

**Comprehensive Review Report**

**St Paul's Co-educational College**

**Address of School: 33 Macdonnell Road, Hong Kong**  
**Comprehensive Review Period: April 16, 17, 18, 19 & 22, 2008**

**Centre for Educational Leadership**  
**Faculty of Education**  
**The University of Hong Kong**  
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## Contents

	Page
Introduction	3
Management Review	6
Management and Organization	6
Student Support and School Ethos	11
Student Performance	16
Programme Review	17
Teaching and Learning	17
Concluding Remarks	22

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# Introduction

## School Vision and Mission

- As a Christian school, St. Paul's Co-educational College pledged to uphold the founding Christian spirit of 'Faith, Hope and Love' and to cultivate in their students an altruistic spirit of caring and sharing, a passion for lifelong learning and pursuit of excellence, an ability to thinking independently and a global perspective. This is summed up in the School's motto: 'to serve, to excel'.

## Basic information about the College

- St. Paul's Co-educational College was established in 1915. Before joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) in 2002, it had already developed a reputation in scholarship and academic learning, and in music performance. Over the years, the school has produced many alumni who are accomplished members of society with outstanding achievements. The conversion into DSS gave the School an opportunity to upgrade its facilities, provide a higher than average teacher-student ratio and above all, introduce a much more flexible curriculum for the students.
- English is the medium of instruction and Putonghua will be the medium of instruction in Chinese Language in the lower forms next year. The language policy of the School is bilingual in English and Putonghua .
- The class organization and number of students are as follows:

Level	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	Total
No. of classes	7	7	6	6	6	4	4	40
No of students	231	231	195	178	157	106	91	1189

- In 2007-2008, there are 7 classes each of S1 and S2 and 6 classes each from S3 to S5. For Secondary 6 to 7, there are 4 classes at each level. Class size for S1 to S5 is set at 33. In S1 to S3, students are organized into smaller sets in English, Chinese and Mathematics classes, and the number of students in each set is further reduced to as low as 26. There are two form teachers in each class to reinforce pastoral care and civic and moral education.

- In 2007-2008, there are 102 teachers in addition to the Principal. The school has employed 39 administrative and supporting staff of which the Directors of Administration, Finance, Community Relations and Information Technology serve both the College and the Primary school. A Music Director and a Sports Director are there too to coordinate music and sports activities respectively for the College and Primary School. In addition, the school has one full-time and one part-time social worker, five Laboratory Technicians, an Experiential Learning Coordinator and a Careers Mistress.

#### Comprehensive Review Methodology

- The Comprehensive Review (CR) was carried out on April 16, 17, 18, 19 & 22, 2008. It consisted of a Management Review and a Programme Review. The Management Review examined the domains in Management and Organization, Student Support and School Ethos, and Student Performance, while the Programme Review reviewed all the Teaching and Learning areas.
- Prior to and during the CR, the Review Team scrutinized documents and data provided by the School. The Core Members of the Review Team paid a pre-CR visit to the School on April 9th 2008. The team listened to the Principal' presentation, explained the purpose and operation of the CR to the teaching staff, and answered their questions.
- During the review period, the subject specialists of the Review Team observed lessons; scrutinized minutes of staff meetings, subject department meetings and special function committee meetings; examined the schemes of work, examination and test papers, and samples of student work; held discussion of different length with the Principal, the two Vice-Principals (VPs), department heads, subject teachers, students, administrative staff, parent representatives as well as School Council representatives; and observed lessons and subject-related extra-curricular activities.
- The following Key Learning Area (KLA) Groups were reviewed: English Language, Chinese Language and Chinese History, Mathematics, Science, Social Sciences, Information Technology, Physical Education and Music. A total of 76 lessons were observed. The subject evaluators also met the panel chairs and provided initial oral feedback to the whole panel after observing the lessons.
- The findings presented in this report were derived from corporate judgment of the Review Team based on the information gathered through the above-mentioned

methods during the review period.

