

External School Review Report

Sir Ellis Kadoorie (Sookunpo) Primary School

Address of School: 9 Eastern Hospital Road, Sookunpo, Hong Kong

External Review Period: 19-20, 22-23 and 28 October 2009

**Quality Assurance Division
Education Bureau**

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1. Introduction

1.1 External review methodology

- The previous External School Review (ESR) was conducted to the school on 19, 21-23 and 26-27 April 2004.
- The ESR team conducted the review on 19-20, 22-23 and 28 October 2009 to evaluate the school performance in school self-evaluation (SSE) and various domains.
- The ESR team employed the following methods to understand the situation of the school:
 - Scrutiny of documents and data provided by the school before and during the school visit;
 - A total of 37 lessons with a total of 36 teachers were observed;
 - Observation of various school activities, including Multi-disciplinary Time Slot (MDTS), Co-curricular Activities (CCA), Pre- and Post-lesson groups;
 - Meetings and interviews with the School Management Committee (SMC) chairperson and parent representatives, School Headmistress (HM), Deputy Head (DH), Stream heads, Student Guidance Officer (SGO), panels-in-charge, teachers, parents and students; and
 - Shadowing of a sample of three students for a half-day period to observe their school life.
- The review findings presented in this report were derived from the corporate judgement of the ESR team based on the information collected through the above-mentioned methods during the review period.

1.2 Basic information about the school (original text provided by the school)

- Sir Ellis Kadoorie (Sookunpo) Primary School (SEKPS) is a Government Primary School where the medium of instruction is English. It was set up by an Indian Parsee called Sir Ellis Kadoorie for non-Chinese speaking children in 1890. Today, the student body embraces a wide mix of nationalities from all over the world, including some Chinese speaking children. It is the school's vision to fully develop students' potentials, equip them with life-long learning skills, and help them integrate into the local community with a global outlook. It is the school's mission to provide students with a pleasing learning environment, to enhance their effectiveness in communication and to develop in them a sense of commitment and creativity through a balanced education programme which covers ethical, intellectual, physical, social, and aesthetic development.

- Taking into account the school’s vision and mission, students’ needs and self-evaluation findings, its current development priorities have been formulated with special emphasis on enhancing students’ positive values, literacy skills and generic skills. The school believes that by strengthening students’ language ability (English and Chinese) and self-learning skills, they could pursue life-long learning and integrate into the local community more readily. In light of the school development priorities, objectives and implementation strategies are formulated through formal discussion and an evaluation mechanism has been set up to monitor the implementation of the operational work plans in different administrative and subject groups.

- The class structure and number of students in 2009/10 are as follows:

Level	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	Total
No of classes	3	3	2	3	4	5	20
No of students	57	82	64	95	125	158	581

- Working alongside teachers, parents and the SMC, the school has put in place a self-evaluation mechanism by conducting yearly comprehensive reviews of the School Development Plan (SDP), the Annual School Plan (ASP) and the School Administration and Subject Plans. The analyzed data and findings drawn up from the Stakeholder Survey and the Assessment Programme for Affective and Social Outcomes (APASO) are also used to feed towards the next planning cycle so that appropriate school development priorities can be mapped out. Administrative and subject panels hold meetings with members to formulate operational work plans which are in line with the school development priorities. The school is able to enhance communication and collaboration among the administrative and subject panels through a transparent decision-making process so that manpower and resources can be duly deployed. There are focused reviews and analyses on the implementation of the work plans as well as students’ learning outcomes by using evidence based data in all administrative and subject levels. Analytical findings on summative assessment are reported and discussed in co-planning sessions so that there are timely adjustments of strategies and resources deployment that are conducive to better learning and teaching. The Planning-Implementation-Evaluation (PIE) SSE cycle has already been translated into practice in SEK with an aim to pursuing continuous improvement through the synergy of staff.
- The school has strengthened its self-evaluation mechanism by streamlining the processes as well as documentation to focus on those criteria which would have direct impact on student learning. In order to minimize paper work, other modes of evaluation have been adopted to include observation, oral feedback and discussion. Data and reports are reflected upon at the subject levels to inform planning for continuous improvement. The school has opened up new channels in soliciting staff views on management issues by engaging teacher representatives to opine on school policy in the School Improvement Team (SIT) meetings. In order to nurture a participatory planning and decision-making culture, individual interviews with the School Head are arranged so that more holistic and strategic planning in the prioritization of development targets can be carried out. The school trusts that the above measures taken up with reference to the 2004 ESR Report would make its development more manageable and sustainable.

