

Comprehensive Review Report

Po Leung Kuk Ngan Po Ling College

Address of School : 26 Sung On Street, Tokwawan, Kowloon

Review Period : 16-20 & 23 March 2009

**Quality Assurance Division
Education Bureau
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(Parents may contact school for the full report with appendices)

**Education Bureau
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1. Introduction

1.1 School Vision and Mission (original text provided by the school)

- We promote all round education in students' moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development.
- We aim at providing students with a happy, harmonious and positive learning environment conducive to moral, academic, physical, social, personal and artistic development.
- We nurture students with solid foundation for further studies and better career development.
- We promote students' language proficiency in English, Chinese, Putonghua and other prevalent language and skills in Information Technology.
- We help students build up confidence, thinking skills, analytical skills and perpetual learning ability in order to better prepare them for the challenges in the 21st century.

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

- Established in 2003, Po Leung Kuk Ngan Po Ling College is a non-religious, co-educational whole-day school. It is the first Po Leung Kuk secondary school operated under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS) which enables flexibility in school management, curriculum development, student intake as well as manpower and financial resources.

The class organisation and student enrolment at the beginning of the school year 2008/09 are as follows:

Level	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	Total
No. of classes	5	5	4	5	5	2	2	28
No. of students	146	177	149	167	185	60	64	948

- In addition to the Principal, there are 63 teachers in the establishment including a Native-speaking English Teacher (NET). The teacher-student ratio is about 1:16. There are 35 non-teaching staff members including 3 teacher assistants, 1 discipline teacher, 1 librarian, 1 librarian assistant, 1 extra-curricular activity (ECA) coordinator, 2 laboratory technicians, 1 laboratory

assistant, 1 AV technician, 1 IT technician, 3 social workers, 9 administration staff, 1 gardener and 10 janitors.

- Among the 63 teachers, 3% have obtained a doctorate degree and 52% are master degree holders. School-based study subsidy is appropriated every school year for encouraging further pursuit of professionalism. The school also makes effort to enhance teachers' competence by collaborating with different external bodies in the education sector. The school has established close connection with the Singapore Ministry of Education, administrators from Shanghai, Zhuhai and Singapore, American teachers and professors from local universities. School tours, class observations, dialogues and workshops are held for staff development purposes. Moreover, advice from professional school consultants is regularly sought for compiling school development plans.
- The school adopts English as the medium of instruction (EMI) and enhances students' Putonghua language skills so as to sharpen students' competitive edge and widen their international perspective.
- In order to cultivate students' international multicultural perspectives and language proficiency, and to inspire their academic excellence, the school has developed an international cultural exchange circle with prestigious schools in Shanghai, Singapore and New Zealand. Perpetual quality exchange programmes have been conducted since the school commenced its operation in 2003/04. With the opening of the new annex, the Cultural Exchange Centre and Hostels will facilitate more diversified exchange programmes in the near future.
- In response to the need of education reform and the changes in external demand, 4C curriculum which emphasises creativity, critical thinking skills, communication skills and awareness of current issues has been integrated both vertically and horizontally across all Key Learning Areas (KLA). On top of knowledge-based curriculum, generic skills cultivation, effective learning strategies and active learning initiatives are also mingled with the learning syllabus.
- The school has groomed herself to be a learning and growing organisation by means of timely self-evaluation. Through the PIE (Planning, Implementation and Evaluation) cycle, strengths and weaknesses are being revealed. Policies are then fine-tuned and new measures are designed for future school advancement and development.

1.3 Comprehensive Review Methodology

- The Comprehensive Review (CR) was conducted on 16-20 and 23 March 2009 to evaluate the school's performance in four domains of school work, i.e. Management and Organisation, Learning and Teaching, Student Support and School Ethos, as well as Student Performance. The CR team comprised ten inspectors and a lay member.
- Before conducting the Review, the CR team scrutinised documents provided by the school and relevant information available from various sections of the Education Bureau (EDB).

- A preparatory visit to the school was paid on 27 February 2009 to explain the objectives and operation of CR to the teaching staff and address their queries about the Review. A meeting was held with the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) to listen to their views on school management and development priorities. The Principal also took the opportunity to brief the team leader and the assistant team leader on the strengths and development priorities of the school.
- A meeting with parents was held on the date of the preparatory visit to solicit their views on the school. A total of 80 parents attended the meeting.
- The CR team employed the following methods to evaluate the performance of the school:
 - scrutiny of documents and data provided by the school before and during the school visit;
 - observation of various school activities, including the morning assembly, class period, the reading time, activities during recess time, lunchtime forum and reading aloud activities, real-time debate, S5 school break ceremony, a flag hoisting ceremony and a range of co-curricular activities;
 - meetings and interviews with members of the IMC, Principal, deputy principals, panel chairpersons, coordinators of functional committees, teachers, the school social workers, parents and students;
 - scrutiny of samples of students' work and examination papers of past school years; and
 - observation of lessons.
- During the CR, 51 lessons taught by 47 teachers were observed. In addition, a total of 3 lessons of 3 classes was also observed by the CR team leader and the assistant team leader in order to have a general understanding of learning and teaching within the school. The following subjects in the eight KLA were inspected:

KLA	Chi. Lang Ed.	Eng. Lang Ed.	Maths Ed.	P.S.H. Ed.	Sci. Ed.	Tech. Ed.	Arts Ed.	P.E.
Subject inspected	Chinese Language, Chinese Language & Culture	English Language & Use of English	Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Pure Mathematics & Mathematics & Statistics	Economics & Integrated Humanities	Integrated Science & Chemistry	Computer Literacy, Computer & Information Technology, Computer Applications	Music	Physical Education

- The findings presented in this report were derived from the corporate judgement of the CR team based on the information collected through the above-mentioned methods during the review period.

2. Management and Organisation

- In 2001, the Po Leung Kuk (Kuk) submitted an application to the then Education and Manpower Bureau for the establishment of a senior secondary college and a community college under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS). Po Leung Kuk Ngan Po Ling College (NPLC) was eventually established in 2003. As expounded by members of the IMC, adjustment was made to the initial plan in light of the establishment of another community college on Hong Kong Island at about the same period NPLC was established as a secondary college under the DSS instead.
- NPLC began her operation with four S1 and eight S4 classes in 2003/04 and has since grown to the present capacity. Adhering to the Kuk's tradition, the school adopts the same motto as that of other schools under the same school sponsoring body (SSB), namely, "Respect, Love, Diligence and Honesty". The school mission serves well to guide school development in preparing students for challenges in the twenty-first century. Apart from attaching importance to students' all-round development, the school's prime concern is to establish a positive learning environment in which students acquire and build a solid foundation for further studies and better career development, such as skills for language, thinking, Information Technology (IT) and life-long learning.
- Specific policies and guidelines have been drawn up under the leadership of the Principal to facilitate the school's daily operation and long-term development. They serve a range of operational and development needs, namely those with respect to daily school administration, curriculum development, the use of medium of instruction, discipline and guidance, extra-curricular activities, student affairs and use of IT to support school development.
- The IMC functions smoothly and provides adequate support and guidance to the school management. Given the school's relatively brief history, a few seats on the IMC have yet to be filled, for example, the alumni manager. Nevertheless, through regular and frequent meetings with the school management, the IMC has been well informed of the school's development and progress and has been able to give due guidance for decision and policy making. There exists mutual trust between the IMC and the school management and the latter is given a relatively free hand to steer school development.
- In the course of school development, the school management is adopting an approach which sees a greater involvement of teaching staff of all ranks in school policy making. The making of the school development plan (SDP) (2003/04 – 2007/08) and the SDP (2008/09 – 2012/13) is a good example as to how this participative decision-making takes shape. The former was mainly the work of the Principal in consultation with a few middle managers, while the latter was an outcome of a series

of discussions among teachers of various subject departments and members of the various functional committees, which was then finalised by the Executive Committee for implementation. The Executive Committee comprises some senior members of the schools playing the advisory and monitoring roles on school policies ensuring that they are implemented as planned. The much wider staff participation in policy making represents a good effort made by the school management to hear teachers' voices and elicit their views in an attempt to build consensus on policy issues.

- With enhanced staff participation, school development planning in the current cycle has been a better-informed planning process. The present 5-year SDP covers a range of operational and development tasks that serves to strengthen the school's administration, curriculum development, adoption of EMI, discipline and guidance, provision of extra-curricular activities, management of student affairs and use of IT. Specific policies and guidelines have been drawn up under the leadership of the Principal to facilitate implementation of the key tasks. Sharp development focuses are set annually. These include enhancement of effectiveness of learning and teaching as well as use of EMI, better preparation for the implementation of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) curriculum, strengthening the school ethos and the sense of belonging of both teachers and students, and elevating the quality of student performance and education provision for building a better school image. In general, they address well the improvement needs of the school and her students, the external requirements relating to curriculum and assessment, and the shared concerns of the staff.
- The school management is, on the whole, reflective as the annual concerns are progressively modified with due consideration given to the changing improvement needs of the school, students and the learning environment. The effectiveness in planning is evidenced by the noticeable improvement in student achievement in recent years. Continuous efforts have been made to attain greater transparency and accountability at all levels in the self-evaluation cycle that comprises planning, implementation and evaluation. Subject departments and functional committees are required to draw up individual subject or programme plans together with suggested implementation strategies and success criteria, and to conduct mid-term and end-of-term programme evaluation. A systematic self-improvement mechanism is taking shape and functioning fairly smoothly. Evidence collected is appropriately used by some subject departments to inform future planning. In this regard, this good practice needs dissemination so that effective use of evaluation data can be made by other subject departments to inform and improve planning.
- Communication in the school is good. The regular Curriculum Development Committee (CDC) meetings, the Executive Committee meetings and the Friday lunchtime meetings of all teachers allow quick horizontal and vertical flow of information and keep track of the development of the various committees and subject departments. The atmosphere of the meetings supports easy and frank exchanges of ideas and views. The IT infrastructure of the school facilitates fast and efficient flow

of information between all staff members.

