



External School Review Report

Marymount Secondary School

School Address: 123 Blue Pool Road, Happy Valley, Hong Kong

External Review Period: 11, 12, 15, 18 and 20 March 2013

**Quality Assurance and School-based Support Division
Education Bureau
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Contents

	Page
1 Introduction	1
2 School Performance	3
3 Concluding Remarks	17

1. Introduction

1.1 External Review Methodology

- The previous External School Review was conducted at the school on 3, 8, 9, 10 and 15 March 2006.
- The ESR team conducted the review on 11, 12, 15, 18 and 20 March 2013 to evaluate the school performance in school self-evaluation (SSE) and various domains.
- 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 school visit;
 - Observation of 42 lessons taught by 42 teachers;
 - Observation of various school activities, including 'Home Room Time', 'Reading Time', 'Extra English Class', 'Extra Mathematics Class', 'Other Learning Experiences Programmes', 'Good Samaritan Lunch', preparation for 'Odyssey of the Mind Competition', choir practice, orchestral rehearsal and 'Parents' Night';
 - Meetings and interviews with the Supervisor, School Management Committee representatives, Principal, Assistant Principals, panel chairpersons, heads of functional committees, teachers, school social worker, parents and students; and
 - Shadowing of a sample of two students for a half-day period to observe their school life.
- The review findings presented in this report were derived from the corporate judgment of the ESR team based on the information collected through the above-mentioned methods during the review period.

1.2 Basic Information about the School (Text provided by the school)

- The school was founded in 1927 by the Maryknoll Sisters from the United States. Over the years, the school has been able to maintain its tradition of providing quality education for young ladies under the dedicated guidance of the different sponsoring groups. In the year 1978, the sponsorship was handed over to the Columban Sisters from Ireland. In 1998, the sponsorship of the school was transferred to the Christian Life Community (CLC), an international Catholic lay community associated with the Society of Jesus.

- The class structure and number of students in the 2012/13 school year are as follows:

Level	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total
No. of Classes	4	4	4	4	4	4	24
No. of Students	144	144	144	152	160	160	904

- In carrying out its education ministry, the CLC's vision and mission is based on the spiritual vision of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. 'Experience, Reflection, Action and Evaluation and the Search for Excellence' are the ways of life of the CLC. In the management of the school, the entire school body also adheres closely to these principles and assiduously practices them.
- "Magis, Sustainability and Symphony" are core values upheld by the school. All parties of the school work collaboratively to develop students into life-long learners, help students realise their potential, nurture them into women for others and motivate them to persist in the search for excellence.
- In alignment with the core values, "Promoting high aspirations within a culture congenial to learning and teaching, motivating and supporting students to excel" and "Instilling in students three key values as preparation for life in a fast changing society: Respect for self and others; Perseverance and Commitment" are the two major concerns of the current 3-year School Development Plan commencing from September 2010.
- A reflective culture is cultivated among staff and students which facilitates school development planning. Together, the school management and teaching staff study the signs of the times, collect evaluation data and review school policies, structures, implementation plan, current pedagogical methods and all other elements of the school environment to find those means that will best accomplish the purposes of the school and implement the educational philosophy of the sponsoring body. St. Ignatius insisted on the "magis" – the more, the search for excellence. It is in this spirit that the school conducts self-evaluation and school development planning. Measures taken by the school to follow up the suggestions made in the previous ESR Report of 2006 include embedding the suggested direction related to learning and teaching in the major concerns of the following two 3-year School Development Plans and making capacity building of staff especially the middle managers and developing further a collaborative culture specific concerns of management and organisation.
- All in all, the school has since 2006 engineered a smooth transition to the New Senior Secondary Academic Structure and Curriculum. The school continues to provide a broad and balanced curriculum developing independent and intelligent learners as well as comprehensive student support, nurturing students into all-round, integrated persons of wisdom, care, love and compassion.