# Management Review

## Management and Organization

- The School is founded by Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, one of the oldest Christian Churches established in Hong Kong since 1843. Other than churches and social services, Sheng Kung Hui has made great contribution to education. There are now over 30 primary and secondary schools sponsored by Sheng Kung Hui in the territory. St. Paul's Co-educational College is one of them. The School is sponsored by the Council of St. Paul's Co-educational College which consists of prominent academics, senior government officials and professionals. Many of them are alumni and a few are parents. They are people with vision, and have great devotion to education.
- They regarded joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme as an opportunity to transform the School from a local school to an international institution. They see that their ambition is to preserve the basic elements of the traditional Chinese education while incorporating appropriate modern educational theories, concepts and values. Their ultimate aim is to turn St. Paul's Co-educational College into a world-class school on par with the best in the world whilst retaining its local character.
- The Council has been very successful in fund-raising which put the School on a very solid financial base. The Council meets regularly and is responsible for the overall policy and direction. While giving the School its generous support, the Council leaves room for the Principal and her team consisting of the two VPs and some senior teachers to chart out new programmes and try out new ideas. This trusting relationship built between the Council and the School is highly valued by the Council members.
- Since joining DSS, a number of changes were introduced to the School. In management, a Steering Committee (SC) and an Academic Committee (AC) were set up in 2004 to strengthen the management process. The function of the SC is to take charge of overall policy formulation and in steering, guiding, coordinating school plans to ensure the activities could realize their objectives. The AC, on the other hand, has been commissioned to set policies, makes decisions, gives directives and oversees all activities of curriculum planning, teaching and learning, and staff development. The SC and AC are strategically arranged so that each looks after an important aspect of development of the School and coordinates the subcommittees under them.

- The membership of the SC consists of the Principal who chairs the meetings, the two VPs, and the core members of four dimensions of learning, namely: Language and Culture; Humanities, Mathematics, and Science; Aesthetics and Creativity, and Leadership and Community Service. These new dimensions were one of the main items in the 5-year School Development Plans to introduce experiential learning to widen the learning experiences of students. The SC meets quite regularly in the year. It is the main decision-making body which decides all the major developments of the School. The minutes of its meetings were sent to all teachers, a useful measure to facilitate communication among the teaching staff.
- The Academic Committee, parallel to the SC in the organization structure, focused on curriculum, teaching and learning and staff development. The AC is staffed by the Principal who also chairs the meeting, the two VPs, teachers in charge of subjects and staff development, and a few others who also sit in the SC. The AC meets six to seven times a year and coordinates the work of subject departments, library work and staff development.
- A Management and Leadership (ML) Team headed by the Principal has also been set up since 2005 with the two VPs and five senior teachers sitting in both the SC and the AC. Shared leadership is practised in the ML Team which meets regularly to brainstorm on the development of the School. New ideas are generated and brought back to the SC and/or AC for more discussion and formal decision.
- The Principal is an experienced educator who has a strong leadership. As a member of the School Council, she shares the Council's vision and works effectively as a link between the Council and teachers. Working closely with the two VPs and senior teachers in the SC and the AC, she plays a vital role in formulating the school plans, implementing strategies and supervising the execution of these plans. The bulk of the responsibility of the School rests on the shoulders of the Principal, VPs and the senior teachers who are hard-working and dedicated. Strong directive leadership in school management is displayed, which has increased efficiency and clearly shown the direction of where the School is moving.
- The management and decision making process have no doubt been strengthened and management and operations have become more efficient. As the School expands, more teachers have been recruited; the number has risen from 60 odd some years back to over 100 in 2007-2008. It is inevitable that different opinions would arise. How to maintain the course of direction while at the same time accommodate diverse views and continue to enhance a greater sense of ownership among teachers remains a

challenge to the School in the next phase of development.

- Clear procedures, guidelines and directions have been set up. Filing system is orderly. The self evaluation practices are largely followed in committees and subject panels but of diverse quality. The planning and evaluation work were better done in new programmes than in academic subjects. In some subjects, there was either the absence of appropriate measures to address the identified weakness, or that the measures were not articulated, and hence its effectiveness was unclear. In some cases, success criteria could be made more specific to enable clear measures on learning outcomes. There is sufficient in-house knowledge on the subject and internal workshops could be organized to improve coherence between objectives and improvement measures, and between evaluation and planning.

