External School Review Report

Wa Ying College

Address of School : 8 Sheung Wo Street, Homantin, Kowloon

External Review Period : 12 & 20 to 25 May 2004

Quality Assurance Division
Education and Manpower Bureau

<May 2004>
1. Introduction

1.1 External review methodology

• The External School Review (ESR) team conducted the review on 12 and 20 to 25 May 2004 to validate and report on the school’s performance in school self-evaluation (SSE) and performance in the four domains of school work.

• The ESR team collected information about the school through the following:
  - The documentation supplied by the school was scrutinized and analyzed before and during the ESR.
  - In addition to observing 48 full lessons and 12 lessons of a minimum duration of 15 minutes taught by 55 teachers, there were observations of other activities such as assemblies, student Christian fellowship, and prefects’ meeting.
  - Focus group meetings were held with the supervisors, members of the School Management Committee (SMC), the Executive Committee, the Academic Committee, the School Self-Evaluation Committee and teachers in charge of student assessments and student support, students, parents and the School Development Officer of the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB). Informal meetings with teachers, student councilors, the school librarian, school social worker, clerks and janitors were also conducted.
  - Five students were shadowed for a whole-day period to observe student learning and the support for students.

• It is important to note that this report reflects the life of the school that was observed and considered by the ESR team during the review period.

1.2 Basic information about the school (manuscript provided by the school)

• Wa Ying College was first founded by the Methodist Church in Foshan, southern China in 1913. Since then, the school had been highly acclaimed and attracted students from afar, including many from Hong Kong. It was eventually closed in 1951 as all schools had to be operated by the Chinese government. In September 1971, the new Wa Ying College was re-established in Hong Kong by the alumni and the Chinese Methodist Church.

• Wa Ying was founded on Christian principles, which have shaped and sustained the school and the whole-person education over years. Through preaching of the Gospel, the school seeks to help students lead an abundant life. The school also
strives to promote the well-founded culture of its Alma Mater, Foshan Wa Ying, to prepare the students to be persevering, hardworking and frugal; to love and respect their school, teachers, and fellow schoolmates.

- At the beginning of the school year 2003-04, the school has a total of 1183 students in 31 classes. The class allocation is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>S1</th>
<th>S2</th>
<th>S3</th>
<th>S4</th>
<th>S5</th>
<th>S6</th>
<th>S7</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of classes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of students</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1183</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- To foster the culture of self-evaluation is one of the school’s major concerns this year. The school has set up the SSE Committee with members representing the four domains to prepare the School Development Plan for the coming three years and the School Annual Plan. The committee members actively equipped themselves through attending training organized by EMB and tertiary institutes in order to lead the whole school in carrying out self-evaluation. A very thorough self-evaluation procedure, involving the principal, vice-principal, assistant principal, heads of departments and committees and all teachers, was conducted. The school also collected feedback from students on teachers’ teaching and those from parents on the performance of the school. Through implementing the self-evaluation mechanism, the culture has been gradually fostered among the staff. The results and the follow-up analysis will be useful references to set the future direction of development of the school.
2. School’s Work on Self-evaluation

- The School Self-evaluation Committee, a designated setup headed by the school principal, was established last school year to steer and develop the SSE exercise with the collective efforts of staff members. The strategy and scope of the SSE were formulated and defined to align with the development of the school. As reflected in the major concerns of the school of furthering her school-based management, a 3-year development plan was drawn up with SSE as an integral part of school-based management.

- The school has successfully instilled a positive and committed attitude amongst her staff members towards accountability and self-evaluation without compromising the caring and harmonious atmosphere of the school. A clear framework and work schedule to implement and develop the SSE exercise were drawn up and administered with the concerted effort of all functional committees/groups, and subject departments and other stake-holders. Throughout the process, the school sought to maintain a multi-directional communicative channel amongst the staff members, students, parents and other stake-holders.

- Also, the school has developed some school-based evaluation tools such as indicators, and questionnaires for the stakeholder survey, including one for evaluating teaching effectiveness of the teachers. In fact, departmental appraisal, self-evaluation and peer observations have been widely adopted, forming an integral part of the SSE. The school also took part in the CUHK School Improvement Project on SSE this year.

