



INSTITUTE OF SENIOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINSTRATORS

## ***EDUCATION ASIAN STYLE***



## **Report of the ISEA's Study-Tour to Hong Kong & Singapore July 2010**

*WORKING TOGETHER FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION*

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### **Hong Kong**

- Professor Allan Walker, Director Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change, Hong Kong Institute of Education, and staff
- Mr Anthon Chu, Professional Assistant, Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change, Hong Kong Institute of Education
- Dr Anissa Chan, Principal, St Paul's Co-educational College and staff
- Dr Terry Quong, Principal, Jockey Club Ti-I College and staff
- Ms Shirley Wong, Principal, TWGS Kap Yan Directors' College and staff
- Ms Fung Yuk-yi, Principal, TWGS Ma Kam Chan Memorial School and staff
- Ms Catherine Chan, Chief Professional Development Officer, Education Bureau, HKSAR Government and staff.

### **Singapore**

- Ms Grace Fu, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Education
- Ms Ho Ping, Director-General, Ministry of Education
- Ms Low Khah Gek, Director, Curriculum Planning and Development Division
- Mr Michael de Silva, Deputy Director, Leadership Development, Ministry of Education and staff
- Ms Goh Meei Yunn, Special Assistant, Leadership Development, Ministry of Education
- Mr Lee Kok Hong, Senior Quality Assessor, School Appraisal Branch, Ministry of Education
- Ms Catherine Seah, Principal, CHIJ Our Lady of Good Counsel Primary School and staff
- Associate Professor Ng Pak Tee, Associate Dean, Leadership Programs, National Institute of Education and staff
- Assistant Professor Joyce Koh, Learning Science and Technologies, National Institute of Education and staff
- Mr Tham Kine Thong, Principal, Jurong Secondary School and staff
- Mr Tony Tan, Cluster Superintendent, Ministry of Education
- Mdm Lim Soh Lian, Principal, Admiralty Primary School and staff.

*Gratitude is also expressed to the numerous teachers, principals, students, administrators and academics who willing gave of their time and resources at each of the institutions visited.*



*The ISEA Tour Group with the principal and staff of the Admiralty Primary School, Singapore*

# REPORT OF THE ISEA'S STUDY-TOUR TO HONG KONG & SINGAPORE, JULY 2010

## INTRODUCTION:

*Following successful study-tours to the UK and Germany in 2005, Washington State (USA), Alberta and British Columbia (Canada) in 2006 and Illinois and Michigan (USA) and Ontario (Canada) in 2008 the ISEA conducted a fourth study-tour to schools, systems and institutions in Hong Kong and Singapore in July 2010.*

*With Tour members drawn from a range of DET functional areas and the university sector, the focus of the visits, and the information gathered, covered a wide-range of professional interests including school improvement, school accountability, data-gathering and analysis, leadership development, and system-university co-operation. To this end, the tour group met with senior officers with the respective ministries of education, including the Singaporean Education Minister, Ms Grace Fu, academics, principals, teachers and students in a wide variety of institutions. In addition, the tour group members were guests of honour for the plenary sessions at the PERI Holistic Assessment Seminar held at the Republic Polytechnic in Singapore and involving 1600 school principals and their executive teams. The event drew media coverage across Asia.*

*The report that follows traces the itinerary of the tour and provides commentary across all of the educational areas, functions and issues explored and locations visited.*

*The seven members of the tour group included the Executive Officer of the ISEA, two primary school principals, a school education director, a senior departmental officer with expertise in assessment and reporting, a secondary deputy-principal and consultant, and the co-ordinator of a university educational leadership program.*

*Both jurisdictions are now shifting the emphasis from testing and examination regimes to more holistic, learner-centred teaching and assessment designed to build the human capital of the country in a globally competitive environment through co-operative, across-school learning environments. This is in sharp contrast to recent developments in Australian education with the dichotomy made sharper by Asian cultures that traditionally have fostered more didactic teaching pedagogies. The study-tour enabled the participants to track these developments at first hand through the policy making arenas and to investigate their implementation in schools.*

