

# **Inspection Report**

On Focus Inspection

## **Pui Kiu Primary School**

**Address of School: 12 Fu Yee Road, Siu Sai Wan,  
Chai Wan, Hong Kong**

**Inspection Period: 1, 2, 8 & 10 June 2009**

**Quality Assurance Division  
Education Bureau**

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**Education Bureau  
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# 1. Inspection Methodology

- The focus inspection was conducted by Ms HUNG Bik-ha, Isabella and Ms YAU Tsz-yan, Cecily on 1, 2, 8 and 10 June 2009 to evaluate the development of the English Language Education KLA in the school.
- The inspectors employed the following methods to understand the situation of the school:
  - Observation of 14 lessons taught by 16 English teachers;
  - Observation of morning reading, morning assembly, morning broadcast and a lunch-time English activity held in the English Room;
  - Meetings with the Principal, panel chairs, teachers and students;
  - Scrutiny of documents and information provided by the school;
  - Scrutiny of samples of students' work and examination papers; and
  - Visit to the School Library, English Room and Reading Corner.
- 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-mentioned methods during the inspection period.

## 2. Learning and Teaching

### 2.1 Learning and Teaching of the English Language Education Key Learning Area

#### 2.1.1 Student Performance

- The performance of a majority of students in English Language is satisfactory, with some having attained a rather good standard and fluency. Students' writing and speaking skills are acceptable, while their reading and listening skills are comparatively better. Their generic skills, including those of communication and critical thinking, could be further developed. Some students, particularly those in the upper levels, display creativity and make a fine attempt at writing at length.
- Most students are interested in learning the language and are willing to answer teachers' questions. They can generally understand the lesson content and complete their assignments properly. The more able students are quite confident in using English, as reflected in their verbal responses in class and in their writing assignments. Some students, however, lack confidence in using English. On the other hand, when prompted by their teachers, some of them make an effort and can produce reasonable language output. The average students employ a limited range of learning strategies, whereas the more able show good initiative in self-learning by consulting tool books and learning online.
- Students are quite active in taking part in school-based English-related activities, such as festive events, talent shows and inter-class competitions. They also enjoy the English Day morning assembly and lunchtime activities. Some P5 and P6 students are trained to deliver programmes on the school radio. Over the past three years, students of different levels have participated in the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival and carried away the Championship, runner-up prizes and Certificates of Merits in the solo-verse speaking and choral speaking sections. In the Hong Kong Schools Drama Festival, some students have also obtained encouraging results.

#### 2.1.2 Quality of Learning and Teaching

##### *Major Strengths*

##### Curriculum

- The English panel has devoted satisfactory effort in aligning its annual programme plan with the school's major concern of enhancing the effectiveness of learning and teaching. Due emphasis is placed on

improving students' writing, reading and speaking abilities, promoting collaborative learning and enhancing the school's English learning environment. Through level-based co-planning and co-teaching, panel members contribute to enhancing the school-based English curriculum by developing lesson plans with cooperative learning as a key focus, as well as developing teaching and learning materials for the school-based reading and writing programmes.

