



Inspection Report

On Focus Inspection

Ying Wa Primary School

Address of School: No 3 Ying Wa Street, Shamshuipo, Kowloon

Inspection Period: 7, 8, 11 & 25 May 2012

**Quality Assurance Division
Education Bureau**

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1. Inspection Methodology

- The focus inspection was conducted by Ms Liza LO and Ms Ivy MAN on 7, 8, 11 and 25 May 2012 to evaluate the development of the English Language Education Key Learning Area in the school.
- The inspectors employed the following methods to understand the situation of school:
 - Observation of 12 lessons taught by 14 teachers;
 - Meetings with the School Head, panel chairpersons, teachers and students;
 - Scrutiny of documents and information provided by the school;
 - Scrutiny of samples of students' work and examination papers;
 - Observation of the lunchtime activities; and
 - Visit to the English Room cum English Library.
- 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.

2. Learning and Teaching in the English Language Education Key Learning Area

2.1 Student Performance

- Students are highly motivated to learn English and their overall performance in English Language is very good. Their language development in terms of the acquisition of the four language skills is balanced. They enjoy reading both fiction and non-fiction and most have developed a good reading habit.
- Students are, on the whole, confident, attentive and well-behaved in lessons. They participate in the learning activities with enthusiasm. They can communicate with their teachers and peers fluently in English. They, generally, grasp the lesson content and express themselves clearly. They are well prepared to act as Student Ambassadors, guiding guests around the campus and introducing to them in English the school facilities and students' school life.
- Students are serious in completing their assignments. Their work is tidy and neat. They are, generally, capable of writing clearly and systematically on given topics and expressing themselves sensibly in their journals. Some have demonstrated critical thinking skills and imagination in their work.
- Students are keen to participate in the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival and they have obtained remarkable results, especially in solo verse-speaking. At school, they are eager to take part in a range of English activities, such as the Speech Gala, English Day, Drama and Creative Writing Competitions. A few have taken on the challenges of improvising poems in external competitions and have achieved impressive results.

2.2 Quality of Learning and Teaching

- The English Year Plan is formulated with clear objectives and appropriate implementation strategies. The objectives are in line with the school's major concern, to enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching. The school-based English Language curriculum is well designed to ensure students' balanced development of the language skills through meaningful tasks and purposeful use of the language.
- Reading is the core component of the school-based English curriculum. Students are widely exposed to a variety of genres, including those related

to language arts. In addition to the course books, readers and supplementary reading materials, students are effectively motivated to read extensively through the use of a Reading Log for all levels and through the Literacy Programme for Key Stage 1 (KS1). Having fostered students' reading interest and habit, the English panel has aptly set the aim of equipping students with reading strategies that enable them to read to learn. The panel has implemented the Reading Strategies Training Scheme (RSTS) since last year. Under this scheme, reading skills, such as interpreting meanings, processing information, making inferences, summarising and connecting ideas, with regard to a wide range of text-types, are targeted for different levels. Reading tasks, in the form of worksheets, small books and book reports, are well designed to enhance students' reading skills. Some open-ended questions are incorporated into the reading tasks to develop students' higher-order thinking skills.

- To develop students' writing skills, the panel has provided ample opportunities for students to write, such as journal writing, creative writing competitions and poetry writing. The school-based writing tasks, covering a good variety of text-types, such as descriptive, narrative, creative and imaginative texts, are suitably contextualised with sufficient pre-writing activities. Helpful writing frames and graphic organisers, including story or character maps, summary outlines, tables and charts, are provided to prepare students for individual work.
- Adequate measures are adopted to cater for learner diversity. To better support the less able students at P5 and P6, split-class teaching is arranged for them. There is an enhancement class for every level to exploit students' potential. All students serve as Student Ambassadors, and take the role of introducing the school to guests and visitors. Some are trained to be English Captains to assist in lunchtime activities and other English-related activities.
- The school is operated in the through-train mode with the adjoining secondary school. To ensure a smooth interface between the English curricula of the primary and secondary schools, appropriate measures have been taken. The English panel members of the two schools meet regularly to review their English curriculum, exchange views and share their experience. Lesson observation is arranged among English teachers of the two schools to align their expectations of student performance. To prepare students to learn in English in S1, the primary school has taken appropriate measures, including equipping students with the necessary reading and writing skills for different genres and helping students to develop a strong grammar foundation by designing school-based progressive grammar worksheets for all levels. Primary school teachers have also made an effort in developing students' independent learning skills and habits, such as note-taking, and use of dictionaries and on-line resources.
- The headmistress is enthusiastic and creative and leads teachers to design a captivating annual theme. Revolving around the theme, all subject panels

