Inspection Report

On Focus Inspection

The Education University of Hong Kong Jockey Club Primary School

School Address : **10 Lo Ping Road, The Education University of Hong Kong, Tai Po, New Territories**

Inspection Period : **14, 15, 19 and 22 October 2020**

Quality Assurance and School-based Support Division
Education Bureau

November 2020

Notes on the Focus Inspection Report

1. This report covers the current development of English Language Education Key Learning Area (KLA) in the school and the key Focus Inspection (FI) findings.   Suggestions for improvement are also given for reference of the school.

2. The report is intended for the key stakeholders of the school, including members of the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC) and teachers.

3. The IMC should lead the school to follow up the suggestions made in the report, in order to facilitate the improvement of the ELE KLA and enhance its continuous development.

Contents

1. Inspection Methodology

1.1 The focus inspection was conducted in October 2020 to evaluate the development of the English Language Education KLA of the school.

1.2 The inspectors employed the following methods to understand the situation of the school:
- Scrutiny of documents and information provided by the school;
- Observation of 7 lessons taught by 9 English teachers;
- Observation of school activities, including English recess activities as well as online activities including Battle of the Books and Speakers' Corner;
- Meetings and interviews with the School Head, panel chairpersons, teachers and students; and
- Scrutiny of samples of students' work and assessment papers.

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

2.1 Student Performance

- The overall performance of students in English Language is good. They are interested in learning English and some show good mastery of the four language skills. In general, students are able to understand instructions given in English and some can often respond spontaneously and appropriately. The more able ones converse with teachers in English confidently, with fluency and natural intonation. Students can comprehend different types of texts, displaying their mastery of basic reading skills, such as locating specific information and identifying main ideas. They can organise ideas properly with the suggested writing framework and write with the language support provided. The more able students can use a range of vocabulary, expressions and make good attempts to write in complex sentences. They can also add their own ideas with elaborated supporting details and some demonstrate originality and imaginative ideas in creative writing.

- Students are eager to take part in English-related activities in school, such as the recess activities on English Day. Some upper primary students have actively participated in the online English co-curricular activities such as the Speakers' Corner and Battle of the Books. A number of students have participated actively in different activities and competitions organised outside the school, such as the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival, inter-school writing and debating competitions, winning some group and individual awards.

2.2   Quality of Learning and Teaching

- The development focuses of the English panel adhere closely to the school major concerns (MC).   Success criteria which focus on the impact of effectiveness of learning and teaching should be set to facilitate the planning-implementation-evaluation work of the panel.

  - To address the school's MC of harnessing the potential of new technology to expand innovative educational practices and enhance students' learning experience, e-learning has been suitably employed as a strategy to enhance teaching effectiveness and students' learning.   Alongside the "Bring Your Own Device" policy (BYOD) implemented in some upper primary classes, various online learning platforms are duly adopted at different year levels. Concerted efforts have been made by the English panel to make use of a Learning Management System (LMS) to promote learning beyond the classroom and facilitate assessment for learning respectively.   For instance, teachers suitably leverage the LMS to upload learning materials, including video clips and reading materials, for students' preparation before lessons; and to assign extended learning tasks which facilitate both teacher-student and student-student interactions after lessons.   During class suspension, teachers made strenuous efforts to produce different videos and upload them on the channel of English Campus TV such as those of storytelling and "3 Words a Day", covering a wide range of topics from language features to themes of students' interests, to maximise students' learning at home.   It is praiseworthy that different interesting elements, for example, animations, video clips and jokes, are added to arouse students' interest in learning unfamiliar vocabulary items.   Different sample sentences are also aptly used to illustrate how to use the vocabulary in context.