- In promoting reading and enhancing students' reading abilities, the panel implements the Primary Literacy Programme – Reading (PLP-R) at P1-P3, an extensive reading programme for P4-P6, and an intensive reading programme for all levels. The PLP-R programme fosters students' reading strategies and habits of reading, with shared reading as the focus in P1 and guided reading in P2 and P3, as well as co-teaching between a Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) and a local teacher. The intensive reading programme suitably incorporates the teaching of reading sub-skills using a variety of text types, whereas the extensive reading programme engages students in reading daily, reading aloud and listening to their English teachers' book sharing. Realistic, yet challenging, reading targets are duly set and all students are able to attain them. In addition, the panel has aptly revised the format of dictation, with due incorporation of the four macro skills, General English and phonics.
- To improve students' writing abilities, the panel launched its school-based process writing (PLPW) programme at P4 in 2005, and has since extended it to P3-P5. Due emphasis is placed on brainstorming for ideas and peer editing, with opportunity for students to share their work. Co-teaching is also adopted for teachers to model for students the writing process and support them through individual student conferencing. A variety of genres, mostly linked to modules in the coursebook, are duly incorporated. Mini lessons, being an integral part of the programme, provide students timely feedback on strengths and common problems in their writing. Home writing tasks assigned serve to extend learning and develop students' fluency, with the more able students writing diaries, and other classes doing reading-related writing. Useful thematic vocabulary in the form of a "Word Bank" has been developed as a learning aid for students. P3 students can generally write simple sentences, while those at upper primary level demonstrate satisfactory fluency. The high achievers can write longer paragraphs and develop their ideas coherently.
- The panel has taken positive steps to develop students' generic and independent learning skills through cooperative learning activities, pre-learning tasks and self learning. Learning materials such as the "Word Bank", audio recording of the daily readers and PowerPoint presentations are developed through the collaborative efforts of panel members and made accessible to students on the school website. Daily readers are also assigned to mainly lower primary students to increase their exposure to reading.
- Learner diversity is suitably addressed through split class teaching, an

intensive remedial teaching programme, morning remedial and enhancement classes, as well as the Plan A programme for high achievers. In class teaching, cooperative learning has been adopted as a strategy, with grouping and cooperative learning activities incorporated, complemented by graded worksheets and graded dictation. The graded readers in PLP-R and process writing also help to cater for the range of learner abilities. All P5 and P6 students take part in the weekly morning remedial and enhancement classes, with focuses on the consolidation or enrichment of reading and/or writing skills by their subject teachers. The Plan A programme considerably enhances the exposure to English of high achievers in P2-P5 through life-wide learning and project learning.

- Panel management is facilitated by a level coordinator system and regular meetings. The panel chair (PC) is assisted by a deputy PC in charge of the PLP-R programme and another deputy PC in charge of the school's English learning environment. Weekly co-planning on a level basis facilitates coordination and sharing among panel members, as well as enhancement of the school-based English curriculum through panel members' sustained effort in developing teaching and learning materials. Assignment inspection has been introduced this year to monitor students' reading progress and teachers' marking in the writing programme. With cooperative learning being a key strategy to address learner diversity, the panel has undertaken a whole-school professional development workshop on the topic and has started to incorporate cooperative learning activities in class teaching. Other in-house workshops for panel members include reading and writing workshops offered by the school's NET. Both in-house peer observation with post-observation discussion and interflow with other primary schools, mostly involving lesson observation, are duly emphasised to promote professional exchange.

#### Support Measures to Enhance English Language Learning

- The panel devotes fine efforts to enriching its English learning environment, which is one of its developmental focuses in the current school year. The weekly English Day enhances students' interest in and exposure to English through a variety of activities conducted by English teachers at the morning assembly, Pui Kiu On Air radio programmes, and lunchtime English Room activities. The English Months of December and July engage students in drama appreciation and drama-related activities, level-based talent shows, and inter-class competitions. These are complemented by culture-rich festive celebrations such as Halloween, Christmas and Easter celebrations. A majority of these activities are fun-filled, engaging students in informal and pleasurable use of English; they involve all or most students in a series of activities and a relatively extended period of practising. The panel aptly promotes cross-subject collaboration, for instance, with the Art panel, and involvement of parents as helpers, participants and performers.
- The English Room is well decorated and stocked with a good variety of learning resources such as word cards and reading materials, thus producing a print-rich, visually stimulating environment. This is also achieved by

posting word cards, vocabulary and students' work in English both inside and outside classrooms and on board displays, thus giving recognition to students' efforts. The school strives to enhance students' exposure to native-speaking English teachers by having two NET to co-teach with local English teachers in P3-P5 PLP-R/PLPW lessons, in organising English activities with other English teachers, and in producing audio recordings on daily readers and phonics for students to access on the school website.