devise and organise their co-curricular activities. Last year, students showed their earnest concern in English projects and in writing about saving polar bears and the environment. This year, students' curiosity and imagination have been successfully aroused by the big mysterious pearl displayed at the school entrance. The English panel has designed challenging thematic tasks, including projects and writing assignments, that require students to read extensively, think critically and solve problems so that they can substantiate and elaborate their views on the pearl. Students, on the whole, have shown their creativity and imagination in their work.

- The English learning environment is stimulating. The school campus is print-rich, widely exhibiting posters, news and students' work. A school-based television broadcasting system, named 'Wa Square', has been designed to enhance student learning and sharing. Students' performances in different activities and competitions, including those in English, are video-recorded and then broadcast every day non-stop in the covered area of every floor, creating an encouraging and pleasurable learning atmosphere. A rich variety of English-related activities, such as the English Day, Speech Gala, drama and study tours abroad, is arranged. Students are used to communicating in English at school when they meet the English teachers, the two Native-speaking English Teachers and the English Language Teaching Assistant (ELTA).
- The English Room cum English Library, managed by the ELTA, is well equipped with information technology (IT) and subject resources to facilitate daily teaching and lunchtime activities. A rich collection of books and reading materials, including small books written by some students, is easily accessible to students. To supplement the Literacy Programme for KS 1, good efforts have been made to arrange book purchases several times a year for students. Students have ample opportunities to choose and own the books they enjoy reading. The publication of students' work in the English magazine and the anthology has greatly motivated students to write. Students' impressive written work, at all levels, has made the publications highly regarded by their parents and fellow schoolmates.
- Clear guidelines for assignments and assessment have been formulated for panel members' reference. Both the quantity and frequency of assignments are appropriate. There is a good variety of assignments, including the project work related to the school's annual theme, to help students develop different language skills. Language arts elements, such as poems and riddles, are suitably incorporated in assignments to arouse students' interest in using the language. Some attention has been paid to catering for learner diversity through the provision of supplementary worksheets, which are designed to suit students' needs in different classes. Both formative and summative assessment are adopted and the weightings are, generally, appropriate. A systematic assessment paper vetting mechanism is in place to ensure the quality of the assessment papers. The assessment tasks are appropriately designed, and aligned with students'

assignments. At some levels, open-ended questions are incorporated to challenge the more-able students.