  - The implementation of the subject plans is properly monitored by the panel chairpersons through panel meetings, collaborative lesson planning (CLP) and lesson observations.   While clear implementation strategies such as using various e-learning platforms for different purposes as well as developing an e-resource bank for learning and teaching are set to address the objectives in the annual plan, some success criteria of the panel work are rather broad or focus mainly on the number of tasks to be completed, and is not conducive to effective evaluation of the panel's   work. Expected outcomes concerning the effectiveness of the strategies or pedagogies adopted and the impact on student learning should be specifically spelt out while setting the success criteria.   By doing so, the reasons for success and difficulties encountered in implementating the strategies could be deliberated more accurately to consolidate the experience which could then facilitate a holistic evaluation of the panel's work to improve future planning.

- The school-based English language curriculum is well aligned with the central curriculum framework. Great importance has been attached to strengthening students' literacy skills. A reading culture is cultivated among students.

  - The school-based English Language Curriculum is well aligned with the central curriculum framework, covering the learning targets of the Knowledge, Interpersonal and Experience strands. It appropriately comprises the four key elements, namely the General English (GE) Programme, Reading Workshops, Intervention Programme and Enrichment Programme.

  - In addition to the implementation of the Primary Literacy Programme – Reading/Writing (PLP-R/W) at Key Stage (KS)1, the panel has been restructuring the literacy programme at KS2 by utilising the Grant Scheme on Promoting Effective English Language Learning in Primary Schools (PEEGS) since the 2019/20 school year with the dual aims of enhancing students' language proficiency and building a smooth interface between KS1 and KS2. A range of stimulating reading and writing activities with the use of both fiction and non-fiction books is suitably devised. Alignment on the themes covered in the GE Programme of the same year level is appropriately done when designing the learning tasks and materials. Different reading skills, such as making predictions and making connections with personal experience, are taught explicitly with the school-based activity booklets and vocabulary booklets. These booklets are graded according to students' English abilities, with the elements of vocabulary building, phonics and high frequency words aptly incorporated to support students to read and cater for learner diversity. Different e-learning platforms and apps are also rightly adopted to help students learn vocabulary in a fun way and allow teachers to assess students' mastery of the target reading skills at different reading stages. To echo the school's MC of the promotion of values education, relevant elements are purposefully incorporated into the design of the materials to cultivate students' positive values and attitudes such as persistence and gratitude.

  - Home reading programme is well in place with the use of the award scheme, Reading Passport, to nurture students' reading interests and sustain their reading motivation. Levelling of students' reading abilities are conducted regularly to take care of students' individual differences and allow teachers to have a good grasp of their abilities so as to provide them with the readers geared at their levels.

  - Drawing in the support of the school librarian, meaningful reading activities and materials are developed to facilitate students' purposeful reading. For example, students dress up as their favourite book characters and write about the characters on Book Character Day. They conduct book sharing regularly during library lessons or videotape their sharing for viewing on

the LMS.   They also create their own audio picture books with the use of e-learning platforms to share with teachers and classmates.   Other than regular book promotion and school-based reading award scheme, to motivate students to read on different themes, sharings with writers are organised.   For example, on the theme of environmental protection, a well-known foreign researcher and writer was invited to school to share her books and promote her philosophy of protecting the natural world to students.   It was interactive as opportunities were also provided for students to introduce the school's conservation programmes and exchange ideas of environmental protection with her.

- An online English reading platform is suitably utilised to expose students to a variety of e-books according to their reading levels.   Parent volunteers are also engaged in conducting storytelling activities, which helps foster the enjoyment of reading.   In all, there is a good reading culture in the school and as observed, students show great interest and are concentrated during reading.

- Commendable efforts have been made to create an English-rich learning environment, with an array of English activities held to widen students' exposure to using English.

  - A good variety of activities is organised to widen students' exposure to English language beyond the classroom, including recess games, Speakers' Corners and English multiple intelligence courses under the close collaboration of local English teachers (LET) and native-speaking English teachers (NET).   Moreover, by utilising resources and network established with different external organisations, plenty of opportunities are created to maximise students' experiential learning.   Examples include the enlistment of the regular support of some exchange students of a local university, who are native English speakers, to help organise English activities such as language games and storytelling; language programmes such as Radio Play and Language Lab organised or supported by Standing Committee on Language Education and Research (SCOLAR). Furthermore, some upper primary students are invited to join an online global learning conference to share different Chinese cultures with foreign educators and students.   These experiences greatly boost students' confidence and interest in using English to communicate with others.

