

CURRICULUM & SUPPORT GROUPS REPORT

English as an Additional Language (Prim+Sec)

Due to the enormous focus on EAL throughout ESF, the EAL cross-phase curriculum group was fortunate to be allocated two full curriculum days, as well as two twilight meetings in 2000-2001.

Last year there were two major projects focussing on EAL awareness which have come into fruition this year. The first project requested that curriculum groups spend time considering the needs of EAL students in their specific subject areas followed up by suggestions for EAL user-friendly programmes of work and activities. These ideas are now available on the Shambles website.

The second project was in the hands of Carol Ford and the EAL teachers at Sha Tin College, and has resulted in an EAL Staff Development video and handbook which arrived in all ESF schools early May.

The first full day meeting was addressed by Janet Tan who joined the staff of Hong Kong International School this year. She is one of the Directors of the EAWP Summer Institute based in Kuala Lumpur, but readers who attended the Writing Workshops in Pattaya, Thailand may have met her there. She discussed motivating EAL students to write with the emphasis on the need for writing to be real, have purpose for the writer and come from the heart.

A great deal of time and thought throughout the year has been given over to assessment. The needs of KS2/3 transfer have raised a lot of concern and discussion and at this point in time the agreement across the phases has been to "standardise" EAL assessment so that all EAL teachers are using the same documentation and a child's English language development will continue smoothly despite moves within ESF schools, or transfer from primary to secondary. This is still in process.

More international schools have been invited to join our meetings this year. Most of these schools feed into ESF secondary schools so it is valuable to have them on board to contribute ideas and clarify issues. Many have also expressed interest in 'standardising' the assessment for EAL students, so that we will be supporting each other.

ESL in the Mainstream has continued to empower many more ESF teachers this year, and is now equipped to provide training specifically for Early Childhood teachers.

Our group will continue to promote EAL awareness and the richness the cultural diversity of both students and staff brings to the learning in our schools.

Helene Forrester-Brown / KJS



EDITOR'S NOTE

The ESF Curriculum and Support Groups are an important element in the ESF's culture of professional sharing.

The Chairs and Secretaries of these groups give considerably of their time in addition to their main school responsibilities without them the whole structure would simply not work.

To them and other group members ... many thanks.

Primary Art Group (Artefacts)

2000-2001 was another creative and productive year for the Artefacts team. In addition to the twilight meetings held throughout the year, we also met for a whole day at Kowloon Junior School to produce an 'EAL and Art' pack. This pack is an extremely useful one, crammed full of visual aids, photocopiable worksheets, wordlists and display ideas that will definitely benefit all children and their teachers. It will be introduced this year. A huge thank you to the whole team who worked tirelessly on this project.

Last year the Artefacts team would have introduced you to the guide called 'Making Sketchbooks Useful'. We hope you have found this resource stimulating and worthwhile. The team has been monitoring the use of sketchbooks throughout ESF Primary schools and the feedback has been excellent.

Last year we welcomed Kerry Howarth from Sha Tin Junior School to the team, a most welcome addition of expertise and enthusiasm. The difficulty of communicating was a small but significant issue for the group last year and as a result Artefacts has gone hi-tech. A mailing list (listserv) has been formed for members to post messages, ideas, minutes and questions.

This year's focus for the group will be 'ICT and Art'. We will be looking at various programmes, web sites and activities that incorporate the creative techniques of IT and Art. So IT specialists watch out, we will be picking your brains for ideas.

I am confident that this year will also be an extremely productive one due to the continued commitment and hard work of all our members.

Ross Dawson / KJS



Secondary Deputy Principals

2000 – 2001 was another challenging year for the Secondary Deputy Principal's group. On the curriculum front the year has been dominated by 'Curriculum 2000' issues, with the introduction of the new AS Levels into all the schools and the continuing I.B. Pilot at Sha Tin College. These issues will continue to be a key area of discussion next year.

Sadly, the group has some farewells to say again this year. Our 'biggest' is to John Freeman, who is 'retiring' after 28 years in Hong Kong, including 12 years at Island School and 16 years at Sha Tin College. We shall miss John's contributions to the group and in particular we shall miss his good humour. We wish him and Jan a restful and relaxing future.

The group also bids, what we hope is only 'au revoir', to Eric Jabal and Ian McKirdy, who have been Acting Deputy Principals this year at SIS. We have valued their input to the group and we hope to work with them again soon.

Congratulations must be given to three people – Lynne Burt (KGV) and Jane Foxcroft (WIS) who have been appointed Deputy Principal at their respective schools, against stiff external competition, and to Siu Ming Cheung (WIS) who has been seconded as Project Director to the ESF Foundation Office.