- Thematic school-based professional development programme on SSE for the teachers was organized to strengthen their understanding of SSE and promote collegiality amongst the staff members. Sharing and discussion sessions were organized to promote consensual understanding.

- The school has built up a repertoire of self-evaluation experience and findings which have been used to analyze the effectiveness of school’s performance in the light of the school context, to refine the school development plan and to achieve self-improvement.

- For further development, the school could work towards further substantiating the culture of self-evaluation and self-improvement amongst the staff members, teaching staff in particular, and to deepen their understanding of how to use the SSE findings to inform class learning and teaching.
3. School Performance

3.1 Management & Organization

- The School Management Committee (SMC) comprised wide representation of stake-holders, including parent and alumni who were professionals from different fields. Teacher representative would also be included in 2004-05. Being knowledgeable of the school’s administration, the SMC worked closely with the principal and, through regular meetings, attended to the operation and development of the school effectively. A clear and well-structured management mechanism was in place, and the roles and responsibilities of individual functional committees including crises management, subject departments, and different personnel were clearly presented in a series of internal standing circulars. The 3-year school development plan and departmental plans were drawn up with the collective effort of the staff and were in line with the school’s major concerns: Cultivating self-evaluation atmosphere; Achieving effective learning and teaching; Further developing school-based management; and Providing support for student development” and the school motto: “We work together; We care; We serve” which best manifested the mission and aims of education upheld by the school. Overall, the school was conversant of her strengths and weaknesses and was committed to providing quality education to the students.

- The school principal, being positive, visionary and enthusiastic, maintained harmonious relationship with the staff members, students, parents and other stakeholders. With clear and purposeful leadership, the principal sought to lead the school via the Executive Committee (EC) which comprised the Principal, the Vice-principal, the Assistant Principal and the key players of the middle management who were all effective managers. In addition to handling matters of routine operation of the school, the EC played a significant role in orchestrating the concerted effort of respective subject departments and functional groups in support of the school’s endeavour. A sound managerial hierarchy and good team spirit was observed along with a strong sense of belonging among the school personnel.

- The duties and responsibilities of individual staff in the capacity of a teacher or as a member/head of a functional group were clearly delineated. The deployment of staff and allocation of duties were appropriately made according to the expertise and experience of teachers, the operational need of the school and the preference of the staff concerned. Non-teaching staff generally worked diligently and supported the work of teachers. The Staff Development Committee (SDC) was set up to undertake staff development activities, including the induction programme and mentorship for new teachers. The school had set up a fair, just and open staff
appraisal system to promote the professional development and accountability of the staff, which was well recognized by the teachers in general. The said system included staff appraisal by the senior staff and self-evaluation by the appraisee. For further development, the school could make reference to the information about the training needs of the teachers as reflected in their appraisal reports for the purpose of formulating informed professional development plan for the staff with a view to fueling the school for the challenges ahead.

- In areas of planning and managing resources, the Principal in consultation with the Finance Committee handled the allocation of funds to subject panels and functional committees/groups. Additional funds could be sought through a flexible mechanism. The overall financial control met the requirements set by external auditors. As observed, procurement was made according to a set of detailed and comprehensive procedure handbook. Also, designated tendering committees for opening the tender, vetting the tender and approving the tender were set up to oversee the procurement process. The school also made good efforts to seek additional funds to support learning. Provisions were sought from the Quality Education Fund, parents and alumni to improve learning environment and school facilities, like the Robotics Laboratory. Despite that the school building was about 30 years old, it was well maintained. Great efforts have been made to fully utilize the school premises notwithstanding the physical constraints, and some rooms were designated for special purposes. The use of Capacity Enhancement Grant was finalized by the Capacity Enhancement Grant Committee through which teachers’ views and suggestions would be fully considered. The inventory records were compiled and teaching resources were generally properly kept and made easily accessible.