- An induction programme is organized for all new teachers with general guidelines on school and professional issues. A mentor-mentee system is in place for their support and they are paired up with experienced teachers in co-teaching. The School also places great importance on staff development. Teachers, both as individuals and in groups are given opportunities and financial support to undertake short-term courses, go on overseas visits for new ideas or strategies, or obtain higher professional qualification. However, there seemed to be a gap between the staff development policy and the expectation of the teachers as they rated staff development the second lowest in their Stakeholder Survey. Probably after the announcement of the new policy in 2006, many teachers have not had the chance to exploit the financial support provided for their own professional development, not to mention to applying for the one year study leave. It was also possible that thus far, the topics of Staff Development were more related to educational or curriculum issues, mostly as a response to the reform set by Educational Bureau (EDB) rather than teachers' personal development needs. The School is aware of this and has included topics of teachers concern for staff development.

- An elaborated appraisal system including self reflection, identification of areas for evaluation, and evaluation from different appraisers has been introduced since 2006. The system has clear objectives, procedures, forms to be used, and criteria for judgment. It applies to all new teachers who need to go through appraisal every year with different foci during their two-year contract. It is applicable to teachers who are about to be promoted. Other teachers are appraised once every three years which will begin in 2008-2009. The teacher stakeholder surveys showed that teachers did not seem to be happy with the staff appraisal. Since the survey was done in the same year as the new appraisal scheme was implemented, there is a need to wait till the

scheme has run through its three-year cycle before fair judgment can be reached.

- The School treated the Stakeholder Survey seriously. The data were analyzed and discussed in a staff meeting. Regarding the views of parents, the Survey showed that parents were most satisfied with the school culture, followed by home-school cooperation. They rated reading habit of their children the lowest. On individual item, they felt their children did not often discuss with classmates and share what they had learnt. As for the students, they were most satisfied with the teachers - their attitude and academic knowledge. However, they rated their learning and reading activities the lowest. On individual item, they did not agree that the teachers often praised them in class, nor were they interested in reading activities organized by the school. Measures were discussed and adopted in the staff meeting to deal with the issues raised by students. One of them was to invite teachers to give more encouragement to students during lessons. Teachers should be aware of the influence of praise and encouragement on students during lessons. Interestingly, the students we interviewed stated they liked reading (see Teaching and Learning below) but not writing book reports. Since many school reading activities required the submission of book reports, this could be a possible explanation why they were not interested in the school-organized reading activities. If this were the case, the School could consider alternative requirements instead to promote the habit of reading.
- There is a very strong collegial culture in the School. Teachers are very supportive of each other and are accustomed to sharing of ideas. This is particularly strong among teachers within the same subject panel due largely to the grouping of teachers based on subjects in different staff rooms. Team teaching and collaborative planning periods for teachers in most subjects further enhance this supportive spirit. Peer evaluation is encouraged and practised, though variation exists among subjects as shown in discussion with teachers. Busy schedule is often cited the reason for putting off this unscheduled practice. Peer observation fits well with the strong collegial culture which needs strengthening in order to further enhance the quality of teaching in the classroom.
- With the support of the financial experts in the School Management Committee (SMC) and a full-time accountant, financial management is both sound and prudent. There are clear guidelines on the procedures for purchase and tendering. Budgets for all subjects and activities are planned in May each year and are administered on the principle of programme budgeting. Fee remission to assist the needy students is well over the required percentage. The school has also made good use of the flexible DSS funding mode in devising incentive measures to recruit and retain quality teachers.

Teachers can apply for advance promotion from Graduate Master 2 to Graduate Master 1 and eventually to Senior Graduate Masters. A medical scheme is provided for all staff. Under the new salary structure, teachers could apply for a one-year paid study leave to further pursue professional development.

- At the moment, the school premises are still crowded. It is slightly improved after the School Improvement Project. The building is old but it has style. Efforts were made to keep the style of the old building and maintain cleanliness of the school compound and lavatories by frequent cleaning and refurbishment. Some conversions were made to fit the new development. The Primary School will move out of its present buildings in Macdonnell Road by mid-June and the existing premises will be redeveloped into a modern building with greatly improved facilities such as gymnasium and lecture theatres. The old building with red brick facade and inner courtyard will be kept, blending the modern with tradition which will make the School a unique place for students to study.
- Parents are regarded as key partners in the development of the school. Teachers meet parents several times a year, during parents' day after the first term examination, and in form level meetings at the beginning of the academic year. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) committee is active. They solicit parents' views through questionnaires and forward them to the School for information and response. Some parents are anxious to know the progress of their children in the new environment. Some want to provide guidance to their children in Extra-curricular Activities (ECA) and expect the School to feed them with more information. The PTA in particular asked for more communication opportunities. While the School has put a lot of information on the school website, there is still a need to provide more channels of communication with parents. The School could move one step forward by inviting a parent representative from the PTA to sit in the SMC.
- Besides parents, the School maintains close connection with the Alumni Association. Many alumni serve as mentors for the S6 students and provide valuable advice in their formation.

