

Comprehensive Review Report

St Paul's Co-educational College Primary School

Address of School: 26 Kennedy Road Hong Kong

Comprehensive Review Period: April 30, May 2, 5, 7 & 8, 2008

Centre for Educational Leadership

Faculty of Education

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Introduction

School Vision and Mission

- St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School belongs to the family of St. Paul's Co-educational College. It shares the same vision and mission as the secondary school. It pledges to uphold the founding Christian spirit of 'Faith, Hope and Love' and to cultivate in its students an altruistic spirit of caring and sharing, a passion for lifelong learning, the pursuit of excellence, the ability to think independently and a global perspective.

Basic information about the School

- St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School was established in 1915. Together with the secondary school, it has produced many alumni who are accomplished members of society with outstanding achievements. Joining the DSS gave the school an opportunity to improve its resources, upgrade its facilities, provide a better teacher-student ratio and introduce a much more flexible curriculum for students.
- Cantonese is the medium of instruction (MOI). Both English and Putonghua are introduced from Primary 1. Putonghua is partially adopted as the MOI in Chinese Language in P4 & P5 and totally in P6, while English is used as the MOI in P6 in the academic subjects.
- The class organization and number of students are as follows:

Level	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	Total
No. of classes	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
No of students	120	121	120	117	123	109	710

- In the current academic year, 2007-2008, there are 4 classes each of P1 to P6 with an average of 30 students in each class. There are two class teachers in each class to reinforce pastoral care and civic and moral education.
- In 2007-2008, there are 57 teachers in addition to the Principal. The school has also employed eight Putonghua teaching assistants, eight English language assistants, six administrative staff, two Information Technology (IT) assistants, ten janitors, and

one full-time accountant who also serves the secondary school. The school shares with the secondary school the same Music and Sports Directors who coordinate all music and sports activities for both schools.

Comprehensive Review Methodology

- The Comprehensive Review (CR) was carried out on April 30, May 2, 5, 7, & 8, 2008. It consisted of a Management Review and a Programme Review. The Management Review examined the domains of Management and Organization, Student Support and School Ethos, and Student Performance, while the Programme Review examined the domain of Teaching and Learning.
- 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 23rd 2008, attended the principal's presentation, explained the purpose and operation of the CR to the teaching staff and answered their queries.
- During the review period, the subject specialists of the Review Team observed lessons; scrutinized the minutes of staff, subject department and special function committee meetings; examined the schemes of work, examination and test papers, and samples of student work; held discussions with the head, deputy head, 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 Areas (KLAs) were reviewed: English Language, Chinese Language, Mathematics, General Studies, Physical Education and Music. A total of 58 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 the 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 sponsored by Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui which was established in 1843 and is one of the oldest Christian churches in Hong Kong. Other than churches and social services, Sheng Kung Hui has made great contributions to education. Over 30 primary and secondary schools are sponsored by Sheng Kung Hui, St. Paul's Co-educational College (SPCC) Primary School is one with long history. It belongs to the SPCC family and forms a 'through train' with St. Paul's Co-educational College. The school is administered by a School Council which consists of prominent academics, senior government officials and professionals. Many of them are alumni and a few are parents of children at the school. They are people with vision who are clearly devoted to education.
- The School Council regarded joining the Direct Subsidy Scheme in 2002 as an opportunity to transform the school from a local school to an international institution. They aim to develop St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School together with the Secondary School into a world-class school whilst retaining its local character. Their ambition is to preserve the core elements of traditional Chinese education while incorporating appropriate modern educational theories, concepts and values.
- The Council has been very successful in fund-raising which has ensured a very solid financial base. It meets regularly and is responsible for the overall policy and direction. Whilst providing generous support, the Council leaves room for the head, the deputy head and the senior teachers to manage the school. This trusting relationship between the Council and the school is highly valued by the Council members.
- After the summer of 2006, the two primary schools of St Paul's Co-educational College were combined into one. Currently, it occupies two campuses. The lower-primary students (P1-3) are housed in the Kennedy Road campus, and upper-primary students (P4-6) in the Macdonnell Road campus. Some of the facilities in the two campuses are not modern, but by frequent refurbishment and upkeep, the school is very well maintained and provides a safe and inviting learning environment. During the summer of 2008, the school will move to its new building which is more spacious and can accommodate up to 30 classes with 900 pupils. Other than standard facilities (such as gymnasium and lecturer theatre), the new campus will include a state-of-the-art cultural and education centre. The school's next target is its

