Inspection Annual Report 2020/21
Executive Summary

Background

1. Since the implementation of the School Development and Accountability (SDA) framework by the Education Bureau (EDB) in 2003, schools have been undertaking the "Planning-Implementation-Evaluation" (P-I-E) cycle of self-evaluation to enhance self-improvement. The Quality Assurance Division of the EDB conducts External School Review (ESR) and Focus Inspection (FI) in a "school-specific and focused" manner and provides schools with feedback as well as recommendations for improvement. In the 2020/21 school year, the EDB conducted ESR and FI in a total of 240 schools, including primary, secondary and special schools.

Key Inspection Findings

Effectiveness of School Self-evaluation

2. Schools embed the concepts of self-evaluation in their routine work and set appropriate directions for development in alignment with the trends in education, school contexts and students' needs. They collect different data to understand the work progress of various tasks and stakeholders' opinions on their work. However, there is still room for improvement for school self-evaluation (SSE) work. For example, the major concerns set are high-sounding with too many goals, thus undermining the effectiveness in implementing the work plans; or the implementation strategies are generally routine work and work plans are not adjusted timely in line with the goals; or when reviewing the work effectiveness, schools focus more on reporting the perceptions of stakeholders or the completion of tasks than on conducting a holistic evaluation and formulating specific follow-up measures. Therefore, the effectiveness of using evaluation to inform planning still needs to be strengthened.

Professional Leadership

3. The school management leads all staff to set directions for development and deploy various resources to enrich students' learning experiences, supporting student learning and development. Middle managers are also able to formulate work plans according to schools' major concerns and students' needs. However, the school management's performance in co-ordinating and monitoring the tasks varies while middle managers do not fully grasp the concepts of the school curriculum, hindering their performance in fulfilling the role of promoting and improving the overall curriculum planning. The collaboration among subject panels and committees is more for co-ordinating activities, but less for working on a comprehensive planning of school curriculum or the integration of learning inside and outside the classroom, affecting the work effectiveness.

<u>Fostering Students' Whole-person Development</u>

4. In general, schools can plan the school curriculum in accordance with the school missions and trends in education, and the development focuses are mostly related to enhancing values education, self-directed learning (SDL), STEM[1] education and catering for learner diversity. They arrange diversified life-wide learning (LWL) activities to enrich students' learning experiences.   The primary school curriculum help students build a solid learning foundation in an orderly manner, whereas for secondary schools, the curriculum planning for the junior secondary (JS) level generally needs to be improved.   For example, the core elements of the Key Learning Areas (KLA) in Personal, Social and Humanities Education as well as Technology Education are not fully covered; or some senior secondary (SS) curriculum topics are brought forward to the JS level, resulting in the inadequate coverage of the essential learning content at the JS level, hindering the building up of a solid knowledge foundation for JS students. Moreover, not many schools are able to plan comprehensively and promote cross-curricular collaboration at the school level.   Taking the cultivation of students' information literacy (IL) as an example, in response to students' needs as well as the change in the learning mode under the new normal, schools are gradually paying attention to the fostering of IL in students, but most of them are unable to make holistic planning at the school level to systematically integrate IL into the curriculum of various subjects and LWL activities, for the purpose of effectively fostering students' abilities and attitudes in using information technology.   The promotion of "Reading across the Curriculum" (RaC) also needs to be strengthened.   At present, only a small number of schools can further promote RaC by building on the foundation of using different strategies to promote reading.   Most of the subject panels and committees implement their own work plans without much effective co-ordination among them, or do not provide enough opportunities to students to integrate knowledge across different subjects, resulting in ineffective implementation.

5. Schools place great emphasis on values education.   They generally promote values education through different KLAs, moral education curriculum and LWL activities.   However, most of the subject panels and committees integrate the learning elements of values education into their own learning activities and there is a lack of close collaboration among them.   For promoting national education, co-ordination and planning at the school level are yet to be enhanced, with subject panels and committees working on their own without holistic planning.   Schools should strengthen the collaboration among subject panels and committees, improve the holistic planning of values education as well as systematically connect the learning inside and outside the classroom, for the purpose of enhancing students' understanding of the situations of our country and cultivating their sense of national identity.

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[1] STEM refers to the education of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

6. Schools attach importance to developing students' SDL abilities, generally promote SDL through embedding relevant elements in various subjects, or connecting it with other development tasks such as reading, e-learning and project learning.   Pre-lesson preparation and note-taking are the more commonly adopted implementation strategies, while self-assessment and peer assessment are also employed to encourage students to reflect on their own learning performance.   To support students' ongoing learning outside classroom, schools speed up the promotion of SDL and e-learning, as well as make a good effort to develop students' self-learning habits and capabilities during the suspension of face-to-face classes.   Students are generally able to apply basic self-learning skills such as note-taking and pre-lesson preparation under teachers' guidance, but seldom ask questions or make use of self-learning resources.   Many students are not able to set learning goals or make constant adjustments to their learning plans and strategies through continuous reflections.   Students' overall self-initiative and sense of agency in learning need to be strengthened.