2. School Performance

2.1 Continuous Development of the School

- Commended as a very good school in the previous external school review, the school began to head its direction of continuous development as “from good to great”. The school continues to dedicate its vision and mission to fostering the greater development of its students in moral, intellectual, physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual aspects. This is also in line with the aims of education in Hong Kong.
- Strategically, the school first took active steps to follow up on the recommendations made in the previous external school review report. With due emphasis on strengthening the professional capacity of middle managers, the staff appraisal mechanism has been refined to facilitate more in-depth professional dialogue between the school management and panel heads as well as among subject teachers. Experienced professionals and academics were also identified and invited to conduct tailor-made in-house workshops for teachers on themes related to learning and teaching. Teachers also attended various related professional development programmes organised by external professional bodies. These measures were effective as the middle managers and teachers could make full use of what they have learnt in preparing for the implementation of the new senior secondary (NSS) curriculum which was the focus of the major concern in the previous school development planning (SDP) cycle (2007/08 to 2009/10).
- As a timely response to address the education reform on new academic structure and being mindful of the teachers’ concerns, uncertainties and complexities involved in the planning and implementation of the NSS curriculum, the school suitably put forth the notion of “Engineering a smooth and successful transition to new senior secondary aiming at catering for the diverse needs of students, stretching their potential and inspiring them to excel through reflection, creativity and commitment” as the only major concern in the previous SDP cycle. This was another significant step taken to translate the school vision and mission into actions.
- With the committed and concerted effort of the school management, middle managers and teachers, resourceful support from alumnae, systematic and thoughtful planning at school level and classroom practices, the transition was successful and all the set goals stated were achieved to full satisfaction of the stakeholders concerned. The outstanding academic achievements of the students were particularly impressive.
- In the current cycle of SDP (2010/11 to 2012/13), two major concerns are identified for deliberation at subject, committee and classroom levels based on student development needs, analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of the implementation work of the last SDP cycle. These major concerns are: “promoting high aspirations within a culture congenial to learning and teaching, motivating and supporting students to excel” as well as “instilling

in students three key values as preparation for life in a fast-changing society: respect for self and others, perseverance and commitment”.

- Echoing the school core values of “Magis” implying the more, the search for excellence, and “sustainability” implying the more lasting, the first major concern in the current cycle relates naturally to the major concern of the last SDP as it casts a sharper focus on how to facilitate students to excel. The second major concern, aligns well with the school’s vision to inculcate positive values among students for good character formation. These concerns represent further steps taken to realise the school vision and mission and point to the direction “from good to great”.
- Similar to the last cycle of SDP, the process of formulating the School Development Plan in the current cycle is transparent and participatory. All teachers are invited to propose their concerns for the school’s consideration when they complete the self evaluation survey. A ‘Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats’ (SWOT) Analysis is conducted to identify the implementation gaps. There are thorough discussions at subject and management levels to build consensus and set priorities. When devising the related plans, the school management also takes into consideration the imminent learning and development needs of students, teachers’ readiness and their needs for capacity building as well as the school context and culture. Similarly, explicit implementation strategies with both quantitative and qualitative success criteria are also spelled out clearly in the related Annual School Plans at school and subject levels for actions by all teachers.
- With a good understanding of the rationale for, and essence of, school self-evaluation (SSE), the self-evaluation mechanism has long been established at management and subject levels for tracking the progress, reviewing the effectiveness of the strategies and analysing the impact on student learning as a whole to inform further planning. It is an integral part of the school’s infrastructure and day-to-day practices. The planning-implementation-evaluation cycle is well embedded in the routine work of subject panels under the Teaching & Learning Division as well as functional committees and teams under the Pastoral Care Division. Both divisions are headed respectively by each of the Assistant Principals. Systematic periodic reviews by responsible panels, committees and teams are also carried out in monitoring the progress and making any necessary modifications.
- In evaluating the ultimate effectiveness of the implementation strategies, the impact on student learning and their personal development in terms of values and attitude, in this concluding school year of the current SDP cycle, statistical data have been collected in a timely manner. SSE tools such as Key Performance Measures, Stakeholders Survey (SHS), Assessment Programme for Affective and Social Outcomes (APASO) and questionnaires developed by the school itself have been used for the evaluation. These findings, together with teachers’ observations of student behaviour during lessons, actual class performances and assessment results are carefully analysed by the school management.
- Anchoring to the sponsoring body’s educational principles of “Experience, reflection, action, evaluation and the search for excellence”, and believing in continuous self improvement, the school makes very skillful use of the built

in SSE mechanism at subject and management levels as a whole to inform future planning. The formulated school development plans and annual school plans suitably address the major concerns to further enhance the quality of learning and teaching. In advancing further, cross references could be made to the qualitative assessment data across subjects. Discussions could also be held across Key Learning Areas (KLAs) by teachers concerned to identify holistic means of helping students to attain the next higher level of performance in their learning as a whole. The plans also support students' personal development in terms of values education. The intended outcomes of the current SDP cycle are achieved and student learning outcomes are remarkable. The school has successfully instilled the three key values of "respect for self and others, perseverance and commitment" among students through their active participation in various school events, activities and classroom learning. These values are shared among teachers and students.