*The Singapore education system is highly integrated with "milestone" professional development programs to prepare aspiring principals for leadership. These are provided by universities for the Ministry. Teachers are tracked according to both potential and performance. Promotion depends on performance. The attrition rate of principals is low. Principals are matched to their school by the Ministry. Leadership programs do not simply prepare teachers to "do the job". Rather, they develop strategic capabilities and learn "how to think". Education itself is recognised as a key strategic part of nation building. Principals have tenure for up to 7 years in the one school before being moved to another by the Ministry.*

*The overwhelming impression gained by the tour group members was that both Hong Kong and Singapore saw the future prospects of their societies inextricably linked to the effectiveness of their education systems. Apart from a willingness to invest considerable funds into education there was an unwillingness to believe that the success of the past policies and programs would be sufficient for the future. Success in international rankings was not seen as anything like a guarantee of developing a creative, versatile, healthy and socially conscious society. Much more was needed than teaching basic skills in isolation. A true education would ensure that basic skills would be the means to an end, not an end in themselves.*

*The tour group took the opportunity to visit the sights of Hong Kong (The Peak, Stanley Markets and Macau) and Singapore (Zoo, Bird Park and Raffles Hotel) – breakfast with the orangoutangs being a highlight – but nothing compared with the outstanding hospitality, generosity, and professionalism extended to us by our Asian colleagues. We were humbled by the warmth of their welcome and immensely impressed by the earnestness and quality of their educational endeavours.*

**Ron Ikin, ISEA Executive Officer.**

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## HONG KONG

### THE HONG KONG INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION (*Professor Allan Walker, Director, Asia Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change*)

The tour group was provided with an overview of school education in Hong Kong by Professor Allan Walker, Director of the Asia-Pacific Centre for Leadership and Change. Allan, an Australian by birth, has worked in Hong Kong for 15 years after a career as a teacher, principal and consultant in Australia.

Hong Kong has always been proud of its economic achievements but the economic turmoil that swept across South East Asia revealed a weakness in its economy. It was realised that its education system needed to be reformed to meet the challenge of the information technology era. Reforms first introduced in 2001 promoted the principles “student-focused learning”, “no losers education”, “life-long learning”, and “society-wide mobilisation”.

Professor Walker reported that the Hong Kong system was on the cusp of massive changes over the next decade with widespread curriculum programs and assessment systems under development and implementation. Whereas previously there had been 7 years of



secondary education, the senior years were only available to about 1/3 of the student cohort, the others being excluded by examinations. The more recent arrangement allows for 6 years of secondary education but with near universal participation. A broadening of the curriculum and a revision of the purpose of assessment had facilitated these changes.

Adjustments to the management of education were necessary to support the required changes. These adjustments included:

- Interactive, evolutionary system feedback and adjustment at policy level
- Provision for transition and alternatives
- Alignment with other educational initiatives: school-based management, quality assurance, school building design and leadership in schools
- Resources including information technology and other school facilities
- Evidence-based development, research priority and refocussing.

Arising from his own Institution Professor Walker spoke of the Blue Skies Program. Designed to help beginning principals to start their principalship on a positive note, the Blue Skies Program aims at assisting them to clarify what is important about their schools and to engage them in ongoing professional development within a supportive collegial environment learning. As such the program represents a new, integrated approach to professional learning for beginning principals in the primary, secondary and special schools of Hong Kong.

Professor Walker reported that changes to professional development for teachers in Hong Kong were characterised by:

- Informing and reforming pre-service, in-service and continuing teacher education
- Teacher development through participation in school-based curriculum development and on-going curriculum development processes
- Participation in action and applied research to generate knowledge and to use knowledge in research
- Dissemination of good practices (e.g. websites, informal networking, conference participation)

## ST PAUL'S CO-EDUCATIONAL COLLEGE (*Principal, Dr. Anissa Chan*)

St Pauls is a high performing, selective entry, well resourced co-educational college situated in a densely populated area of Hong Kong, It is supported by several high profile sponsors and organisations.

The principal, Dr Anissa Chan, explained that recent reforms which imposed top-down system-level initiatives were strongly influenced by curriculum developments in the UK and Australia. They were changing the way the school would be required to operate.



The initiatives sought sweeping changes to existing learning and teaching practices by:

- Promoting whole-person development
- Implementing task-based syllabus design
- Utilising criterion-referenced assessment practices
- Encouraging pair and group work as the norm for classroom practice.