  - Students' work and printed materials related to students' learning in English are posted up inside and outside the classroom to arouse their learning interest.   To address the school's MC of promoting positive values, language activities held on English Day are purposefully designed to instil different positive values and attitudes like forgiveness into students; relevant posters of idioms, mottos and quotes are put up around the campus. To maximise the use of the print-rich environment, teachers could further

- make good use of the literacy materials displayed by linking them with classroom learning.

- Appropriate measures are adopted to cater for learner diversity at different levels. More professional exchanges should be conducted for teachers to have a general consensus on how students' higher-order thinking (HOT) skills could be assessed.

  - Different measures and strategies at school, curriculum and classroom levels are thoughtfully arranged to cater for learner diversity. For example, to enhance the interface between kindergarten and KS1, a P.1 diagnostic test is suitably designed to understand the English abilities of the pre-P.1 students. Teachers conduct data analysis right afterwards to identify students who need more support before studying in P.1. A structured English summer bridging course, covering the revision of alphabet, teaching of basic vocabulary items and classroom routines, is also provided for those in need, effectively helping them prepare for the study in P.1. At some year levels, small class teaching and after-school online tutorial lessons for the less able students are aptly arranged. Concerted efforts are also made by teachers to provide graded materials to suit students of different abilities in class. In the assessment papers, questions are set at three levels of difficulties to help differentiate students' abilities and cater for learner diversity. Good attempt is made to include some HOT questions in the papers. However, from the assessment papers scrutinised, teachers show a varied understanding on HOT questions, more professional exchanges should be conducted in panel meetings for teachers to discuss and share how students' HOT skills could be assessed.

  - Furthermore, different enrichment programmes, with the aim of enhancing students' different language skills, are properly arranged after school for students with higher language proficiency. These students are also nominated to take part in different kinds of English-related activities and competitions, such as debating and storytelling, to stretch their potential.

- Lessons are well planned with a variety of activities, sustaining students' motivation and participation. With the classroom settings and routines being affected by the epidemic, the panel would need to explore ways to optimise the roles of co-teaching teachers and teaching assistants in catering for learner diversity.

  - Students are well engaged in lessons. Most follow teachers' instructions closely and complete the tasks satisfactorily. They answer teachers' questions readily and some are eager to share their ideas with the class on topics they are familiar with, showing confidence in using English. The lessons are well prepared with clear lesson objectives. Appropriate scaffolding is often provided to help students master the learning content. To maintain a high level of student participation, fun and competitive

elements are rightly incorporated into some of the learning activities with the use of language games and e-assessments.   Teachers also make good use of different resources such as photos and videos to facilitate students' understanding of the target vocabulary or to relate the learning content to their personal experience.   However, teachers could make better use of the whiteboard to help students organise their ideas or enlarge the views on projector screens so that students at the back of the classroom could see clearly.

- In lessons with pre-lesson preparation tasks assigned, students' work and preparation are well made use of to facilitate their learning in class.   For example, students are exposed to the target vocabulary items on the e-learning platforms before the lesson.   They are then given ample opportunities to apply the vocabulary as well as the target language items to set questions and conduct an interview in the lesson.   Both teachers and students are familiar with the use of e-devices.   Apps are effectively used to check students' learning progress.   There is also appropriate follow-up such as providing instant and concrete feedback to students in class after e-assessment.