- With good resource planning and management, the school provides a pleasant and well-resourced learning environment for students. As a school priority, a favourable language learning environment has been developed for students, providing valuable opportunities for them to practise their language skills. The podium, in particular, is well used for a series of regular lunchtime activities such as the English forum, student presentations and reading aloud activities. The opening hours of the School Library are duly extended to accommodate the growing needs of students to do their self study. Resource support for subject departments and functional committees is good. Where and when needed, additional financial support is provided via the Executive Committee for implementation of ad hoc tasks. The completion of the new annex on the school premises which houses new facilities would bring added advantages to the school especially in her effort to provide better support to students and teachers in the area of learning and teaching.
- The school has put in place detailed and easy-to-follow crisis management procedures. The relevant guide covers most types of crisis that may occur in the school and provides in fine detail nearly all the need-to-know elements. This is one example of the school's effort to help teachers focus on their teaching duties.
- Presently, the school's major concerns are addressed independently by individual subjects and committees. There is a need to strengthen school-level coordination to ensure coherence in planning and implementation. Evaluation results prepared by individual subject departments and functional committees need consolidation to reflect the exact progress made against the targets set. With a clear picture of how well the priority tasks have been accomplished, the school management could then be in a better position to make informed decisions.
- Performance at departmental and committee levels is closely monitored by the school management. Currently the CDC and the Principal assume a major monitoring role by scrutinising annual plans and reports submitted by subject departments and functional committees.
- The school supports and encourages teachers to participate in professional development programmes within and without the school. Subsidies and leave incentives are provided to support teachers' continuous professional development. The Kuk's school network has been aptly used to arrange visits to schools of the same SSB or outside the territory to broaden teachers' perspectives on curriculum management and teaching. For professional support, mentors are assigned to help newly recruited teachers to settle in and get acquainted with the school climate quickly.
- In-house talks and workshops are organised by the school to help meet teachers' professional development needs. In particular, theme-based training programmes are held annually to address the school's immediate concerns, for example, sharing of

insight of curriculum design and learning and teaching of the subject of Liberal Studies by a local subject expert from a tertiary institution. However, with the relatively large staff movement, the school needs to devise a better staff development plan to build capacity for sustaining school improvement and development. Apart from addressing school-level concerns, staff development programmes need a sharper focus on teachers' immediate support needs, especially those of new teachers, so that they can be better equipped for not only daily teaching duties, but also their role in curriculum development and student support.

- In the formative years of her development, the school requires strong leadership which the Principal, as an experienced and skilful school administrator has demonstrated. At the helm of the school, the Principal is proactive and at the same time pragmatic, and she thinks long term. She is steadfast in her belief that students' attainment and a good school image are the cornerstones of the school and she is committed to seeing her plans through. She shows a deep passion for the school and care for her staff. She has a good understanding of the school context, in terms of the abilities of her students and those of the team of young teachers, as well as the threats and opportunities the school is encountering. She is making plans to bring about the desired results and is gaining the support from the IMC and the teachers.
- The Vice Principal is rendering a good service to the Principal in his administrative support to the school, as well as serving effectively as the bridge between the teachers and the school management. Middle managers of the school are providing good support to the Principal and are serving the school well by accomplishing their administrative duties effectively and performing satisfactorily in managing the subject panels and functional committees under their charge. The Principal, Vice Principal, middle managers and teachers alike are reflective and committed. They help form a pleasant cohesive working environment. The school has a team of very young teachers who are able, energetic, full of aspiration and, most importantly, dedicated to their teaching. Together they have helped create a pleasant school atmosphere.
- A proper mechanism has been established for allocation and review of staff duties. Staff members are consulted annually about their views on the assigned duties, their aspirations and preferences, so that their expertise can be better tapped to serve students' interests and their professional development needs better catered for. A multi-tier appraising system is adopted to serve as both a monitoring mechanism and a support measure. It includes vetting of students' assignments, peer evaluation, self evaluation and lesson observation by peers, seniors and the Principal. Opportunities are made available for individuals to learn of their performance and reflect and respond to comments and views from peers and other colleagues. The existing mechanism also serves to identify appraisees' training needs, which can help inform staff development planning.
- The staff turnover has remained a challenge since the establishment of the school. To ensure provision of quality education, the school management needs to consider means to retain quality teachers and build a more stable professional team. To

achieve sustainable development and to bring in fresh ideas, there is a need for the school management to develop distributed and collaborative leadership. The middle managers need to be equipped and empowered progressively to assume a more prominent leadership role. In this respect, promotion of cross-subject collaboration and coordination could provide a good platform for nurturing curriculum leaders and adding impetus to school-based curriculum development.