- The School Management Committee (SMC) steers the vision and mission of the school and fully supports the direction of school development. Its composition, mainly of professionals from different fields, is similar to that of an Incorporated Management Committee. There are representatives of alumnae, teachers, parents and the sponsoring body and an independent manager. They have a good grasp of the school's development priorities and offer constructive advice to the school on human resource and financial matters as and when necessary. The SMC thoughtfully included the head of the partner primary school as a non-voting Member to facilitate collaboration between the primary and secondary schools and for P6 to S1 students to have a smooth interface.
- Working as a professional in the tertiary education sector, the School Supervisor, who is also the Supervisor of the related partner primary school, has a good understanding of the school context and student development needs at different life stages. She gives her dedicated support to the school and students by regularly visiting the school to have meetings with the Principal, teachers and students as well as attending or chairing special school events and functions. The School Supervisor, together with the SMC members, trust the School Principal and the school staff and are highly appreciative of their committed effort and high quality work. They are also very proud of the achievements of the students.
- The Principal is knowledgeable and possesses rich professional experience. She is insightful and pursues the vision to transform the school "from good to great". Being conscientious, open-minded, passionate and devoted, she ably steers the direction of school development and leads the whole school with moral and spiritual principles. Her strong emphasis on values education as being vital for students' personal development in balance with the search for academic achievement also deserves notable commendation.
- The Assistant Principals work collaboratively with the Principal in leading the school to sustain its successful development. They are well-experienced and good at their teaching. They discharge their duties effectively and responsibly in overseeing the work of respective panels and committees. As the heads of the Teaching & Learning Division and the Pastoral Care Division, they care for students and are supportive of the middle managers and teachers in both managerial and professional matters. The heads of

subject panels, functional committees, teams and task / working groups, share the school vision and mission, and also work capably in guiding their members to devise plans and implement various programmes for school development.

- Understanding that there is a continual need to further enhance the professional capacity of teachers, the Staff Development and Appraisal Committee keeps teachers well informed of the latest developments in education and professional development programmes available with outside bodies. Apart from using the staff appraisal mechanism to provide qualitative feedback on the quality of learning and teaching for individual teachers, other modes of in-house teacher professional development are organised to encourage more mutual sharing and professional dialogue among teachers. ‘Critical buddy lesson observation’ and having experienced teachers serving as personal mentors for new teachers are examples of some of these useful means. In addition, the Principal has taken the lead and shared the school’s good practices with other schools while some teachers have also shared their subject expertise within the panel and with other school teachers. A professional learning community has taken shape in the school and is making good progress.
- In supporting teachers’ continuous professional development to become mastery teachers and outstanding curriculum leaders, some long term, semi-structured programmes with research-based elements could be explored. These could be in any form or means with theoretical underpinnings to provoke deeper reflection, facilitate intellectual discourse and co-construction among teachers across KLAs and to generate new working knowledge. As an example, collaborative lesson studies in the form of action research among teachers or with academics in the tertiary education sector could be considered. One of the foci could be on how to integrate subject content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge to bring about teaching excellence and prime quality student learning. Alternatively, there could also be more and regular in-depth discussions across KLAs regarding specific pedagogical practices. The focus could be on enhancing teachers’ role as facilitators in first understanding the conceptual barriers that students face. A cognitive road map could then be outlined for students to overcome the obstacles and deepen their conceptual understanding. Students may then accelerate through self-directed learning.

2.2 Learning and Teaching

- Based on the Hong Kong School Curriculum Framework, the school is good at providing a broad and balanced curriculum to develop the potential of students and facilitate their all-round whole-person development. A wide range of subjects covering all the eight KLAs is offered at both junior and senior secondary levels. There is also a rich and broad variety of life-wide learning activities / programmes organised to extend students’ learning outside the classroom. These may take the form of a special event such as the 85th Anniversary, an annual school event such as the ‘Good Samaritan Lunch’, other learning experiences, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, community service projects / programmes, territory-wide or international competitions and study visits to Mainland and overseas. All

these help students to make meaning of their learning, demonstrate their multiple intelligences and enrich their learning experiences in moral, social, physical, aesthetic and spiritual aspects.

