

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

**Ching Chung Hau Po Woon**  
**Secondary School**

**Address of School : No.21, Hang Fu Street, Tuen Mun, N.T.**

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**Quality Assurance Division**  
**Education Bureau**

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## Focus Inspection Team

### Team Leader

Mr KAM Shi-yuen

### Member

Ms CHUNG Ka-man, Amy

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## 1. Inspection Methodology

- The focus inspection was conducted on 7 and 11 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 adopted as the MOI for Integrated Science (IS) in one of the S1 classes;
  - Extended learning activities (ELA) in English are implemented for most content subjects in all four classes at S1 and S2. ELA are also promoted through various Life-wide Learning programmes and activities.
- The inspection team used the following methods to review the effectiveness of the above arrangements:
  - Observation of one S1 IS lesson taught by one teacher;
  - Observation of various school activities, including English morning assemblies, campus TV broadcast and English Day activities;
  - Meetings and interviews with the Principal, the Coordinator and members of the Language Policy Task Group who oversee the implementation of the school-based MOI arrangements, the heads of the subject panels concerned, including English and IS, and one group of randomly selected S1 students who study IS in English;
  - 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.

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

- The school has adopted a Whole School Approach for its language policy which aligns with the school vision that places emphasis on developing students' biliteracy and trilingualism. A clear direction has been set to guide the formulation of the school-based MOI arrangements. Discussions were held within the Language Policy Task Group under the Academic Affairs Committee and among panel heads with the clear objectives of enhancing students' exposure to English and offering them an early opportunity to prepare for subjects using English as the MOI at the senior secondary level. Due consideration has been given to contextual factors, such as students' capability, teachers' readiness and professional development needs, support measures in place and stakeholders' views, including those of parents and students. The school has come to a consensus among stakeholders that all students at the junior secondary level should be given opportunities to learn in English and that greater effort should be made to enhance their exposure and confidence in using English. Starting from the 2010/11 school year, the school development plans, annual school plans and evaluation reports have been compiled with respect to student, staff and school levels. In this connection, mother-tongue teaching has been adopted for S1 students in the 2010/11 school year and quite aptly supplemented by the implementation of ELA in English for all subjects with the exception of Chinese Language and Putonghua. ELA in English are also promoted through various Life-wide Learning programmes and activities.
- The MOI policy is closely monitored by the Language Policy Task Group, which consists of the Vice Principal and the panel heads of English and Chinese, to oversee the implementation of the school-based MOI policy. Lesson observation of teachers concerned is regularly conducted by the Principal for monitoring purposes, while peer lesson observation is conducted among panel heads, English teachers and subject teachers to share practice. Lesson observation is valued by teachers as they pool wisdom, exchange ideas and learn from others.
- After the review of the first year's implementation of ELA in the 2010/11 school year, and in consideration of the school's planning to offer classes for students to learn Biology and Chemistry in English at senior secondary level, there is a greater need for the IS subject to tackle the articulation issue than there is for other subjects. Hence, IS is chosen as the starting point for S1 students to use English as the MOI in the 2011/12 school year.
- The school participated in the SEED project in 2009 on "Joining the Learning Dots: Connecting Learning Experiences in English Language with other Key-Learning Areas through Reading across the Curriculum". Through the project, English teachers have worked in collaboration with Science teachers with a focus on mapping the English and IS curricula. Based on the experience gained, the Language Policy Task Group has taken the initiative to attempt curriculum mapping by matching the topics covered by the English and some content subjects at S1 and S2, such as the Integrated Humanities and IS.