2. School Performance

2.1 Continuous Development of the School

- SEKPS is a multi-cultural government school where students study and get along well with each other in a harmonious learning environment. Since the last ESR in 2004, there have been changes at the school management level - SMC chairperson, HM and DH. The school also faces the challenges of frequent intake of new students and high staff turnover rate.
- In addressing the key recommendations of the last ESR report, the school has strengthened its SSE mechanism. There is adequate staff participation and contribution in the SSE, with data drawn at the subject and administration level to inform the school planning. There is general consultation of staff before the implementation of school policies and use of different grants. SIT is also set up to channel teachers' voice, with two nominated teacher representatives, and has proved to be effective.
- The school's major concerns in 2006-09 SDP are to "maintain a balanced curriculum with an emphasis on the development of Chinese", "nurture whole person development", "strengthen the supportive learning environment" and "promote reading to learn". In line with the SDP, a six-year plan on the development of the Chinese curriculum is devised. In-class and outside class support has been well in place to enhance student learning. Students are in general fond of reading. The formulation of 2009-12 SDP is based on the evaluation of the effectiveness of the last SDP, the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis of the school, the overall performance of students, and has made good use of the Stakeholder Survey and APASO data. All the teaching staff participate well and contribute in the process. School's major concerns in 2009-12 SDP are to "maintain a balanced curriculum with emphasis on literacy", "cultivate students' positive values so as to become healthy well-beings" and "foster self-learning through enhancing students' generic skills". They are appropriate to the school development and students' needs. The subject and administration plans well echo school's prior concerns, with clear targets and half-yearly review of the work progress.
- Focuses of 2009/10 include the nurturing of "care and serve" among students and development of their self-management skills and study skills. Opportunities are provided to all students to serve each other at different posts in class. Students are well-disciplined in lessons. Most of them show good sense of responsibility and manage to bring along their own things in lesson, though not many demonstrate study skills.
- Good efforts are made in reviewing school's yearly major development. However, the review is mainly on the accomplishment of measures and provisions, and not evaluative enough to feedback on the future strategic planning. The ASP is a compilation of the subject and administration work plans and lacks focused and appropriate strategies in addressing the major concerns at the school level.

- The use of resources well aligns with school's prior development. Different grants are properly used to enhance students' whole-person development, and to address the needs of the non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students and students with special educational needs (SEN).
- With a good grasp of educational trends and education policies, the school management well steers the direction of school development. The SMC is very supportive of the school development, especially in terms of resource allocation. The HM is in her third year of headship in school. She is capable, committed, and has a clear goal to drive the school for further improvement. She has brought in a number of initiatives, both in management and curriculum to school, including systemizing the work flow for better communication, formulating a six-year strategic plan for the school curriculum, starting off the collaborative lesson planning (CLP) session and revamping the school time-table and assessment policy. She holds high expectations of students' behaviour and academic performance. The DH is in her fourth year in school. She is strong in administrative work and can well serve as a link between the HM and teachers.
- The working relationship between the school management and teaching staff is in general harmonious and communication is smooth. The school now operates with eight Streams, each headed by a senior teacher, together with different working groups. The HM, DH and the Stream heads form the Advisory Team (AT) which meets weekly to discuss and review school policies. There is regular Stream and staff meeting, and bi-weekly Friday sharing session. Communication between the HM and teachers are sometimes through the Stream head. In addition to briefing on school affairs, the Friday sharing session could be made better use of as a direct channel for communication, with clear and accurate messages of policy implementation conveyed to all teachers.
- Since staff turnover and deployment of teachers are mostly beyond the control of the school management, the allocation of teaching and administrative duties to staff is a challenge to the school. The school management assigns administrative tasks according to the established principles of the school needs and staff expertise. Duties and responsibilities, as well as the reporting system, of the staff members are clearly delineated. However, the duties undertaken by some Streams do not match well with the title. For school's continuous development, it is worth reviewing the duties and composition of each Stream to enhance the better functioning of different Streams.
- Stream heads are experienced teachers. They are currently mainly engaged in the administrative duties of the Stream. Their role in planning, coordinating and monitoring the Stream development under their purview need to be strengthened. A couple of Stream heads have to revive their professional impetus so as to exercise their roles more effectively. There are also needs for greater collaboration among subjects and administration panels to bring in school advancement. Professional sharing and exchange with other schools will surely help teachers' professional growth.