- At present, around 15 subjects are offered at the junior secondary level, some of them on a half-term basis only. There are also two school-based curriculum programmes which have been offered for quite a number of years: 'Junior Secondary Understanding and Managing Project Learning' programme (JUMP) at S1 and the 'Learning through Engineering, Art and Design' programme (LEAD) at S2. The former programme focused on project learning skills and the latter is based on a programme developed by an overseas tertiary institution with a focus mainly on application of a specific piece of computer software. Extra manpower and resources are also allocated to conduct the programmes. In relation to the recent curriculum developments in the Personal, Social and Humanities Education KLA, the Technology Education KLA and the Arts Education KLA as proposed by the Curriculum Development Council, the content, delivery modes and means of these cross-curricular collaboration programmes could be reviewed among various subject panels and teachers concerned through curriculum mapping. Students need a holistic understanding of the knowledge and concepts they acquired in various key learning areas and their inter-relationship in order to accelerate and excel in their studies. In advancing further, a holistic review of the school's junior secondary subject curricula, together with the two school-based programmes mentioned above could, using related curriculum audit tools, be carried out to refine the curriculum design and content for vertical and horizontal coherence. Similarities and differences identified could then be used as entry points for in-depth discussion among teachers of different key learning areas with a view to cross fertilization. The direction could be more on supporting students to conceptualise with deeper understanding and in enriching students' knowledge base across different disciplines.
- In terms of curriculum planning and management at the senior secondary level, strategic plans and systemic measures have been effectively devised, coordinated and adopted at both school and subject levels to attain the set goals of the major concern on "Engineering a smooth and successful transition to New Senior Secondary, aiming at catering for the diverse needs of students, stretching their potential and inspiring them to excel through reflection, creativity and commitment" put forth in the previous school development cycle. In catering for the diverse needs of students, there is provision of a wide range of elective subjects such as Literature in English and Applied Learning programmes under the NSS. Students are given the option to study 2 or 3 elective subjects out of the 13 in 2009/10 and 14 in 2010/11 provided by the school. Other language subjects such as French and GCSE Chinese Language are also offered for selection by students whose mother language is English. 'Extra Mathematics Classes' are provided for S4 students who are in need of assistance. There are also flexible time-tabling arrangements on different schools days for special school events and for different school terms. The design of the 'block time-tabling system' also allows maximum flexibility for the provision of as many different subject combinations as possible. Regular lesson time slots for Other Learning Experiences (OLE) have also been purposefully built into the lesson

timetable to allow more flexibility for organizing events or programmes across different levels within or outside the school premises. Together, the above-mentioned measures fully meet the diverse interests and needs of students. Students can also “stretch their potential” through their academic studies or taking leadership roles in chairing club meetings, organising school functions or participating in various competitions. Reflecting on the experience gained from the completion of the first-cycle of NSS, the school also effected fine-tuning of the subject combinations to cater for the changing needs of students.

- In curriculum development matters, the Academic Committee (AC) and the Curriculum Committee (CC) set up under the Teaching & Learning Division play different roles. The AC is comprised of subject panel heads and focuses more on individual subject / KLA development in alignment with school policies while the CC focuses more on cross curricular initiatives. Task groups and their membership formed under the CC are on an ad hoc or operational needs basis. This provides more flexibility for the school in deploying relevant teachers and devising suitable cross-curricular plans to focus on specific curriculum initiatives / matters. At present, there are the Promotion of Reading Working Group, PSHE Curriculum Task Group, Aesthetic Education Working Group and the Refined English Enhancement Scheme Task Group all formed under the CC. In monitoring the curriculum implementation progress, a programme plan, mid-year and year-end panel review reports have to be submitted to the Principal and Assistant Principal for feedback on their strengths and areas for improvement. The feedback is used by subject panels for review and refinement of their plans. Panel chairpersons monitor the panel work mainly through panel meetings and assignment inspections. It is a well-established practice that subject evaluation is conducted by all subject panels annually to inform curriculum planning. Reference is made to the views collected from students based on which recommendations for follow-up actions are made by different subject panels.
- In classroom settings, the strategies adopted align well with the two school major concerns of the current SDP. Provoking higher order thinking and self-directed learning among students are built into daily classroom learning and teaching activities, and home assignments as some of the means for inspiring and supporting students to aim high and surpass themselves in their academic performances. The three core values: “respect for self and others, perseverance and commitment” are highlighted in related subject contents or incorporated in learning activities. Students are encouraged to reflect on their behavior and attitude and put the three key values into practice. A habit of self-reflection among students, as early as at the junior secondary level is fostered with a focus on goal-setting and on-going review. Students are fully aware of the school values and high expectations from the school as the school management and teachers reiterate the emphases on various school occasions with concrete examples identified from their peers.
- The school’s language policy is aimed at supporting students to become biliterate and trilingual. Putonghua is adopted as the medium of instruction for Chinese Language in one of the classes at each junior secondary level to cater for students who prefer to learn in Putonghua as they are more

proficient in Putonghua. This is appropriate in view of the different cultural and family background of the students and in preparation for their future studies and careers. With a long established practice of using English as the medium of instruction for all subjects except Chinese Language, Chinese History, Putonghua and French, the school learning environment and culture are particularly strong in enabling all students to be highly proficient in their spoken and written English. Communicating totally in English is an inherent routine not only between teachers and students but also among students inside and outside classrooms and at all school events and functions. With this rich and vibrant English language environment, S1 and S2 students who have used mainly Chinese to learn in their primary schools are highly motivated to learn in English and make good progress.