transformation to an e-learning school. Design work is already underway.

- The school head is experienced and dedicated. She is aware of the needs of teachers and provides them with appropriate support. By focusing on improving the languages, and broadening the knowledge base of students and their participation in activities, the head has succeeded in harmonizing the merger of the two primary schools. She is ably assisted by the deputy head and works closely with the senior teachers. The head, the deputy head and the senior teachers are all hard-working who meet regularly to review the development of the school. The senior teachers are conscientious in the discharge of their duties and coordinate well the work of different subject panels.
- Procedures, guidelines and directions are clearly established. The filing system is orderly. In view of the proposed e-school, there may be a need to speed up the development of an electronic filing system for documentation and communication. The school management is reflective on its own strengths and weaknesses and is quick in devising solutions. It values highly the transparency and effective communication amongst different stakeholders which is very much appreciated by parents as shown in the stakeholder survey.
- The school makes full use of staff meetings which include staff development. Staff meetings are held three times a year. During each meeting, teachers spend half a day dealing with routine items, reviewing the work done in subject areas, deciding on improvement measures, and discussing future events. At the end of a meeting, group discussion is held on a topic usually suggested by the school. This provides an opportunity to engage teachers in discussion. While this is helpful, more time could be given within the existing routine to reflection on new developments, or new teaching strategies.
- As indicated above, the school places great importance on staff development. Talks and workshops on different topics are organized each year for teachers. For example, a four-day workshop on Multiple Intelligences (MI) teaching and assessment was organized for teachers. After the workshop, teachers tried out MI in some subjects and invited the experts to evaluate the results. The entire staff was engaged in another whole day staff development on e-learning and e-schooling. The school regularly invites experts from universities or other institutions to help teachers develop new ideas and try out new strategies in learning. This open attitude and readiness to adopt new initiatives in learning is highly commendable. Other than these formal gatherings, teachers from different subjects could be encouraged more to meet

informally for greater exchange of ideas and views in order to build greater consensus.

- Teachers are diligent, enthusiastic and dutiful. They are anxious to learn and upgrade their qualifications. As reflected in the stakeholder survey, teachers' morale and sense of belonging is very high. Within subjects, teachers are quite accustomed to sharing and have established a good collaborative culture and team spirit. New teachers are supported through a mentoring system in both class duties and in teaching.

- An elaborate appraisal system which includes self reflection, identification of areas for improvement, and evaluation from different appraisers has been in use since 2006. The system has clear objectives and procedures (including forms to be used) and clearly articulated evaluation criteria. The appraisal system applies to all new teachers, who are appraised each year of their two-year contract, with different foci each year. It is also applicable to teachers who are applying for promotion. Other teachers will be appraised once every three years starting in 2008-2009. It is perhaps expected that after the system has gone through one or two cycles, there will be sufficient information generated which may be used for staff development.

- The two libraries, one in the lower primary campus and one in the upper primary campus are small, but they have over ten thousand volumes which are borrowed extensively by students. This collection has provided students with a wide range of resources that could meet their individual differences and could broaden the horizon of their learning. The library funds are sufficient. The teacher librarians coordinate well with the subject teachers. They purchase and arrange books according to teachers' requests and schemes of work. Students can borrow additional books and materials for interest and deeper learning. The library staff organizes regular book exhibitions, conduct reading habit surveys, give awards to students who borrow the most books, and help students apply for City Hall library cards. The activities of the libraries help to create a cohesive atmosphere which makes the overall learning of the school rather effective.