Despite our losses the group will in fact swell in numbers next year. We look forward to welcoming Annabel Stoddard as Deputy Principal to SIS, Richard Dyer as Acting Deputy Principal at WIS and four Assistant Principals from Sha Tin College. Last year, Sha Tin College had the honour of providing the only stability within the secondary schools with no changes in their DP group – this year this falls to Island School!

Topics for discussion in 2001-02 include the wider issues of School Self-Evaluation and Inspection, 'Curriculum 2000', I.B. provision and the possibility of middle management training.

My thanks go to the entire group for all their efforts. We continue to provide mutual support, which I know from personal experience, is valued by new colleagues. Special thanks should go to Caryl Hartwright who steered the group well last year and who has 'eased' me into my new role as Chairperson. We look forward to another challenging year!

Michelle Hughes / IS



MAILING LISTS - LISTSERVS

During 2000-2001 there has been one common development across many of the groups which has improved communication.

This has been the increased use of email and also the establishment of mailing lists (listservs) so that group members can not only have a central address list but also a place on the internet to store files and archive messages.

Most of these groups are private so you need to contact the chairperson of your own group for details of how to join.

There is also a listserv solely for the chairs of groups themselves, if you are eligible to join then simply send an email message to ESFchairs-subscribe@yahoo.com for automatic subscription.



Primary Deputy Principals

The Primary Deputy Principals have had another busy and stimulating year. The discussion paper produced by the Group during 1999 – 2000 on "An International Curriculum" was finalised early in the year and copies were circulated to David Coles and members of the Principals Group. This paper was initially intended as part of the preparation for a middle management course which the Deputy Principals had proposed to run during 2000 – 2001 but in the absence of central funding for the course, it was felt that it could perhaps be a focus for dialogue between the Principals and Deputy Principals Groups.

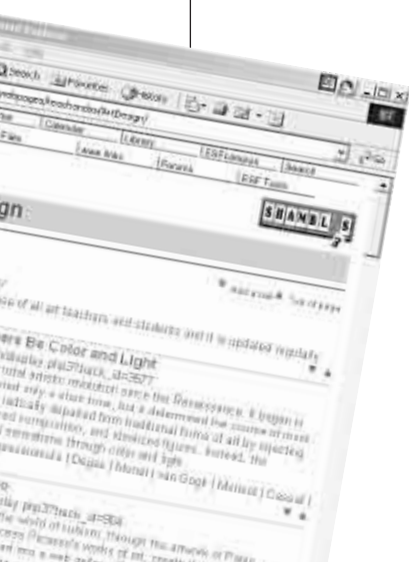
At the second twilight meeting of the year it was decided unanimously that Admissions issues should provide the agenda for our Conference Day in March, since it was an area not only of concern to those in the Group but one in which all members were involved.

The day itself was tremendous! Following an input on the background to the current Admissions procedures from Perry Tunesi, the Group brainstormed the main issues which they felt needed to be addressed and from this list, five key issues were highlighted and discussed frankly, passionately and at length. By the end of the day a paper had been formulated listing the issues and also recommendations on a way forward which had been agreed by the Group.

A sub-group met with David Coles in April to discuss and clarify the points raised in the paper and shortly afterwards Carole Denny and myself were invited to attend two Principals' meetings to discuss these issues and possible resolutions. These meetings were very positive and encouraging progress was made on standardising dates and procedures in the Admissions process for 2002 – 3 onwards.

We look forward to being able to continue this dialogue in the coming year under the chairmanship of Simon Walton.

Paul Hamblin / Kennedy School





Primary Language Group

Another interesting and productive year for the Primary Language group. Last year seemed to be one for connecting with other curriculum groups.

The Primary Language Group forged closer links with both the EAL Group and to a lesser degree the Assessment and Reporting Group. At the Key Stage 1 and 2 English Moderation Days, we were delighted to have Carole Denny from Kowloon Junior School present an excellent workshop on the Australian ESL Scales. This workshop was well received so we would like to extend our thanks to Carole for her time and effort. We look forward to working further with the EAL group.

Last year saw the group take greater control over the planning and presentation of the Moderation Days at all levels. While all three days had moderating aspects, they were also a vehicle for the delivery of powerful English INSET. Members of the Primary English Group were active as presenters at all three days. I would like to thank each of them for their time. It was exciting to see the involvement of the Primary Language Group in the Key Stage 2/3 Moderation Day. Presenting at this day gave us the opportunity to discuss literacy issues with our secondary colleagues. The group would like to thank Andrea Britton and Fran Crouch for inviting us to be a part of this day.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Chair, George-Ann Gunn for all her hard work and dedication. I would also like to welcome our new members and thank the whole group for their support and guidance and I look forward to working with you all to achieve our goal of sharing excellent practice and raising the profile of English in our schools.

