

Focus Inspection Report
on the Use of English as the Medium of Instruction
at the Junior Secondary Level

HKTA Ching Chung
Secondary School

**Address of School : 4 Hiu Yuk Path, Sau Mau Ping,
Kwun Tong, Kowloon**

Inspection Period : 21, 22 and 24 May 2012

Quality Assurance & School-based Support Division
Education Bureau

August 2012

Focus Inspection Team

Team Leader

Mr LIU Chun-fung

Members

Ms CHUNG Siu-yee

Ms LEE Yee

Ms NG Wing-chee

**Education Bureau
The Government of the Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region (2012)**

Except for commercial purposes or use in connection with a prospectus or advertisement, this report may be reproduced in whole or in part, provided that the source is acknowledged.

Contents

	Page	
1	Inspection Methodology	1
2	Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of the School-based Medium of Instruction Arrangements	2
3	Learning and Teaching	4
	3.1 Curriculum and Assessment	
	3.2 Support Measures	
	3.3 Classroom Learning and Teaching	
4	Way Forward	8

1. Inspection Methodology

- The focus inspection was conducted on 21, 22 and 24 May 2012 to help the school review the effectiveness of its medium of instruction (MOI) arrangements for S1 and S2 in the 2011/12 school year. Below is a summary of the arrangements:
 - English is used as the MOI for ‘Life and Learning’ at S1 and S2. Extended learning activities (ELA) in English are conducted for Mathematics at S1 and S2 and Computer Literacy at S1 for a group of more-able students only.
- The inspection team used the following methods to review the effectiveness of the above arrangements:
 - Observation of one ‘Life and Learning’ lesson at S1 and one at S2 taught by one teacher;
 - Observation of various school activities, including morning assembly and variety show;
 - Meetings and interviews with the Principal, the Vice Principal, the Academic Committee, the panel chairs of ‘Life and Learning’, English, Mathematics and Computer Literacy, the subject teachers concerned, the school librarian, the native-speaking English teacher (NET) and two groups of randomly selected students from S1 and S2;
 - Study of documents and information provided by the school; and
 - Study of samples of students’ work and assessment papers.
- The inspection findings presented in this report were derived from the corporate judgement of the inspection team based on the information collected through the above methods.

Education Bureau
The Government of the Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region (2012)

*Except for commercial purposes or use in connection with a prospective or
advertisements, this report may be reproduced in whole or in part provided
that the source is acknowledged.*

2. Planning, Implementation and Evaluation of the School-based MOI Arrangements

- In response to the EDB's fine-tuned MOI policy for secondary schools and to provide an English-rich environment for the students, the school has formulated its school-based MOI plan, taking into consideration the English Language ability of its S1 intake and teachers' readiness. To enhance transparency, the school-based MOI plan has been discussed at various levels, including meetings of the Academic Committee, Heads of Department, teaching staff, Parent Teacher Association and the Incorporated Management Committee. After collecting teachers' views, the school has adopted English as the MOI in a new school-based curriculum, 'Life and Learning', in all S1 classes in the 2010/11 school year, and then extended it to all S1 and S2 classes in the 2011/12 school year. The objectives of 'Life and Learning' are to cultivate students' learning interest in other subjects and in acquiring and using English in their daily-life experience. Some elements/topics in different subjects, including Physical Education, Music, Art, Integrated Science, Geography and Computer Literacy, are incorporated into the 'Life and Learning' curriculum. Apart from selecting some topics in the existing S1 and S2 curriculum, some simple daily-life topics and subject-specific terms in Psychology, Tourism and Hospitality, Liberal Studies and Biology are also incorporated to widen students' exposure. One period per week is allocated to 'Life and Learning' in S1 and S2, and is taught by an experienced English teacher only, as she is more aware of the students' learning needs and English ability. ELA are conducted in Mathematics at S1 and S2 and in Computer Literacy at S1 for a group of more-able students only, outside class time.
- To facilitate the MOI development in the school and to enhance the effectiveness of the implementation of the MOI arrangements, the Academic Committee, with a Vice Principal as its advisor, is responsible for coordinating and overseeing the planning, implementation and evaluation of the MOI plan. The Principal and the Academic Committee have given substantial support and valuable advice on the selection of teaching materials and on teaching strategies to 'Life and Learning'. One subject panel works together with the 'Life and Learning' teacher in the selection of topics, subject-specific terms and the main teaching points, but the input and collaboration from different subject panels concerned vary. To enhance the learning and teaching effectiveness, collaboration on selection and design of teaching materials, and mutual support between the related subject panels and the 'Life and Learning' panel should be strengthened under the coordination of the Academic Committee. In reviewing and monitoring the effectiveness of the ELA conducted in Mathematics and Computer Literacy, the Academic Committee will explore the feasibility of teaching some topics in English in some classes instead of just to a group of students only in the coming school years.
- The school has allocated different resources, such as additional English teachers, a teaching assistant and a book coupons award scheme, to support the implementation of the MOI arrangements. The English panel has made good