- Questioning is frequently employed to check students' understanding of the learning content.   Effective probing, helping students identify their own mistakes and make appropriate self-corrections, is also observed in some lessons.   In individual lessons, thought-provoking questions are asked to stimulate students' thinking and elicit their ideas.   However, insufficient wait time for students to respond is sometimes noted.   Hints or answers are often given out by teachers too early in such cases.   Teachers give timely and positive feedback with the focus on the accuracy of students' answers. They demonstrate to students a better way of expression by rephrasing their answers.   Yet, limited strategies are used to help students decode unfamiliar words.   Teachers should take the opportunities to reinforce the enabling skills students have learnt in Reading Workshops, for example, the breaking up of words into syllables and blending, to consolidate their learning of the letter-sound relationship.

- Tiered worksheets are adopted in most lessons, giving students different levels of support.   Visual support is often given to the less able students to help them understand the meaning of vocabulary while the task requirement for the more able students is higher in terms of quantity.   Sometimes, much language support is given to the less able ones, while opportunities for them to apply the target language themselves are limited.   In more effective lessons, appropriate adjustment is made to the teaching pace and plan in accordance with the performance of students.   Apart from the use of tiered assignments, individual support is often provided and good efforts are made in the design of learning activities and use of strategies to engage all students in the classroom.   In view of the good ability of students, more

differentiated or complex tasks could be arranged for stretching their potential.   Notwithstanding the classroom settings or routines being affected by the epidemic, more thoughts could be given to the role of co-teaching teachers and teaching assistants, to better cater for the needs of the less able students and students with SEN.

- A good variety of assignments is in place to consolidate students' learning.   e-Learning platforms are suitably used for different pedagogical purposes. Teachers could make judicious use of marking codes to strengthen students' abilities to do self-correction in writing.

  - A good variety of assignments in pen-and-paper and electronic modes is duly adopted to consolidate students' language skills and knowledge. Different e-learning platforms are well utilised to enhance students' learning for different purposes.   For instance, some are commonly used to consolidate students' learning of the use of target grammar and vocabulary items while some are used by students to share their ideas and pre-lesson preparation work.   To enhance learner automony, students are encouraged to prepare online vocabulary flash cards for their classmates on the e-learning platforms, reinforcing their learning of vocabulary when doing the preparation and promoting peer learning.   Good efforts are made in designing a school-based "Learning Journal" booklet for each unit, consisting of different sections such as the pre-study tasks, "my dictionary" and "my notes" to foster students' self-learning habits.   Multimodal texts are suitably incorporated into the pre-study tasks to prepare students for the learning of the unit.   Speaking tasks are also duly designed for students to practise reading aloud the target vocabulary or the comprehension texts. Besides, parent evaluation form is aptly adopted, encouraging parents to support their children's learning.   A self-evaluation checklist with guiding questions is included for each unit, helping students reflect on their own learning progress of the target language.   The use of metalanguage is commonly found in the evaluation rubrics.   The panel should ensure the language used in the self-evaluation checklist is manageable for students, especially at lower primary levels.   Some examples could be added to guide them to conduct more effective self-evaluation.

  - Concerning reading and writing assignments, an adequate variety of text types is included and the designs suitably facilitate students' progressive development of the language skills.   Different types of writing tasks are designed for developing students' various writing skills as well as generic skills.   For example, fun and imaginative topics are included in creative writing, enhancing students' creativity as well as their enjoyment in writing. Yet, excessive support and guidance are often given to students in daily writing practices.   These should be gradually withdrawn towards the end of the year and across year levels so that students' creativity and development of ideas could be well enhanced.

- The marking of assignments is done conscientiously. Most teachers correct students' mistakes in writing by providing them with the correct answers directly. Good attempt is made by individual teachers to add some marking codes beside the corrections given to students. Teachers give detailed and encouraging feedback to students, and are usually able to highlight their strengths and areas for improvement in respect to the use of the target language and structures as well as the elaboration of ideas. Concrete suggestions are also provided to help students improve. Self- and peer evaluation are also adopted, especially in process writing. Together with the use of proofreading exercises at different year levels, self- and peer editing help students build up the habit of self-checking and avoid careless mistakes. Currently, the panel is unifying the use of marking codes. Teachers could make judicious use of the codes to help students self-correct or conduct peer editing.

