

# **External School Review Report**

## **Po Leung Kuk Hong Kong Taoist Association Yuen Yuen Primary School**

**School Address: 26 Tsing Hoi Circuit, Castle Peak Road, Tuen Mun, NT**

**Review Period : 15, 17, 18, 22 and 25 May 2023**

**Quality Assurance Division  
Education Bureau**

**January 2024**

## **Notes on the External School Review Report**

1. This report covers the current development of the school and the key External School Review (ESR) findings. Suggestions for improvement are also given for the school's reference and follow-up.
2. The report is intended for the key stakeholders of the school, including members of the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC), teachers, specialist staff, parents and students.
3. The school should release the content of the report to the key stakeholders by making the ESR report available in the school premises for their easy access. To further enhance transparency, the school is encouraged to upload the report to its homepage for access by the public.
4. The IMC should lead the school to follow up on the suggestions made in the report, in order to facilitate its self-improvement and enhance its continuous development.

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## 1. External School Review Methodology

- 1.1 The ESR team conducted the review in May 2023 to validate the school's self-evaluation (SSE) and its impact on the school's development. Suggestions are made to facilitate the school's continuous improvement and development.
- 1.2 The ESR team employed the following methods to understand the situation of the school:
- Scrutiny of documents and data provided by the school before and during the ESR;
  - Observation of 37 lessons taught by 49 teachers;
  - Observation of various school activities, such as morning assemblies and life-wide learning activities; and
  - Meetings and interviews with the key stakeholders of the school including the school management<sup>1</sup>, teachers, specialist staff, parents and students.

## 2. Current Development of the School

- 2.1 The school was established in 1981 by The Hong Kong Taoist Association. Since 2005, the school has been operated by Po Leung Kuk under the Direct Subsidy Scheme. In accordance with its vision, the school aims at fostering students to achieve academic excellence, inspiring their potential and developing their positive values and attitudes, thus achieving the goal of whole-person development.
- 2.2 The class structure approved by the Education Bureau and the number of students<sup>2</sup> in the current school year are as follows:

Level	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	Total
Number of Classes	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
Number of Students	131	131	129	128	107	115	741

- 2.3 The school has undergone considerable personnel changes since the last ESR. The School Head (SH) has taken up office since the 2019/20 school year. The number of Deputy Heads (DH) has increased to three, with two of them assuming their roles since the 2022/23 school year. The number of middle managers has been expanded, with several experienced teachers having been promoted in recent years. Nearly half of the teachers have less than four years of teaching experience in the school. In recent years, there is an increasing

<sup>1</sup> The school management generally refers to the IMC, school heads and deputy heads

<sup>2</sup> Based on administrative records kept in the Bureau's information system during the ESR

intake of transfer students, and there are around 5% of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students.

- 2.4 In the ESR conducted in 2018, the school was recommended to: (1) set clear and specific targets in stages at school level for effective development of the school's priority areas, and lead the subject panels and committees to set specific developmental foci to guide their implementation of the school's priority areas; (2) strengthen the selection mechanism to identify more gifted students to receive suitable training so as to maximise their potentials, and better develop students' higher-order thinking skills and creativity by posing a wider range of questions and providing more specific feedback in lessons.
- 2.5 The major concerns of the last school development (SD) cycle (the 2018/19 to 2020/21 school years) are to (1) enhance cross curricular teaching and learning; (2) incorporate moral education into all subjects; and (3) provide every student with opportunities to develop his/her potential.
- 2.6 The major concerns of the current SD cycle (the 2021/22 to 2023/24 school years) are (1) catering for individual learner differences; and (2) professional development of teachers.

### 3. External School Review Findings

#### 3.1 The school upholds its vision in inspiring students' potential in a positive school climate.

3.1.1 In line with its vision, the school has been providing a wide range of learning experiences and opportunities to inspire students' potential. Students are well-behaved and have performed well in a variety of academic and non-academic areas. Parents trust the school and appreciate the supportive atmosphere and plentiful opportunities for students to excel. Moreover, the school has cultivated an inclusive environment with a positive school climate. A number of support services is rendered to assist students, including NCS students and transfer students, to adapt to the school culture, thus fostering their sense of belonging. A positive relationship among students and teachers has been successfully maintained over the years.