effort to conduct a series of well-received measures and activities to provide an English-rich environment to build up students' confidence and interest in learning English. The school also promotes peer lesson observation and professional development on the MOI. Related subject teachers are invited to observe 'Life and Learning' lessons to understand students' performance on the subject content, and identification of students' weaknesses and the language support needs. This facilitates the 'Life and Learning' teacher and related subject teachers to revise the 'Life and Learning' curriculum and teaching strategies. Teachers are also encouraged to attend relevant training courses on teaching non-language subjects in English. However, due to the difficulty in time arrangement, only a few teachers have taken part in peer lesson observation and relevant training courses on using English as the MOI. Furthermore, the school is also aware of the necessity of having more than one teacher teaching 'Life and Learning'. For sustainability and continuity, one more teacher would be assigned to teach 'Life and Learning' in the coming school year. Since many subjects are concerned, and more teachers will be involved in 'Life and Learning' in the coming school year, teachers should be encouraged to enhance their professional development through peer lesson observation, relevant training courses and mutual sharing of thoughts and experience on student performance and learning difficulties.

- Questionnaires are conducted to collect students' feedback on 'Life and Learning' and ELA. Post-uniform test and examination evaluation data have been used to tackle learning problems and to adapt the 'Life and Learning' curriculum. The Academic Committee has made use of the assessment data and teachers' observations to monitor students' overall performance and gain a better understanding of their receptiveness to the use of English as the MOI in 'Life and Learning' and the conduct of ELA in Mathematics and Computer Literacy. By placing a sharper focus on the learning outcomes and learning difficulties in 'Life and Learning' and ELA, the school could make better use of the assessment and evaluation to inform the future planning of its school-based MOI arrangements.

3. Learning and Teaching

3.1 Curriculum and Assessment

- 'Life and Learning' aims to develop students' interest in learning other subjects in English and to widen their scope of learning in the language, and is properly implemented and taught by an English teacher. The teacher has developed a school-based curriculum for S1, with subject content contributed by related subject panels in the 2010/11 school year. With the experience gained, she has adapted the S1 curriculum and developed the S2 curriculum accordingly. S1 and S2 classes are streamed according to the students' ability and a variety of learning activities has also been planned to meet the subject objectives and students' ability. However, students' performance in the weaker classes is not satisfactory. With the good efforts of the 'Life and Learning' teacher in tailoring the teaching materials, improvement in students' performance is evident this year. One subject panel works close together with the 'Life and Learning' teacher to prepare the teaching and learning materials addressing the students' subject and language support needs. These good practices could be promoted to other subject panels concerned. Closer collaboration on the selection of subject content, teaching schedule, design of teaching materials, identification of students' weaknesses and language support needs between the related subject panels and the 'Life and Learning' panel could be strengthened. Professional exchanges on the teaching strategies on using English as the MOI between the subject panel and the subjects conducted ELA could be organised.
- The teacher-designed worksheets are the main learning materials used in class and for consolidation. They, generally, contain attractive visual material and subject knowledge relating to daily-life experiences. The worksheets are well-presented but the subject content of some related subjects is a bit difficult for the less able students. Different strategies such as simple wording and tailored worksheets geared to students' ability should be adopted to cater for learner diversity and to address the unsatisfactory performance of less able students.
- Worksheets are mainly used for class practice during lessons and the work is not marked. The teacher just checks the answers with students orally in class. Summary sheets for a unit or sub-topic are given as homework. Students' performance in the samples of assignment submitted is satisfactory. The teacher's marking is conscientiously done on summary sheets to help students to improve their language accuracy, especially in spelling key words. Apart from checking answers with students, it is suggested that answers on worksheets could be uploaded to the subject website for consolidating and facilitating students' self-directed learning.
- The types and content of assessment papers are similar to that of the worksheets used in class. The assessment paper is divided into Core and Enhancement sections to address students' language needs and their learning abilities. Continuous assessment, including quizzes and specified assignments similar to tests and examinations, is adopted to monitor students' progress. The students'