- The language policy is clear. Cantonese is adopted as the medium of instruction (MOI) but both English and Putonghua are purposely cultivated from Primary 1. Putonghua is partially adopted as the MOI in Chinese Language in P4 & P5 and totally in P6 while English is used as the MOI in P6 in academic subjects. There are eight Putonghua teaching assistants who assist class teachers in the lower primary school and during Chinese language lessons to reinforce the use of Putonghua. The

other teaching assistants organize language games during lunch breaks. In the morning, they greet students in front of the gate of the lower primary campus and engage them in word games and simple conversations. Students know which language they must use to greet different language teachers in the campus, which is a very effective way to reinforce and develop bilingualism.

- The school has the support of the financial experts in the School Management Committee (SMC) and a full-time accountant. Financial management is sound and prudent. Procedures for purchases and tenders are provided by the school Accountant. Budgets for all subjects and activities are planned in May each year. The school has also made good use of the flexible DSS funding mode to devise incentive measures to recruit and retain quality teachers. Last year, the teachers were given the same salary increase as those in aided schools. A medical insurance scheme was introduced for all teachers.
- The school has a very supportive Parent Teacher Association (PTA) which fully endorses the school's traditional values and international aspirations. The parents are most generous with their time. Many parents serve as volunteer helpers in school activities including reading time in the morning and in the library during lunch break, supervising the Accelerated Reading Scheme, acting as group facilitators in P6 science days, attending training courses, helping in Extra-curricular Activities (ECA), and in organizing donations. The school responds positively to suggestions made by parents and the channel of communication between the PTA and school is smooth and effective.

Student Support and School Ethos

- The school is keen to cultivate in their students an altruistic spirit of caring and sharing, a passion for lifelong learning and pursuit of excellence, an ability to think independently and a global perspective. It also attaches great importance to the development of moral values of the students, including diligence, honesty, courtesy, modesty, and respect for teachers and parents, as well as oneself and others. The direction of student support services, together with guidance and counseling are guided by these vision and concerns. The work of guidance and counseling is largely done through activities in cultivating individual characters.
- In moral and civic education, the school has adopted for some years the "Rainbow Award Scheme". The aims of the Scheme are to develop students' personal character, cultivate desirable values and attitudes such as responsibility, respect for others, patriotism, and establish good habits. It is operated mainly through rewards rather than punishment. Some 20 awards are offered in each class for various achievements and behaviours including good work in service, in reading scheme, in promoting environmental awareness, being a responsible classmate, and at the end of the year, achieving the largest academic improvement. The school does not only awards individuals, it stresses team spirit by giving awards to whole classes to recognize outstanding work in class discipline and cleanliness. Last year, 17 classes out of 24 received the outstanding class award and enjoyed a free picnic together. Each student has a personal portfolio to keep their awards and other records of activities. While awarding students is an effective means to cultivate desirable values, it has its limits in that students may develop a reliance on extrinsic motivation. It is necessary for the school to continuously place emphasis on the value of learning virtues, attitudes and acquiring good habits for their own sake, particularly in upper primary.
- Moral and civic work is reinforced by the weekly morning assembly, daily morning prayers where stories from Chinese history or the Bible are shared, and in Religious Studies and General Studies. On current and health issues such as IT crime and ethics or sex education, outside helpers are effectively sought. The school has produced a comprehensive network of support for the moral and civic development of students.
- A Prefect System is introduced in the upper primary school to develop students' leadership skills. Each year in May, around 40 students from P3 to P5 are nominated by their home-room teachers then elected by their classmates to become candidates.

In early June, the candidates are each given 1 to 2 minutes to talk about themselves before the election. This is a useful way to learn and practise democracy under guidance. The prefects serve as models of leadership in the school and are given additional support in knowledge and skills training. Last year they attended workshops on multiple intelligences and writing skills. Students are eager and proud to become school prefects. Apart from serving the school on a daily basis and on special occasions, P4 prefects are also assigned to help the P1 students to adjust to primary school life and to cope with learning after lunch each day. This is a useful peer support for lower primary students.