## Student Support and School Ethos

The vision of St Paul's Co-educational College is to cultivate in their students an altruistic spirit of caring and sharing, a passion for lifelong learning and pursuit of excellence, an ability to thinking independently and a global perspective. This is summed up in the motto of 'to serve' and 'to excel'. The School also attaches great importance on the development of moral values of the students, including, diligence, honesty, courtesy, on the love of learning, respect for oneself and others, and respect for rules and regulations. The direction of student support services is guided by these vision and concerns.

- Over the years, the work on promoting moral education falls mainly on the Moral Education and Pastoral Care Committee. The Committee has gathered rich resource materials including books, pamphlets, videos and worksheets on issues faced by adolescence to be used by the two form teachers. Three structured themes have been developed, namely, adolescent health programme, sex education and leadership skills for S1 to S3 which takes up about 1/3 of the home-room time. Good connection is maintained with outside bodies and their support is sought in the delivery of the programme. Form teachers supplement with topics for the remaining time. Last year, they included topics on friendship, IT ethics, school rules, courtesy, respect for the elderly, and relations with parents. For S4 to S6, the work is done through Enrichment Programme which organized workshops on 'Time and Stress Management', 'Anti-crime and Anti-corruption', and 'Mother's Choice' (consequences of pre-marital sex). To assess the effects of the programmes, the Committee could at the end include evaluation on both contents and delivery methods.
- S1 students get additional support to become integrated into the school culture. A Big Brother and Big Sister Scheme involving mostly S4 and a few S6 students are included to assist the young students' integration through personal friendship. The fifty S4 and S6 students are given intensive training on leadership and mentoring skills before they make their first contact with the new S1 students during S1 orientation day. The efforts were greatly appreciated by the S1 students.
- The students are supported individually through counseling work provided by the School Counseling Team consisting of teacher counselors, school Social Workers and the Educational Psychologist. The Team handled some 70 cases a year. The Team members meet and discuss the discipline issues and offer individual supports to the needy students.

- Probably the most counseling given in the School is on further education. Almost all graduates after S7 go on for higher education locally or overseas. Each year there are quite a number of students who leave before or immediately after S5 for further studies abroad. Careers talks and exhibitions were organized and individual consultation was given by a full-time counselor on further education.

- Since 2005, with the intention to widen the experience of students and raise civic awareness – another aim of the School, Community Service was made compulsory for the lower forms. However, this intention was not readily appreciated by the students, particularly S1 as some failed to understand its purpose when it was first introduced. Experience was gained and adjustment was quickly made in the following years. The activity was moved to the second term. With more time and differentiated activities for each form, the activities were better accepted by students. The intention of involving students in community services is a sound one though there is a need to better enhance coordination and cooperation with other activities, such as Student Activities Week (SAW) (for example, there is no reason why tree planting cannot be included in S1 out-door activities in SAW). Doing so will reduce duplicated efforts, resources and most importantly time for both teachers and students. The School is aware that eventually the students, particularly those in the senior forms, would have to take up their own community services.

- The School has done a lot of work to help students ‘to excel’ in social and leadership skills and in multiple intelligence. Since 2004, measures in supporting the potentially gifted students have been formulated. Pioneering work in Mathematics has started in three areas: enrichment courses by introducing Math topics outside the Math syllabus, encouragement of self learning and competitions, and targeting different groups of students with different emphasis. The Enrichment Courses are open to S1 to S4 to raise the general standard. The Self-directed Learning is targeted at those S3 and S4 who are mathematically abler and have developed deeper interest in the subject. Self-study is arranged in groups or individually with teacher supervisors. The last of these measures is to stimulate interest through participation in school and public competitions. Each year since 2006, over 250 students have taken part in different math competitions. The hard work of the teachers is to be commended. Through Math activities, they do not only concentrate on a few gifted but also aim at raising the general interests and standard of students.