performance in different classes varies considerably and with low passing percentages in the weaker classes, although improvement is in evidence. Post-uniform test and examination evaluation data have been properly used to tackle learning problems and to inform curriculum planning. The 'Life and Learning' teacher analyses students' performance in individual questions and then revises the teaching materials and adjusts the teaching strategies accordingly. Students' perception of the subject also forms part of the information that the subject panel takes into consideration. In order to gain a more accurate picture for future planning, the design of students' questionnaire could be more focused on their comments on the learning difficulties.

- For the ELA in Mathematics, around 10 more-able students at each of S1 and S2 are selected and taught in the 'English Mathematics class' after school, using daily-life topics. The ELA in Computer Literacy are conducted at S1 only and one selected computer programme is taught in English on Saturdays to approximately 20 more-able students. The focus of the ELA in Computer Literacy is on computer programming while that in 'Life and Learning' is on the acquisition of computer specific vocabulary in daily-life experience. The school aims at to trial out some modules and programme in Mathematics and Computer Literacy to be taught in English with the more-able students. Based on the students' performance, the school will review its planning on the MOI arrangements in the coming school years and explore the feasibility of teaching some topics in some classes in English in these two subjects. The subject panel chairs also observe the ELA lessons and give advice to the teachers for improvement. On the whole, the implementation of ELA is in order and there is positive feedback from the students. The school could review its existing practice with a view to extending the scope of ELA to include more students and topics.

3.2 Support Measures

- A range of measures is in place to support the implementation of the MOI plan. A 3-day pre-S1 Summer English Bridging Programme, focusing on the learning of English, was held in 2011. It covered reading comprehension, listening, poetry and dictation. With the aim of preparing students to learn in English, classroom language was taught during the first lesson of 'Life and Learning'. More attention could be given to the linkage between the bridging material and the 'Life and Learning' curriculum. To support students' learning of 'Life and Learning', e-resources have been launched onto the school website to allow students' access to course-related materials. To further enrich the e-resources, which serves as a good platform to promote self-directed learning, with the assistance of the NET, sound clips of the vocabulary covered in the course worksheets could be uploaded on it.
- Given the challenge of developing the school-based curriculum and the teaching materials, there is a need to give more professional and resource support to 'Life and Learning'. Spelling and pronunciation are the major obstacles hampering students' learning of the subject. Given that the S1 phonics programme is conducted in regular English lessons, the 'Life and Learning' teacher could apply phonics when introducing new subject-specific vocabulary items.

- As reading is one of the school's development focuses, reading in English is promoted through the weekly English morning reading session, the English reading scheme and an online reading scheme. With the school's resource support and with reference to the recommendations made by the subject panels concerned, new subject-based titles have been procured to enrich the collection in the school library. The librarian displays the new titles inside the library and makes announcements to inform students of the newly purchased resources during the morning assemblies. Library visits were also conducted for two of the S1 and S2 classes, respectively, during the 'Life and Learning' lessons where new titles were promoted. Such visits could be conducted for all S1 and S2 classes.
- Aiming to motivate students to learn English and allay their anxiety of learning the language, commendable efforts have been made to create a favourable English-learning environment and to provide students with plentiful opportunities to use English. The annual inter-class variety shows, in which students act and sing wholeheartedly, help to boost students' confidence in speaking English. The annual English Day Camps, held for S1 and S2 students, are run by the senior form students. Through these activities, junior form students can recycle the vocabulary learned during the English lessons and the senior form students can develop both their leadership and language skills. The English Society, the most popular club in the school, holds the English Fun Day and regular meetings for different English learning activities. Furthermore, opportunities are provided for students at different year levels to give presentations on topics learned during the English lessons in the weekly morning assembly. Beyond the campus, students have the chance to join cultural exchange programmes with a local international school. With the joint effort of various subject panels, cross-curricular activities, providing opportunities for application of English, are organised. They include an exhibition, game stalls and an English café taking place during the Parents' Day. Videos are also made on some daily-life topics, through the Campus TV. To optimise school resources, the English room could be more inviting to include English games and prints, and more extensively used for the promotion of English learning.
- The school is making due efforts to enrich its English print environment. There is a theme board displaying information related to students' daily-life experience in English to arouse their interest in learning. Posters, designed to reinforce students' learning of 'Life and Learning', are posted along the corridors and on the staircases. To strengthen manpower support, a teaching assistant is deployed to render assistance in producing the posters. To create a sense of ownership, students could be invited to prepare posters as an extended learning activity. There could also be more print display of 'Life and Learning' in the classroom to reinforce students' learning.