- The school is well aware of the importance of staff development. The school management draws up school-based professional development plans with the help of data collected from Stakeholder Survey, APASO and suggestions from teacher representatives. External resources and support are tapped to cater for the needs of both the school and teachers. Professional sharing practice has started off with CLP session organised for subject teachers of each grade. School-based professional sharing on specific themes such as Chinese Textbook Adaptation and Assessment Analysis is also arranged. The CLP, sharing session, peer and appraisal lesson observations all serve as means of staff development.
- Some senior teachers serve as subject advisors who oversee the development of different subjects while the basic rank teachers get the chance to take up the roles as subject panel-in-charge, panel chair and assistant panel chair. Such arrangement is intentionally put in place to ensure the continuity of subject development and to reduce the impact caused by the transfer of experienced teachers to other schools due to promotion or deployment. As the panels-in-charge or panel chairs are not directly involved in appraising the learning and teaching effectiveness of the subjects under their charge, their role in monitoring and evaluation of subject development is passive. For both curriculum development and teachers' mutual professional growth, the school should consider involving the panels-in-charge and panel chairs in the lesson observation, so that the strengths and weaknesses of the subject areas could be identified. Then panels-in-charge and panel chairs will be empowered by going through the complete PIE cycle.
- On top of the linearity and cascading staff appraisal mechanism within the Streams, the HM interviews individual staff regularly to provide feedback on their performance and development needs. Staff can express their desire and targets of continuous professional development directly to the HM, who is receptive and supportive. This arrangement provides a channel for personal interaction to obtain consensus to meet school and staff needs.

2.2 Learning and Teaching

- The school has clear curriculum goals which are in line with school's mission and the SDP. Commencing 2007, a six-year "strategic plan for whole-school curriculum" has been developed, outlining the school's curriculum development in Four Key Tasks, generic skills, life-wide learning, and Key Learning Areas (KLA) focuses. Adequate attention is also given to the NCS students to enhance their ability in reading and writing Chinese. The curriculum planning is appropriately geared to the school's context and student needs.
- Nurturing a reading culture has been one of the school focuses since the last SDP. To "maintain a balanced curriculum with emphasis on literacy" is a school major concern this year. Students are expected to develop a good reading habit and use different strategies to write independently. Primary Literacy Programme in Reading and Writing, level readers and Early Bird Reading Scheme are good attempts to achieve the expected outcomes. Students like reading English books and a reading culture has been

successfully cultivated in school. However, students are not so enthusiastic about reading Chinese books. School's Chinese reading environment should be boosted, with a better coordination between the school librarian and the teachers. Both the Chinese and English panels arrange writing activities to arouse students' interest in using both languages for expression. As the programme is still being tried out, its effectiveness has yet to be reviewed.

