

Inspection Report

on Focus Inspection

TWGHs Wong Yee Jar Jat Memorial Primary School

Address of School : 8 Hok Lam Lane, Tseung Kwan O

Inspection Period : 22, 23, 25 November 2005

**Quality Assurance Division
Education and Manpower Bureau**

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1. Inspection Methodology

1.1 Inspection Methodology

- The focus inspection of English was conducted by Ms Kitty LI and Liza LO on 22, 23 and 25 November 2005 to evaluate the development of the English Language Education Key Learning Area (KLA) in the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors employed the following methods to evaluate the performance of the school:
 - Observation of 13 lessons taught by 13 teachers;
 - Meetings with the Headmistress, Chief English Panel Head, Supporting English Panel Head, teachers and students;
 - Scrutiny of documents and information provided by the school;
 - Scrutiny of samples of students' work and examination papers;
 - Visits to the school library, English Kingdom, and Staff Room; and
 - Attendance at morning reading session and song-singing in the recess.
- The inspection findings presented in this report were derived from the corporate judgment of the inspection team, based on the information collected through the various activities during the inspection period.

2. Learning and Teaching

2.1 The English Language Education Key Learning Area (KLA)

2.1.1 Student Performance

- The overall student performance in English Language was good. In general, students' abilities in listening, speaking and reading are stronger than in writing. Most students have confidence to communicate in English. However, their generic skills such as writing, critical thinking and creativity as well as self-learning skills need to be strengthened. Students participated in English-related activities such as Song Singing, One-minute English Talk, Drama Show, Halloween Day. Some students participated in solo-verse and choral speaking competitions of the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival. Some students won certificates of merit and P.4- P.6 boys won first runner-up in 2004 choral speaking.

2.1.2 Quality of learning and teaching

Major strengths

Curriculum

- Clear development priorities have been set with a sharp focus on better use of student assessment; developing different teaching strategies and generic skills; and enhancing teachers' professionalism, which are well aligned with the school-level concerns. The goals of the English curriculum are set with reference to the English Language Education Curriculum Guide.
- The English panel is systematically managed by a dedicated and highly-committed chief panel head assisted by one supporting panel head and six level coordinators. A level coordinator system is well established to facilitate cooperation and teamwork within levels. In addition to regular panel meetings, weekly level meetings are held to plan lessons and discuss students' learning progress. The contents of the meetings have covered a wide range of procedural matters, teaching and learning issues. Small working teams have been appropriately set up to attend to issues such as reading promotion, cross-curricular activities and publication. Designated teachers have been assigned to take charge of the mentoring programme for P.1-P.3 teachers and the NET Programme.
- Both the school management and the English panel made good efforts to address the issue of catering for learners' differences. The school has provided adequate human resources for teaching remedial groups across P.2 to P.6 with a four-day morning programmes for P.2 and P.3 and a 2-day morning programme for P.4 to P.6 classes. Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP) has been offered across P.2 to P.6 this year. To stretch the ability of more able students, those who are placed in P.4E, P.5E, P.6F are given extra training with focus on enhancing their leadership and presentation skills in Honours English Leadership Programme supported by the Hong Kong Council of Early Childhood Education

Services (HKCECES). Supplementary lessons in the form of English Workshop for training weak students' spoken skills from P.1 to P.4 have been effectively implemented with the help of a teaching assistant subsidized by the Capacity Enhancement Grant.

- Commendable efforts have been made to adopt school-based curriculum with all teaching materials designed by the teachers with due consideration of students' needs and abilities. Allocation of lesson time for each level is appropriate. The 9-period English timetable is clearly differentiated with GE, Reading Skills and Speaking Skills lessons with a heavy emphasis on reading input. Cross-curricular elements, such as General Studies, have been incorporated into the school-based curriculum. Good attempts are made to infuse literary arts elements, such as songs, poems and rhymes into the curriculum. The Sing Along Read Aloud Programme, which is implemented across P.1 to P.6, has been well-received. The well-designed Sing Along Read Aloud booklet serves multi-purposes including teaching, class sharing and creative tasks completion.
- Vertical coherence and coordination in curriculum planning have been achieved with clarity and systematic organization. To ensure spiraling and consolidation of student learning, the panel has created a user-friendly Reading Skills Framework, specifying the various skills the students have to master throughout the six years of primary English education. Besides, there is a systematic Generic Skills Framework, indicating a spectrum of skills that have to be progressively mastered from P.2 up to P.6. Apart from implementing the one-minute talk, the English speaking skills taught are well differentiated with English Workshop for P1. to P.4 conducted by a Graduate English Language Teaching Assistant (GELTA) while P.5 and P.6 students have a separate speaking programme with the EMB NET.
- The panel has implemented a comprehensive and balanced Reading to Learn programme. There are six types of reading programmes conducted during and after class hours. Storytelling is done regularly in tutorial time. Reading Aloud is carried out in the form of one-minute talk. Shared reading is done through the English Morning Reading Session and Reading Mom. Supported reading is conducted through the Buddy Programme while the independent reading is done through the Daily Reader and the optional on-line reading programme. Reading Award Scheme is held in collaboration with the library.
- Learning English through Moral and Civic Education has been systematically conducted. Teachers have to organize at least one activity on either one of the focused areas of the Moral and Civic Education. Evaluation reports have to be completed and attached together with the Scheme of Work.
- Good attempts have been made to strengthen professional development with a view to building panel members' capacity for curriculum development and teaching strategies. There is weekly collaborative lesson planning for each level. The peer lesson observations, which are held 3 times a year, are conducted with three purposes. They are appraisal, developmental and coaching. Primary 1 to 3 teachers are coached by a designated teacher with a focus on Shared Book Reading skills while P.4 to P.6 teachers, who are involved in the Learning to Learn English Language Project (LLELP), are coached by HKCECES mentors.