- The science teachers launched similar programmes last year using enrichment classes for identified students in S4 and S5 and sent S6 to attend off-site programme run by Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. Last summer, some

science teachers went to Singapore to learn how schools there prepared the gifted students. The School has both resources and potential to develop a comprehensive gifted education programme for the students.

- On the other end of the scale, remedial classes are organized weekly after school for S4 and S5 students who are weak in math or science. They are given supplementary materials and exercises for consolidation.
- The School continued to build up relationship with some schools outside Hong Kong. Altogether nine sister schools from China, Singapore, Australia and USA were established. Each year, some 50 selected students visit a few sister schools for a week to a month. Students who have taken part highly praised the activities. On top of exposure to schooling experience abroad, their social skills have improved. Other students who could not participate in the exchange programme could join the yearly study tours and summer programmes to Singapore, UK, China, New Zealand and Australia. This, together with an array of other values education opportunities, helps broaden students' horizon and develop their potential.
- Training leaders of tomorrow is one of the salient objectives of the School. Leadership programmes are promoted and organized by the Leadership and Community Service Committee for senior form students. They participate in activities of Hong Kong Model United Nations, International Model United Nations locally and the more intensive Harvard Model Congress Asia in Bangkok. The students were enthusiastic about their emulation of world leaders to discuss world business following the United Nations Charters. Each year, the S5 and S6 have been joining the leadership conference held in Singapore since 2002. The more adventurous few, who are mostly S6 students, participate in hiking and climbing Mount Kinabalu in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, and East Malaysia.
- Since 2006, international conferences of a different nature and theme have been organized. In 2006, the Student Science Conference was held jointly with the University of Hong Kong for some 100 student participants from China, Singapore, Australia and Taiwan. Last year, it was the International Choral Conference Grand Concert with choirs from schools in China, Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong taking part. These activities brought together students of different caliber from overseas. It is a pity that due to the physical constraint of the School, the venues of these conferences were all outside campus and the impact of the conferences was mainly confined to the participants and helpers. Efforts should be made in the future events to enable the bulk of students to interact with the overseas students and share

some of the experience and insights.

- Many more students take part in activities in the academic and interest clubs, societies, sports and uniform groups. Each year, the number of students participating in the Hong Kong Schools Speech and Music Festivals and the prizes won is very impressive. The School, in the past few years, has made great effort to promote sports among students. More hands are employed and greater variety of sport activities are introduced to stimulate student interest and those who show greater interest are recruited into the school teams for special training. While choices are increased, there was concern raised by some parents that the students might be overstretched. There may be a need for the School to educate students, particularly those in the lower forms, on priority setting and time management.

- Last year, as part of the civic education, different students visited the 'Refugee Camp in the City' exhibition, the Legislative Council, participated in the debate over the demolition of the Star Ferry Clock Tower in City Forum, attended 'Heartfelt Dialogue' between the newly elected Chief Executive and young people, joined the 'Friends of UNICEF' Ambassador programme for a child-friendly family, participated in a leadership programme on child abuse, and attended a talk by Amnesty International Hong Kong on human rights. The S3 students visited the homes of people living in partitioned units in Shamshuipo, took part in the 'Basti Life Simulation Game' to experience child labour and exploitation. Students who were exposed to these activities expressed deep gratitude for having such enlightening learning experiences.

- Student support services indeed run very smoothly. The supports are many and the life of students is greatly enriched. Since 2004, many new programmes have been introduced and teachers work very hard to deliver the services and to meet the targets. They are to be commended for their speediness in adapting to changes and in responding to students' needs. Teachers are aware of the need for collaboration and coordination. But because of the need to bring out the programs, most efforts were consumed in the planning and evaluation of individual programs. Now that these programs have been tried, teachers could afford the time to sit down for cooperation and collaboration in the planning of the next round of activities.

- The School has cultivated a strong and supportive atmosphere. There is respect among the stakeholders of the school and trust between the SMC and the staff. Internal communication is good and teachers have ample opportunities to voice their opinions through various channels. Teachers are hard-working, eager to learn,

responsible and professional. They have also built up trust among themselves, particularly within subject panels, and have established a collegial culture. Students are happy, polite, friendly and enthusiastic in learning. They love the school and respect the teachers. Students enjoy their school life and actively participate in ECA and other school activities. Peer relationship is harmonious. The school is making extraneous efforts in promoting an all-round education by providing ample opportunities for students to develop their potential, broaden their horizon and develop their social and leadership skills. The teachers are most keen to engage in professional development, of which the Principal has set a very good example; and the School is providing generous support to enable teachers' professional development. Teachers' morale and sense of belonging is very high. It is obvious that the progress made after joining DSS has been well worth the effort.