- There are a very wide range of extra curricular activities (ECA) to facilitate students' personal development and extend their potential to the fullest. Over 65 types of ECA with some 210 clubs and societies are organized for students each year. The school also organizes a sports day, a swimming gala, and a number of book and art exhibitions annually. The school strongly encourages students to take part in competitions and in particular, inter-school competitions. In competing with others, students are encouraged to challenge themselves. During inter-school competitions, they are encouraged to interact with students from other schools, to learn from their own mistakes and failures and learn positive ways of handling pressure. Competitions also train self discipline and self respect, all part of character and confidence building. St Paul's Co-educational College Primary School students have done outstandingly well in most competitions and have won many prizes in both group and individual competitions in the Hong Kong Speech, Music and Dance Festivals. The school might find it valuable to examine to what extent the students have acquired the virtues the school intends to instill in them through competitions.

- Many ECA and club activities are organized as part of the curriculum and take place from Tuesday to Friday for one hour in the last period. The program is rich, ranging from academic activities such as computer innovation and science workshops, to sports such as ping-pong, Chinese kung fu and rugby, to performing arts such as dance, choir, orchestra, drums, and to visual arts such as Chinese painting, ceramics. Other activities including Go chess, Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and Learning through Engineering Art and Design Project are also on offer. A number of these clubs and activities are taught and assessed by out-sourced coaches and monitored by teachers. Under the 'one music, one sport' policy, many students have developed interests in both music and sport. Students who display talent in these activities are selected for more advanced training and development in the extended programmes. For a few students, their interest in music has developed into a life-long hobby. Every year, P6 students are taken to Beijing in November for a week to visit schools and engage in

cultural activities as a graduation celebration. The cost of the trip is borne entirely by the school. Parents are supportive of all the efforts of the school and fully understand the significance of ECA in their child's development. Many parents volunteer as helpers in these activities.

- Throughout the year, field trips are organized for students as part of the enrichment programme. Last year, these included visits to the Railway Museum, the Fire Brigade in Central, the HK Cultural Centre, the HK History Museum and the Beijing Space Exploration Museum (for P6 students). Students were briefed beforehand to facilitate learning during visits and were given follow-up projects and tasks. Upper primary students also took part in a number of social services. P4 and P5 students participated in tree planting and flag days, and P6 students visited protection workshops to understand the lives of physically and mentally disabled people. Students expressed their gratitude for the opportunities these activities afforded them.
- Most likely due to the strong school culture and sense of belonging, students are very well-behaved and discipline is not considered to be a problem. The few students who violate school regulations are dealt with by both the home-room teachers and school counseling team members. On more serious cases, the parents of the students are informed. The school still pays close attention to discipline and makes efforts to instill in students good manners, respect for others and care for school and personal property.
- Teachers are hard-working, eager to learn, responsible and professional. Students are happy, polite, friendly and enthusiastic in learning. Parents fully embrace the values upheld by the school and are very satisfied with its work. The school has successfully created ample opportunities for students to develop fully their educational potential and their social and leadership skills. The school has created a strong, supportive and caring culture which is conducive to student learning and development.

Student Performance

- Students are happy, very bright, extremely polite and very keen to learn. They love their teachers and enjoy school life. Students are fond of reading and respond well to the reading scheme challenge of 80 books a year. Many students expressed that they have read well above the required 80. The school provides students with frequent opportunities to take part in competitions in the Hong Kong community, and the students have done outstandingly well in most activities including music (orchestra and choir), art, essay writing, Putonghua competitions, science projects, mathematics competitions and in sports, not to mention the many prizes in both group and individual competitions in the Hong Kong Speech, Music and Dance Festivals. With the encouragement of the school, each student has participated in at least one outside competition, and upper primary students have exceeded this level of participation. This is a commendable achievement.
- The vast majority of students are bilingual and are very comfortable communicating in the medium of English and Putonghua. Students are articulate and able to make interesting comments on their learning. Some upper primary students are not just interested in becoming proficient in a subject such as Mathematics, English or General Studies (GS) but are also enthusiastic about the nature of the subjects in terms of exploring more open end questions and many students demonstrate great potential.