- The self-evaluation has been timely and rigorously done. The panel could make full use of the results to inform subsequent curriculum planning and improving the learning and teaching methods. On the whole, the curriculum planning and management, which is led by the Chief English Panel Head and guided by the Headmistress, have demonstrated strong and effective leadership in setting clear directions.

Support Measures to Enhance English Learning

- English books in the class libraries and the school library are classified according to the level of difficulty. Such a system can help students to select the books independently appropriate to their level in extensive reading.
- Good attempts are made to set up English Team to train students' leadership and management in leading English activities. An audio-rich environment, in the form of group singing in the recess, has been created both in class and outside class. Authentic and purposeful use of language activities, such as Halloween Day, have been successfully implemented and well-received. The time and space of the newly-renovated English Kingdom have been fully utilized.
- The NET Scheme has been well implemented. The foci of the NET programmes are clear. While the Primary NET (EMB NET) is responsible for developing speaking activities and packages for P.5 and P.6, the School NET (GELTA) is responsible for developing P.1 to P.4 speaking packages and organizing level activities. The EMB NET and the GELTA play a supportive role in promoting the use of English. They have arranged a variety of language activities to enrich students' learning experiences and increase their exposure to English. Their expertise is well-tapped as they co-plan and share their experiences with junior and senior level teachers. The school has effectively utilized the Capacity Enhancement Grant to deploy the GELTA.
- The English panel has adequate resources to support teaching. A good variety of self-developed task sheets, English journals and EMB teaching packages are systematically kept in the library and Staff Room for teachers' use. Well-organized teaching and assessment materials are uploaded onto the resource bank of the school intranet for sharing.

Teaching

- Teachers have a good command of English. They were conscientious and committed. All teachers were friendly, approachable and supportive. Lessons were, on the whole, carefully planned with clear objectives. Presentation was generally systematic and explanations were clear. Most of the teachers made good use of teaching resources including big books, picture cards, word cards and PowerPoint. English was used effectively as the medium of instruction. Teachers were able to motivate their students with songs and stories and sustain their attention in class. Some teachers helped

their students to pronounce unfamiliar words with phonic skills. In individual effective lessons observed, teachers were able to construct knowledge with their students and accomplish tasks together. Good teacher-student rapport was established. In most of the lessons observed, a harmonious atmosphere conducive to learning was maintained throughout the lessons.

Student Learning

- Students were well-behaved and attentive in class. They showed an interest in learning English and responded with enthusiasm. They were eager to answer teachers' questions and were ready to participate in learning activities. Most of the students could understand the lesson content and grasp the lesson objectives. They were, in general, able to communicate in English, follow teachers' instructions and complete tasks. The more able students could speak with confidence, ask questions and relate to what they had learnt in their daily life. Some students could write to express their ideas coherently. Individual students could read aloud with good intonation in the One-minute Talk. Students' assignments were conscientiously done and their corrections were completed with care.

Performance Assessment

- The overall policies on assignments and assessments are clear. Good efforts were made to balance between assessment for learning and assessment of learning. Apart from examinations, students' performance including language skills and progress in learning is closely observed and recorded. The variety of assignments given is adequate to consolidate and reinforce classroom learning. In order to be in line with the school's emphasis on developing students' writing skills, a variety of interesting text types writing assignments have been designed. Daily readers are assigned to reinforce students' reading habit. To enhance students' vocabulary building, a booklet named Word Bank was designed for recording words under different categories. Students are encouraged to remember words in the Word Bank which are included in the Free Dictation. Group project is given to students in the upper levels to develop their generic skills. To promote learning and sharing among students, the project work completed was displayed and accompanied by fun-filled activities so as to involve all students. Assignments scrutinized were accurately marked and corrections were closely monitored.
- The frequency of examinations is appropriate. Examination papers were well set with suitable coverage and a variety of item types. Rubrics were clear and questions were contextualised. The coverage of the examination papers is, in general, well balanced with the inclusion of all four language skills and various text types. The four-time post-examination reviews were rigorously done to evaluate student performance, teaching effectiveness and the quality of examination papers. Assessment data has been well used to inform learning and teaching. Suggestions for improvement were proposed and follow-up action was taken to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching. The report card, which provides a breakdown of the language skills scores, can clearly reflect students' performance and inform parents of the students' learning progress. Commendable efforts were made to provide parents with

details of students' performance including their ability and attitude to learning English before each examination.