3.1.2 With due consideration of the current curriculum development, for example, Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) education and e-learning, and to provide students with an all-round education, the school has appropriately provided a balanced and diversified school curriculum to develop students' essential knowledge, skills and attitudes. The school actively taps external resources, including the support services provided by the Education Bureau (EDB), network schools and tertiary institutions to support curriculum development and various school programmes. Also, the school develops an active and extensive network of

Mainland sister schools. Although the face-to-face exchange has been suspended under the epidemic, the school has strived to maintain multi-faceted exchange activities with its sister schools by, for example, having students to write to their counterparts in the sister schools to share their hobbies and introduce the life in Hong Kong. Through the active participation in these exchange activities with the sister schools, students have deepened their understanding of and affection for the nation.

3.1.3 In recent years, there is a high turnover of teachers, posing challenges to the school's efforts in enhancing the work concerning student learning and development. Also, while the school has taken a number of measures in catering for learner diversity, including pull-out classes and enrichment courses which are suitably arranged with high teacher-student ratio for better attention and individual support to students, the effectiveness of the strategies to cater for learner diversity in the classroom varies.

**3.2 A clearer direction for school development is set. Evaluation should be strengthened to inform strategic planning for continuous improvement and development.**

3.2.1 In response to the recommendations in the previous ESR, the school has seen an improvement in setting a clearer direction for development in the current school development cycle, with more focused major concerns formulated with reference to the findings from Assessment Programme for Affective and Social Outcomes and school-based evaluation data, such as data from teacher surveys. Upon reviewing the major concerns of the last school development cycle, the school has extended the focus of developing potential of students through life-wide learning activities into catering for learner diversity, while the strategies of cross-curricular teaching and learning have been institutionalised. The process of formulating major concerns is transparent and decision-making is open with teachers' views systemically collected for the administration team's analysis and further discussion at staff meetings. The strategies in response to the major concerns are appropriate in general; however, the expected outcomes in students' performance are rather vague, hindering the conduct of evaluation. While most subject panels and committees can formulate their corresponding work plans according to the major concerns, the strategies outlined for the major concerns of some committees under the domain of student support are mostly routine work. The school should continue to lead committees to develop more focused strategies for the major concerns.

3.2.2 At both the school and departmental levels, evaluation is rather general and on a programme basis, mainly focusing on reporting the progress of work and perception of stakeholders, without a comprehensive review of work effectiveness. To better understand the impact of the strategies on students' learning, there needs more thorough and holistic evaluation on the

effectiveness of the relevant strategies to inform strategic planning for the school's continuous improvement and development.

**3.3 Due importance is attached to teachers' professional development to enhance their professional capacity.**

3.3.1 To facilitate succession and sustain school development, staff with good performance are identified to take up the leadership roles with clearer and more transparent delineation of roles and duties for the school management and middle managers. Most of the middle managers have newly assumed their roles, their leadership skills in steering the development of responsible areas vary. Continuous support could be rendered to strengthen the leadership of the middle managers. Besides, communication between the school management and staff is open and adequate, and a climate of collegiality is evident. The SH, DHs and core middle managers meet regularly for effective communication about school work in different aspects. There is timely dissemination of information about school work to teachers for follow-up. School leadership, on the whole, is receptive to teachers' views.

3.3.2 In view of a high turnover of teachers in recent year, due emphasis has been laid on teachers' professional development. Being one of the major concerns of the current school development cycle, the school has aptly arranged an induction training programme to familiarise the new teachers with school policies and prevailing teaching strategies in the school, as well as assigned each of them a mentor to acclimatise them to the school environment. Besides, the school has not only arranged different professional development activities on various themes such as team building, e-learning, as well as promoting the mental and physical wellness of teachers, but also provided a benchmark with reference to the Professional Ladder for Teachers to encourage teachers to participate in professional development activities. A steady increase in the number of training hours among teachers is noted in general.