- A range of measures is also effectively planned and adopted by various subject panels to cater for learner diversity in terms of language abilities and learning needs. Split-class teaching and extra classes in English are strategically arranged for students who need stronger support in English Language learning at S1 and S2. A school-based Chinese curriculum is adopted for the non-Chinese speaking students. Some subject panels also make good attempts to strengthen learning support by providing supplementary learning materials during lessons, enhancing the design of assessment tasks with graded tasks and setting bonus questions to challenge students. The school takes positive steps to groom its gifted students and high achievers. Students are nominated to attend relevant programmes offered by external organisations and tertiary institutions as an incentive for them to aspire for excellence and to extend their knowledge. They are also encouraged to participate in various local and international subject-based competitions, events, and enrichment programmes such as Chinese creative writing and International Debating Tournament, etc. Since 2011, the school has also initiated and tailor-made three school-based pull out programmes on Mathematics, Chinese Literature and Science for the more-able students in the senior forms.
- There is a smooth interface for students promoted from Primary Six to Secondary One as the school's senior management works closely with the partner primary school, which is adjacent to the school and shares some of the floors in the annex. Experienced teachers are rightly deployed as homeroom teachers of S1 students. Tailor-made 'Summer Bridging Programmes' and 'Extra English Classes' are also suitably organised to support S1 students who are not from the partner primary school where Chinese is used as the medium of instruction. Students attending the 'Extra English Classes' are then generally able to improve their performances in English after a certain period of time.
- Collaborating with the school librarian, the Promotion of Reading Working Group (with language subject panel heads as members) plays an active role in cultivating students' interest in reading through both Chinese and English. Their work to further increase students' exposure to reading across different disciplines, especially non-fiction, is making progress. More focused alignment with non-language subject teachers could be explored to sustain students' interests, deepen and widen their learning.

- The clear and comprehensive assessment policy is a good example of emphasizing the importance of assessment for learning more than assessment of learning. The weighting of continuous and summative assessments to be reported in the report card varies at different levels. In S1 and S2, the weighting of continuous assessments is as high as 70% with only 30 % allocated for the summative 'common written tests'. The weighting of continuous assessments then decreases progressively in higher forms to align with the public examination requirements.
- A mechanism is well in place to support the policy of monitoring student performance. Through regular feedback meetings, homeroom teachers and subject teachers work closely to discuss the progress of students in terms of performances, learning abilities and attitudes. The performance of S1 and S2 students is closely monitored throughout the learning process using quizzes, written assignments, oral presentations, projects and complemented with common tests in the middle or at the end of school terms. This ensures that remedial actions can be taken early to tackle their learning gaps and help them to build a solid foundation before promotion to higher forms.
- The depth of reviewing and analysing the summative performance of students in examinations varies among subject panels. Some panels review students' answer scripts of each class closely to delineate their strengths and areas for improvement with follow-up actions suggested to improve learning and teaching. Such good practices could be disseminated and shared with other subject panels in refining pedagogical practices and enhancing student learning.
- The assignments scrutinised are of a good variety including essay writing, investigation reports, artwork production and projects. They are well designed as students need to demonstrate their level of understanding and application of generic skills like creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills when completing the assignments. The marked assignments illustrate that students have a very good command of written English. Specific scoring rubrics or written feedback given to students in some of the assignments help them to reflect on their learning and be more aware of the ways to improve.
- Lessons in general are well-planned with clear objectives. Systematic explanations are suitably given by teachers to highlight the major learning points and clarify misconceptions. Teaching materials and visual aids such as video clips, real objects, and presentation software are effectively used by teachers to facilitate students' understanding of the lesson contents. A good range of learning activities, such as reading aloud, experiments, role-play, practical work, group discussions and presentations are purposefully planned for students to explore, express their ideas and construct knowledge collaboratively. Graded class work / exercises are given in some classes for consolidation and checking students' level of understanding. In some lessons, rubrics are provided for students to carry out peer assessment. This helps them learn how to evaluate the quality of their learning achieved.
- Teachers conducted their lessons smoothly. They speak fluently and succinctly in English and students are accustomed to speaking and using the language in their everyday classroom learning. There is a good rapport

between teachers and students. Teachers with good questioning technique ask questions with different levels of difficulty to help students construct their knowledge progressively. Timely and positive feedback is also given to highlight the areas for improvement in a majority of the lessons. Students are praised for their good presentation work and also encouraged to raise questions and give feedback to their peers after their oral presentations. Some lessons could be more flexibly designed or structured to accommodate students' learning pace and strike a balance between content coverage and deep learning. Students could also learn better if the lesson objectives were explicitly stated at the beginning and recapitulation of major teaching points carried out at the end. A conceptual framework could be introduced when applicable to facilitate deep learning. Teachers' role as facilitators could also be further strengthened.