3.3 Classroom Learning and Teaching

- The lessons are well organised with clear focuses and are delivered systematically. Various resources and strategies are effectively adopted to raise students' interest level and to facilitate their learning, such as showing visual

aids and real objects, providing daily-life examples, playing the Pictionary game and highlighting subject-specific expressions. The teacher is responsible, friendly and interacts well with the students. She gives instructions and presents the subject content in a lively manner, with fluent English. She is aware of students' language needs and addresses them appropriately by repeating and rephrasing instructions. To support students' learning of some subject-specific vocabulary, strategies such as recycling, explaining the vocabulary in everyday English and breaking them into syllables are applied. To help students master the pronunciation of the vocabulary, reading aloud by the whole class or individual students is conducted. To further address students' spelling and pronunciation difficulties, the teacher could apply phonics when introducing new subject-specific vocabulary items.

- In general, students are attentive and engaged in the learning activities. The more-able can follow instructions given in English, while Chinese translations are given at times to help the less able. Questioning is used frequently to check their understanding and to sustain their motivation, with timely praise and hints provided to facilitate students elaborating their answers in English. Students usually answer in single words and the more-able respond in simple phrases when encouraged. Suitably designed worksheets are completed in lessons for the consolidation of key learning points and subject-specific vocabulary. In general, the more able students can grasp the subject vocabulary and content. However, for the less able, they have little response to the teacher's questions and cannot follow teachers' instruction. More specific guidance, prompting questions, timely language support and encouragement should be provided to the less able students to build up their confidence in speaking English. Progressive targets should be set to limit the amount of Chinese translation used in classroom teaching.

4. Way Forward

In response to the EDB's fine-tuned MOI policy for secondary schools and to provide an English-rich environment for the students, the school has formulated its school-based MOI plan taking into consideration the English Language ability of its S1 intake and teachers' readiness. To enhance transparency, the MOI plan has been discussed at various levels. After collecting teachers' views, the school has adopted English as the MOI for a new school-based curriculum, 'Life and Learning', at S1 and S2. The English panel has made a good effort in conducting a series of well-received measures and activities to provide an English-rich environment to build up students' confidence and interest in learning English. The teacher teaching 'Life and Learning' is responsible, friendly and interacts well with students. She gives clear instructions and presents the subject content in a lively manner with fluent English.

For continuous improvement of the school-based MOI arrangements, the school could direct more effort and attention to the following:

4.1 Strengthening collaboration between 'Life and Learning' and the related subjects

- Given the challenge of developing the school-based curriculum and the teaching materials, there is a need to give more professional and resource support to the 'Life and Learning' subject panel. Closer collaboration on the selection of subject content, teaching schedule, design of teaching materials, identification of students' weaknesses and language support needs between the related subject panels and the 'Life and Learning' panel could be strengthened under the coordination of the Academic Committee. Professional exchanges on the teaching strategies on using English as the MOI between the subject panel and the subjects conducted ELA could be organised.

4.2 Catering for learner diversity and encouraging students' use of English

- A more in-depth analysis of the students' weaknesses and language support needs in learning the content of various related subjects, is necessary to facilitate teachers in the formulation of strategic plans to enhance learning and teaching. Different strategies such as simple wording and tailored worksheets geared to students' ability should be adopted to cater for learner diversity and to address the unsatisfactory performance of less able students. In classroom teaching, more specific guidance, prompting questions, timely language support and encouragement should be provided to the less able students to build up their confidence in speaking English.