

# **External School Review Report**

## **Sacred Heart Canossian College**

**School Address:** LG/F-6/F 2 Chi Fu Close Chi Fu Fa Yuen Pokfulam  
Hong Kong (Excluding Chapel & Quarters)

**Review Period :** 30 April, 2, 6, 7 and 10 May 2024

Quality Assurance Division  
Education Bureau  
August 2024

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

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

# 1. External School Review Methodology

- 1.1 The ESR team conducted the review in April and May 2024 to validate the school self-evaluation (SSE) and its impact on the school’s development. Suggestions are made to facilitate the school’s continuous improvement and development.
- 1.2 The ESR team employed the following methods to understand the situation of the school:
- Scrutiny of documents and data provided by the school before and during the ESR;
  - Observation of 46 lessons taught by 46 teachers;
  - Observation of various school activities, such as the flag-raising ceremony, morning assemblies, Foundress Week activities, life-wide learning activities; and
  - Meetings and interviews with the key stakeholders of the school, including the school management<sup>1</sup>, teachers, specialist staff, parents and students.

# 2. Current Development of the School

- 2.1 Founded by the Canossian Daughters of Charity in 1860, the school aims at providing an all-round education of Christian values and formation of the heart to empower youngsters to be women of integrity and versatility with global awareness.
- 2.2 The class structure approved by the Education Bureau and the number of students<sup>2</sup> in the current school year are as follows:

Level	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	Total
Number of Classes	6	6	6	6	6	6	36
Number of Students	180	129	134	132	119	111	805

- 2.3 In recent years, a number of experienced teachers have either retired or tendered resignation with almost 20% of the teachers newly joining the school in the 2023/24 school year. The Principal has been serving the school for many years while both Vice-Principals (VPs) were appointed in the 2023/24 school year.
- 2.4 In the last ESR in 2010, the school was recommended to (1) enhance shared understanding and practice among teachers; and (2) stretch students’ potential in independent learning.

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

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

- 2.5 The major concerns of the current school development cycle (2021/22 to 2023/24 school years) are: (1) empowering students to be committed self-directed learners; (2) grooming students to be grateful, value-driven young people, ready to serve and share with others; and (3) providing an energising environment for learning and teaching to take place.

### 3. External School Review Findings

**3.1 The school is committed to driving its continuous development through the SSE with a participatory approach; a holistic evaluation of school work against student performance could be enhanced.**

3.1.1 The school attaches great importance to the SSE and has made strenuous effort to evaluate and improve its work. A participatory approach is adopted in implementing the planning-implementation-evaluation cycle, and the decision making process is transparent. All teaching staff are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of implementation strategies, providing suggestions on the school's development direction, and deciding on different profiles of Sacred Heartists, which enhances their ownership and consensus. Students' views are also collected through different channels, such as the School Development and Advisory Committee (SDAC) and Head Girl Core Group, in which students are involved in school policy-making. For instance, in the review of the optimising measures at the senior secondary (SS) level, student representatives have reflected the views on behalf of their fellow schoolmates on timetabling at the SDAC meeting. Highly respected and valued, students' voices are taken into consideration in the formulation of school policies.

3.1.2 The school's development direction is appropriately formulated with reference to students' attributes, the latest educational development trends and the seven learning goals. For instance, the major concern of grooming students to be grateful and value-driven young people has been appropriately devised taking into consideration the trend of promoting a healthy lifestyle and the negative impact brought about by the epidemic on students' growth. Tying in well with student learning, however, the target of empowering students to be committed self-directed learners is rather broad without spelling out the expected student performance in terms of self-directed learning (SDL) capabilities. Concrete targets in relation to student learning should be set to facilitate a more focused evaluation. The strategies devised are generally feasible, with an emphasis on student learning within and beyond the classroom, tapping well the strengths of different stakeholders, parents and students in particular. Most subject panels and committees plan their work based on their specific context in close alignment with the school's development direction.

3.1.3 Despite regular reviews on individual tasks, evaluations at both school and subject/ committee levels tend to focus more on reporting work progress, albeit occasional incorporation of students' and teachers' perception. Leveraging the launch of the enhanced School Development and Accountability framework, the school has taken the initiative to further refine the SSE work this school year with more rigorous use of evaluation data. An SSE team has been swiftly set up to examine the data collected for a thorough level-based analysis to identify any anomalies, and to conduct focus group interviews with target students to further understand their needs. Building on this, the school should set more concrete targets, and further enhance its evaluation with an integrative use of qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the impact of strategies on student learning to drive its continuous development.