- Students demonstrate a very good learning attitude, manner and high ability to apply what they have learnt. They respect their teachers and show interest in their studies. They possess very good potential for self-regulated learning and are attentive in class. They make effective use of strategies such as jotting down notes, drawing mind maps, using graphic organisers and raising questions to help themselves to organise the content, clarify queries and learn better. They work capably in preparing for individual or group presentations in class. Their pre-lesson preparation work, such as group projects, is thorough and comprehensive showing committed effort and collaboration among group members. They apply a good range of generic skills such as self-management skills, creativity, communication skills, critical thinking skills and problem solving skills in their class presentations and peer evaluation work. They also demonstrate a very good command of both spoken and written English and communicate effectively.
- In the highly effective lessons, students are keenly motivated and deeply engaged in a range of planned learning activities to co-construct knowledge with their peers leading to effective learning outcomes. They are given many opportunities to make use of their generic skills such as HOTS, creativity, and problem solving skills in working with or finding solutions for the given tasks. Teachers possess sound subject knowledge and demonstrate very good questioning techniques in prompting, probing and guiding students to scaffold their learning as well as provoking deep thinking. With good use of well-designed worksheets and audio-visual aids to cater for different learning styles, students are also given the opportunities to read, listen, watch, discuss, compare and analyse the given materials, suggest new ideas and ask challenging questions among their peers. The lessons are well-structured with clear objectives and conducted at an appropriate pace. Timely and specific feedback are given by the teachers to clarify misconception and point out ways to improve.

2.3 Student Support and School Ethos

- Throughout the years, the planning and provision of student support services and programmes have been premised upon the school vision and mission of

enhancing the whole-person development of students and educating each individual through care and concern. The whole-school approach is continuously and aptly adopted to provide a comprehensive range of pastoral care services, award schemes, guidance programmes and activities largely meeting the personal, social, and learning needs of individual students.

- With meticulous planning and sophisticated coordination among various committees, teams of the Pastoral Care Division, subject panels and working groups of the Teaching & Learning Division, the diverse range of events, programmes and activities planned and organised are well translated into meaningful and authentic contexts for students to feel, to experience and to act upon. They are also well connected with the major concerns of the previous and current cycles of SDP in promoting high aspiration, to excel through reflection, creativity & commitment as well as instilling the three key values of “respect for self and others, perseverance and commitment”.
- The content and foci of the planned events, programmes and activities are well structured and serve as a dynamic platform open for students to: (i) interact among themselves, develop / strengthen their generic skills such as creativity, self management and problem solving skills; (ii) apply and demonstrate their social and leadership skills; and (iii) cultivate / realise their values of “respect, commitment and perseverance” through their organising / participating in these activities and programmes such as service trip as well as inter-school / international competitions. The outcomes are visible and fruitful in bringing positive impact on students’ personal development, attitude and behaviour.
- The ‘Good Samaritan Lunch’, an annual event including a musical jointly organised by the Student Council and the Religious Activities Committee, is a successful example. Through the process, students experience hunger, reflect on their attitude and behaviour towards the poor through the musical, take action in rewriting the script of the song to convey their message of love and care, evaluate the impact and seek to improve and influence their peers. The student audiences are impressed by the musical which heighten their awareness of the needy, and are encouraged to show continual support and care for others for betterment of the community.
- In encouraging students to “dream high” and consider how to achieve their goals within a timeframe, multiple intelligence assessments are conducted among S1 students. The findings are discussed with individual students by respective homeroom teachers. Students are then able to understand more of their potential and set higher but achievable goals under the guidance of these teachers during the ‘OLE Slot’. Goal setting workshops and the student learning profile are also suitably used as tools to help S3-S6 students to reflect and set goals for their future. A “Special Award for Outstanding Student Leaders” is also in place to encourage S4 or S5 student leaders to develop high aspirations and “dream their dream”.
- Leadership skills are strengthened among senior form students who take up major roles in planning, organising, managing and conducting a range of extra curricular activities (ECA) and community service programmes. Students are able to work independently requiring little support from their teacher advisors. They are also empowered to train their junior counterparts

and plan for succession. Orientation camps and briefings arranged for new student leaders are useful in helping them to gain a better understanding of the nature of their committee / club activity work and how to plan and organise activities for their peers. The guidelines given to them are also practicable.