## Student Performance

- Students are very polite, clearly enjoying school life and very well behaved. They are confident, diligent, articulate and responsive. Many students in the lower forms could switch easily between English and Putonghua and demonstrate high communicative skills. The more able students show a good grasp of thinking skills too. The students all love their school and are respectful to the teachers and peers. They are highly motivated and enthusiastic in learning. They actively participate in various co-curricular and ECA. Student leaders, such as the committee members of the Student Union and Prefects, are mature and responsible; they show a strong sense of commitment, possess good leadership skills, and are ready to serve others.
- In the past three years, the number of students attaining Grade E or above in five or more subjects and attaining Grade C to A from the best six subjects in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education (HKCEE) were among the highest in the territory. On average, some 80 students each year in the past three years had gained 4 distinctions and above. The Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination results showed that all the students met the general entrance requirements for admission to tertiary institutions and some 15 students each year were admitted into local universities through the Early Admission Scheme..
- Students' non-academic performance is equally impressive. Each year many students take part in the Hong Kong Music Festival and Hong Kong Speech Festival and win prizes, including major ones. Other than academic and aesthetic activities, many more students took part in a wider range of activities as, for example, in a series of Model United Nations activities on leadership training, Odyssey of the Mind, and many sports and inter-school competitions in the last few years. The students have obtained good results in the Hang Lung Mathematics Award and more recently in sports competitions. Music continues to dominate the scene not only because of the wide range of activities including wind band, concert choir, chamber choirs, harmonica orchestra and school orchestra - a very impressive list for a school, but also because the teams continue to be invited to perform on public occasions. Last year, the School organized its first International Choral Conference Grand Concert in Hong Kong and invited choirs from schools in China, Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong. In the coming summer, the Senior Mixed-voice Choir and the Treble Choir will take part in the 5<sup>th</sup> Choir World Games to be held in Austria. For quite a number of students, the interest in music is sustained long after they have graduated and has truly developed into a life-long hobby.

## Programme Review

### Teaching and Learning

- Before joining the DSS, St. Paul's Co-educational College was particularly known in two areas; students' very outstanding performance in academic studies as reflected in the HKCEE results and in choir and orchestra performances. The School Council intends to make use of additional resources and freedom enjoyed by DSS to broaden the curriculum and widen the experience of the students. Their ambition is to transform St. Paul's Co-educational College into a world class school with international standing.
- As mentioned before, since taking up the leadership of the School, the Principal and her team of senior teachers have initiated and consolidated a number of major developments. The School accepts 33 students in a class. Co-teaching is implemented in all the major subjects. In the three main subjects of English, Chinese and Mathematics, students from seven classes are split into nine sets in the lower forms. The same policy is carried out in English up to S5. In S6 students are split into two small tutorial classes in Science and other subjects based on the achievement. With better resources, this is probably a good way to handle teaching for diversity without much labeling effect. All classes are also staffed by two home-room teachers to strengthen pastoral care.
- Parallel to academic learning, experiential learning through co-curricular activities were introduced. The school curriculum was regrouped into four domains namely, Language and Culture; Humanity, Mathematics and Science; Aesthetics and Creativity and Leadership and Community Service. Each domain conducted teaching and learning outside classrooms.
- In Language and Culture, a Cultural Salon was organized for all students. Cultural Salon made use of a few days designated originally for the Enriching Programme Days (EPD) activities which were introduced since 2000-2001 to enable different subjects to organize outdoor activities and co-curricular talks for students. Typically Cultural Salon organizes culture related activities such as 'To know the Central District' with cultural talks, photo and painting exhibitions. One meaningful development was a suggestion from a S4 student, taken up by the School, to permit students to form their own interest core groups. A total of 11 proposals were received and the interests were wide, ranging from Chinese and Western history, appreciation of Chinese couplets, animation, hot talks in town, to culture of poker. This sets a good

example of taking up views from students to enrich the programmes. Since the students are very capable and full of ideas, their views could be further solicited in planning for future activities.