- In the samples of assignments scrutinised, students' work is neat and tidy. In general, students demonstrate high accuracy and fluency, mastery of a good range of vocabulary and sentence patterns, and creativity, which is especially found in writing assignments and project work. Initial attempts have also been made to engage students in reflecting on and editing their own work through code marking, self-editing and peer checking, at some levels. Teachers' marking is conscientious, timely and accurate, with appropriate use of the marking scheme and timely follow-up on students' corrections. Teachers' feedback is, generally, positive, especially in students' journals. Concrete and specific feedback is provided by some teachers to inform students of their strengths and weaknesses, and clear suggestions for improvement are also made. Such practice could be further promoted in the panel to help students improve their learning.
- Students' learning attitude, progress and performance are reviewed in regular level and panel meetings. Post-assessment analysis of students' performance by year level is conducted. Assessment data have been well used to identify the aspects of students' learning that require reinforcement and follow-up. At times, concrete and specific follow-up measures, including revision and additional practices, are devised to address students' learning difficulties as revealed by assessment. Such practice could be further promoted to help the panel refine the curriculum plan and teaching strategies, where necessary.
- The English panel is well led by a panel chair and three vice-chairpersons. With the deployment of level coordinators, there is good communication among panel members, who are devoted, cooperative and ready to share. A harmonious working relationship has been established. Collaborative lesson preparation and opportunities for professional sharing are arranged appropriately. The expertise of an English consultant has been well tapped to give advice to teachers on improving the pedagogy, enriching the English learning environment, and organizing teacher training workshops. A monitoring mechanism through lesson observation, assignment inspection and vetting of assessment papers is suitably administered. Good efforts have been made to evaluate the year plan with emphasis on students' learning outcomes.
- Teachers have a good command of English and content knowledge. Being friendly, open and supportive, they have a very good rapport with students. A pleasant learning atmosphere is created. Lessons are well prepared and classroom routines are established. Teachers' clear presentation, appropriate use of classroom and IT resources facilitate students' understanding of the lesson content and the interaction between them and students. Students are mostly attentive and interested in lessons. They are eager to answer teachers' questions and engaged in learning activities. They are, in general, able to grasp the lesson content and ready to speak in

English to both teachers and peers. Most of them show confidence in speaking English, particularly those at lower levels.

- Lessons are, generally, well-organised with clear objectives. Usually, students' prior knowledge is activated and checked at the beginning of each lesson. The learning activities, in general, suit students' needs and ability levels. Most of the activities are well-sequenced and related to students' daily-life experiences. In some lessons, the learning objectives are also shared with students at the beginning and the learning focuses are reiterated at the end by a few teachers to reinforce students' learning.
- Teachers, on the whole, ask a range of questions to check students' understanding and elicit their views. They usually provide students with positive, timely and specific feedback, which facilitates their learning. Students can mostly provide correct answers, suggest ideas and improve with teachers' feedback. To further stretch the more-able students, teachers could ask more probing questions to provoke their critical thinking.
- There is sufficient teacher-student interaction in lessons. Nevertheless, a majority of lessons are rather teacher-centred. Apart from offering individual support in class, most teachers cater for learner diversity by asking students a range of questions, monitoring their learning progress and adjusting the teaching pace. More diversified strategies, which help to cater for different learning needs and styles, could be explored. Peer learning could be advocated through providing more opportunities for students to interact with their peers and work collaboratively in class. The more-able students could offer assistance to, and demonstrate as role models for, the less-able, while the passive or quiet ones could be stimulated or better engaged in their learning.
- In the effective lessons, much effort has been made to cater for learner diversity. In order to help students who are weaker in speaking and writing, the target sentence structures are stated clearly on the blackboard and prompting questions are asked, with specific feedback provided to help students improve their learning. To realise the potential of the more able students, challenging tasks are assigned to them and probing questions are asked to provoke their thinking. In these lessons, students express sensible and creative ideas with elaboration. Learning strategies, such as note-taking and use of learning tools, could be further promoted to enhance students' independent learning skills.

3. Concluding Remarks

The school has successfully created a rich, stimulating and pleasurable English learning environment for students, whose overall performance in English Language is very good. The English panel has applied the concept of Planning-Implementation-Evaluation in the design and delivery of the school-based English curriculum and demonstrated good collaboration and team spirit to achieve agreed goals. The aim of enabling students to read to learn is aptly set and a range of measures is adopted to enhance students' reading and writing skills through incorporating a rich variety of text-types. Being committed to providing high quality education, teachers are caring, friendly and supportive. Students, who are well-behaved and motivated, have shown confidence in learning and using English. They can speak fluently and write clearly in English. They enjoy reading and have a good reading habit. Building on the strengths already accomplished, the panel could consider the following suggestions to further enhance the learning and teaching of English:

- Peer learning could be further promoted with an aim to better cater for learner diversity in class. More interactive activities, such as discussion and role play, could be designed so that, through collaboration, the more-able could act as role models and provide support for the less-able. The passive or quiet students could also be better engaged in their learning.