- English is the medium of instruction in school and the school maintains an English-rich learning environment. Taking into consideration parents' expectation, students' standard and in better preparing students for external assessment, the school has stepped up measures to foster NCS students' ability in reading and writing Chinese. Most of the students are expected to attain P.3 level in Chinese, with the elite ones reaching P.6 level upon graduation. Conscientious effort is made in selecting suitable Chinese teaching materials. Curriculum tailoring is done at P.1 and P.2. Local textbooks are currently used as the core materials supplemented by school-based materials to suit students' needs. In view of the large intake of NCS students with diverse backgrounds and different learning pace, there could be regular review of the Chinese curriculum planning and the effectiveness of measures in place.
- The school addresses the issue of learner diversity mainly through split class and small class teaching. Various reading programmes, including Recovery Reading, Buddy Reading and Reading Mum are in place to help students with reading difficulties. Graded worksheets and post-lesson tuition are arranged to help students in need. As observed, teachers' techniques in teaching small class and the academic low achievers need further enhancement. Curriculum adaptation in Mathematics and Information Technology (IT) should also be implemented so as to suit the great learning diversity of the students.
- To "foster self-learning through enhancing students' generic skills" is one major concern of the school. Project learning and programmes in various KLAs are deployed to progressively develop students' study and self-management skills. A well organised cross-curricular project learning guide is prepared by the General Studies (GS) panel. Generic and project skills are infused in the MDTS project session, with the GS teachers giving appropriate advice to the students. Students mainly practise their generic and project skills through the class-based "mini-projects", with the P.5 students having the opportunity to apply the skills through the cross-curricular project learning. "Magic pocket" and "magic bag" are used to build up students' vocabulary bank in Chinese and English, as an attempt to develop their self-management skills. The GS teachers also guide students' learning through highlighting the key words and important information. As reflected in students' project work, their IT skills need to be strengthened. School should consider opening up the computer rooms for students' use.
- To complement the formal school curriculum, life-wide learning opportunities are provided through Friday CCA, after-school interest groups and educational visits. It is commendable that MDTS is arranged every Monday so that students can benefit regularly from the moral and civic education, counselling session and project session. As for the school time-table, the "class period" could be made better use of for rapport building and cultivation

of students' positive values apart from dealing with class routines. The recess time could also be lengthened so that students will have more opportunities to interact with their peers and teachers.

- With respect to curriculum management, the HM has taken a pivotal role in planning and coordinating the six-year strategic plan for the whole-school curriculum and raising the Chinese standard among the students. The Curriculum Development Mistress (CD) mainly plays an advisory role by giving suggestions to teachers during CLP sessions and subject panel meetings. Apart from peer lesson observation, the CD also conducts lesson observation to gain a better understanding of the curriculum implementation. Yet, such lesson observation cannot serve monitoring the curriculum development. Her role in curriculum leadership, planning and monitoring should be further strengthened. On the whole, panels are running smoothly. Most of the subject panels devise plans to address the school concerns and conduct yearly evaluation. The skills of subject panels in evaluation could be improved in stating clearly the effectiveness of strategies used. Panel chairs are committed to planning, implementation and assignment checking, but less active in monitoring.
- The school has a clear assessment and homework policy. Continuous and summative assessment is adopted to monitor students' academic progress. Review of the assessment policy has been done and the frequency of summative assessment is reduced so as to suit the curriculum development of the school. From samples of assignments provided, students have the opportunities to reflect on their learning, thus helping them develop a positive learning attitude. Self and peer assessment are practised in project work. School also attaches great importance to the use of data collected from both the internal and external assessment. Detailed analysis of the data is made with follow-up discussion in the CLP session.
- Lessons are generally well prepared with clear focuses. Textbooks and worksheets, with some graded ones, are used appropriately in conjunction with other teaching aids, such as video clips and PowerPoint to stimulate students' interest and facilitate their understanding. Students are well behaved and show interest in learning. Teachers are responsible, mostly friendly and can communicate clearly with students. More recognition and praises could still be given to students to affirm their efforts.
- The school has put emphasis on students' literacy in the current SDP. The reading atmosphere in the school is generally good. In most of the English lessons observed, learning activities are well designed to arouse students' interest and suit their needs. Lessons with collaborative teaching are particularly effective, with good use of teaching resources to optimize class interaction and provide meaningful context for learning. Individual teachers train students in reading strategies and students are required to make use of the learning tools in the process. Students in general display fluency in speaking English. In some of the Chinese lessons observed, teachers can make use of teaching resources flexibly to engage students in different learning activities such as reading and role play. Students are motivated to read aloud with the teachers, with some keen on completing their worksheets

to practise their writing skills. Some NCS students are eager to respond in Cantonese during Chinese lessons, with the rest willing to try hard.