## JOCKEY CLUB TI-L COLLEGE (*Principal Dr. Terry Quong*)

Dr Terry Quong was a primary school principal in Darwin, Australia prior to being appointed the Jockey Club Ti-I College and has been with the College for just on 12 months. The school, established in 1985 and funded by the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club (RHKJC) and the Government, is classified as an Aided Secondary School.

Dr Quong, apart from describing his school, also provided the group with a comprehensive overview of school education in Hong Kong.

## HONG KONG EDUCATION AT A GLANCE

- 365,000 students in primary schools
- 478,000 in secondary schools
- 582 primary schools
- 523 secondary schools
- 61 special schools
- Public sector = 85% of students
- Private sector = 15% of students; 71 Direct subsidy schools 7.4% and 51 international schools)
- Hong Kong's 2008/09 expenditure on education, HK\$77.3 or 24.7% of expenditure.
- Australia's 2008 total expenditure on education by Commonwealth and local governments, AUD \$39,613 million or 14% of total expenditure
- Free education extended from 9 years to 12 years in the 2008-09 school year
- School age 6-15 years
- No public kindergartens (964 kindergartens on a voucher system)
- Inclusion policy for special schools.

Traditionally Hong Kong has performed very well in the *Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA)*. In 2006 Hong Kong was ranked ahead on Australia in Science, Reading and Mathematics.

In Hong Kong the government recognises, to keep relevant and competitive you need to change the way you educate students to ensure you have a workforce for the future.

The Education system in Hong Kong is undergoing considerable reform and is focussing on the curriculum as learning experiences for the whole person. They see this as providing lifelong learning experiences essential to a students' whole person development. The move is to Key Learning Areas for a broad and balanced curriculum. The Ministry reforms are focusing on the learning culture moving from rote learning to a learning culture that focuses on creativity and critical thinking.

As a result of the Ministry of Education's new direction the school is undergoing considerable change in the approach to Teaching and Learning and Assessment, moving away from the traditional summative assessment (of learning) to formative assessment (for learning). These changes have created considerable challenges for staff in the approach to pedagogy and assessment.

The school aims to provide quality education to Hong Kong families who want their children to be international citizens, high performance achievers, academically successful and well rounded in sports and the arts.

Dr Quong noted the professional development of teaching staff to support the move from a formal prescribed curriculum to a curriculum which keeps the school as the centre of student learning. He saw this as also accommodating the new needs of society. The strengthening of relevant elements of learning and providing alternatives will be the school focus. The process of using assessment data to inform teaching and learning will involve a change in the approach to school and class-based assessment practices.

Dr Quong commented on the changes to education in Australia, the National Curriculum, National Assessment program, Literacy and Numeracy tests for students in Years 3, 5 7 and 9 and likened the changes in Australia compared to those underway in Hong Kong as "*Ships crossing in the ocean*".



### TWGH'S CAP YAN DIRECTOR'S COLLEGE (*Principal, Ms. Shirley Wong*)

Ms Wong guided the group on a tour of her school. She explained that her mission was to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure the school catered for student potential, abilities and needs.

Diversified teaching and learning styles, strategies, contexts and resources were to be encouraged for different purposes and needs of the teaching and learning process. Based on the conviction that all students, including those with special educational needs, can learn, the principal and staff of this school regularly considered possible ways to cater for students with varying learning potentials.

Ms Wong strongly believed that the strengths of learning cultures in families, schools, and society should be preserved, reinforced and effectively used to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school. The school was in the process of considering the key curriculum concepts embodied in its past curriculum in the context of the currently proposed reform measures. Such measures included:

- Learning targets in a *Target Oriented Curriculum*
- Use of integration in an open and flexible curriculum framework to develop diversified organisations and models
- A student-focussed spirit as a common and overriding principle for teaching and learning e.g. The Activity Approach, Mastery Learning

- Information technology as a learning tool and resource
- Criterion-referenced and formative assessment in a *Target Oriented Assessment* policy for informing and improving teaching and learning.