**3.4 A cross-curricular collaborative culture among subject panels is developed, promoting students' integration of knowledge and skills and enriching their learning experiences. Good progress is shown in the development of STEAM education and e-learning.**

3.4.1 With the effort in enhancing cross-curricular teaching and learning as a major concern in the last school development cycle, theme-based learning through cross-curricular collaboration is well planned and implemented at all levels. Various themes, from personal to national contexts, are suitably set in designing learning tasks that connect the learning contents of relevant subjects, which could facilitate students' development of generic skills and integration of knowledge and skills. For example, in the learning theme "China", students integrate the skills in design and 3D printing with the knowledge in Chinese history in relevant disciplines to create board games. A wide variety of life-wide learning activities covering both academic and non-academic

domains, for example, variety show, programming competitions and subject-specific learning activities, have been duly organised to enrich students' learning experiences, fostering their whole-person development. A collaborative culture among teachers across subject panels has been developed, as exemplified by the co-planning of cross-curricular thematic learning tasks and suitable modification of learning themes in relation to students' learning needs and curriculum development.

3.4.2 The school properly promotes STEAM education through relevant learning activities for all students and those having special interest in STEAM-related activities respectively. A STEAM panel comprising teaching staff of relevant subjects has been appropriately set up to oversee the development of STEAM education collaboratively. Actively tapping external support from network schools and the subject knowledge of the STEAM panel members, the school has developed a STEAM programme for all students in recent years to cultivate their creativity, problem solving and collaboration skills, and facilitate their integrative use of cross-disciplinary knowledge and skills in meaningful contexts. Students are well-engaged in an array of "hands-on and minds-on" individual and group projects, such as assembling and decorating handmade musical instruments, and designing robots with programming for the running race and tug of war. Not only do students have to test and improve their design in the learning process, they also have to make attempts to seek solutions on their own prior to consulting teachers, thereby nurturing their problem solving skills. From the samples of students' work scrutinised, students can integrate and apply relevant knowledge and skills, particularly their creativity and collaboration skills, in conducting group projects. In addition to STEAM Day and relevant outings for students at different year levels, various enhancement teams covering diversified themes, ranging from drone technology to virtual reality, are formed to stretch the potential of interested students. They are also encouraged to participate in local and international STEAM-related competitions, and some awards have been obtained.

3.4.3 e-Learning has been advocated in the school to prepare lower primary students for using e-learning tools in learning, and to help upper primary students develop self-learning habits. The infrastructure, professional development for teachers and seminars for parents to support e-learning are well in place. "Bring Your Own Device" for upper primary students is well implemented. Mobile devices are commonly used by students both inside and outside the classroom to facilitate learning. As observed in the lessons, students make good use of their mobile devices to share ideas, prepare presentation slides and search for information, displaying good Information Technology (IT) skills. e-Learning tools are effectively used to demonstrate students' learning or to assess students' mastery of knowledge. Due attention is also given to enhancing students' information literacy in the curriculum. Joint efforts are made by various subjects to incorporate the relevant learning



elements in their curricula to help students become effective and ethical users of information and IT. In sum, e-learning has become an integral part of learning and teaching in the school, facilitating interactive learning and assessment for learning in the classroom.

**3.5 The school is successful at developing a strong reading culture. Efforts should be stepped up to create a language-rich environment for learning Chinese.**

3.5.1 Promotion of reading is effective in developing a strong reading culture. In response to the recommendations in the last ESR, the school has taken appropriate measures to widen students' scope of reading through the Reading Passport programme, in which students are encouraged to read both Chinese and English fiction and non-fiction and to accomplish a wide variety of post-reading tasks, such as personal reflection, creative writing and drawing. In addition to the Reading Award Scheme, the library closely collaborates with different subject panels in identifying and sharing with students books relevant to the curriculum content and themes in the Library period. Some avid readers are properly groomed through peer learning activities like Literature Circle and Battle of the Books. As observed, not only are students well engaged in quiet reading during the class period, they also enjoy visiting the library for leisure reading. Furthermore, individual subject panels have taken active steps to promote reading across the curriculum by working collaboratively to identify common topics, such as animals and life cycle, as an entry point for students to do extensive reading for relevant learning activities, thereby deepening their understanding of the topic. The arrangement suitably helps students connect reading experiences across subjects, and such practices could be further promoted.