**3.2 A learning community with a climate of professional sharing has been created; the strong support from different stakeholders and external working partners enriches student learning experiences.**

3.2.1 The tactically-devised staff development plan is comprehensive, effectively facilitating the implementation of school work. It encompasses school-based initiatives and joint-school programmes, available both locally and abroad, tailored to meet the diverse needs of different target groups, including the newly-recruited teachers. A climate of professional exchange has been created through various internal sharing sessions, department-based programmes, and focused peer lesson observation. Besides, the school has extensively tapped support and resources from the IMC members, sister schools under the same school sponsoring body, alumnae and various external working partners, to enhance teachers' professional capacity and to enrich students' learning experiences. Both alumnae and parents maintain close communication with the school and actively engage in various activities. They have become the school's companions in fostering its continuous development and actualising its heritage.

3.2.2 The school management, middle managers and teachers are committed to providing students with rich learning experiences. Close communication has been established among them through such channels as the weekly Staff Information Session and general staff meetings, which keeps teachers well informed of the latest development of the school. Sharing a sense of collegial culture and trust, teachers are dedicated and supportive to one another. Steering committees have been appropriately set up with members appointed from different subject panels and committees to effectively foster their collaboration over some key initiatives like information technology in education and Entrepreneurship Education. The middle managers are given a high degree of autonomy in planning and carrying out their work towards the school's development direction, with most displaying competence

in leading the development of the units under their charge.

**3.3 Rich learning experiences are provided to foster students' whole-person development; curriculum planning at the junior secondary (JS) level needs strengthening.**

3.3.1 The school has been committed to offering a wide range of life-wide learning activities to foster students' whole-person development. With the lesson time released from optimising the four SS core subjects, an Activities Week has been tactically organised to extend the learning of students beyond the classroom. During the week, in addition to the workshops and adventurous activities catering for students' interests and developing their potential, local field trips are arranged to connect students' classroom learning with the community from such perspectives as history and natural environment. Besides, students are well engaged in different theme-based Mainland and overseas study tours, the long-standing tradition of service learning in Cambodia, and various national and international visits and competitions on STEAM education and music. All these not only effectively broaden students' horizons, but also enhance their understanding of our country and their global perspectives.

3.3.2 In response to the latest educational development trends, the school has taken a proactive step to review the progress and coverage of Information Literacy (IL) education in the school curriculum, making proper reference to the "IL for Hong Kong Students" Learning Framework. Upon review, some topics are found missing and have been rightly supplemented in the curriculum of the home periods. In the JS curriculum, however, some core learning elements in the Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE) Key Learning Area (KLA) and Technology Education KLA are lacking. The school should conduct a holistic review of the JS curriculum to help students acquire and construct a broad and solid knowledge foundation.

**3.4 Steady progress is made in the promotion of the SDL and STEAM education; effective measures are taken to create a positive reading atmosphere.**

3.4.1 A number of measures have been employed to nurture students to be committed self-directed learners. Higher-order thinking skills are well promoted by equipping JS students with a set of systematic thinking approaches in different subjects, and providing them with various platforms to apply these thinking skills beyond the classroom, including Project-Based Learning (PBL) and the Sacred Heart Enterprise Challenge. Different subjects have been developing various online learning resources and adopting the flipped classroom approach to promote self-learning. In recent years, with the launch of Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) policy, peer interaction and assessment have been promoted in lessons to enhance students' engagement and reflection in the learning process, further nurturing their SDL capabilities.

3.4.2 The school has a clear direction for the development of STEAM education, promoting it for all, the interested and the elite. STEAM learning elements are properly incorporated into the KLA-based projects for JS students to integrate and apply relevant knowledge and skills through hands-on and minds-on learning activities. Workshops are also arranged in the PBL for interested students to explore the use of artificial intelligence (AI), robotic coding, and virtual reality in authentic contexts. Talented students are recruited as STEM Ambassadors while training and local, Mainland and overseas visits are arranged to widen their exposure in the area. From the samples of student work scrutinised, students demonstrate their abilities to work out solutions by drawing on the knowledge and skills across disciplines to solve real-life problems. For example, in view of the recent local news concerning intruders disguised in school uniform trespassing school premises, some students design a smart gate with the use of AI and their knowledge of the facial features of males and females to identify the gender of the person entering the school.

3.4.3 Effective measures have been put in place to foster students' reading habits and interests. Reading sessions are scheduled regularly in the timetable for students to enjoy reading. Extensive reading is well promoted through the provision of a good variety of subject-based reading tasks and materials in different subjects, and the joint effort by subject panels and the school librarian in organising lunchtime teacher sharing and fun-filled activities like audiobook recording. A wide range of enjoyable reading activities, such as author talks and theatre shows, are organised to develop students' reading interest. Students are highly engaged in reading books of different genres and topics during the morning reading session, and a strong reading atmosphere prevails.