- In collaboration with non-profit-making organisations and voluntary agencies, a good variety of learning experiences is provided in educating students to fulfill a role in serving others. The aim is for them to aspire to build a just and compassionate society, to be sensitive to the needs of others, especially the poor, and to put Christian values into practice. Strategic plans are in place to promote students' caring attitude and foster their service skills.
- Ample service opportunities, both within and outside school, are arranged to develop students' sense of benevolence. Systematic service training has been organised in conjunction with a voluntary agency for all S2 students and is found to be effective in arousing their concerns for others especially the needy. In sustaining students' impetus to contribute to society, an explicit policy on service hours is in place from S3 onwards and in-depth service training workshops are provided for S4 students to sharpen their skills in planning, organising and evaluating different service projects. They are also encouraged to share their valuable experiences and to reflect on how to improve and develop their services to others.
- The school systematically identifies students' varied support needs for personal development by making use of various findings. They include those from SHS, APASO and views collected from class and homeroom teachers through their regular contact and observation of student behaviour and attitude towards their peers, learning and participation in ECA, competitions and school events. A mechanism of early identification of students at risk is also in place to provide timely help to students with problems. Individual counselling services and interventions are effectively delivered to these students by homeroom teachers, social workers and the Big Sisters.
- A good supportive network for S1 students is set up. The Adjustment Programme, and all other follow-up services by the Big Sisters and the student support teams have helped the S1 students adapt to secondary school life quickly. There are also thoughtful and focused preventive and developmental programmes in place. These include 'It's Easy to be Happy', 'Adventure-based Team Building Programme' and 'Big Sisters Scheme', which serve well to enhance students' sense of efficacy in facing life challenges. These also extend their collegiate network and enhance friendship between senior and junior students.
- The school takes positive steps to groom the gifted students and high achievers. They are encouraged to participate in related programmes for the gifted and competitions, such as English debate contests and web-based courses. As a further step, in-house sharing sessions could be organised. Teachers who have received professional training and gained much experience in teaching the gifted could share their observations and strategies to other teachers to provoke insight. Gifted students may also share their way of studying or tackling problems with fellow students.

- The school makes good use of the award system to encourage positive behaviour and recognize students' achievements, contributions to service and active participation in activities. Self-discipline among students, rather than punishment, is emphasised. An educative approach to student discipline, placing an equal emphasis on reinforcing commendable behavior and reflecting on inappropriate behaviour in a timely manner is rightly adopted. There are clear school rules although students on the whole are well-behaved.
- Civic and environmental awareness is properly fostered by various activities, campaigns and inter-class competitions. Sex and health education are appropriately introduced to address the developmental needs of the students. Good attempts have been made in recent years to widen students' career-related exposure by introducing the one to one matching career mentoring scheme to senior form students with inputs from alumnae in various fields and sectors. Appropriate career guidance programmes and career-related experiences, such as talks, campus and workplace visits, are systematically organised for S3 and senior secondary students. The aim is to help them to set goals according to their own inclination and enhance their understanding of the range of academic and career opportunities available to them. Suitable reference materials are also provided in the Career Library and e-class to facilitate students' access to career information.
- The school values parents as crucial partners in fostering good characters and positive values among students. Various channels are provided for parents to convey their ideas and participate in various school activities contributing to school development. Parents are well informed of their children's progress and are appreciative of the caring attitude of the teachers and the prompt response of the Principal to their requests. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) provides strong support to the school and serves as a close link between the school and parents. As a member of the School Management Committee, the Representative of the PTA / Parent Manger, conveys the views of parents on school policy directly to the school management for consideration. Newsletters are published twice annually by the PTA and uploaded onto the school website for parents' information. The various programmes jointly organised by the PTA and the school serve the needs of parents in enhancing parenting skills. Examples include the values education workshops for parents, fostering parent-child relationships and promoting home-school partnership by such as the 85th Anniversary Walkathon and the Open Day cum Carnival. Building on such a good foundation of parent-school collaboration, parental involvement could be considered as a privilege to enrich the learning experiences of students, for instance, in career education.
- The alumnae provide a wealth of professional expertise, human and financial resources. They offer generous support to the school and students such as serving as guest speakers, career mentors for students, donation, sponsoring scholarships and school activities. They show a strong sense of belonging to their alma mater and are keen to contribute. As an example, one of the alumnae, also the former PTA Chairperson, provided her extensive support to the school by serving as the Chairperson of the school's 85th Anniversary Organising Committee and coordinated a series of events to celebrate the anniversary in 2011/12. The Alumnae Association also sends representatives

to serve as Alumnae Managers in the SMC to express their views on school policies.

- The school has effectively built up appropriate links with various external organisations such as voluntary agencies, tertiary institutions, government departments and non-governmental organisations to enhance student learning and support personal development. Coordinating with the school's programme plans, these organisations help to provide a broad range of life wide learning experiences in extending the scope of student learning beyond classrooms in the form of talks, workshops, visits and exchange programmes. Good attempts to develop professional exchanges with other schools and tertiary institutions have been started to further promote high quality learning and teaching.
- The school treasures its Christian heritage and traditional values. There is a strong sense of affiliation among stakeholders. A liberal, respectful and supportive atmosphere prevails. There are formal and informal opportunities and channels for teachers and students to voice their views and make suggestions which are readily taken into consideration by the school management. Teachers cooperate well and professional sharing among them is increasing. Teacher-student and student peer relationships are harmonious and supportive. Respect is evident between students and teachers. Students of different cultural background and abilities integrate well into the school community. Students have a strong sense of belonging and enjoy their school life. They are keen in their studies and are rather reflective. The senior form students, who take up functional posts of the Student Council, ECA clubs, etc. are highly competent and proactive. Their suggestions of setting up some new clubs and societies are supported by the school. They take good care of their junior counterparts. Parents appreciate the care and support given by teachers to their children, while students appreciate the opportunities provided by the school for their personal development.