- The main teaching mode adopted in lessons is lecturing, complemented with group work and role play on some occasions. Teachers pay adequate attention to students' learning progress and provide support to those lagging behind in group work. Still, students' diverse learning abilities and styles could be better catered for. Some group activities are not well designed enough to enhance students' peer learning or generic skills. In view of students' positive learning attitude, more opportunities should be provided for students' interactive learning with both their peers and the teachers, such as collaborative group work and presentation of their accomplishment. In some lessons where suitable learning activities are arranged and clear guidelines given, students show enthusiasm in learning. They demonstrate creativity and good communication skills.
- Questions are mainly used to check students' prior knowledge and understanding of the learning contents. More guiding and probing questions could be used to stimulate students' thinking. In small class size teaching, teachers pose more questions to assess student learning and a more interactive learning environment is created. To optimize the small class size, teachers could re-direct questions to different students and ask them to comment on one another's answers so as to enhance students' critical thinking skills. Feedback is in general insufficient. More timely and specific feedback has to be given to students to advance their learning.
- Students' use of prior knowledge and skills in processing their learning is satisfactory. Apart from the use of "my first dictionary" and "magic bag" in a few lessons, not much is shown on students' use of self-learning strategies. More opportunities could be provided for students to own their learning, such as note-taking and pre-lesson preparation.
- In less effective lessons, the lesson design can hardly engage students in learning or facilitate their understanding. Some teachers just follow the textbook closely, without well illustrating the concepts to the students. In other lessons when the special room is used, classroom routines are not well established. The learning tasks are not meaningful enough to engage the students, subsequently making them off-task.

2.3 Student Support and School Ethos

- Nurturing students' whole person development and cultivating their positive values have been the school's prime concern in recent years. The work of student support is taken charge of by different Streams, including "Student Affairs", "Academic 2", "Discipline", "Student Development", and "Counselling and Guidance", with the planning and coordination mainly through the AT. With reference to the APASO data and teachers' observation, the focus of this year is to raise students' awareness on "care and serve". Talks and activities that align with the theme are organised for students. A training course on "conflict management" has been arranged for both the teachers and parents. The "Good Helper Campaign" is

implemented with opportunities given to all students to serve one another in class. Students take pleasure in their service and the progress of the campaign is encouraging. Stickers and certificates are awarded to serving students under the “Outstanding Service Award” and “Be a Good Kadoorian” to reinforce their good behaviour. However, clearer guidelines have to be set for giving out awards and with mutual understanding reached among teachers and students. Clear criteria have also to be worked out to assess the effectiveness of the measures.

- The school attaches importance to values education. Various activities incorporated with elements of environmental, moral, health and sex education have helped to inculcate students’ positive values and attitudes. Currently, the implementation of Personal Growth Education (PGE) is mainly carried out by the GS panel. The SGO has to play a more active part in the growth of students’ well-being. Considering the significant role of the class teacher in student support, the school should consider having the PGE conducted with the concerted effort of SGO and the class teachers, with the former rendering the necessary professional support.
- The school has organised a variety of extra-curricular activities for students’ healthy development. Post-lesson training sessions are well in place to stretch students’ potentials, in particular in areas of sports and music. As the majority of the CCA are conducted on a weekly rotation class basis, students might find it difficult to have their interests and skills developed. School needs to review the arrangements.
- Starting from last school year, a whole-school approach has been adopted to provide better support for the SEN students. A proper mechanism is in place to identify students with SEN. Various services such as occupational therapy, peer support and Individual Education Plan (IEP) are aptly provided to address student needs.
- Some activities/ strategies stipulated in the ASP are not well deliberated for the intended targets. Evaluation done on the devised strategies thus fails to reflect the impact on student development. There is a need for a more thorough and comprehensive planning in the domain development. Closer collaboration among the Streams is necessary to better support students’ needs. The monitoring of the work progress also has to be strengthened.
- Parents are delighted with the work of the school and are pleased that their children have the opportunity to learn in the school. They have trust and confidence in the school. There are two parent representatives in the SMC. They are supportive and hold positive attitudes towards school development. The Parent-teacher Association (PTA) is a collaborative partner of the school. It serves as a good platform for home-school cooperation. Members of the PTA identify with and support the direction of school development. Members reflect parents’ opinions and help to resolve the problems. Parents are well informed of school policies and activities. They can easily communicate with the HM and the teaching staff.
- Quite a number of parents are willing to offer support to the school. They participate in voluntary activities and functions at school, such as Lunch Supervision, Reading Mum and Early Bird Reading Scheme. At times,

parents may even serve as translators for those parents who can speak neither English nor Chinese. The school should consider offering more diversified parent education programmes which help parents acquire the knowledge and skills needed for educating their children. School-based parenting courses on how to support their children's learning to meet the expectation of the school may be particularly helpful to parents. Programmes for parents on Cantonese instructions, Mathematics calculation and reading can be run by school teachers, alongside those for the students.