- The school builds on the implementation experience of the last school year and makes adjustment to refine some support measures for teachers and students. In this school year, ELA in English are implemented for all content subjects in all four classes at S1 and S2, except in one of the S1 classes where English is adopted as the MOI for teaching IS. This S1 class is allocated with more-able students who are streamed according to their performance in English Language in the Pre-S1 Hong Kong Attainment Test (Pre-S1 HKAT). After adopting English as the MOI for teaching IS in this S1 class, there has been a drop in IS assessment results but the situation is, gradually, improving. This is due to the closer collaboration between the English and IS teachers through endeavours such as co-teaching in the form teachers' periods, which started in April 2012.
- Concerted efforts have been made in devising measures to support the implementation of the MOI arrangements. Cross-curricular collaboration is aptly in place, with peer lesson observation and collaborative lesson planning among teachers coordinated by the Language Policy Task Group. On the whole, commendable effort has been put into adapting learning materials and developing supplementary booklets to cater for the diverse abilities of students in learning various subjects.
- The school places great emphasis on staff development. Some content subject teachers have attended MOI-related courses organised by the Education Bureau (EDB) and tertiary institutions. The Refined English Enhancement Scheme (REES) funding is well-used to hire consultancy service to provide training for Science and Mathematics teachers, including lesson observation and developing teaching materials. A regular time slot is allocated for teachers of the same KLA to share teaching materials and strategies at panel level. Teachers of the same KLA have a chance for professional exchange during the Learning Circle sharing session at the end of the school year and are responsible for a presentation on a topic chosen by themselves. To enrich the English speaking environment, the Native-speaking English Teacher (NET) has provided training for office staff, enabling them to communicate with students in English on English Days.

### 3. Learning and Teaching

#### 3.1 Curriculum and Assessment

- In consideration of the language ability and support needs of students, the curriculum of the IS subject has been selected to be taught using English as the MOI. The IS curriculum is implemented with coverage of all topics. However, due to the use of English as the MOI, the actual progress made falls behind that planned. It is recommended that some topics, which are more difficult and of greater language demand, be trimmed and the trimmed topics be taught in the science KLA at S3 or S4. In this connection, the trimmed topics need to be noted clearly in the panel meeting record to facilitate the preparation of remedial teaching. Under the influence of the Language Policy Task Group, there is closer collaboration among English and Science teachers. To collaborate on a wider range of topics, teachers could make better use of the existing collaborative lesson preparation meetings to design teaching strategies, which could be trialled through peer lesson observation by subject and English teachers.
- The teaching materials are properly designed to facilitate students' learning. The Language Policy Task Group has established an assignment and assessment policy, with clear instructions for panels' reference. There is a variety of assignments, including worksheets and homework. Students' performance in the samples of assignments scrutinised is satisfactory, in general, and teachers' feedback serves to help students improve. For those subjects implementing ELA in English, 25 per cent of the lesson time is allocated for teaching in English while, in the uniform test and examination papers, 25 per cent of the questions are set in English. The other questions in the papers are set in Chinese. The test and examination papers are properly designed with suitable use of English language, even coverage of topics and suitable levels of difficulty. The data analysis on the test and examination outcomes for IS show that the passing percentage of the S1 students learning IS in English is lower than that of the students learning IS in Chinese supplemented by ELA in English. It is recommended that the use of assessment data could be strengthened to identify students' specific language support needs.
- A questionnaire was designed to collect views from the class of more-able S1 students who learn IS in English. The feedback from students was positive. Most of them agreed that they enjoyed learning Science in English and that their reading and comprehension skills had improved. All of the students agreed that learning science in English could help them to further their studies.
- In planning the ELA for the current year, the school intends to enhance students' English standard through introducing vocabulary and short passages and to develop their confidence through reading-aloud practices. Each subject panel can then choose the mode of delivery of ELA. While most subject panels have compiled their own bilingual glossary and notes, some have given students short passages and chapter summaries to study. Review on the effectiveness for

implementing ELA in English is conducted through regular meetings among panel heads.