3. Learning and Teaching

- The development of the school-based curriculum is in good progress. It has been well guided by the goals and focuses set for specific stages of school development. In the first three years after the establishment of the school, the focus was on the development of an administrative and coordination mechanism facilitating development of subject-based curriculum and students' knowledge foundation. It also addressed closely the school concern to establish a favourable language environment for development of students' bi-literacy and tri-lingual abilities, and effective adoption of EMI. The CDC was then established to steer and coordinate curriculum development at the school level. It has since comprised Junior and Senior Section Focus Groups, and other sub-committees working on specific school-level concerns such as the use of EMI, and key administrative work relating to timetabling, internal and external examinations. As a majority of the teaching staff members are novice practitioners, the Principal has assumed much of the curriculum leadership role. With her strong leadership, clear directions and specific guidelines have been set for curriculum development and implementation.
- With good groundwork established for curriculum development starting from the school year 2005/06, active steps have been taken to explore, deliberate and set the directions and focuses of the school-based curriculum with effective use of a whole-school approach led by the Principal. The outcome of the series of deliberation processes has led to the development of a 4C curriculum as a shared response to the latest curriculum development and trend, as well as external assessment requirements. As a whole-school initiative, the 4C curriculum has a well-defined goal to guide implementation and evaluation. This is to foster across the curriculum the development of students' communication skills, critical thinking and creativity, and to enhance their awareness and understanding of current issues. A phase-in approach has been duly adopted with a trial run of the intended curriculum in 2006/07, implementation and review in 2007/08 and onwards. Good practices have been identified, documented and disseminated to build capacity and support implementation. Reading is widely promoted across the curriculum with extensive use of news articles and editorials. Resource support, including that provided by the IT infrastructure, is strong. Further, use of a "KSTLE" approach has been promoted to add impetus to curriculum implementation. Such an approach addresses well the school's concern to strengthen students' **K**nowledge foundation and develop their generic **S**kills through enhancing **T**eaching and **L**earning **E**ffectiveness. Under the leadership of the Principal, use of a language framework for critical thinking has been introduced as a strategy for equipping students for the NSS curriculum and assessment requirements, indicating a proactive approach to curriculum development.
- Development of a favourable English learning environment for effective implementation of EMI has long been a school priority task and goal. To this end, a

well-constructed package of strategies is adopted. With the EMI Committee and the English panel playing a major role, a range of co- and cross-curricular activities are implemented to provide additional exposure and opportunities for use of English outside lesson time. A strong team of English Language Ambassadors has been formed to serve as role models and render quality assistance in running regular lunchtime activities such as reading aloud, oral presentation and booth games. The weekly lunchtime forum jointly organised by the English Panel and the Civic Education Committee provides a good platform for students to demonstrate their English debating skills and knowledge of the issue concerned. It is school policy that in subjects for which EMI is adopted, students' language development is a focus of classroom teaching, regular assignments and formal assessments. To develop a language-rich environment, there could be better use of display areas in the classroom.

- Despite the staff turnover issue, the development of the NSS curriculum is in steady progress. An ad hoc working committee has been formed under the CDC to coordinate the planning work. A generally clear curriculum framework has been developed, providing details on subject choices and combinations. Time allocation and human resource deployment plans have been drafted, and a detailed NSS booklet compiled for students' reference. Good progress has been made by a majority of subjects in strengthening the interface with the NSS curriculum. To facilitate implementation, more attention could be given to professional sharing and exchange on learning and teaching approaches. Elements of school-based assessment have been duly integrated into the curriculum of several subjects through assignment and assessment design, and use of the language framework promoted by the school. While a basic framework for other learning experiences (OLE) has been designed, active steps need to be taken to work out details of the OLE component with emphasis placed on the quality of the learning experiences to be provided. Cross-curricular collaboration needs promoting to support ongoing curriculum development. Project learning, which remains an area for further development in the school curriculum, could be a focus of cross-curricular collaboration. It could be further promoted as a key strategy for development of students' learning skills so that students can be better prepared for independent enquiry study in the NSS curriculum.
- A good range of measures is adopted to cater for learner diversity. These include split-class and ability-grouping arrangements for the teaching of English, Chinese and Mathematics, design of graded worksheets, additional classes for remedial or enhancement purposes, and use of bonus marks in assessments. Yet more could be done in terms of curriculum adaptation both to help academically less able students consolidate learning and to stretch the more able. While it is common practice among subject panels to develop core and extended curricula as a means to address diversity, clearer targets and curricular contents need to be designed to guide implementation and review.
- While emphasis is placed on students' academic attainments, due importance is attached to their balanced development through incorporation of life education and

civic education across different levels. A good range of co-curricular activities has been organised by most subject panels to supplement classroom learning. Good planning is done to boost students' self-confidence through the organisation of the Annual School Concert and lunchtime presentations. Further, there is good use of the school's external links to provide valuable life-wide learning opportunities such as those offered through internship and exchange programmes to enrich students' learning experiences. Values education is mainly promoted through mass programmes, thematic and co-curricular activities. In this regard, more attention could be given to integration of values education into the curriculum in different KLA.