7. Most schools can make effective use of resources to promote STEM education.   They set up designated committees to co-ordinate related work, such as organising project learning or LWL activities on the theme to enrich students' learning experiences; or nominating students with higher ability to take part in STEM education-related training or competitions outside school to help them reach their full potential.   However, schools seldom evaluate the overall effectiveness with reference to the objectives of STEM education and the specific learning performance of students.   When assessing student performance, schools' methodology is monotonous, such as evaluating the product design or degree of completion, but not comprehensively reviewing student performance in integrating and applying their knowledge, skills as well as attitudes across different subjects during the process.

8. Schools are capable of formulating school-based policies on catering for learner diversity, deploying different resources flexibly to provide students with appropriate support for their learning and development, as well as adapting the curriculum and designing the assessment tasks according to students' abilities and learning needs.   Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, in general, can lead the designated committee to collaborate closely with other professionals to arrange different counselling groups on learning, emotion and social skills to provide timely support to students.   However, there is still a need to continue to help teachers enhance their skills in taking care of students with special educational needs in class.   As for gifted education, schools mostly make use of school-based pull-out programmes and off-site support to nominate gifted students to participate in special training or competitions for developing their potential. Regarding non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, schools generally arrange learning support and LWL activities for them, but still have to continue to help NCS students learn Chinese language in a systematic way, facilitating their integration into the community.

<u>Learning and Teaching Effectiveness</u>

9. Under the ongoing epidemic, teachers and students have been familiar with using apps to engage in real-time online lessons.   In both face-to-face classes and real-time online lessons, teachers are generally able to present the lesson objectives clearly in class, use learning and teaching materials to boost students' motivation in learning, and connect the learning content to everyday life.   Concluding from the observations of both face-to-face classes and real-time online lessons, there is not much interaction among students.   The lack of such interaction in face-to-face classes is due to the social distancing measures and shortened lesson time under the epidemic; while in online classes, teachers mainly explain the content of presentation slides, leading to relatively less student-student interaction.   In addition, teachers usually use questions to check students' prior knowledge, but not many of them can guide students to deepen their learning and cultivate various thinking skills through asking questions of different levels as well as offering guidance and concrete feedback.

Recommendations

<u>Strengthening professional leadership, improving self-evaluation effectiveness and promoting collaboration among subject panels and committees</u>

10. The school management should lead teachers to formulate work plans with clear priorities and focused goals, and conduct a holistic review of the work effectiveness by integrating qualitative and quantitative evaluation information and data.   This will help schools adjust the directions for future development as well as work priorities and to improve SSE.   This will, in turn, facilitate schools' continuous development and enhance their accountability.

11. The school management should play a better role in planning, supporting and supervision, as well as strengthen the communication and collaboration among subject panels and committees, leading all the teaching staff to jointly plan and implement cross-curricular development tasks, so that synergy can be achieved with accountability ensured at all levels for improving work effectiveness.   Middle managers should have a more accurate understanding of the concepts of the school curriculum, strengthen their role and professional capacity as curriculum leaders, as well as provide students with a broad and balanced curriculum to achieve the goal of whole-person development.

<u>Enhancing the overall curriculum planning and strengthening the promotion of values education</u>

12. Schools have to ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and resonates with the seven learning goals of school education, to help students build a solid learning foundation, cultivate positive values and attitudes as well as the capabilities to achieve lifelong learning.   It includes due efforts to promote STEAM[2] education and planning of students learning inside and outside

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[2] STEAM refers to the education of Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics.

class by flexibly applying the notion of "learning time".   It is also necessary to pay attention to the students' physical and mental well-being, help them lead a healthy lifestyle and foster in them positive attitudes in the face of pressure and challenges.   Secondary schools should leverage the opportunity brought by the optimisation of the four senior secondary core subjects to create space for students and cater for their diverse learning and developmental needs.

13. Schools have to improve the planning at the school level and promote cross-curricular collaboration.   This includes enhancing students' IL, guiding them to use information and information technology ethically and to assess the reliability of information.   Schools need to co-ordinate subject panels and committees to jointly promote values education through learning activities inside and outside the classroom, continue to help students understand our country's history and culture as well as gain a correct understanding of the Constitution and the Basic Law, including "one country, two systems".   Schools should also cultivate students' awareness of and a sense of responsibility for jointly safeguarding national security, so that they could become a new generation with a sense of belonging towards the country, affection for Hong Kong and an international perspective.