Jo-Anne Dooner / QBS

Secondary Careers & Tertiary Education

Last year saw the E.S.F. secondary schools successfully send their UCAS applications through cyberspace, with few technical hitches. This was helped in no small way by the sharing and evaluation of the Electronic Application System (EAS) within the group over the past year or so.

Progress has also been made in developing our links with U.S.A. Higher Education. Jim Rowark fed back to the group on his tour of U.S. universities and plans are underway to give all members the opportunity to attend a conference on U.S. admissions in the coming year. In addition, we are also organising an E.S.F. Conference for U.S. College representatives on 8th October. The idea is to promote an understanding of E.S.F. schools and students. It will also provide an opportunity to explain Curriculum 2000 changes.

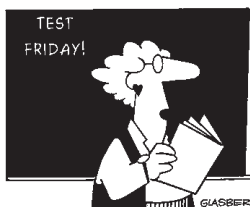
Martin Campion / SIS

Equal Opportunities Group

The last academic year saw the Equal Opportunities group consolidate its work on Anti-bullying and designate a new focus for the coming year. A great deal of time and effort was expended by all the coordinators, and the result is that all schools now have an anti-bullying policy and a catalogue of resources and ideas for staff to use. The area of anti-bullying was an interesting one that generated some interesting discussions and highlighted the wealth of knowledge and experience encompassed by the E.O. group. I would like to thank everyone involved in the meetings this year for their input and efforts.

This year the group will be aiming to develop a successful framework from which individual schools can build a policy supporting multiculturalism and anti-racism. This undertaking will be with the guidance of a new Chair, Annelise O'Gorman of Clearwater Bay School. Annelise was an indispensable Vice Chair last year, and will be a great success this.

Dominic Parry / KJS



"Class, I've got a lot of material to cover, so to save time I won't be using vowels today. Nw lts bgn, pls trn t pg 122."

MINUTES OF MEETINGS

One of the challenges of ESF curriculum and support groups is to ensure that their minutes inform not only their own members but also other Foundation members.

Groups are requested to send copies of their minutes to both ESF Education Officers, David Coles (primary) and David West (secondary) in whatever form is convenient (fax 2834 6881 or email eoofficer@esf.edu.hk).

In addition all groups are asked to email a copy of all minutes to ESFminutes@yahoo.com which archives them to be seen at :

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ESFminutes/messages>



SNAGS (Prim + Sec) (SEN)

The SNAGS group had another successful year in 2000-2001 pursuing our aim to improve the educational provision for our students with Special Educational Needs. As a cross phase group we were able to look at the whole ESF picture and focus on providing consistent and innovative programmes across all of our schools.

Last year was also a busy one with our group continuing our previous Ensuring Excellence projects with a focus on looking at best practice internationally. This has enabled us to further improve and develop our own practice in Hong Kong. At our whole day INSET we were presented with SEN models from England, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand and this enabled us to review our current model of provision in Hong Kong. It is incredible the depth of SEN knowledge and experience we have within our own group and I believe we need to utilise this knowledge more than we do at present.

We were privileged to have spent a morning at Jockey Club Sarah Roe School and it certainly is a fine example of educational provision for children with profound and multiple learning difficulties. My thanks to Anne Richardson, Michael Doherty and the staff of Sarah Roe for taking the time to show us around. We should be proud of this wonderful school and I recommend a visit to all ESF staff.

We have spent a large amount of time surveying our schools to try and get a factual and realistic situation regarding SEN provision. The results raised some interesting observations and issues relating to the numbers of children identified with Special Educational Needs, the methods of support, the amount of teaching staff dedicated to Special Needs provision and the amount of and use of Educational Assistant support. Thank you to Michael Wood for instigating and facilitating this survey. The results were presented to Principals and I am confident we now have the facts to ensure that the provision for children with Special Needs is met realistically and that all ESF schools develop the most suitable models for provision.

We look forward to this year when we shall be focussing our efforts on streamlining our documentation, looking at our assessment procedures and continuing to utilise our expertise within the group to increase our personal professional development. We will also focus on training and development for our Educational Assistants without whom our jobs would be impossible.

Fond farewells to our departing colleagues and I wish them all well in their new pursuits. Gail Wright has gleefully volunteered to chair the group this year and I am sure she will continue to promote the interests of all of our SEN staff and the children we are here for.

John Brewster / Peak School



Secondary Music Group

For a report from secondary music please go to page 65.

Primary Music Group

The Primary Music Curriculum Group enjoyed a stimulating and lively year of performing arts related days.

The 16th Orchestral Weekend, hosted by Island School, was extremely well attended with 150 children taking part.