- Panel resources are well managed with the inventory list systematically kept. The reading corner on the ground floor contains some English readers so that they are easily accessible to students. The school website has useful English learning materials uploaded, for instance, PowerPoint presentations on units in the coursebook, audio recordings of daily readers and phonics, and open-ended questions for oral practice. The English panel also shares teaching resources and panel documents in the school intranet.

### Teaching

- Teachers are friendly, caring and approachable. They maintain a good rapport with students and a positive learning atmosphere, which are conducive to students' participation in class and generally enhancing their willingness to respond to questions or suggest ideas. Teachers' communication skills are effective and their presentations are clear. They often make use of teaching resources such as PowerPoint presentations, video clips from YouTube and pictures, to facilitate students' understanding and elicit ideas. In some effective cases, the well-selected materials contribute to the establishment of a joyful learning atmosphere and enhance class interaction.
- Lesson design is generally good, with a clear learning focus. Due attention is given to checking students' prior knowledge and setting the appropriate context. Integrated learning tasks are mostly appropriately designed and sequenced to scaffold lesson content. A variety of learning activities, such as group competitions and quizzes, are often used to sustain students' learning interest and motivate them to participate. Adequate opportunities for paired and group work, learner presentation and games are often included. In a highly effective lesson, the teacher was able to make use of students' mistakes to elicit explanations from, and stimulate discussion among, other students. His/Her effective use of questioning techniques and skilful feedback brought good classroom interaction and promoted students' thinking.
- In some classes, due attention is given to fostering students' learning habits by assigning pre-learning tasks and reminding students to make use of the "Word Bank" or dictionary. The pre-learning task, which is done as pre-lesson preparation task, is often used to set the context of a lesson. Students' phonic skills are used or reinforced when unfamiliar words are

encountered.

- In most co-teaching lessons, teachers are clear about their roles and are able to collaborate with their colleagues, sharing out their duties and sometimes supplementing each other well through good observation of their partner's performance and students' reactions. With a lower teacher-student ratio, teachers are able to give more attention to students and offer individual assistance, especially in a few writing lessons.

### Learning

- Students are attentive and show a good learning attitude in class. They generally enjoy a good rapport with peers and teachers. In most lessons, students follow instructions properly, and engage in learning activities well. They are willing to answer questions and some of the students show good initiative. When pre-learning tasks are assigned, students contribute more actively and readily. Students are able to make use of tool books, such as the "Word Bank" and dictionary, in writing lessons or when suggested by their teachers.
- Most students are used to communicating with teachers in English in lessons. When paired or group work is assigned, students are able to collaborate with their peers to complete the learning task. There are occasions when group work does not require students to communicate much or exchange ideas or information, but students are able to work in groups and are willing to participate. Some students are more conscientious in explaining difficult words or offering help to other group members. Students, especially those at the lower primary level, are eager to chant in chorus, with proper pronunciation, intonation and pace. Generally, students demonstrate greater readiness and are able to write productively if adequate input, guidance and support are given. In writing lessons, students generally make a good effort to seek help from teachers, mainly in connection with vocabulary and expressions.
- In a highly effective lesson, most students demonstrated good use of their critical thinking and communication skills, and expressed their ideas clearly, fluently and confidently. With the aid of teachers' appropriate prompting and probing, students were able to criticise the ideas given by their classmates with good supportive reasons.

### Performance Assessment

- The assignment and assessment policy is generally clear. There are a few good attempts, such as the school-based intensive reading exercises and process writing programme, to enhance students' reading and writing skills. Apart from routine exercises on grammar and specific language skills, extensive reading is assigned to extend learning and help students develop their self-learning habits. The panel has also made positive effort to promote assessment for learning. Dictation and Quiz is a well-designed



routine practice assessing students' spelling, reciting and listening abilities, together with phonics and grammar knowledge. The unit-based reading aloud assignment is designed to facilitate improvement and enhance peer learning as selected audio clips recorded by students are played and evaluated in class. Sometimes, teacher-student conferencing is conducted for evaluating students' performance on the reading aloud assignment and process writing.