- For Humanity, Mathematics and Science, each curriculum organized its own learning activities. For the current year, Humanity curriculum took up the theme of environment protection in: ‘A New Lifestyle, A New Earth’ . With the cooperation of academic subjects, the school and the Student Union, concepts on environment education were introduced and the 4Rs - reduce, recycle, replace and reuse were implemented. Mathematics curriculum continued their efforts in the gifted education. Besides gifted education, Science curriculum organized the International Student Science Conference on Conservation and Sustainable Development in 2005.

- In Aesthetics and Creativity, an innovative module “Aesthetics and Creativity Education” (ACE) was included in the teaching time table replacing Home-economics for S2 students. Different from traditional classroom of talk and chalk, ACE engaged students in aesthetics and creativity activities through Design and Technology (D&T), Visual Arts, IT Music, Modern Dance, and Theatre Exploration. To broaden interest, students need to select an area of activity for one term and another area for the second term. Students display their products for D&T, IT Music and Art or present a performance for Modern Dance and Theatre Exploration at the end of the school year. How to continue this module and in what format are questions for the teachers. It is perhaps time to review this module together with other issues before a firm decision is taken.

- The Leadership and Community Service continued to provide training courses for the chairperson and committee members of clubs and societies and to recommend students to attend outside leadership activities and conferences. Community Service has been made compulsory for S1 to S3 students since 2005 and was successfully conducted.

- Student Activities Week referred to in the above was first organized for S1 and S4 students in 2005. Since 2006, it was introduced to the whole school. Different forms of students, except S5 and S7, are engaged in outdoor and cultural activities for S1 to S4, and individual work attachment for S6 for a week. Since these are programmes within the curriculum, the cost of the activities is totally borne by the School except the Shanghai Business Attachment Programme of S6.

- All these new programmes and activities have significantly widened the school curriculum. Together with the academically oriented programmes, the school has offered a very broad and balanced curriculum catering to the interests, abilities and needs of students. The curriculum planning, both old and new, reflects well the school's vision and major concerns.

- Students whom we interviewed showed great interest in reading, even though their scores on Students' Reading Habit in the Stakeholder survey were not high. The School spares no effort in consolidating this habit and their work is supported by parents. Each subject organizes its own reading programme with recommended booklist for students to choose. Extensively Reading Scheme is introduced and students need to submit book reports or reviews after reading which the students we interviewed did not particularly like. The Library works closely with subjects by introducing fictions, reference materials. It organized book exhibitions, postcard design competition and 'Book Week' to arouse students' interest in reading. It sponsored exhibitions organized by Photography Club and Arts Club held inside the library. Newsletter and leaflets were published and a website was launched. The librarian also used morning assemblies and library lessons to talk directly to students to promote library activities. However, as teaching schedule is tight, subject teachers were reluctant to let the library borrow class time at the end of the school term for library period.

- Curriculum leadership is strong at the department level. The heads of departments are experienced and well-qualified, and are capable of taking lead in the subjects. Some good common practices are found in a number of departments. These include mentoring new and young teachers, collaborative lesson planning, sharing of resources and teaching materials, team teaching and organizing peer observation and collaboration. A strong collegial culture has been established particularly within the subject panels. Teachers are responsible and energetic, and they maintain warm relationship with students.

- Most lessons observed were properly prepared and implemented with objectives and foci. There appeared to be quite a difference in the quality of lessons between the lower form classes and senior form classes. In some senior form classrooms, students were quite passive and teacher-talk was the dominant mode of teaching. There was minimal teacher-student interaction for exploration and investigation. By contrast, quite a number of very good lessons of different subjects were observed in the lower forms. In these classes, lessons were alive with discussion and active involvement of students. Students were eager to participate and the teachers allowed

plenty of room for students to express their opinions. Peer learning was encouraged. In one class observed, an ethos of genuine peer support and mutual encouragement led by the teacher had clearly developed. Overall, there is still room for improvement in the development of students' independent learning capacity through more interactive approach in different classes.