### 3.2 Learning & Teaching

- The school set proper priorities and adopted appropriate strategies in support of the curriculum reform. The programme plans of a majority of subject departments were closely linked to the school’s annual goals in learning and teaching. While seeking to provide a broad and balanced formal curriculum, the school also managed to make available a good range of electives for the students, particularly at S4 and S5. The school made flexible arrangements of the school days to facilitate the organization of a good range of co-curricular and life-wide learning activities to cater for the development of students’ generic skills, and to cultivate proper values and attitudes. A variety of enhancement and remedial groups were thoughtfully administered amongst the subjects of Chinese, English and Mathematics to cater for learner differences. The school’s Academic Committee has been advocating and encouraging multi-disciplinary collaborations, professional sharing and interflows, co-lesson-planning and peer observations with a view to enhancing teaching effectiveness. As such, common free periods amongst the teacher groups were arranged deliberately during timetabling for this
purpose. Also, individual subject departments have begun to engage themselves in cross-curricular collaboration in promoting project learning. For improvement, the school could review the effectiveness of the existing mechanism including delegation of authority in respect of monitoring the development and implementation of curricular measures/initiatives.

- As for teaching, teachers were on the whole devoted and friendly. They displayed a serious attitude towards teaching and established good rapport with the students. As observed, class management was also properly maintained. The lessons were generally well prepared with clear objectives. The instructions were systematic and explanations clear. Some teachers provided opportunities for students to learn through an inquiry approach. They made good use of probing questions to guide students to acquire high order thinking skill and gave timely and constructive feedback to help with their self-reflection on learning. As witnessed, appropriate praise and encouragement was employed to strengthen the students’ confidence in learning. In some lessons, opportunities for students’ interaction were provided to develop generic skills of the students and challenging tasks were also arranged to stretch students’ potential. There were, however, lessons that were conducted mainly in a teacher-centred, direct exposition style with apparently little effort made to enhance interaction or to promote collaborative learning among peers. Overall, the provision of graded activities and suitable individual support to cater for students’ learning diversity was not adequately made while the use of IT to facilitate interactive learning, for instance, could be strengthened.

- As for students’ learning performance, they were well behaved, cooperative and responsive and with good learning attitude. Most of the students participated actively in the classroom learning activities. On the whole, they completed the assigned tasks satisfactorily. When given the opportunity, collaborative learning among peers was also observed. In some of the lessons observed, students showed good initiative in class and employed a variety of learning strategies and skills to learn, like showing keen interest, actively taking down notes and raising questions to clarify doubts and concepts, etc. Besides, some of the students showed confidence in learning and they displayed good communication skill and presentation skill. They were able to use English to express their views during group discussion and presentation. Notwithstanding, the opportunities to develop students’ critical thinking skill and other generic skills needed to be stepped up.

- The school had set clear assignment and assessment policies with elaborate guidelines for teachers’ reference. Most of the subject panels observed the policies closely and arranged assignments and set assessment schedules accordingly. Both continuous and summative assessments were properly used to monitor students’ learning progress. Different assessment methods including self-assessment and peer-assessment were adopted to evaluate the learning progress and outcomes of students. The design of a number of student assignments such as creative writing, reflective learning journals and cross-curricular projects was good. Due emphasis was placed on the development of different generic skills, values and attitudes in
the learning process. Timely and specific feedback was given to help students improve in their studies. Both academic and non-academic achievements were properly recorded in student report cards. Test transcripts were issued to parents to keep them well informed of the student learning progress. For improvement, the school could strengthen the coordination of project work in junior forms. There was also a need for the better use of assessment data, including those generated through internal assessments, to inform curriculum planning and decision-making.

3.3 Student Support & School Ethos

- The school provided excellent support for student development. It adopted a whole school approach and all programmes in this aspect illustrated the same commitment and shared vision – to give the best support to students. A good variety of programmes and activities were organized for different students in various aspects of student development. Leaders of the student support teams worked collaboratively and harmoniously and they were very dedicated to providing a very ‘loving and caring’ learning environment for their students. Both the senior and junior students benefited greatly from the various support programmes organized by the school like the Peer Counselor Scheme, Self-Actualization Scheme, and Student Tutor Scheme, for example. They provided great opportunities for both the senior and junior students, either as training as leaders or support for junior students, especially the newly admitted S1 students. The varied needs of the students including affection development were being taken care of through various activities organized for them. The students were able to demonstrate the love and care they received from their teachers to their fellow students. With the joint efforts and dedication of the teachers, the mission of making Wa Ying a beloved family: “Wa Ying for once, Wa Ying for life” has been best demonstrated.