3.5.2 Taking into consideration the learning needs and ability of NCS students, the Chinese curriculum for NCS students is suitably refined with professional support sought from a tertiary institution. The school has also made proper use of the assessment tools of the EDB to understand students' learning proficiency in Chinese language. Pulled-out classes at each year level is appropriately arranged to provide more attention and support to them in learning Chinese with reference to the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework". Support measures, for example, supplementary learning materials on e-learning platforms, card games during recess and a reading buddy programme are suitably employed to help NCS students gradually enhance their Chinese language knowledge and skills, and understand more about Chinese culture and history.

3.5.3 In addition to the substantial English displays on campus, the school provides students with ample opportunities to use the language in authentic contexts with lessons and school activities mostly conducted in English. The English language environment is also successfully enriched with additional

Native-speaking English Teachers hired to support classroom learning and teaching, and school activities. Students are used to conversing in English within and beyond the classroom with most of them displaying confidence in using the language. Building on the strengths, the school could move forward to cultivating an environment equally conducive to Chinese language learning, in particular for NCS students to better integrate into the society.

**3.6 Ample opportunities are provided to facilitate students' participation in class. Students are confident and well-engaged. The learning and teaching strategies to cater for learner diversity should continue to be enhanced.**

3.6.1 Students are motivated, attentive and well-engaged in class. They respond to the questions raised by teachers actively and are able to express their ideas fluently and confidently. Friendly and approachable, teachers are clear and fluent in their instruction and explanation. With a good teacher and student rapport, a positive and open learning atmosphere prevails in the classroom.

3.6.2 Lessons are in general systematically planned and conducted, with clear learning objectives shared. A variety of learning resources, for example, video clips, reading materials and mobile learning applications, are aptly used to sustain students' interest and enrich their knowledge. Some teachers draw on students' daily-life experiences to facilitate their understanding of abstract concepts. Ample opportunities are provided to facilitate students' participation in class through activities such as group work with students assigned different roles to collaboratively complete the task, hands-on activities to programme a robot. As observed, students participate actively and are able to perform the role assigned by teachers in group activities. They are able to connect and apply relevant subject knowledge in completing the learning tasks. Some students can provide constructive feedback or encouragement to one another. The learning activities facilitate the exchange of ideas and sharing of learning outcomes, thus nurturing students' collaboration and communication skills.

3.6.3 To cater for learner diversity, mixed ability grouping and co-teaching are usually used in the classroom. While the less able students are well supported through interaction and collaboration with more able students in the adoption of mixed ability grouping, the effectiveness of co-teaching varies. In more effective lessons, the two teachers monitor closely students' learning progress and offer timely individual support. They also collaborate well with each other to carry out demonstration and to facilitate feedback in smaller groups. In a few lessons, on the other hand, the role of the additional teacher is confined to providing logistical support and carrying out routine tasks.

3.6.4 Questioning is frequently used to check students' understanding and to elicit more elaborate responses, with some teachers displaying sound

questioning techniques, including prompting and probing, to stimulate students' thinking. Nonetheless, the use of questions requiring students' higher-order thinking skills is rather limited. The feedback of teachers is usually positive and timely, but rather brief to help students improve. More specific feedback could be given to improve students' learning. In some lessons, the more able students complete the learning tasks quickly and remain idle. Given the abilities and readiness of the more able students, the learning tasks should be made more challenging to extend their learning. All in all, the learning and teaching strategies to cater for learner diversity should continue to be enhanced.