- The assignment and assessment policy of most subjects is in close alignment with the school policy and the relevant subject guidelines are clear and specific. In most subjects, assignments are of a good variety. Quality of teachers' marking is good and their feedback is generally positive and specific enough to foster students' improvement. The school assessment policy places due emphasis on use of continuous assessment of students' performance to help inform curriculum planning. It is properly implemented at the subject level and it serves well to keep track of students' learning performance and progress. There is an effective mechanism for ensuring quality of assessment paper design and teachers' marking, and for review of students' performance. Evaluation of student performance in term examinations is thorough in most subjects. It provides a clear analysis of students' performance and, in particular, their areas for improvement. Yet there is a need to make further use of the evaluation data to inform design of pedagogical approaches to help students improve.
- Proper mechanisms are in place for curriculum evaluation. These include regular CDC and subject panel meetings, lesson observation focusing on questioning techniques, interactions and effectiveness, assignment check coupled with feedback to members, interim and year-end subject evaluations. Yet the review of the exact effectiveness of learning and teaching lacks depth at both school and subject levels. The evaluation of the implementation of the 4C curriculum does not provide a clear picture of students' progress in the development of the target skills, delineate the difficulties encountered or suggest specific pedagogical changes to support curriculum implementation. As regards remedial and enhancement measures, the focus of evaluation is on provision of support and completion of related programmes rather than the exact programme effectiveness or impact on learning and teaching. There is a need for more in-depth evaluation with a balanced use of qualitative and quantitative criteria both at school and subject levels to examine the extent to which students have acquired the target skills and the expected knowledge base. The evaluation results then generated should be used to inform curriculum and teaching design, as well as planning for staff development.
- Peer lesson observation and collaborative lesson planning have been actively promoted to support teachers' professional development and facilitate curriculum development and review. However, the level of staff turnover is impeding

curriculum planning and implementation. For a young school, clear directives and strong support from the school management are needed. In this regard, the Principal has served well as a curriculum leader providing the needed support and engaging staff in exploring the direction for curriculum development, as seen in the development of the 4C curriculum. However, for sustainable development, there is a need for progressive distribution of curriculum leadership roles. Capacity building and empowerment of subject/KLA leaders need stepping up to nurture a team of curriculum leaders that could initiate, lead and manage curriculum change independently and collaboratively. Further, to foster cross-curricular collaboration, there is a need for a gradual transition from subject-based to KLA development.

- Teachers are friendly, approachable and energetic. They have good subject knowledge and a comfortable command of English. Students are attentive and well-behaved in class. They are, in general, motivated and interested in learning. They demonstrate the ability to learn in the medium of English. They generally possess good communication and collaboration skills, while their critical thinking skills need to be further strengthened. As seen from their assignments, some of the students exhibit good creativity. A good teacher-student rapport is developed and the learning atmosphere is generally good. Classroom routines are established and class management is effective.
- Most of the lessons observed are well prepared, with clear objectives and focuses. A range of resources is employed to facilitate more effective learning and teaching and teacher-designed worksheets are commonly used to consolidate learning. IT is suitably used for presenting teaching materials in most lessons to enhance teaching effectiveness. It could be better deployed to promote effective interactive learning. Lesson delivery is mostly smooth and systematic. Teachers show a good command of the adopted medium of instruction. Their presentation and demonstration are systematic and ideas are conveyed clearly. Learning activities are suitably arranged to consolidate student learning. Students are able to follow teachers' instructions closely and present their views and ideas with clarity. In general, they show a good grasp of the lesson content and demonstrate good use of independent learning strategies such as pre-lesson preparation and self-initiated note-taking. Some of them manage to use mindmapping properly for making connections between concepts taught and planning their presentations.
- Most teachers begin their lessons by checking or eliciting students' prior knowledge through short quizzes or direct questioning. As a school's priority task, social issues are duly incorporated in the design of some lessons for developing students' 4C's. In most lessons, a range of learning tasks and activities is organised to engage students in learning. Students participate actively in these activities and, when engaged in collaborative work, they can generally support each other well. In science lessons, peer assessment is arranged to enable students to learn through assessing peer performance and from peer comments. In some language lessons, activities are well sequenced and organised to prepare students well for, and engage

them properly in, pair work and group work, leading to effective development of their communication and collaboration skills. However, in some other lessons, there is a lack of a strong linkage between the activities and the learning objectives, and there is a need for improvement of group task design to allow more equal participation among members.