- The school has also established linkage with external organisations, including the Education Bureau (EDB) and other non-government organisations (NGOs), to obtain resources and support for teachers' professional development and school-based curriculum development. Good links are maintained with local schools and community centres to widen students' exposure and participation in exchange programmes and social services, which works in line with school's target in cultivating students' positive values. With the long history of the school, it is worth to establish the Alumni Association to extend the alumni network and tap the resources for the benefit of students and school development.
- Students enjoy the campus life. They cooperate and get along well with one another in this unique and multi-cultural environment. They are willing to serve the others. Student leaders are also keen to serve their fellow students. Teachers are friendly and care about the students. The teacher-student relationship is in general good. Though there is turnover of teachers every year, teachers respect and cooperate with one another. Harmonious working relationship is maintained. The HM embraces positive change and has instigated a number of initiatives in the school. Teachers' professional growth has been enhanced through CLP, peer lesson observation and Friday sharing session. Their drive for betterment and goal sharing could be further strengthened. Greater team work and synergy among all teaching staff are expected for school's continuous development.

2.4 Student Performance

- Students are polite, cheerful and confident. They enjoy their school life and participate actively in learning, both inside and outside the classroom. They hold positive attitude in learning and show compliance to school rules and regulations. Students of different races and nationalities get along well with each other. They are happy to serve each other. Yet, their self-learning strategies, and the self-management skills of some students, could be further strengthened.
- Students' performance in English is good, but barely satisfactory in Mathematics. Great diversity is shown in students' performance in Chinese, with Key Stage 1 performing better than the Key Stage 2. Students participate in a wide range of activities outside school and have obtained different awards in music, dance and speech. Students have accomplished good results in sports, such as cricket, basketball, and track and field events.

3. Concluding Remarks

Sir Ellis Kadoorie (Sookunpo) Primary School is a unique school where students of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds are learning and growing in a harmonious environment. Since the last ESR, its SSE mechanism has been strengthened. Formulation of school's prior development is based on the Stakeholder Survey and APASO data, and with adequate staff participation. Grants and resources are aptly used for students' whole-person development and are well aligned with school's major concerns. With the recent change at the school management level, new initiatives in management and curriculum development are brought in, with the support and appreciation of different stakeholders, and implemented with school's concerted effort. Students are pleasant and active in learning. They enjoy the school life and get along well with each other. Parents are supportive of the school development. Mutual respect and trust have been established.

Building on the existing strengths, the school could make further advancement in its provision of quality education by directing attention and efforts to the following issues:

3.1 Full implementation of "PIE" cycle and strengthened role of the middle managers

- The "planning-implementation-evaluation" cycle and the use of evaluation findings for subsequent planning have to be actualized at both the school and subject/ administration level for school's sustained development and improvement. Strategies have to be well-deliberated to meet the target, with the review and reflection evaluative enough to show the impact on students. The outcome of students' performance need to be better utilized to feedback on the planning of curriculum and assessment, and student support. The school has to review the duties and composition of different Streams for their effective functioning. Greater awareness of the PIE cycle in the Stream development is expected among the middle managers, whose leadership, support and monitoring of the Streams could be further strengthened.

3.2 Teacher development and greater effectiveness in learning and teaching

- The peer and appraisal lesson observation could be made better use of to identify and provide feedback on teachers' needs for further enhancement, especially on curriculum development, teaching and learning. More professional sharing, exchange or shadowing programmes with other schools will help teachers acquire more ideas and knowledge for their professional development. In lessons, there needs better use of questioning to cater for students' diverse ability. More opportunities need to be open up to develop students' generic skills and self-learning strategies. Specific feedback could be delivered more timely to recognize students' efforts and facilitate their improvement. The advantages of small class teaching could be further capitalized to enhance greater learning and teaching effectiveness.