**3.7 A happy school life has been promoted through creating an inclusive and caring environment, and providing chances for all students to unleash their potential. Holistic planning for the development of values education should be strengthened.**

3.7.1 Different measures are well in place to help new students smoothly adapt to the school environment, such as arranging enrichment classes for transfer students and organising a bridging course for Primary One students. Besides, lower primary students appreciate the guidance and care from the upper primary students through programmes like the Big Brother and Sister Scheme and Caring Ambassador, and a good rapport of students has been built. Students' sense of belonging towards their class is boosted through different class building activities, such as making each class unique in terms of its name and classroom decoration. Together with the good teacher-student rapport, an inclusive and caring environment is created, helping students lead a happy school life.

3.7.2 To actualise the school's vision and echo the major concern of the last school development cycle that every child has their potential, students have been provided with a variety of experiences and opportunities to develop their potential and showcase their talents through stage performances, competitions and a wide range of life-wide learning activities. As observed, students actively participate in and enjoy the activities. Ample opportunities are purposefully arranged for different students to develop their leadership, such as serving as student leaders and organising game booths in different school functions. With due consideration of students' academic performance, teachers' recommendation and observation of subject teachers, a mechanism is in place to identify the gifted. To develop their potential, enhancement classes are suitably arranged to prepare them for both internal and external gifted programmes and competitions.

3.7.3 The school has continued to enhance the development of values education. Currently, values education is mainly implemented by the Moral and Multiple Intelligence (M&M) curriculum and individual subjects respectively. Students' positive values and attitudes are cultivated in a

progressive manner in the M&M curriculum, with lessons organised according to their different development stages. In addition to seminars, there are various activities such as discussions, competitions and hands-on activities that allow students to deepen their understanding of positive values. In this school year, further efforts have been made to refine the curriculum by focusing on specific themes in each school term. However, in refining the M&M curriculum this school year, holistic planning on how to nurture students' virtues as well as specific learning objectives of values education has yet been in place. Holistic planning of values education should be strengthened for better implementation in all subjects.

3.7.4 National education is duly promoted by subjects and committees respectively. The school aptly organises different activities to promote national education, including sharing sessions about Chinese festivals and seminars about the recent development of the country to help students understand the country, culture and history, and life-wide learning activities like Chinese Dance and Chinese Calligraphy to provide students with the chance to learn and experience Chinese culture in an authentic context. National security education (NSE) is suitably promoted through curriculum mapping with the curriculum framework of NSE to foster its implementation in all subjects and the M&M curriculum. In general, most of the subject panels have developed a common understanding of NSE and adopted appropriate strategies to incorporate relevant NSE elements in the curricula. The school has formed a flag-raising team to assist in the weekly flag-raising ceremony and arranged for students to watch the broadcast of the flag-raising ceremony conducted in a Mainland sister school. As observed, students demonstrate proper etiquette when they participate in the flag-raising ceremony, but students at the upper primary level could be nurtured to sing the national anthem loudly.

**3.8 Students are courteous and well-mannered. They enjoy school life and participate actively in various competitions and activities. Their overall academic performance is very good.**

3.8.1 Students are courteous, lively and self-disciplined. They enjoy their school life and demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the school. They have good interpersonal relationships and there is strong bonding among students. They have a positive attitude towards learning and are willing to take up different roles assigned by the school in service learning activities. Student leaders are dedicated and willing to serve.

3.8.2 The overall academic performance of students is very good. Students participate actively and whole-heartedly in various academic, as well as non-academic activities and competitions within and outside school. They have performed well in a variety of areas such as music, STEAM education and sports. They have acquired many group and individual awards in

competitions, including inter-school choral singing competitions, territory-wide programming competitions and dancing competitions.

## 4. Suggestions for Improvement

- 4.1 The conduct of SSE should continue to be strengthened. The expected outcomes in students' performance should be clearly defined, and a more thorough and comprehensive evaluation on the effectiveness of the strategies should be conducted to informing planning.
- 4.2 Learning and teaching strategies to cater for learner diversity should continue to be enhanced. The effectiveness of co-teaching and the strategies to stretch the potential of students, including the design of learning tasks for extending students' learning, should be further strengthened.