- The school won the support of the Alumni Association which was well established. The alumni showed very strong sense of belonging to the school and were proud of the school and the heritage. It took the initiative to support school development and contributed great efforts towards school improvement. The participation and contribution of the alumni in the SMC was highly regarded and it helped to formulate, plan and implement school policies and activities. Besides, the school devised clear policy on home school cooperation. The school valued the partnership with the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) which was positive, supportive and enthusiastic. The school maintained effective communication channels with parents and engaged the PTA in a number of close collaborations and joint ventures in support of the school’s operation and development. Also, a Parent Voluntary Service Team has been set up to render services to the school. The school maintained appropriate links with the community and various organizations. External resources were also strategically utilized to support student learning and school development.
The admirable school culture was best reflected in the mutual trust, respect, acceptance, unity and harmonious relationship amongst the school staff. Teacher-student relationship was warm and friendly. Teachers and students respected each other and they communicated and shared different opinions. There were many channels, for example, the tutor scheme, for the senior students to serve their junior counterparts and to offer advice or support. The open and positive leadership style of the principal contributed to creating a prevailing warm, caring and harmonious school atmosphere. The staff, students and alumni had a strong sense of belonging to the school. They were proud to be members of the school and spoke highly of the caring school culture, tradition and history. The staff fully understood and supported the school goals. Being positive and proactive, they participated willingly in school affairs and rendered their support in building the collaborative culture of the school. The alumni also played an important role in cultivating the school culture. Besides serving as role models, they were mostly devoted to the Alma Mater and played an active part in the running of some school activities. Amidst this harmonious human relationship, the principal gained the full support of the middle managers as well as teachers, and succeeded in creating an environment conducive to continuous school improvement and progress.

3.4 Student Performance

Most students had a high self-image and expectation, and they exhibited confidence in themselves. They were polite and courteous, and they showed respect and consideration for both teachers and fellow students. They had a positive learning attitude and hold a positive value for life. There was a strong rapport between teachers and students and among the fellow students and they exhibited good social skills, leadership quality and interpersonal relationship.

In the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination of the past three years, the percentages of students with five or more passes and the percentages of students with 14 or more points from the best six subjects were all well above the territory level. Regarding student performance in the best six subjects, the value-added performance of the school was maintained at the territory level in the past two years. In the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination of the past three years, the percentages of students meeting minimum entry requirements for local degree courses were all well above the territory level. Students performed well in a variety of competitions outside the school in the past three years. They sustained good achievements in the fields of sports, music and speech activities. Students took an active part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. They were also keen on community service and demonstrated their care for the community.
4. Concluding Remark

Wa Ying College is an outstanding school that exemplifies clear and committed vision of providing quality education to nurture the younger generation. The leadership and management of the school are effective and conducive to sustaining its continuous development. The shared vision of the teaching force of the school, their loving and caring attitude, their self-improvement awareness and their commitment towards education contribute to boosting the morale and the school culture to a high standard of achievement widely recognized by parents and alumni. Students are provided with the opportunities to develop and excel in their academic studies as well as in their spiritual and moral development.

Given the strengths mentioned above, the school could definitely make substantive advancement in the provision of quality education to the students if appropriate measures could be considered to address the following issues:

4.1 Furthering the self-evaluation culture for enhancing effective learning and teaching

- Building on her concerns for further development, the school could capitalize on her strengths and collective efforts to improve on its SSE mechanism in order to sustain and further the self-evaluation culture within the general context of school operations, and in particular,

  (a) in the mechanism of monitoring the implementation of curriculum initiatives and measures amongst subject departments and functional groups so that the feedback so generated could be used to inform curriculum planning, learning and teaching; and

  (b) in the planning of school-based professional development for teachers with reference to their training needs as divulged in the appraisals.