the P–I–E cycle, in particular the process from evaluation to planning.   An accurate and specific evaluation is necessary in planning the major tasks of the new development cycle and adjusting the strategies between consecutive school years, thus benefitting the continuous progression of schools.

- Based on the curriculum recommended by the CDC, school development needs, teachers' readiness and students' abilities and needs, schools design their diversified school-based curricula.   In primary schools, they employ a cross-subject curriculum by using thematic activities to connect all subjects.   They also make use of individual subjects, such as languages, to promote reading and writing or implement independent theme-based learning activities, such as the development of thinking skills.   In secondary schools, they emphasise concrete foundation knowledge and generic skills in junior secondary levels and other focuses such as biliterate and trilingual education, cultivation of a rich English learning environment and development of one designated KLA.   The implementation means are quite similar between primary and secondary schools, including longitudinal development across different levels, the use of key stages of learning or

implementation in some classes and then connection with other classes of the same level.   Schools duly address student learning, adjust timetables and provide students with a variety of life-wide learning opportunities.

- Schools give due consideration to developing the four key tasks advocated in the Curriculum Reform, mainly through implementing a single key task or a combination of key tasks.   Students' reading interests and habits are improving but there is still room for greater progress in the areas of reading strategies and reading to learn.   Schools treasure the development of students' values, promote MCNE actively, and take care of students' growing needs by systematic means.   Some schools are eager to use electronic platforms to encourage reading after school, submission of assignments, completion of exercises and discussions.   Only a minority of schools make good use of IT for interactive learning in classes. Schools make good efforts to promote project learning to develop students' generic skills.   The methods used are diversified, including project learning in a designated subject or joint subjects under a leading one, and a thematic approach with a number of collaborative subjects.   The development of project learning is quite successful.   Many schools have formulated concrete programme plans across different levels to progressively guide students to master different learning skills.

- The NSS curriculum has been newly launched in 2009.   Nearly all schools have been ready for the implementation of the NSS curriculum.   Appropriate measures, including design of class structure, provision and combination of elective subjects, choices of elective units and devising of timetables, are well-planned and prepared in advance of the commencement of the NSS academic structure.   In accordance with the change to the NSS curriculum, schools have appropriately deployed teachers and arranged different professional development opportunities for them to support the implementation of the curriculum.   Schools duly take students' views into account when planning the combination of elective subjects.   They also provide ApL subjects to accommodate the various learning needs of students and organise briefings for parents and students on the details and features of the NSS curriculum.   Students have also been assisted to set future development targets for career planning.   The more forward-looking schools have started helping students set targets in junior forms and plan for personal development.   Schools provide content-rich OLE for students, which complement subjects, to enrich their exposure and life experiences.   Most students have their learning profiles ready to record their learning details.   Certain schools have included student learning reflection in the profiles, to enable students to adjust learning strategies and extend learning.

- The use of assessment for learning in classroom teaching is at the exploratory stage. Although questioning and small group discussion have been the major and common teaching methods employed, the use of these two teaching methods has much room

for improvement. Teachers are often unable to point out the strengths and weaknesses of student learning, nor can they provide specific feedback to inform learning and make improvement. More attention should be given to assessment for learning in adjusting teaching content and methods.

- To address learner diversity, schools have made appropriate efforts, in providing both administrative measures and facilities, to address learner diversity. Measures include streaming students by ability, arranging students across classes into smaller groups and devising withdrawal programmes. Schools also arrange various remedial support and enhancement programmes to cater for different learning abilities. The targeted students include those who are academically more able as well as who are less able, those with SEN and others recently arrived from Mainland China or who are NCS. The minority of schools which have made good use of learning and teaching strategies to cater for learner diversity, focus on optimising related teaching methods, such as cooperative learning. Having benefitted, in some cases, from focused professional development, teachers make use of lesson planning and observation to discuss and implement relevant teaching strategies. Through evaluating the lessons observed, they adjust the strategies and conduct frequent trials and refinement until the effectiveness is enhanced.

- Facing changes in curriculum, learning and teaching, as well as the challenges of learner diversity, schools should take into account the different perspectives of subject panels, committees and individuals. Schools are advised to make good use of the P–I–E cycle to internalise SSE, so as to assess students' learning performance and needs in detail, formulate specific learning enhancement targets and promote sustainable development.