- General marking codes for process writing are used. In the assignments scrutinised, some teachers include constructive feedback, which recognises students' strengths, and make clear suggestions for improvement. For some classes, diary writing is introduced, aiming at developing students' fluency in writing.
- Generally, assessment papers are appropriately designed. Requirements are spelt out in the Panel Manual to lay out the general principles of test and examination paper setting. A sound mechanism is in place to monitor the quality of assessment papers. In the assessment papers scrutinised, there is proper use of a variety of text types and coverage of the four macro skills. Usage questions are generally contextualised and some open-ended questions are duly incorporated.

### *Areas for Improvement*

#### Curriculum

- The panel has taken positive steps to incorporate the cultivation of reading and writing skills in the intensive reading practice and writing tasks in addressing the panel's development focuses of improving students' writing, reading and speaking abilities. However, there is inadequate attention in KLA curriculum planning and implementation to the progressive development of the language sub-skills involved as well as learning skills. There is a need to ensure that the language sub-skills can be developed and reinforced in a spiraling manner, and ensure adequate integration of the four macro skills to allow students sufficient practice in learning activities.
- In developing students' generic skills and learning strategies, high achievers also have their generic skills cultivated through project learning adopted in the Plan A programme, which engages them in life-wide learning activities. The samples of projects scrutinized reflect that the students concerned could locate relevant information and present it clearly. However, there is a need to foster their generic skills, including those of information processing and interviewing, as well as exploration of the subject matter. Specific strategies, language learning targets and assessment criteria need to be spelt out to ensure systematic development of relevant generic skills and to guide implementation.
- Whereas curriculum review is sometimes able to highlight relevant issues, including problems in the design of cooperative learning activities and the

need to enhance teacher-student interaction, evaluation in general still tends to be too general. At times it is only a listing of the measures adopted without assessing students' learning outcomes and the extent to which set targets are achieved. Specific success criteria, in terms of targets and learning outcomes, should be spelt out. There is also a need to formulate more holistic follow-up actions to address not just one aspect of the issues identified but to reinforce students' mastery of language skills and enhance their language proficiency. In the light of issues identified, the panel could benefit from its fine practice of frequent collaboration and sharing, by engaging in more thorough discussion of these pedagogical issues. Self-evaluation data, such as that derived from assignment inspection and lesson observation, need to be optimised to inform curriculum planning and planning for panel members' professional development.

### Support Measures to Enhance English Language Learning

- In supporting the promotion of reading in English, the school library is currently rendering assistance in providing P1-P3 students with daily readers, responding to the English panel's request for books and materials on selected topics in the curriculum. A cross-curricular reading programme run by the school library is in progress, though the inclusion of English books in students' reading lists is not compulsory. Given the key role of the school library as a learning support centre, there is a need to strengthen its collaboration with, and support to, the English panel, taking on a more proactive role in planning the provision of learning and teaching resources for the subject. Thematic display of English books, reading-related activities and competitions should be organised to give a high profile to reading in English. The Reading Promotion Committee, which has been set up in the light of the manpower constraints faced by the school library, could set goals and devise strategic measures to promote English reading.
- Whereas students' interest in learning English is enhanced through the good range of English-related activities, currently the number of students using English spontaneously, both inside and outside class, is still limited. The panel could further optimise the weekly English Day and other English activity days, as well as learning resources such as the speaking booklet, to promote teacher-student and especially student-student interaction in English.