Programme Review

Teaching and Learning

- On the whole, the school curriculum is broad and balanced and curriculum planning is in close alignment with the school's vision and major concerns. To meet students' needs, extensive supplementary materials are included in the school-based curriculum. In English language, graded readers published in Australia designed for native English speaking children are used. In Mathematics and GS, additional topics with extension worksheets are provided. In Chinese language, extended readers are included. These supplementary school-based materials are aligned with the curriculum guides and policies issued by the Curriculum Development Council of the Education Bureau. (EDB)
- The school is currently undertaking a project on MI through cross-curricular lessons. To prepare for this, the teachers attended a four-day workshop to learn about MI theory, applications of MI through integrated lessons, the assessment of MI learning, and ways of bridging one intelligence to another. In 2007-2008, a cross-curricular mathematics and visual arts unit was trialled in P2, where artifacts produced in an audio-visual lesson were employed to develop mathematical concepts. In P5, music lessons were combined with English lessons to teach creative writing. These are both examples of innovative and interesting MI units of work. To make the lessons more effective, teachers could be more explicit about the intelligence(s) that students are intended to develop in the cross-curricular lesson.
- A great many students enjoy reading. Peer influence is strong and a genuine interest in reading has been developed. As many students show great potential, the school may consider offering even more support in terms of additional enrichment programmes in different subjects. A number of students can easily handle and enjoy longer chapter books and non-fiction texts. In Chinese language a number of students reported having read *The Romance of Three Kingdoms*, *All Men are Brothers under the Four Seas*, and/or long kungfu stories. To extend students' reading, instead of providing only short texts as is the current practice, the subject department could recommend more demanding books along with curriculum support. Many students have also developed a keen interest in issues and topics covered in GS. They could undertake project work to enhance their studies and widen their reading and knowledge.
- Over the years, the average academic result of all classes in both junior and

senior levels in all subjects is over 80%, a very high average. Regarding the four main domains, the average result of Chinese Language for all classes at all levels is around 86%, and for English Language, Mathematics and GS, it is about 88%, 82%, and 90% respectively. High scores aside, the performance of these subjects were also evaluated highly and positively in the KLA reports by individual subject specialists. To match this standard and to better prepare the students for secondary school life, it is appropriate for the school to accelerate the progress of the syllabi of English Language, Chinese Language, Mathematics and GS in 2006. The six-year curriculum was shortened to five years through consolidation, cross-curricular projects and integration. Thus far, there is no sign to show the new arrangement has created any adverse effect on both teaching and learning. The acceleration of programme and curriculum is working. Despite of this, the school still needs to be on its guard to ensure no existing students are deprived of a proper and fair chance in learning. Apart from regular review, there is also a need for the school to evaluate its overall objectives after the new arrangement has been tried for a full cycle.

- The primary school has established a strong connection with the secondary school in the development of a continuous curriculum. With the programme acceleration, effort has been made to bridge the learning with S1 by incorporating drama and science into the P6 curriculum. English is used as the teaching medium in Mathematics and GS while Putonghua is adopted in teaching Chinese Language. Supported by teachers from the secondary school, P6 students are given opportunities to conduct experiments in the secondary school laboratories. Other collaboration between teachers of the primary and secondary schools also takes place in Chinese and Mathematics where an in-depth approach to independent topics and summer enhancement programmes are jointly organized. There is much collaboration between teachers of primary and secondary schools, but they need not be confined to curriculum planning. It can be extended to explore teaching pedagogies, IT innovations and student support.
- Teachers are well qualified and have good subject knowledge and classroom communication skills. They are energetic, conscientious, confident and very willing to help one another. There is a collegial working relationship amongst the teachers who co-plan, co-teach and share the production of lesson plans and teaching materials. In some observed co-teaching lessons, both teachers shared the work in a lesson, and both demonstrated abilities to take on a range of tasks and roles. The teachers are warm, kind, patient with children and have the pastoral care skills necessary for primary teachers.