Appendix 1   Schools Undergoing ESR in the 2009/10 School Year

Primary Schools

Aberdeen St Peter's Catholic Primary School
Alliance Primary School, Tai Hang Tung
Buddhist Wing Yan School
Buddhist Wong Cheuk Um Primary School
Chai Wan Kok Catholic Primary School
Chi Hong Primary School
Cho Yiu Catholic Primary School
Christian Alliance S Y Yeh Memorial Primary School
Cnec Ta Tung School
Cumberland Presbyterian Church Yao Dao Primary School
Dr. Catherine F. Woo Memorial School (AM)
Emmanuel Primary School, Kowloon
Fresh Fish Traders' School
Fung Kai Innovative School
Hennessy Road Government Primary School (AM)
Holy Cross Lutheran School
Hong Kong Baptist Convention Primary School
Hong Kong Taoist Association Wun Tsuen School
Islamic Primary School
Kowloon City Baptist Church Hay Nien (Yan Ping) Primary School
Kowloon Tong Government Primary School
Kwun Tong Government Primary School (Sau Ming Road)
Leung Kui Kau Lutheran Primary School
Li Sing Tai Hang School
Lions Clubs International Ho Tak Sum Primary School
Lok Sin Tong Leung Kau Kui Primary School
Lok Sin Tong Leung Wong Wai Fong Memorial School
Lui Cheung Kwong Lutheran Primary School
Lung Kong World Federation School Limited Lau Tak Yung Memorial Primary School
Man Kiu Association Primary School
North Point Government Primary School
North Point Government Primary School (Cloud View Road)
Po Kok Branch School
Po Kok Primary School
Po Leung Kuk Chong Kee Ting Primary School
Po Leung Kuk Leung Chow Shun Kam Primary School (AM)
Po Leung Kuk Riverain Primary School
Po Leung Kuk Vicwood K.T. Chong No.2 Primary School (Am)

Po Leung Kuk Vicwood K.T. Chong No.2 Primary School (Pm)

Pui Kiu Primary School

Queen Elizabeth School Old Students' Association Branch Primary School

S.K.H. Ka Fuk Wing Chun Primary School

S.K.H. Ma On Shan Holy Spirit Primary School

Shan Tsui Public School

Shap Pat Heung Rural Committee Kung Yik She Primary School

Shun Tak Fraternal Association Wu Siu Kui Memorial Primary School (AM)

Sir Ellis Kadoorie (Sookunpo) Primary School

Sun Fong Chung Primary School

Tai Po Old Market Public School (Plover Cove)

The Church Of Christ In China Kei Wa Primary School (Kowloon Tong)

The Church Of Christ In China Wanchai Church Kei To Primary School (Kowloon City)

The Salvation Army Lam Butt Chung Memorial School

The Salvation Army Ann Wyllie Memorial School

Tin Shui Wai Methodist Primary School

Toi Shan Association Primary School

Tseung Kwan O Government Primary. School

Tsuen Wan Government Primary School

Tung Wah Group Of Hospitals Chow Yin Sum Primary School

Yaumati Kaifong Association School

Yuen Long Merchants Association Primary School

Secondary Schools

Aberdeen Baptist Lui Ming Choi College
Belilios Public School
Buddhist Ho Nam Kam College
Buddhist Mau Fung Memorial College
Buddhist Wai Yan Memorial College
Buddhist Wong Wan Tin College
Caritas Wu Cheng-Chung Secondary School
Carmel Alison Lam Foundation Secondary School
Carmel Divine Grace Foundation Secondary School
Chan Sui Ki (La Salle) College
Cheung Chau Government Secondary School
Chinese Y.M.C.A. College
Christian Alliance College
Christian Alliance S. C. Chan Memorial College
Chung Sing Benevolent Society Mrs. Aw Boon Haw Secondary School
Confucius Hall Middle School
Cumberland Presbyterian Church Yao Dao Secondary School
Ho Fung College (Sponsored By The Sik Sik Yuen)
Hong Kong And Macau Lutheran Church Queen Maud Secondary School
Hong Kong Taoist Association The Yuen Yuen Institute No.2 Secondary School
Hong Kong Teachers' Association Lee Heng Kwei Secondary School
Hong Kong True Light College
Hong Kong Weaving Mills Association Chu Shek Lun Secondary School
Ju Ching Chu Secondary School (Kwai Chung)
Ju Ching Chu Secondary School (Yuen Long)
Kiangsu-Chekiang College (Shatin)
Kowloon Technical School
La Salle College
Lai Chack Middle School
Lee Kau Yan Memorial School
Lingnan Dr. Chung Wing Kwong Memorial Secondary School
Lok Sin Tong Wong Chung Ming Secondary School
Lui Cheung Kwong Lutheran College
Ma On Shan Tsung Tsin Secondary School
Maryknoll Convent School (Secondary Section)
New Asia Middle School
Ng Wah Catholic Secondary School
Notre Dame College
Po Leung Kuk Lee Shing Pik College