- Questions, including thought-provoking ones, are frequently raised in class to check understanding. Students respond readily to teachers' questions. They give sensible though brief, answers when appropriately guided. Feedback given by teachers is generally positive and timely. On the whole, the range of questioning techniques used needs broadening. More prompting and probing questions could be raised to encourage more use of language and application of thinking skills, as well as general and subject knowledge. Further, students should be given sufficient wait time to process the question posed prior to responding. There is a need for more spontaneous praise and encouragement to boost students' confidence. In most lessons, teachers conclude by reviewing the focuses. It would be more fruitful if students could be led to reflect on what have been learnt.
- To cope with learner diversity, the school puts in place ability-grouping and split-class arrangements for some subjects, such as Chinese, English and Mathematics. Besides the above arrangements, graded worksheets are suitably designed and used in some lessons to address the needs of students of different ability levels. However, more attention could be given to the relatively quiet students in class, and more challenging tasks and activities are also needed to stretch the high-performing students. A wider repertoire of teaching strategies should be enlisted to cater for the diversified learning styles of students.
- In those lessons where learning effectiveness is particularly high, teachers employ a good variety of teaching strategies to engage students in active and purposeful learning. There is good use of authentic materials to stimulate discussion and thinking. Students are engaged in well-structured tasks that provide meaningful opportunities for language use and practice. Current issues and real-life examples are effectively used to arouse and sustain students' interest. Adequate opportunities are provided for students to apply their subject knowledge, explain and analyse real-life issues, which facilitates well the development of their 4C curriculum.

4. Student Support and School Ethos

- The planning of support services for student development is aligned with the school's major concerns. The emphasis is on the strengthening of the school ethos, enhancement of teachers' and students' sense of belonging, improvement of students' performance and the promotion of the school image. The current practice of planning and evaluation by related committees is, however, mainly conducted on a programme-by-programme basis, resulting in fragmented accounts of committee work accomplished, falling short of throwing light on whether the concerted effort is achieving the goals stipulated by the school's major concerns. To improve the overall planning and evaluation, there is a need to set up a clear mechanism for coordinating student support services and related programmes or activities organised by different committees
- The school has provided adequate support for students who form the first cohort under the NSS academic structure. Special arrangements have been made in a timely way to address the needs of the students concerned. These include talks that briefed all junior form students and their parents on the latest development of the NSS curriculum and academic structure, as well as subject choices and university entrance requirements. It also gave advice on how students should select subjects under the new structure. Besides, the last cohort of students taking the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations (HKCEE) has been duly briefed on the available exit pathways and the special arrangements to be made for them. In addition, a variety of careers guidance services, such as career exhibitions, provision of information at the careers corner in the School Library, and pre-mock examination activities, have been organised by the Career Guidance Committee in a timely way to help S3, S5 and S7 students plan for their future careers and studies. However, there is a need to increase junior form students' awareness of their own aptitudes, interests and abilities, and the various career and education pathways available, so that they can be better prepared for making decisions about their future.
- The school has attached much importance to students' conduct and the establishment of a safe and orderly environment. A proper mechanism has been established by the Discipline Committee to handle students' misconduct and promote positive behaviour. There are in place clear procedures for handling students' misbehaviour, a well-defined case referral system, and a system for classification of students' behavioural problems. A variety of measures, such as foot drills, adventure-based training camps and a merit system, adopted to develop students' self-discipline and encourage positive behaviour is effective in preventing the occurrence of students' undesirable behaviours. Discipline form coordinators are in general able to provide class teachers of the same form with due advice on handling students' misdemeanours. Opportunities for students to atone for their mistake are provided through schemes, such as the Fire Phoenix Project. In view of the significant improvement of students'

behavioural performance in recent years, there has been a gradual and proper shift in the emphasis of discipline measures from external control to self-discipline. For example, students are encouraged to take up posts of responsibility offered by the school, such as IT prefects and Student Librarians, to develop the virtue to serve others. This marks a good move by the school in response to both her students' and her own development needs. Building on the progress made, the school might consider setting up a student union to provide ample opportunities for students, particularly senior form students, to foster their self-management and leadership skills.