### Teaching

- In a majority of lessons, most questions asked are limited to checking students' understanding of the lesson content or previous knowledge. More open-ended questions and specific feedback could be used to develop students' higher order thinking skills and stretch their abilities.
- In a few lessons, teachers tend to focus more on coverage, with a lack of attention to students' learning progress and difficulties, or strategies to cater for learner differences. Though teachers monitor progress and sometimes

provide individual support, some of them are not aware of students' specific learning needs and difficulties. As a result, they have relatively low expectations and seldom encourage risk-taking in students.

- Opportunities for peer interaction and students' active use of the language for purposeful communication are sometimes undermined by a lack of genuine purpose in group tasks. In some lessons where group work is assigned, there is a need to re-examine its design to see if it truly requires collaboration among students to complete the assigned work. More language input and oral practice could be included to ensure students can master the target language forms and gradually develop their confidence in speaking. More prompting and probing are needed to encourage students to think and speak more in English.

### Learning

- Students generally need more confidence in speaking English. While they are willing to respond to teachers' questions, they seldom take the initiative to elaborate, give examples to support their answers or views, raise questions or seek clarification.
- During paired and group work, some students lack skills and language for discussion, usually resulting in the use of Cantonese as a medium of communication. Opportunities for students to apply and develop such skills should be provided through careful design of learning tasks that engage students in purposeful collaboration. The use of Cantonese in classes requires attention and should be sensitively discouraged.
- In the samples of daily assignments scrutinised, some students encounter obvious difficulties in making grammatically correct sentences. They mostly have difficulties in diction, using proper expressions and forming sentences.

### Performance Assessment

- The analysis of internal and external examination data often results in the introduction of more worksheet exercises. The analysis and evaluation should be specific enough to identify the knowledge and skills which students fail to master. With the information, the panel can further sustain the development and enhancement of language learning by students, and systematically improve the targeted knowledge and skills from lower primary level upwards. The use of Information Technology in maintaining and generating assessment data should be encouraged to trace class progress and facilitate cross-year and cross-level analyses of student performance.
- Marking and feedback quality varies among teachers. Though there are some examples, with good marking accuracy and adequate constructive feedback for improvement, some do not include any written feedback.

Adequate feedback on students' strengths and areas for improvement should be given. Constructive feedback, encouraging remarks and clear indicators of the direction for improvement, which are used in some of the assignments, could be shared among panel members and more consistently used. The panel could further promote the use and consistency in the application of marking codes and criteria, especially in writing assignments.

- To enhance assessment for learning, self and peer assessment could be further implemented in the English classroom. This would help students to become more aware of their own learning, the assessment criteria, the qualities they should look for and the feedback they should offer to facilitate mutual improvement.

### 3. Concluding Remarks

The school duly emphasises the development of students' reading, writing and speaking abilities, and has devoted fine efforts to implementing its school-based reading and writing programmes and enhancing its English learning environment. The English Panel capitalises on the school's fine culture of collaboration among teachers and enhances the English curriculum through collaborative lesson planning and co-teaching. The positive learning atmosphere and learning activities in most lessons engage students well and promotes their participation. Students are able to meet the realistic yet challenging reading targets, and some demonstrate satisfactory fluency in speaking and writing. To further enhance the learning and teaching of English, the following suggestions could be considered:

- Whereas the panel has demonstrated greater self-reflection in curriculum review, there is a need to spell out clear and specific success criteria in relation to set targets and learning outcomes. This will help better gauge the extent to which these targets, linked to students' development of language skills and language development strategies, have been attained, which in turns informs curriculum planning. More holistic follow-up actions can then be formulated accordingly.
- There should be more attention to the progressive development of language sub-skills and language development strategies across year levels, as well as adequate integration of the four macro skills, so that the language skills and target language structures can be developed and reinforced through ample opportunities for practice and application.
- Classroom assessment could be further enhanced through the use of more prompting and probing as well as higher order questions. Task design could also be improved to ensure that a genuine purpose for communication and interaction is built in. More specific feedback needs to be provided, both in lessons and in student assignments, to better inform students of their strengths and ways to seek further improvement.