Po Leung Kuk Mrs Ma Kam Ming-Cheung Fook Sien College

Po Leung Kuk Wai Yin College

Pope Paul Vi College

Pui Kiu Middle School

Queen Elizabeth School Old Students' Association Tong Kwok Wah Secondary School

Queen's College Old Boys' Association Secondary School

Raimondi College

Sacred Heart Canossian College

Sai Kung Sung Tsun Catholic School (Secondary Section)

San Wui Commercial Society Chan Pak Sha School

Sha Tin Methodist College

Sheung Shui Government Secondary School

Shun Tak Fraternal Association Tam Pak Yu College

St. Catharine's School For Girls, Kwun Tong

St. Clare's Girls' School

St. Francis Xavier's College

St. Joseph's College

St. Margaret's Girls' College, Hong Kong

St. Peter's Secondary School

St. Stephen's Church College

The Church Of Christ In China Kei Long College

The Church Of Christ In China Kei San Secondary School

The Church Of Christ In China Mong Man Wai College

The Church Of Christ In China Yenching College

The Hong Kong Chinese Women's Club Fung Yiu King Memorial Secondary School

The Hong Kong Taoist Association Ching Chung Secondary School

The Mission Covenant Church Holm Glad College

The Y.W.C.A. Hioe Tjo Yoeng College

Toi Shan Association College

Tseung Kwan O Government Secondary School

Tung Wah Group Of Hospitals Lee Ching Dea Memorial College

Tung Wah Group Of Hospitals Sun Hoi Directors' College

Wah Yan College, Hong Kong

Yan Chai Hospital Lan Chi Pat Memorial Secondary School

<u>Special Schools</u>

Hong Chi Morninghill School, Tuen Mun
Hong Chi Pinehill No.2 School
Hong Kong Christian Service Pui Oi School
Po Leung Kuk Law's Foundation School
Society Of Boys' Centres Shing Tak Centre School
The Salvation Army Shek Wu School
Tung Wah Group Of Hospitals Tsui Tsin Tong School

Appendix 2   Post-ESR School Survey Findings in the 2009/10 School Year

No. of ESR Schools	Questionnaires Issued	Questionnaires Collected	Overall Response Rate
140	6611	5409	81.8