- Teachers' lessons are well prepared and the teaching observed was of a good standard. Since all lessons are planned within level groups and are team taught, teachers and co-teachers meet regularly to discuss the ways they will conduct the lesson together. One of the outcomes is that lessons are consistent across all levels from P1 to P6. At times, there was a rather too much teacher control in the main activities and tasks, resulting in a tendency for the teacher to present the materials him/herself, and generate largely similar answers from students. There was insufficient student input into the learning process, nor were students encouraged to discover or investigate ideas for themselves. This is an issue the teachers need to examine and address in their teaching strategy.
- Various forms of assessment materials are designed for different levels. Tests and examinations and other formal assessment tasks are generally well designed and are linked clearly with classroom learning topics and text types. Students' daily class work, homework, and weekly journals are well kept. In written tasks, teachers often write responses to students' ideas in addition to their evaluative comments, corrections and grades, a good and useful practice.
- Differences in abilities are catered for either through mixed-ability grouping, different group activities during lessons, or through remedial lessons after school. Graded readers or worksheets are used in different subjects for students of different abilities. In a typical graded worksheet, a core task is assigned for all students to complete, and additional challenging extension tasks are set for the more able students. This could be further improved by, say, giving students the same task but less scaffolding support for able ones, or giving them the same task but offering a choice of support, enabling some students, if not all, to understand also the rationale behind the choice.
- The students are very bright, well disciplined, highly motivated, and are keen to meet the expectations of their teachers. They enjoy studies, are active inside classrooms, and most willing to contribute to their learning. The rapport between students and teachers is excellent. Many students are bilingual and are very comfortable communicating in either English or Putonghua. They do so naturally and confidently. Some students in upper primary are not only interested in becoming proficient in the subject but are also enthusiastic about the nature of the discipline. Some students are exceptionally bright in mathematical reasoning.

Concluding Remarks

St. Paul's Co-educational College Primary School is a school with a long history. After joining the DSS, the school has much better resources, and with an improved teacher-student ratio, the school is able to have co-teaching in all major subjects. More language assistants in Putonghua and English were employed which has significantly improved the language proficiency of students in the two languages. The hard-working and committed staff are supported by an equally committed and hard-working management team. The head provides strong and effective leadership in directing the school to meet its objectives. She is well supported by her deputy head, senior teachers and teachers. The school is confident in soliciting outside expert help in trying out new initiatives, in moral and civic education, in leadership programmes and MI. Moving to the new campus during summer should give the school a great incentive to further develop its programmes and e-learning. The school curriculum is wide and focused. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and there is a strong emphasis on the all-round development of students. Students are bright, happy, polite and hard-working and have a very strong sense of belonging to the school. Their overall performances both internally and in the Hong Kong community are outstanding.

The school has clearly delivered quality educational experience and student achievement is well matched with the vision of its initial proposal to secure Direct Subsidy Scheme status. For further development, the School needs to address the following issues:

Management and Organization

- The performance of middle management could be enhanced so that their support for teachers in teaching in some academic subjects could be maintained and spread more consistently across the school.

Teaching and Learning

- The school has established a collaborative culture among teachers. It is worth considering how to advance this via Lesson Study, a process of lesson planning, implementation and peer evaluation. In this process teachers learn how to teach a complex topic well, and a collaborative culture amongst teachers is further enhanced.
- Inside the classroom, the teachers could involve the students more actively in the

learning process and provide them with more open-ended tasks for discovering and constructing knowledge and understandings and investigating ideas for themselves.