- An appropriate monitoring mechanism to ensure the quality of assessment paper is in place. Assessment data could be analysed in a more focused manner to identify students' learning difficulties so that more specific measures could be drawn up to inform learning and teaching.

  - The panel has formulated its guidelines on assessment in accordance with the school's assessment policy, which are closely observed by teachers. The tasks in the assessment papers are mostly contextualised for students to apply the language knowledge and skills learnt meaningfully.

  - Post-assessment evaluation is suitably conducted in both level and panel meetings. In general, teachers are able to identify students' strengths and weaknesses while some are able to specify the language knowledge and skills which students have not mastered with the reasons highlighted. However, analysis of students' strengths and learning difficulties concerning the mastery of specific language skills in particular against the specific learning and assessment objectives is not commonly seen. As a result, the follow-up measures suggested, such as assigning students extra practices or reminding them to read the questions carefully, are not specific enough to address students' learning difficulties. To make diagnostic use of the assessment data for informing learning and teaching, the question intents and the levels of difficulties of the assessment items set should be spelt out clearly when setting the paper. Besides, the guiding questions in the writing assessment could be reduced so that the genuine writing abilities of students could be reflected.

- The panel actively seeks support from the Education Bureau (EDB) or tertiary institutes to support its professional development.   Professional dialogue often takes place in CLP to discuss expected students' learning difficulties, pedagogical design and the use of e-learning to achieve desired learning outcomes.
    - The English panel is led by the chairperson with good support from the deputy chairpersons and level co-ordinators.   A monitoring mechanism of lesson observation and assignment inspections has been properly established.   Clear guidelines regarding roles and duties of panel members, administrative arrangements as well as the design of assessment papers are laid on English Teacher's Handbook for panel members' reference.   In all, the panel's work is well managed.

    - Strategic planning has been made on the allocation of human resources in the panel to facilitate its development.   To facilitate succession planning and strengthen the management of the panel, two more deputy panel chairpersons are recently appointed.   The expertise of NET is well utilised for developing school-based literacy programmes as well as organising English-related activities.   They also have strong collaboration with the LET on refining the GE Programme at KS2 as well as facilitating the interface between KS1 and KS2.   A collaborative culture is present in the panel.   In the regular CLP meetings, apart from discussing the teaching progress and logistic matters, teachers devote their time to the co-planning of lessons, with the focuses on catering for learner diversity and the incorporation of e-learning elements, alongside the identification of students' possible learning difficulties.   Lesson observations by peers, middle managers and the School Head on the general effectiveness of English lessons are properly arranged to promote teachers' self-reflection and improvement.

    - To address the school's MC of enhancing teachers' professionalism and competencies to establish a community of practice, teachers are rightly encouraged to attend more external professional development programmes for continuous capacity building and keeping themselves abreast of the latest educational trends.   The panel also actively seeks support from the EDB and tertiary institutes to facilitate the continuous development of the school-based curriculum, through having professional exchanges on the design of different learning and teaching materials as well as lesson planning.   There is also a culture of professional sharing as teachers often share what they have learnt in the seminars or workshops during the level meetings and panel meetings.

3. Suggestions for Improvement

- To facilitate more effective evaluation to inform furture planning, the English panel should set the success critera in close relation to the effectiveness on students' learning. By doing so, the reasons for success and difficulties encountered in implementating the strategies could be further explored to consolidate the experience and improve future planning accordingly. Furthermore, a more diagnostic analysis of the assessment data should be done, for formulating specifc follow-up work to address students' learning needs.

- In lessons, whilst teachers' good efforts in designing learning activities engaging all students' participation are acknowledged, the roles of co-teaching teachers and teaching assistants could be further explored to cater for learner diversity. Whenever appropriate, teachers should also take the opportunities to reinforce and revisit the enabling skills students have acquired.