## 5. Appendices

### Appendix I

#### Overall Performance in Classroom Learning and Teaching

No. of Lessons Observed	Overall Performance in Classroom Learning and Teaching			
	Excellent	Good	Acceptable	Unsatisfactory
37	11%	49%	40%	0%

## School Response

The school response on the draft ESR report was received on 3 January 2024. The original text of the school response is incorporated as follows.



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22<sup>nd</sup> September, 2023

### External School Review 2023 School Response

Dear Mr. Wong,

Thank you for the timely and thorough External School Review (ESR) Report, which was a follow up to the report of 2018. We have discussed the report of this year with our teaching staff, as well as the Incorporated Management Committee (IMC), and we agree with most of the report's findings. We appreciate the recognition of our areas of strength and the recommendations for areas in which we could improve.

First of all, we truly appreciate your recognition and compliments regarding the following:

- Support for students' whole-person development.
- Balanced and diversified school curriculum.
- Effort on enhancing teacher's professional development.
- Effective cross-curricular collaboration and the success of STEAM education and e-learning.
- Development of students' language abilities and reading habits.
- The loving and caring campus with well-mannered and lively students.
- The good academic and non-academic performance of students.

#### Feedback on the Suggestions for Improvement in the Report

##### **The Conduct of SSE**

Our school agrees that continuous self-assessment is essential and highly beneficial for both the school and the students. Therefore, our school has been conducting self-review on teaching strategies and student performances from time to time. Especially in recent years, with the impact of the epidemic, there has been a sudden change in the teaching mode. Teachers need to step out of their traditional teaching framework, learn new skills, and continuously improve to cope with the ever-changing teaching and learning needs. Our school has made timely reviews, devoted efforts to developing teachers' professionalism, and at the same time, gained a closer understanding of students' needs, enabling them to learn effectively in different situations.

In order to develop a more effective and systematic SSE, our school principal and three vice-principals will participate in "The Enhanced School Development and Accountability (SDA) Framework Seminars-cum-Workshops (Workshops)" organized by the Education Bureau on January 4, 2024. Later, our school will hold workshops within the school to share with all teachers. We will have a more thorough and comprehensive evaluation on the effectiveness of the strategies being conducted on our school plan. The expected outcomes in students' performance would be clearly defined. We will continuously strengthen the promotion and implementation of SSE in the future to achieve sustainable progress for the school.



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**Learning and Teaching Strategies to Cater for Learner Diversity**

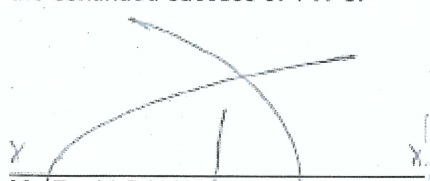
We have always valued the comprehensiveness of student care, and our school has implemented different strategies to cater to learning differences. We have small classes to teach some relatively weak students separately during lessons. We also provide Enhancement and Enrichment classes for students with different abilities in order to offer them the most appropriate learning programs. In addition, we implement Co-teaching in most classes with a dual-teacher approach to ensure personalized care for each student.

Aside from teachers' one-way teaching, we provide opportunities for students to learn from each other, achieving a cooperative learning experience. For example, in group work, we assign students with different abilities to the same team, training students with better abilities in leadership, coordination and organization skills among others. Furthermore, in our General Studies classes, we allow students to present their news sharing assignment in different ways, enabling students with different abilities to choose the most suitable way of expressing themselves, catering to diverse learning needs and achieving mutual learning outcomes.

Of course, we believe that there is always room for improvement. We will reinforce the effectiveness of Co-teaching, including incorporating the role division of Co-teaching into the Scheme of Work and lesson plans, as well as exploring more learning tasks for students with different abilities, enhancing their learning efficiency.

**Closing**

We would like to express our gratitude to the ESR Team for their professional and constructive advice as well as their efforts in supporting our development. We shall endeavor amongst ourselves to implement measures to realize the professional advice and recommendations received in order to keep the school moving forward so as to strive for excellence and develop students' potentials and talents. With the lead of Po Leung Kuk, Hong Kong Taoist Association, the Principal and the school staff, we believe we will ensure the continued success of YYPS.

  
Mr. David C H HO  
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