### **TWGH'S MA KAM CHAN MEMORIAL PRIMARY SCHOOL (Principal Ms. Fung Yuk-yi)**

#### ***Travelling at 100km per hour only using only your rear view mirror***

So what is it like to go to school in Hong Kong? Two young Master's graduates calmly said, "Your class mates are your enemy, they are your competitors". Although Hong Kong's education system has long been criticized as lacking in creativity and over-emphasising rote learning, on the whole it has served Hong Kong extremely well, developing outstanding business leaders who continue to maintain Hong Kong's competitive edge.

International school rankings mean little in the light of cruel economic climates. Elite schools like TWGH's Ma Kam Chan Memorial Primary School are educating for a post economic down-turn world. The education reform, which is still on-going, aims to overhaul the entire system by introducing the "Liberal Studies" model of learning and school based assessment.

School Principal, Ms Fung Yuk-yi, explained that traditional pedagogical models will only produce similar levels of student outcomes; stellar as they may be.

While the Australian education system drives into the night of national curriculum reform, centralism and NAPLAN assessment, Hong Kong has glanced into the rear view mirror and begun creating creative, innovative, problem solving thinkers to be competitive in tomorrow's world.

### **HKSAR GOVERNMENT EDUCATION BUREAU, PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT TEAM (Dr Catherine Chan Ka-Ki, Deputy Secretary for Education and Chief Professional Development Officer)**

Dr Chan was previously Principal Assistant Secretary and Head of the Curriculum Development Institute of the Education Bureau, Hong Kong, and has been responsible for formulating policies related to curriculum development of kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. Before joining the government in 1998, Dr Chan was an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Hong Kong.

Since the new HKSAR the Government has set ambitious goals and policies for education reform and school leaders have been pressured to deal with multiple policy changes. Recently principals and teachers have made great efforts in the implementation of the new secondary curriculum so as to provide students with a broad and balanced curriculum with diversified choices. The New Academic Structure was introduced to:

- Prepare students better for the 21st century – for whole-person development & lifelong learning, for all to succeed
- Continue to increase the competitiveness of HK as an international city by enhancing human resources in all facets
- Improve Critical Thinking Skills, Communication Skills and Creativity.

Schools have tried to enhance their students' learning motivation and help them realise their potential through the introduction of a Liberal Studies programs. The HKSAR Government Education Bureau has learnt much from the continuous student population decline in the last few years. The Bureau is aiming to provide strong school development so as to sustain the quality of education and exploring ways to best alleviate the grave difficulties facing HKSAR schools.

The HKSAR Government Education Bureau, has committed considerable energy to the development, design, implementation and evaluation of contextually-relevant leadership development schemes for aspiring, newly appointed and experienced school principals as well as front-line leaders in international schools. These projects include:

#### **Blue Skies: A Professional Learning Programme for Beginning Principals**

A twelve months programme for Beginning Principals which matches them with experienced principals to learn about real issues within their school contexts.

#### **Blue Line: A Professional Learning Body for Serving Principals**

The Blue Line is a leadership learning programme which has been specifically designed for experienced principals. The programme aims to enrich and reinforce the purposeful construction of collaborative and shared leadership learning, and stresses the need for principals to take professional control of and responsibility for their own learning.

#### **Serving principals Needs Analysis Programme (SpNAP)**

An ongoing flexible needs analysis scheme for serving principals in Hong Kong. This Programme aims to stimulate serving principals' curiosity about their leadership and to use the resulting insights to challenge their present beliefs and ways of operating. They may well uncover new, different or even more meaningful ways of leading their students, teachers and the broader school community.

#### **Preparation for Principalship Course (PFP Course)**

A comprehensive series of courses designed to better prepare aspiring principals for their future roles. This project is the first of its kind in Hong Kong. It is ongoing and to date has served over 400 principal aspirants.

#### **Needs Assessment for Newly Appointed Principals in Hong Kong (NAFPhk[NAP])**

A comprehensive needs assessment scheme for newly-appointed principals in Hong Kong. Almost all principals taking up their position from 2000-2004 have participated in this scheme.

### **The Prominence of Coaching Colleges and “Star” Coaches**

No report of education in Hong Kong would be complete without mention of the prominence of coaching colleges and the film-star like glamorising of successful coaches. Capitalising on the competitive nature of the society and the emphasis placed on school examinations these colleges thrive on the desire of parents to ensure their children have the best chances of gaining a university education. The more successful coaches attract salaries as high as HK\$ 1 million or more. They are often depicted as young, well dressed, energetic and good looking individuals. Expensive television advertisements give them rock-star status. As such they have become celebrities in Hong Kong society.