### **3.5 Students display sincere learning attitudes with exceptional English language proficiency; the good practices of adopting questions to develop students' higher-order thinking skills should be further promoted.**

3.5.1 Students are highly disciplined and attentive, and they exhibit sincere learning attitudes in lessons. They pay close attention to teachers' instructions and complete learning tasks diligently. Teachers have good rapport with students. They conduct various activities such as drama and learner presentations to enhance students' engagement, effectively facilitating their acquisition of subject knowledge and development of generic skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students are able to produce work of good quality, with some displaying higher-order thinking skills by delving into their preferred topics and analysing the learning content from their perspective. Most students demonstrate effective communication skills and are trilingual, with exceptional proficiency in English. However, some students are hesitant to ask questions when facing learning difficulties, and they could be encouraged to take more initiative to improve their learning.

3.5.2 Lessons are conducted with clear learning objectives. Teachers frequently use questioning to check students' understanding and some ask a range of questions to clarify students' learning concepts, provoke their thinking and stimulate class discussion. In the more effective lessons, scaffolding and questioning are well adopted to facilitate students' learning of abstract and difficult concepts, and to develop their higher-order thinking skills and creativity. These practices could be further promoted among teachers. To cater for learner diversity, teachers generally monitor students' progress closely and provide individual support to those in need. Peer learning tasks and peer assessment are arranged in some lessons to optimise the collaboration and participation of learners of different abilities. In lessons promoting peer assessment, teachers share clear assessment criteria with students. Students are able to give constructive comments to their peers and some use the comments to refine their work, displaying effective peer learning.

3.5.3 Appropriate measures are adopted to develop students' SDL capabilities. While some teachers use the flipped classroom strategy to encourage students to gain prior knowledge of the learning content, some provide additional references to consolidate and extend student learning. In lessons incorporating e-learning elements, teachers and students are well-versed in using e-learning tools. For instance, teachers conduct e-learning games to enhance learners' interest and utilise e-learning apps to showcase students' learning outcomes and facilitate collaborative learning. Students can master the use of e-learning tools to do research and articulate their ideas.

### **3.6 Values education is well promoted by integrating the elements of cognition, affection and action within and beyond the classroom.**

3.6.1 The school has all along highly valued students' character development. It has continuously refined the school-based values education framework, appropriately incorporating the school's core values, character strengths, and the priority values and attitudes promulgated by the EDB. These values are strategically promoted through regular lessons, and different activities outside the classroom, including student-led daily prayers and the setting up of a garden ornamented with religious items. These measures creates a favourable environment, fostering students' moral and spiritual growth and filling the campus with peace and tranquility. To allow students to practise these positive values, appealing hands-on activities, like making preserved flowers, are organised under the Love Project throughout the year for students to express love and gratitude to their mothers. Opportunities abound for students to serve and learn through service learning in the community and overseas, with their abilities and interests well taken into account. For instance, while more guidance and support are provided for JS students to conduct service, SS students are tasked to self-initiate and plan different service programmes.



3.6.2 Good endeavour is made to cultivate students' national identity in the classroom by organically incorporating learning elements of national education into the curriculum. Although subject panels are conscious of embedding the national security education (NSE) elements in relevant learning content, no reference is made to the Curriculum Framework of NSE in Hong Kong for the coverage of the eight strands of NSE; more holistic planning is desirable. Various activities are also arranged to promote national education throughout the year, including the delivery of speech under the national flag by teachers and students, Chinese Culture Day with hands-on experience of traditional games and artwork, and different theme-based Mainland study tours. All these help foster students' understanding and appreciation of the Chinese culture, and the recent social and economic development of our country. During the national flag-raising ceremony, students demonstrate proper etiquette and show their respect for the ceremony.

3.6.3 Enhancing students' mental well-being is one of the school's priority tasks in the current development cycle, with a clear focus on developing students' positive outlook. Positive education is rightly promoted through regular home periods, and students' sharing and individual counselling for students in need. The school also devotes to developing students' diverse interests and stretching their potential in social, aesthetic and physical aspects. The campus is filled with an artistic atmosphere, with students practising singing and playing musical instruments, and artwork displays all around. Another worth-commending initiative is the Mental Well-being Ambassadors scheme, in which training is provided for selected students on positive psychology. They are then tasked to share knowledge about mental illness with their fellow schoolmates, promoting mental health and providing positive peer support to those in need.