		Percentage→				
		Strongly agreed			Strongly disagreed	Don't know / N.A.
1a	I am clear about the objectives of ESR.	25.0%	68.7%	5.7%	0.5%	0.1%	0.3%
1b	I am clear about the procedures of ESR.	22.3%	69.1%	8.0%	0.6%	0.1%	0.3%
1c	I am clear about the scope covered by ESR.	18.7%	69.7%	10.6%	0.9%	0.1%	0.5%
2	Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools 2008' encompasses the major areas of work in our school.	11.2%	66.0%	21.3%	1.4%	0.2%	4.7%
3	The Performance Indicators facilitate the review of our school's major areas of work in a more focused manner.	11.9%	68.8%	17.2%	1.9%	0.3%	2.6%
4	In general, the questionnaires in the Stakeholder Survey are effective in collecting stakeholders' views about our school.	10.3%	68.2%	19.3%	1.9%	0.4%	1.9%
5	The information provided by the Key Performance Measures helps us to conduct SSE in our school.	10.6%	70.9%	16.4%	1.8%	0.4%	2.1%
6	The E-Platform for School Development and Accountability enhances the efficiency of collecting and managing our school's SSE data.	9.9%	65.5%	22.3%	2.0%	0.3%	5.0%
7	My involvement in the 'holistic review of the school' has given me a better understanding of our school's overall performance.	14.9%	66.6%	16.3%	1.7%	0.4%	2.2%
8	I take an active part in evaluating the performance of our school.	18.9%	60.0%	18.6%	2.1%	0.4%	0.9%
9	SSE has enhanced professional exchange among staff on how to make continuous school improvement.	14.3%	65.0%	17.1%	3.0%	0.7%	1.1%
10a	The pre-ESR briefing conducted by the ESR team member in June/July of the previous school year enhanced my understanding of ESR.	13.1%	71.6%	13.2%	1.6%	0.4%	4.4%
10b	The pre-ESR briefing conducted by the ESR team member in June/July of the previous school year allayed my anxiety about ESR.	8.1%	52.4%	29.8%	8.3%	1.5%	4.6%
10c	The pre-ESR briefing conducted by the ESR team member in June/July of the previous school year clarified the requirements for ESR and reduced unnecessary preparation work.	8.8%	55.2%	25.3%	8.4%	2.2%	4.4%
11	The ESR team focused specifically on our school context to review our major concerns.	11.1%	68.0%	17.6%	2.6%	0.6%	2.2%
12	The variety of activities observed by the ESR team was adequate.	10.9%	65.7%	19.0%	3.7%	0.6%	2.2%
13	The ESR team demonstrated professionalism in the review process.	13.8%	64.3%	18.9%	2.3%	0.6%	2.1%
14	The attitude of the ESR Team was sincere and friendly.	22.1%	63.1%	12.9%	1.5%	0.4%	1.3%
15	The participation of front-line educator(s) as member(s) of the ESR team enabled our school's performance to be assessed from different perspectives.	13.3%	70.7%	14.4%	1.2%	0.4%	2.1%
16	The ESR team was able to listen objectively to the views expressed by our school staff in interviews/ meetings.	12.4%	64.9%	19.7%	2.3%	0.6%	6.0%
17a	Post-lesson observation discussion with individual teachers provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on students' learning and classroom practices.	10.9%	65.9%	19.0%	3.2%	0.9%	9.5%
17b	Post-lesson observation discussion with individual	9.1%	64.0%	22.3%	3.7%	0.9%	9.5%

		Percentage					Don't know / N.A.
		Strongly agreed				Strongly disagreed	
	teachers provided opportunities for teachers to reflect on how school concerns were addressed in classroom teaching.						
18	Preliminary findings of the ESR team were clearly conveyed to our school staff in the oral feedback session.	12.1%	65.8%	19.4%	2.2%	0.6%	11.9%
19	Having teachers, other than the team responsible for school development, in the oral feedback session has increased the transparency of ESR.	12.7%	66.7%	18.6%	1.5%	0.6%	8.4%
20a	The ESR has given an accurate judgement on the effectiveness of our school's self-evaluation processes.	8.1%	64.8%	23.6%	2.9%	0.5%	2.2%
20b	The ESR has accurately identified the strengths of our school.	13.8%	66.9%	16.3%	2.5%	0.4%	1.4%
20c	The ESR has accurately identified the areas for improvement for our school.	10.8%	65.9%	19.3%	3.4%	0.7%	1.4%
20d	The ESR has helped our school formulate future goals and plans.	11.9%	68.1%	17.4%	2.1%	0.5%	1.7%
21	I agree with the recommendations made in the ESR report.	8.4%	64.2%	24.2%	2.7%	0.5%	2.2%
22	There was adequate time for our school to prepare the written response to the ESR report.	10.0%	63.3%	24.5%	1.9%	0.3%	10.4%
23	There was adequate discussion among our school staff before finalising our written response to the ESR report.	9.3%	62.2%	23.7%	3.6%	1.2%	5.7%
24	ESR helps me reflect on the effectiveness of our school work.	11.1%	69.6%	16.1%	2.5%	0.7%	1.0%
25	The amount of preparatory work done by our school for ESR was appropriate.	7.8%	59.5%	22.9%	7.2%	2.6%	1.0%
26	Pressure resulting from ESR was reasonable.	4.8%	52.1%	28.1%	11.2%	3.8%	0.9%
27	The entire ESR process was open and transparent.	8.6%	66.3%	20.9%	3.4%	0.8%	0.9%
28	On the whole, I am satisfied with the ESR process.	7.6%	64.8%	23.3%	3.4%	1.0%	0.6%