# SINGAPORE

## SINGAPORE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (MOE)

Our first morning in Singapore consisted of a detailed briefing at the Ministry of Education offices (MOE). This included an overview of school education in Singapore, an outline of leadership development programs, information about quality assurance processes and a glimpse of the 'School Cockpit' an integrated information management system. This was a wonderful orientation which prepared us for our week visiting several schools and a briefing from the National Institute of Education and attending the Holistic Assessment Conference.



### OVERVIEW OF SINGAPORE EDUCATION (Ms Lin Ziyu)

After our introduction and welcome from the Director General Ms Ho Peng, Ms Lin Ziyu from MOE, a very hands-on operator with a background as a primary principal, gave an excellent snapshot of education in the nation state, which with over 500 000 students is somewhat larger in numbers but more concentrated in size than NSW.

Lin Ziyu explained that Singapore is in the throes of a significant change process. While the country rates highly in both international PISA and TIMSS rankings, it is looking beyond this towards a future where the economy and nation will require high order competencies. The focus on building both the nation and the child was clearly reflected in the schools which we later visited. Education is seen as critical to the survival of the nation.

The system is moving towards a learner-centred philosophy to match a less streamed and subject-based curriculum, emphasising holistic education. MOE recognises that teachers need significant support to change their pedagogy to teach and assess 21st century competencies – towards more engaging pedagogy, more emphasis on physical education, arts and music, and more holistic assessment .

In acknowledging diversity in schooling there is now greater emphasis on 'levelling up' of disadvantaged students (through pre-school provision, early intervention and financial support) and training teachers to support students with special needs.

To promote quality teaching, the Ministry now recruits from the top 30% of university graduates, and anticipates that by 2015 all teachers will have graduate qualifications. A 'GROW' approach addresses teacher Growth, Recognition, Opportunities and Wellbeing, and it is acknowledged that remuneration, career development and work/life balance need to be addressed in order to keep good teachers in the profession.

## EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP *(Dr Michael de Silva, Deputy Director Leadership Development)*

Michael de Silva reiterated that Singapore is looking 30 years ahead to the survival of the nation, acknowledging regional and world issues and recognising the importance of education in producing the workers and citizens of the future. The system is moving from an English model based O and A levels with summative assessment and streaming to a more sophisticated and flexible approach.

To develop future leaders the Educational Leadership Development Centre has been established to ensure strategic direction and coherence in the work of the Ministry, the National Institute of Education (which provides professional learning) and the Academy of Principals. This group works to provide 'top down support for ground up initiatives'. Michael outlined in detail how the system identifies potential leaders; helps decide suitability and readiness, and matches officers to school vacancies. Briefly:

- Three career tracks are catered for – *Teaching, Leadership* and *Senior Specialist*. All require a successful teaching background.
- Everything is grounded in a philosophy of leadership which includes principles such as *values and purpose, shared vision, commitment to growing people and leading and managing change*.
- This is supported by a 3-Level framework including *Lead* (identification & selection) *Learn* (training & development) and its *Leverage* (system support) which applies to leaders at every level.
- A wide variety of learning opportunities is provided such as work attachments at school or head office, professional development leave, scholarships, customised courses, overseas study trips, sabbaticals, and structured leadership programs.
- A School Cluster system (4 zones, each with 7 clusters with about 12 schools each) supports principals and encourages networking, collaboration between schools and peer support.

We were interested to hear that teachers are graded A-D each year on performance (for salary progression) and CEP (currently estimated potential) based on intellectual capacity, ability to work with others and drive, stamina and resilience. Those with high CEP are identified, nurtured, offered full-time, paid development programs (e.g. 4 months, then 6 months), put through intensive practical selection processes at an assessment centre and appointed to vacancies that best suit their talents. While any system operates within its own context, this overview gave us food for thought in comparison with the leadership preparation and recruitment systems we are more familiar with.