### 3.2 Support Measures

- Commendable efforts have been made by the school to foster an English-rich learning environment. An array of English activities such as weekly English morning assemblies, English Days and Campus TV broadcast are organised to enhance students' exposure to English. At the same time, the school provides ample opportunities for students to use the language. English Ambassadors from different levels are trained to conduct English activities such as running English game stalls and promoting the use of English on campus. Student masters of ceremonies are trained to use English in various school functions. Junior form students are encouraged to earn stamps and teachers' signatures for their English Passports by participating in various English activities. English is used in some Extra-curricular Activities (ECA) such as uniform groups and Folk Song Club. The V-China Conference, outings and various cultural exchange programmes also allow students to interact with others in authentic contexts. Besides, school facilities such as the English Wonderland and English Fun Room are conducive to English learning. The print environment is enriched mainly through English board displays. There are also displays of wise sayings and some subject-specific vocabulary in English, as well as bilingual displays of signs, banners and bulletin boards. There are rich displays of students' work in English on campus, and the annual publication of Golden Glimpses is a collection of students' writing to recognise their efforts and introduce the organised English activities.
- There are initiatives to promote cross-curricular collaboration between the English and content subject panels. Attempts have been made to match the topics covered by the English and some content subject panels at S1 and S2. To support the learning and teaching of IS in English, S1 and S2 English and IS teachers are involved in curriculum mapping. School-based teaching materials are developed to reinforce students' learning of subject-specific vocabulary, grammar items and sentence patterns. As both the English and IS teachers of the S1 class adopting English as the MOI for IS are also playing the role of class teachers, the two teachers start to co-teach during the Form teachers' period in the second term. At the activity level, English teachers and English Club members attend the meetings of some ECA clubs to promote the use of English beyond lesson time. Cross-curricular elements are also included in some of the English stall games this year. Although such collaboration is still at its early stage, the initiatives are conducted at appropriate starting points for further development of Language Across the Curriculum (LAC).
- Reading is promoted through timetabled Library and Reading lessons. Students are brought to the library on a regular basis to borrow and read books. Activities such as the Reading Week and "READathon" reading award scheme are organised. Some attempts have also been made to promote reading across the curriculum. More subject-related English titles, which suit the language abilities of junior form students, are purchased and stocked in the library. Subject-related titles are introduced in Reading lessons. In addition, the school

has recently introduced the "Star Reading Programme", which encourages students to read books recommended by different subject panels.

- To help the new cohort of S1 students adjust to the English learning environment, an English Camp and a phonics course are organised during the summer holidays. These are followed by an English bridging course, which includes some content subject materials, at the beginning of the academic year. Bridging lessons on IS are also provided for the S1 class adopting English as the MOI. Chinese, English and Mathematics tutorial classes are arranged for students to join after school on a voluntary basis. The bridging materials could be reviewed and further refined to facilitate students' early adaptation to learning IS in English.

### 3.3 Classroom Learning and Teaching

- The teacher is friendly and supportive, and demonstrates good subject knowledge. The lesson is well-prepared with clear focuses and learning objectives. The learning activities are conducted systematically and in logical sequence. The teacher's presentation in English is fluent and is aware of using simple English to elaborate subject content. Subject-specific terms are highlighted on the blackboard, with appropriate breaking down of syllables for students' pronunciation practice. Various teaching strategies are used to promote students' thinking and sustain their learning interest, including presentation software, teacher's demonstration, group experiments and competition. In general, a harmonious learning atmosphere is maintained.
- At the beginning of the lesson, revision is conducted by asking questions to check students' understanding of prior learning. Students are attentive and well-behaved. They can follow teachers' instructions and most of them are willing to respond in English when called upon to answer. Some of the students can respond in short phrases or single words. However, they lack confidence in using English in front of the whole class or in group discussion. The interaction between the teacher and students, and among students is insufficient. The teacher could encourage students to participate actively in class activities. In order to realise students' potential, more interactive activities could be provided to help them participate in the lesson by using English as a learning tool. These could include enhancing opportunities for them to demonstrate their learning outcomes by engaging them in different modes of oral and written tasks to apply the learned subject-related language.
- Questioning is frequently used to check understanding. Sometimes, opportunities are provided for students to recycle the subject vocabulary in context. However, opportunities for further class discussion can be created through more prompting and probing to stimulate students' higher-order thinking and interaction with peers.

## 4. Way Forward

The formulation of the school-based MOI plan in S1 and S2 has involved various stakeholders. A range of measures has been put in place to support the implementation. With the school's support, some teachers have received relevant training. The implementation of the MOI arrangements is monitored through a clear mechanism and feedback from both teachers and students is duly considered in refining the plan.

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

### **Enhancing Cross-Curricular Collaboration among Subject Panels**

- The school has set up the Language Policy Task Group to oversee the implementation of the school-based MOI arrangements. Based on existing good practice, the school could further enhance cross-curricular collaboration by appointing more subject teachers to join the Language Policy Task Group so as to better coordinate the MOI arrangements across the subjects concerned. Teachers could also make better use of the existing collaborative lesson preparation meetings to design teaching strategies, which could be trialled through peer lesson observation by subject and English teachers.

### **Enhancing Interaction between the Teacher and Students and among Students**

- The interaction between the teacher and students and among students could be enhanced. Further improvement could be made to develop students' potential by providing more opportunities for them to practise in lessons by using English as a learning tool to demonstrate their learning outcomes.