- Teaching resources like IT, audio-visual aids, photos/pictures and specific software are commonly used. Generally, such use was competent but care should be given to use Information Technology more interactively, rather than purely as a presentational teaching aid. Teachers need to weigh up the relative value of an IT approach compared to alternative strategies and to consider carefully the power and/or limitations of software.
- A clear language policy which aims at providing a favourable environment for the learning of English language and Putonghua was in place. The result of this effort is easily observable. During the morning assembly both English and Putonghua were beautifully spoken by the students in charge of the activities. During our discussion with them, the students were capable and comfortable in switching between English and Putonghua. Inside the classroom, teachers follow the language policy dutifully, yet the habit of students using English in class has room for improvement. To be consistent with its English Medium Instruction (EMI) status, there is a need for the School to enforce its language policy on students inside the classroom.
- Students were very capable, energetic, attentive and eager to learn. They were able to complete tasks as assigned. They showed high respect to teachers. The performance of junior form students was particularly impressive. They were curious, able to articulate their ideas in group discussions and presentations. The classroom learning atmosphere was alive, demonstrating high learning potential. In comparison, though equally hardworking and well-behaved, students at the senior forms were less active inside the classroom.
- The School made the New Secondary School (NSS) curriculum one of the major concerns in the 5-year Development Plan. Teachers not only aligned their subject curriculum with the overall objectives, but also developed a school-based framework to suit the needs of their students. The intention of the School to offer International Baccalaureate (IB) in the near future provided an opportunity for the subject committees to compare and contrast the two different curricula, and to reflect on how one could learn from the other. The School was one of the early schools in Hong Kong to introduce Liberal Studies, and hence had accumulated much

experience in this work. The existing junior form curriculum structure, of having independent social science subjects running in parallel with Liberal Studies, was considered appropriate for the caliber of the students since it served to equip them with both foundational knowledge in the area of social sciences and generic skills involved in issue-enquiry learning.

- On assessment, some panel, such as Mathematics, used various forms of assessment materials: short quizzes, special worksheets with focus on misconceptions and difficult problems, and revision exercises. And some other panel, e.g. Economics, conducted more systematic evaluation of tests/exams. It shows that some teachers understand assessment is part of learning. Apart from informing students how well they have done, assessment should tell whether learning objectives have been achieved, and provide teachers with opportunity to reflect on how the objectives could be better obtained. This work of assessment for learning could be enhanced to enable more teachers understand its purpose and master the skills.

## Concluding Remarks

Since 2002, after St. Paul's Co-educational College has joined the Direct Subsidy Scheme, the school facilities have been improved, the curriculum widened, the life experience of students enriched and the school's international image enhanced. These were done at no sacrifice of academic learning. The results were achievable largely through a committed and conscientious teaching staff led by an equally committed and supportive management team. The Principal provides strong leadership in setting the course of direction and is well supported by the two VPs and the senior teachers. The curriculum has now been widened. Learning is no longer confined to the classrooms but extended outside the school and Hong Kong, enjoyed by all the students. The language policy in promoting English and Putonghua has been successful. Students are well-versed in both languages and many feel comfortable to switch between the two in communication. On building up student leadership, the School does not confine to intellectual preparation, but extended to character formation. There is a strong emphasis on the all-round development of students with very good support. Both teaching and student learning are very good. In some best teaching classes, peer support and mutual encouragement in learning led by the teacher was created. In academic study and in HKCEE, the students continue to achieve outstanding performance. The students are happy, keen to learn, hard-working and very proud of their school and fully enjoyed the many opportunities provided. External network of the school is outstanding and the School has made full use of the connection.

The School has clearly delivered quality educational experience and its student achievement well matches the vision of its initial proposal to secure Direct Subsidy Scheme status. To further build the strengths it has established, the School needs to address the following issues:

### Management & Organization

- Approaching the end of the 5-year Development Plan, it is perhaps an appropriate time to undertake a holistic review of the curriculum, particularly the new programmes, to revisit the assumptions and to rationalize the programmes for the next phase of development. In the process, the stakeholders' views, particularly those from students, could be solicited.
- Evaluation and planning could be strengthened by making the objectives more specific, the improvement measures more relevant, and the learning outcomes more

focused.

### Learning & Teaching

- The School has established very good practices in mentoring and peer observation. On this basis it could be further developed into a collaborative reflective culture. A small number of teachers within a subject could begin by discussing and analyzing teaching/learning incidents on a regular basis. This is a powerful way to develop critical reflection in a supportive context. When experience accumulates, it could be extended to other subjects and further reinforces the collaboration culture of teachers learning from one another.
- To be compatible with the EMI status, there is a need for the School to help students form the habit of using English language inside the classrooms.