## SCHOOL EXCELLENCE MODEL: QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM *(Mr Lee Kok Hong, Senior Quality Assessor, School Appraisal Branch)*

The School Excellence Model (SEM) is an annual school self-assessment tool to help schools identify areas for improvement, draw up action plans and integrate strategies into school operations. *Enablers* such as leadership, staff management, strategic planning and resources are assessed as well as results including student and staff results, administration *results* and partnership and society results. The aim is to 'put schools in the driver's seat' to initiate change and improvement.

Every 6 years an external validation is conducted to validate this process and ensure consistency across the system. A *Feedback Report* is provided but is not available to the public. Mr Lee believes that the SEM has raised the professionalism of school leadership and staff and increased schools' capability to move towards becoming world class organisations.

Any schools which appear to be underperforming (this is quite uncommon) are supported by their Cluster Superintendent and their peers. It was interesting to hear that principals are rotated among schools every 5-6 years by MOE. Vice principals are also rotated though not so often.

Each school is also encouraged to excel in an area which is relevant to their community (At Admiralty Primary School it was nation – building) and seek a Singapore Quality Award at Achievement, Best Practice or School Excellence Level. We observed that these awards were highly prized by schools.

## THE SCHOOL COCKPIT *(Ms Anne Seow Eng Ling)*

We were given a brief overview of an integrated data management system for schools. Since 2002 the 'School Cockpit' system has evolved to manage student data and school management elements. It also shares data with other government agencies. School and HQ staff are regularly trained to enhance their use of the system.

The system serves over 300 Singapore schools, providing school administration support for 30,000 teachers and 500,000 students. The system is a fully integrated, web-based system that enables teachers to perform day-to-day school administration activities such as lesson planning, timetabling, attendance tracking, assessments and results, progression and awards. It encompasses a comprehensive and integrated suite of IT systems to support the administrative functions and operations in schools and promotes the productivity of teachers, heads of department and school leaders by facilitating management of school and student-related information and work processes.

While it has reportedly eased school operation and administration efforts and reduced costs, we were reminded that it had to 'fit' and support the new focus on holistic, child-centred decision-making and to help teachers carry out their work better. Thus, the student report card is titled the Holistic Development Profile.

## PRIMARY EDUCATION REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION (PERI) COMMITTEE AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT SEMINAR *(Keynote Presenter, Dr Anne Davies)*

The tour group had the honour of being invited to a major seminar conducted by the Ministry's the Primary Education Review and Implementation (PERI) Committee. Attended by the Minister for Education, Ms Grace Fu, and in excess 1600 teachers, principals and system administrators, the seminar examined PERI's findings and especially the recommended holistic assessment processes.

PERI was charged with covering two broad areas.



- To balance the acquisition of knowledge with the development of skills and values through increased use of engaging pedagogies; more holistic assessment to support pupils' learning and development; and a stronger emphasis on non-academic aspects within the curriculum.
- To provide more resources in the areas of manpower, funding and infrastructure to support the proposed changes.

A major PERI recommendation was that:

*The future of primary education should be about developing well-balanced and confident children who enjoy learning as they build strong fundamentals in both knowledge and skills during their foundational years of education.*



*Panel members at the Holistic Assessment Seminar*



*Ms Grace Fu, Singapore's Minister for Education (2nd from right) with ISEA tour group members*

Accordingly the need to develop a more holistic approach to the assessment of student-learning outcomes became necessary if the broader objectives of education were to be assessed.

### **CHIJ OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL (Principal, Ms Catherine Seah)**

The substantial turmoil in the world's economic climate is reflected in the need to create an adaptive education system in Singapore. This message is quickly reinforced by a visit to CHIJ-Our Lady of Good Counsel.



The conclusion is that educational reform in Singapore is not only concerned about the here and now, but also a sustainable national future and thus continued societal stability. Innovation, creativity, self-learning and cooperation are prerequisites for success of the individual and the long-term growth of the nation.



As you walk through the corridors of CHIJ - Our Lady of Good Counsel and listen to the words of Principal Catherine Seah, you can feel her pride when she explains how the teachers strive to be creative and innovative in delivering the curriculum to enhance the creativity and thinking skills of students. Catherine's strong and abiding faith is demonstrated in the visionary teaching and learning that is evident for all students at CHIJ. Her vision is an extension of the Singapore ethos which supports the holistic development of the children, especially in instilling the accepted values and how they relate to others.