Areas for Improvement

Curriculum

- By making full use of the well-equipped computer facilities, the panel could draw up a set of comprehensive guidelines and strategies for using Information Technology (IT) so that students of different learning styles can be accommodated. By gradually infusing IT elements into the formal curriculum, students could master the skills of electronic communication, self-access learning and project presentations. As a starting point, the panel could introduce IT elements in the tutorial lessons once a month to reinforce the language skills that students have already learned.
- While efforts have been made to implement the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP) from P.2 to P.6 this year, it is necessary for the panel to map out clear and strategic plans for implementing tailor-made, small group pedagogies and valid assessment tools for these groups of weak learners. The schemes of work could distinguish the core and extended items for the normal classes and the IRTP classes while the generic skills, IT elements, among others, could preferably be highlighted. More focused direction and specific objectives, aimed at enhancing students' learning motivation and improving learning outcomes, should be considered.
- In designing the success criteria, efforts should be made to sharply focus on students' competence and learning outcome. In conducting the self-evaluation, reflections should be directed against each strategy. Horizontal curriculum planning, such as the incorporation of reading skills into General English, could be strengthened.

Support Measures to Enhance English Learning

- To promote the constant and authentic use of the language, the panel could consider introducing a greater variety of activities. These can include English Speaking Day, Singing Competition and English Passport Programme.
- Although an English-rich environment has been created inside the classroom, the panel could further promote an English rich-environment outside class. To provide a print-rich environment, objects in the common areas could be labelled with words of eye-catching font sizes. Posters, quotations and students' good work could be displayed along the corridors on each floor.

Teaching

- While there was ample interaction between teachers and students, opportunities for promoting purposeful communication between peers was insufficient. Lessons could be better planned with emphasis on authentic language use. More pair work and group activities could be designed to foster the culture of peer learning and collaborative work. Teachers could have higher expectation of their students who were generally self-motivated and responsive. The more able students could be requested to justify or elaborate their answers and

views. More attention could be paid to cater for individual needs in class. More challenging learning activities could be designed to stretch students' abilities. The lesson time of 45 minutes should be fully utilized with a greater variety of activities to reinforce the mastery of target language items. More thought-provoking and open-ended questions could be asked to raise students' higher-order thinking and stimulate their creativity. Questions inviting students to make prediction, draw logical conclusion and distinguish right from wrong could be asked to develop students' critical thinking skills.

Student Learning

- Students' confidence in learning English could be further boosted by giving more praise. They should be encouraged to answer questions in complete sentences and to take risks in order to use English more extensively. While students showed interest in reading, their habit in reading English books could be enhanced. Their self-learning skills could be strengthened by pre-lesson preparation, note-taking and the use of tool books.

Performance Assessment

- Concrete written feedback could be given to students, particularly, in their writing assignments to help them better understand their strengths and weaknesses so that specific improvement could be made. More thought-demanding tasks could be set in the assignments and examination papers to foster students' higher-order thinking and challenge the more able students.

Concluding Remarks

The school and the panel have made commendable efforts to adopt a school-based curriculum with all teaching materials designed by the teachers with due consideration of students' needs and abilities. Vertical coherence and coordination in curriculum planning have been well achieved with clarity and systematic organization. A comprehensive and balanced Reading to Learn Programme has been effectively implemented. Most teachers presented their lessons with clear foci. They could motivate their students and sustain their attention in class. A majority of the students showed interest in English learning. Supporting measures enhancing students' use of language in an authentic way have been successfully implemented. Assessment data has been well used to inform learning and teaching.

In order to strengthen the effectiveness of learning and teaching, members of the panel need to pay special attention to the following:

- A working group should map out clear strategic plans on curriculum tailoring, student-centred teaching methodologies and appropriate assessment methods for conducting the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme. More efforts have to be made to raise students' learning motivation and improving learning outcomes.
- A set of comprehensive guidelines and strategies for using Information Technology (IT) to develop interactive language learning, self-access learning and project presentations needs to be drawn up so that students' interest in language learning could be further enhanced.
- Teachers could make use of the collaborative lesson planning and the experiences gained from peer lesson observation to build up a repertoire of effective questioning techniques such as raising graded thought-provoking and open-ended questions. By asking such questions, the teachers can develop students' critical thinking, stimulate their creativity and stretch their imagination.