- The student guidance programmes and counselling services run by the Guidance and Counselling Committee are rather useful as they provide due support for students to face challenges affecting their learning and personal development. An orientation programme which is well-designed, is conducted annually to help new students adapt to the learning environment. In this school year, the theme "Enhancing our sense of belonging to the school", has been appropriately adopted to encourage students to devote and contribute themselves to the advancement of the school. Under this theme, a number of school-wide developmental guidance programmes, including guidance week activities and interesting theme-related learning activities, have been duly designed and organised by different subject departments to develop students' sense of belonging. Apart from running developmental guidance services, the school could also direct attention to the needs of students who are at risk in order that their needs at different developmental stages are well-catered for. In this connection, a stronger support network could be built to identify target students and organise for them preventive programmes to develop their ability to deal with adversities.
- Under the present organisational structure, student guidance services, school-wide programmes, case counselling and community services are organised by the Guidance and Counseling Committee which comprises one guidance teacher and three social workers as core members. The school might consider strengthening the role of the Guidance and Counselling Committee by involving more teachers in the planning and implementation processes so as to facilitate the implementation of a whole-school approach in this area.
- A dual class-teacher system is in place to provide pastoral care for all students. Class teachers are fully aware of their role in attending to students' development and growth needs. This arrangement would inevitably elevate teachers' awareness in identifying students at risk in their classes. In this school year, the role of class teachers in guidance and counselling has been strengthened. All class teachers are required to provide individual counselling services for at least two students that they consider warrant particular attention, and write a brief case record in the Class Teacher Handbook. To further enhance the effectiveness of this measure, customised staff development programmes could be organised to equip teachers concerned with the needed guidance and counselling skills. As another professional development focus, training activities could be organised to enhance teachers' understanding of special educational needs, develop their guidance skills in this

respect, and promote use of a whole-school approach to addressing those needs.

- With support from a non-government organisation under the Project of “Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes”, a Life Education curriculum is offered by the school for students from S1 to S5 to develop their positive values and attitudes. The Life Education curriculum is comprehensive enough to cover all essential areas of student development and growth, and help students develop their psychological well-being. Apart from the Life Education curriculum, the school offers ample opportunities for every student to participate in community services so as to help them cultivate a serving and caring spirit, and a keen sense of responsibility. In addition, moral and civic education activities, such as the flag hoisting ceremony, lunchtime forums and the Project Hope, are organised by different committees to help students cultivate their sense of national identity and to raise their awareness of civic responsibility. The school also makes good use of the opportunities to raise current issues for discussion among students with a view to enhancing their understanding of the social problems and contentious topics in question. As to the planning and implementation of values education, different committees are organising their own programmes. While it can help develop students’ positive values and attitudes from multiple perspectives, a holistic approach to planning is needed so that values education can be systematically implemented across different key stages.
- The relationship between the school and parents is, on the whole, good. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) functions well as a link between parents and the school by organising monthly activities and the regular PTA newsletters. A range of activities, such as parent education seminars, basin-food parties and picnics, is conducted throughout the school year and parents’ participation in these activities is impressive. Some dedicated parents have volunteered to work as helpers in students’ activities and in the School Library. Parents are well informed of their children’s performance at school. Better use of the existing channels could be made to encourage more two-way communication and further enhance home-school cooperation for the less active parents. Also, the expertise of parents, such as that which can enrich students’ career-related experiences, could be further drawn on to facilitate students’ learning and all-round development.
- The school maintains close ties with its partner schools abroad and in the mainland. Exchange programmes are organised every year to broaden students’ learning experiences and polish their communication skills. Visits to schools in the mainland and to different secondary schools of the SSB have been arranged to support teachers’ professional development and to promote professional exchange among teachers. Besides, the school establishes good links with the community facilitating an effective provision of social service opportunities for every student. Through the Project Hope, students have extended their services to some village schools in remote areas of the mainland. With the existing network with local, mainland and overseas partners, the school could make further use of the resources and expertise available to organise

programmes that address the specific development needs of her staff and students, such as the need to strengthen curriculum leadership among middle managers and student leadership for the running of student-led bodies in school.

- The school has been striving to build a solid foundation for sustainable development. Under the leadership of the Principal, the school has responded well to stakeholders' expectations and the external changes and requirements in connection with the territory-wide curriculum reform. She has been making all-out attempts to improve the quality of learning and teaching and support for student development. As outcomes of a results-oriented culture, initial successes have been achieved in various areas of school development, such as the development of the 4C curriculum and a good English learning environment. While a majority of the teachers is novice, they are, on the whole, energetic, receptive to change and devoted to their profession. They are concerned about the quality of their own teaching and keen to make improvements. At the same time, they are concerned about students' well-being and their own role in supporting students' growth both inside and outside the classroom. As a team, they are cooperative and they enjoy a good collegial relationship. Teacher-student rapport is good and so are peer relationships among students. Both local and non-Chinese students get along well and they enjoy their school life together. Parents are supportive and, with a maturing PTA, more support is expected from parents. To facilitate the development of a learning community within the school, there is, however, a need to address the staff turnover issue and to build a stable professional team.