**3.7 The long-established tradition of Sacred Heartists has been well preserved and passed down through generations; students demonstrate outstanding leadership qualities.**

3.7.1 A culture of passing on the torch has been well preserved in the school where SS students serve as role models, guiding and mentoring their younger counterparts. Such a culture is evident in various student-led activities, creating a caring and encouraging environment and sustaining the different profiles of Sacred Heartists like versatility, humility and perseverance. For example, S6 students act as tutors in the summer bridging programme, teaching their fellow S1 schoolmates subject knowledge and sharing personal experiences on various attributes of Sacred Heartists. As a well-established practice, the Student Handbook is thoughtfully developed every year by the Head Girls of the previous school year. With practical design and quality artwork, the Handbook contains the good wishes from the big sisters to their fellow schoolmates, and highlights the attributes of Sacred

Heartists in passages of interviews with outstanding alumnae.

3.7.2 Strenuous effort is also channeled to develop the potential of the talented. For example, students gifted in different areas are nominated as Ambassadors of Learning to join pull-out programmes, and territory-wide and international competitions. Students at large are also encouraged to step out of their comfort zone and given autonomy to organise various activities. For instance, realising the needs of the children in the district, the executive committee members of the Music Society have initiated a service project to share the joy of music with those in need by providing them with free music education. Similarly, the executive committee members of the Student Union have also launched some new activities in response to the needs of fellow schoolmates, including offering hot chocolate in winter along with busking and free hugs, to show care and love to one another. The successful completion of these activities recognises teachers' ongoing support and guidance and, at the same time, celebrates students' leadership qualities and SDL capabilities.

3.7.3 The school provides students with systematic life planning education, including self-understanding and early career planning for JS students, and career exploration and management for SS students. With the support of an extensive network of alumnae spanning a range of fields, different activities, such as internship programmes, experiential learning activities with simulated work settings, and career talks, are aptly organised to equip students with relevant knowledge and skills in exploring their further studies and career development. In addition to business manners and interview skills, proper emphasis is also put on work values to guide students to explore the meaning of work and job satisfaction. During the interview, students generally articulate clear goals and display good career awareness with careful consideration given to individual attributes, demonstrating their strong learning motivation and confidence in making informed decision.

### **3.8 Students are graceful, modest and eager to serve; their performance in both academic and non-academic areas is excellent.**

3.8.1 Students are graceful, modest and self-disciplined, and they maintain a harmonious relationship with their peers and teachers. Showing a strong sense of belonging to the school, they enjoy their school life and are passionate about taking part in various school activities, especially those artistic ones such as music, art and dancing. They show empathy towards the needs of others and are eager to serve. Student leaders are responsible and they demonstrate remarkable leadership skills and initiative in organising quality activities. They are also mature enough to voice sensible suggestions to the school for ongoing improvement on behalf of their fellow schoolmates.

3.8.2 Students' overall academic performance is excellent. In the past three years, the percentages of students meeting the general entrance requirements for local undergraduate university programmes and sub-degree

courses in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination were above the territory averages of day school students. Taking into account the S1 intake, the school attained excellent results in the HKDSE Examination in the past three years.

3.8.3 Students have attained outstanding non-academic achievements in the fields of arts and sports, winning various group and individual awards in inter-school and territory-wide competitions such as dance, music, speech and swimming. Students have won championships in some territory-wide STEAM competitions. They have also been awarded some group and individual prizes in international music and scholarly competitions.

## 4. Conclusion and Way Forward

The school rightly adopts a participatory approach in implementing the planning-implementation-evaluation cycle where students' voices are highly respected and valued. The teaching team is dedicated and a learning community is built. With the unceasing support from stakeholders, alumnae in particular, students are provided with rich learning experiences, which fosters their whole-person development. The promotion of values education, with Catholic education at its core, permeates the school curriculum, appropriately integrating the elements of cognition, affection and action within and beyond the classroom. A learning environment conducive to students' moral and spiritual growth is created, filling the campus with peace and tranquility. The culture of passing down the school's well-established tradition of Sacred Heartists has been well preserved through generations. Students are graceful, modest and eager to serve, and they exhibit sincere learning attitudes. They display good communication skills in and outside the classroom with exceptional English language proficiency. Student leaders are actively involved in the formulation of school policies and organisation of various self-initiated activities, fully demonstrating their maturity and outstanding leadership qualities.

Looking ahead, the school needs to make reference to the following suggestions to facilitate self-improvement and enhance continuous development.

- 4.1 The school shows commitment in driving its continuous development by taking an initiative to refine its self-evaluation work under the enhanced School Development and Accountability framework. Building on this, the school should set concrete targets with expected student learning outcomes in mind, and conduct a more focused evaluation to better understand the impact of school work on student learning.