*Together, we build a Christ-centred community for the promotion of truth, justice, freedom and love, nurturing and developing our pupils to their full potential, with special reference to the needs of pupils who are disadvantaged in any way, Catherine Seah concluded.*



*Ms Catherine Seah, Principal CHIJ Our Lady of Good Counsel (2nd from right) and ISEA tour group members*

## NIE GRADUATE STUDIES AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING *(Associate Professor Ng Pak Tee, Associate Dean)*

### LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS, OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



The 21st Century is an exciting time for education in Singapore. There is constant talk of the need to re-examine old ways of thinking & acting & of the concomitant need for flexibility, creativity & innovation. Thus the significance of the roles played by school leaders has gained in recognition. In response the NIE has developed a suite of professional development programs for current & aspiring school leaders.

Offered at post-graduate level the candidates become involved in long term, research-based, action-orientated leadership developmental programs. Such programs carry credit towards postgraduate degrees.

### NIE ICT IN EDUCATION *(Assistant Principal Joyce Koh, Learning Sciences and Technologies)*

For teacher education to evolve & remain relevant for 21st Century strong educational leadership was essential to inspire changes in schools to meet the growing educational challenges. The Professional Development Continuum Model was an NIE initiative which encourages teachers to upgrade their skills.

ICT in education plays a pivotal role in the imparting of knowledge in the digital age. With the leverage of technology, pedagogies can now be refined to ensure that the learning process is current and responsive to the growing needs of a rapidly evolving education climate.

### JURONG SECONDARY SCHOOL *(Principal Tham Kine Thong)*

The Jurong Secondary School was established in 1963 and over the years has undergone several upgrades including a more extensive upgrade in 2001. As a result the school has expanded to 1370 students and 90 members of staff.



Education in Singapore is undergoing significant change and is focusing on students having a good sense of self-awareness, sound moral characters, and the necessary skills & knowledge to take on future challenges. The system aims to develop confident & self-directed learners who are active contributors & concerned citizens. Part of the change is to move from formal state exams to school-based holistic assessments.

Since 1997 three Master ICT Plans have been introduced into Singapore Schools, the first being for ICT in Education (1997 – 2002) setting a strong foundation for schools to harness ICT, particularly in the provision of basic ICT infrastructure and in equipping teachers with a basic level of ICT.

The second Master Plan for ICT in Education (2003–2008) built on this foundation to strive for an effective & pervasive use of ICT in education by, for example, strengthening the integration of ICT into the curriculum, establishing ICT standards for students, & seeding innovative use of ICT among schools.

The third Master Plan is to transform the learning environments of students. In particular the professional development of teachers in the use of ICT within the classroom is a high priority in Singapore. The Ministry trains teachers with strong pedagogical groundings to model & lead ICT professional development efforts.

The school is one of 12 schools within a Cluster of schools. It has been established as a Future School emphasising ICT throughout the curriculum. It is to provide leadership and the sharing of best practices & successful innovations for the other schools within the cluster in the use of ICT in the classroom.

The school has set goals for all students to acquire the necessary ICT skills to support their learning and teachers are encouraged to use and embed ICT within each lesson as much as possible. Part of being an ICT competent user is also to respect oneself and others and to be a safe and responsible user of ICT.



### **ADMIRALTY PRIMARY SCHOOL (Mr. Tony Tan, Cluster Superintendent and Ms Soh Lian, Principal)**

*"Building a Nation-Teach Less-Learn More":*

Singapore turns 45 in 2010. Not old enough to be a baby boomer and fewer growing pains. A proud Principal, Lim Soh Lian, quietly explained that her school, Admiralty Primary School, opened in 1997 with 45 classes. Today it has 2,300 students operating in two shifts with two teaching staffs. Her challenge was to provide this vast number of students with a quality education founded on sound moral and national values. "We are building a nation with one resource only... our people", she said.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has been transforming learning in Singapore. The new holistic learning initiatives are set to change the fundamental nature of education in Singapore. In particular are the issues of understanding an engaged learning paradigm & establishing signposts for the shift from centralised student evaluation to holistic school based assessment.

The challenge for Singaporean schools is to go beyond the form of the initiative and to bring real, substantial and sustainable educational change through this movement.

They will do this because they must.