2.4 Student Performance

- Students are courteous, modest, responsible and self-disciplined. They value their school life and are generally self-motivated to learn. They demonstrate competency and confidence in expressing their own views in both English and Chinese and are highly motivated to do their best in both academic and non-academic pursuits. They show much respect to their teachers and maintain a harmonious relationship with their peers. They are eloquent, innovative and readily reflect their views to teachers and the school management. They consistently maintain a top standard in both spoken and written English as evidenced in their school work, including assignments, projects, classroom interaction and presentations, internal and external assessment results as well as inter- and international school events.
- Given a major role to take charge in running the Student Council as well as planning and organising activities for more than 40 clubs and committees, senior form students work competently and independently in demonstrating their commendable leadership qualities. They are creative, committed and

often work collaboratively with their peers and serve as role models for junior form students.

- In 2012, the percentages of students meeting the general entrance requirements for local undergraduate university programme and sub-degree programme in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination¹ were high above the territory averages for day school students. In the past three years, students attained very good results in the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination and the percentages of students awarded the minimum entrance requirements for local degree courses were high above the territory averages for day school students.
- Students are enthusiastic and participate actively in a wide variety of ECA, community service programmes, gifted education award schemes / programmes, inter-school and worldwide competitions. They show strong commitment and concerted effort when preparing for the competitions. The many awards and external scholarships that students receive are impressive. The awards cover areas in personal competency / attributes, performing arts such as music, dance and drama; visual arts, speech in Chinese, English and French; essay writing in Chinese and English and sports. The school choir, in particular, has received distinguished awards both locally and in an international choir festival.

¹ The first Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination for school candidates was held in 2012.

3. Concluding Remarks

With a vision to lead the school “from good to great” in all areas of its life for the benefit of the students, the school management is highly successful and effective in scaling the way up another peak. The school is particularly commendable in bringing further successes in educating students to be reflective and caring individuals who put Christian values into practice, and strive for greater development in both academic and non-academic pursuits.

Synthesising the vision, mission, core values and continuous development into a coherent whole, the school realises its mission and has attained its goals in the recent two school development cycles. With strategic and thoughtful planning, sophisticated infrastructure and leveraging on the shared vision of the SMC, strong commitment of the school management, concerted effort of teachers and earnest support of alumnae and parents, the school sustains to provide a passionate, inspiring, and dynamic learning environment. This allows students to develop and realise their potential and pursue excellence, interact and cultivate positive values as well as generating new ideas or applying what they have learnt to real practice and novice situations.

Highly effective learning takes place among students both inside and outside of classrooms as they are well supported by the team of knowledgeable and experienced teachers. The latter play a facilitating role in guiding students to construct knowledge and make meaningful connections with the subjects learnt. Self-directed learning is also encouraged. Students are remarkable in demonstrating an exceptionally high standard of both spoken and written English. Many consistently perform very well in various areas. They achieve outstanding performance in both academic and non-academic areas.

In sustaining its continuing success and seeking to develop further “from good to great” in all areas of school life for students, the school could explore further the following and surpass what they have already accomplished:

3.1 Sustaining a professional learning community among teachers in facilitating students to excel

- Building on the existing strengths of teachers in subject expertise and aiming at further advancement to become mastery teachers and outstanding curriculum leaders through a professional learning community, some long term, semi-structured programmes with research-based elements could be explored. These could be in any form or means with theoretical underpinnings to facilitate intellectual discourse and co-construction among teachers across KLAs and to generate new working knowledge. As an example, collaborative lesson studies in the form of action research among teachers or with academics in the tertiary education sector could be considered. Alternatively, there could be more and regular in-depth discussions across KLAs regarding specific pedagogical practices. The focus could be on enhancing the role of teachers as facilitators to support deeper learning and self-directed learning among students.

3.2 Mapping a more coherent Junior Secondary curriculum in guiding students to excel

- With the successful implementation of the new senior secondary curriculum in the school, curriculum mapping to review the vertical and horizontal coherence of the school's current school-based curricular programmes and junior secondary subject curricula with the senior secondary curricula could be carried out holistically. Related curriculum audit tools could be used for comparison. The content, delivery modes and means of cross-curricular programmes and collaboration among subject panels and teachers concerned could be further explored to support students in conceptualising with deeper understanding and enriching their knowledge base across different disciplines.