5. Student Performance

- In general, students are pleasant, amiable and polite. They enjoy their school life and have gradually developed a strong sense of belonging. They are cooperative and well-behaved. They mostly show confidence in communicating in both Chinese and English inside and outside the classroom. Some of them demonstrate the ability to clearly and fluently express their views in classroom interactions, debates and lunchtime forums. Students are mostly attentive and interested in learning. They are achievement-motivated and conscientious about their studies. Students respect their teachers. As seen in the school break ceremony held in the morning assembly, they showed much appreciation and gratitude to the teachers. Students are willing to participate in community service, such as visiting disadvantaged members of society. They show a good serving spirit and commit themselves to a wide range of community services that serve the interests of the elderly, children with special needs and low income families. Senior form students are willing to take good care of their junior form counterparts. Student leaders, such as IT Prefect, Student Librarians, Guidance Ambassadors and English Language Ambassadors, are conscientious and committed to taking up the duties assigned by teachers, and they also render quality assistance to teachers in conducting school activities to enrich their schoolmates' experiences. To better prepare students for the challenges in the rapidly changing world, students' leadership skills could be further developed. More opportunities could be provided for students to engage in team work and assume a more leading role in planning, organising work and making decisions.
- The percentages of students with 14 or more points in the best six subjects in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examinations were lower than the territory averages of day-school students in 2006 and 2007, and higher in 2008, the year when the school's first batch of S1 students sat for the examination. In comparison with schools with similar student intake, the school performed satisfactorily in the past three years and the performance met the expected level. In the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examinations, the percentages of students in the school meeting the minimum entrance requirements for local degree courses were below the territory averages of day-school students in 2006, and above the respective figures in 2007 and 2008. The improvement of the performance of the school in the public examinations, overall, is notable.
- Students participate in a variety of inter-school competitions and have achieved good results in sports contests and the Hong Kong School Speech Festival, particularly in the English solo-verse speaking and mixed-voice choral speaking contests. Also, the Marching Band and the School Choir, champions of the Music Festival, have been invited to give public performances on special occasions. To further support students' all-round development, the school may consider encouraging senior form students to participate more actively and play a more leading role in ECA and other school activities.

6. Concluding Remarks

Po Leung Kuk Ngan Po Ling College, under the leadership of the Principal and a team of dedicated young teachers, is committed to providing quality education and catering for students' all-round development. Together, they aim at creating a happy, harmonious and positive learning environment laying a sound foundation for actualising the school mission. In spite of the many challenges confronting a new DSS school in the midst of the education reform, the school is prompt to introduce changes when they are seen to be in the interest of the students. The management is steadfast in its belief in giving prominence to achieving academic excellence and committed to building an English language-rich and multi-cultural environment where students of different ethnicities learn in harmony and with mutual respect for each other. Capitalising on the flexibility enjoyed by her DSS status and together with the support from the SSB, the school provides good guidance and counselling services for students to help them cope with the pressures of study and personal growth. In addition to the mainstream school curriculum, a comprehensive Life Education curriculum is introduced from S1 to S5 in an effort to develop in students a positive attitude towards life. Good effort is made to broaden students' learning experiences through diversified co-curricular activities. The school values parents' views and home-school cooperation is good. Teachers and students are cooperative and friendly; together they establish a good rapport and contribute to the development of a secure and harmonious learning environment.

On the whole, the school is delivering a quality education and providing learning experiences leading to a steady improvement of student performance. The school is achieving the goals as stipulated in her initial application to secure the DSS status. In order to build further on these strengths, the school should address the following issues:

6.1 Sustaining school development through distributed and collaborative leadership

- Strong leadership is needed in the early phase of the school development. It has proved to be effective as evidenced by the progress made in the development of self-evaluation mechanisms and the school-based curriculum. Now that a good foundation has been laid, there is a need to develop a team of middle managers who are well equipped to initiate, lead and manage independently and collaboratively school-based curriculum development that serve to meet students' diverse learning and support needs. With the implementation of the NSS curriculum, cross-curriculum collaboration in promotion of independent enquiry study could be a good avenue for nurturing curriculum leaders and promoting professional exchange to build capacity.
- One key impediment to school development is the staff turnover issue. It affects continuity in curriculum planning, implementation and management. It also undermines leadership growth. For sustainable school and leadership development, there is a need to explore and adopt strategies for building a stable professional team.

6.2 Enhancing school self-evaluation to improve learning and teaching

- While proper self-evaluation mechanisms are in place, review of learning and teaching effectiveness at school and subject department levels lacks depth. There is

a need to improve target setting to guide implementation and evaluation. More consideration should be given to the deliberation and delineation of expected learning outcomes, such as the specific skills to be developed through curriculum delivery, and to the balanced use of qualitative and quantitative criteria for evaluation. In the process of review, attention needs to be drawn to not only the progress made against the targets and success criteria set, but also difficulties encountered and good practices identified in the course of implementation. Suggestions regarding curriculum and pedagogical changes should be given, where appropriate, to enhance learning and teaching effectiveness.

- Current practice of planning and evaluation performed by committees is mainly on a programme-by-programme basis. In order that information so collected from individual reviews could be put to a better use, namely to shed light on achievement of targets stipulated by the school's major concerns, the school is required to put in place a coordinating mechanism to turn independent review results into an integral whole so that it could be used to inform the management if the intended targets have been accomplished.