The Performing Arts Day performances were highly entertaining and reflected the Arts programmes which are enthusing our Primary Schools and encouraging children to become more culturally aware. Our host this year was Kowloon Junior School.

The Saturday 'Singing Day' raised the roof at Clearwater Bay School with over 175 young singers hitting top 'C'.

Our INSET day mainly focused on E.A.L. issues, with the opportunity to analyse a typical teaching scenario in an E.S.F. classroom. Julie Harries, the E.A.L. specialist from Kennedy, led the energetic discussion following the lesson taught by Jacqueline Gourlay-Grant with a Year 4 class.

Brenda Peters led an excellent 'Brain Gym' practical session on children with special needs. We learned exercises that help children to tune in and focus quickly. We were convinced that this positive, active, clear and energetic approach supports all, not just children with learning difficulties.

The last twilight meeting was held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel to toast Lizbeth Grant (CWBS) as she leaves our shores this summer. Thank you everyone for making 2000-2001 a profoundly creative year.

Jacqueline Gourlay-Grant / Kennedy School





Secondary Modern Foreign Languages

Last year was a busy but productive time for us all. As well as continuing our discussions on a variety of issues, including strategies for delivery of the AS, feedback to Edexcel and Self Access Language Learning, the group's links were once again strengthened through joint projects such as the Languages Festival 2001 and the A/AS Level Oral Day.

At the first of our five meetings in 200-2001, members discussed exam results and how these could be maximized. We were able to compare our delivery and share materials and ideas for improving performance within the different skill areas. We were also keen to explore the possibilities of the SALL project, headed by Doug Taylor in our quest to foster and enhance autonomous language learning strategies in our students to support what we all do in the classroom. We look forward to the benefits that this project will bring to our students and ourselves from November 2001. Many thanks to Doug for all his work in realizing this project in the first place.

A central issue for us this year has been how we have all managed the AS Level and on this, as on other issues, the group has collaborated superbly: group members have helped to support each other through these difficult times, producing materials which have been shared as well as some very useful feedback for the examination board. We have planted the seeds for a video-conferencing session to take place with the examination board early next term to help us further in our planning and curriculum design.

The A/AS Level Oral Day, held on Saturday 5th May, was yet another highly successful function. On the day, students practised their speaking skills for the Unit 3, AS Level and the Module 3 and Module 4, A Level in French and, for the first time this year, in Spanish. They had all worked very hard to deliver their two-minute speeches to open the discussions and the feedback I received, both from staff and students after the event was terrific and made all the efforts worthwhile. An enormous note of thanks goes to all the teaching staff who gave up their Saturday to help the students prepare for their exams. I know it was appreciated.

Our final words of appreciation must go to Liz Muscroft who has informed and supported the group admirably and will be missed. All in all, thanks to the group members, this has been a hugely successful year for MFL in the ESF.

Merci. Gracias. Danke. Sheh sheh. Grazie. Todah.

Debbie Joshua / West Island School

The Languages Festival 2001

The Languages Festival 2001 was a sparkling event in the MFL calendar. It saw the Languages Faculties from all five ESF Secondary Schools combining their efforts to produce a wonderful extravaganza of performances in the different languages taught within the ESF and what an event it was!

In all, around 170 students performed at KGV to show off their linguistic talents and they wowed us with some very polished performances on the day. All the students made us, the teachers, very proud indeed. The fact that the Press, in the shape of Young Post journalist, Alan Lee, attended the show and wrote an article about us, which appeared in the Young Post on 13th April 2001, was just the icing on the cake!

We were delighted that Jennifer Wisker and Liz Muscroft came to the party as well! Our thanks go to all the languages teachers who put in so much effort to coach the students for the Festival. My personal thanks go to all the Heads of Faculty for their participation and support, Edgar Holl (SIS), Paul Tattam (STC), Marion John (IS). Special thanks must go to Steve Burnett for providing us with the technical expertise necessary to stage all the performances and arranging for the event to take place at KGV.

It was stunning!





Secondary Geography Group

After the double dose of A level INSET in 1999-2000 (Edexcel 3, OCR 2, a.e.t), last year saw less frantic activity, although several members of the group attended the 3-day IB Conference at IWC in March. IB seems to be revamping itself to incorporate some of the strengths of A-level .. meantime we were trying to adapt to the broadening of GCE towards something a little more like IB.

The new AS has caused problems . It has been difficult to prepare students to present a coursework proposal after only one term's work, instead of a full year as with the previous cohort. Marking the coursework . to a notional Y12 level rather than the established norms of Y13, has created conflict – how to maintain standards, yet not mark down work which is inevitably less competent than before.

The choice between coursework and a fieldwork-based exam has proved especially difficult to call, with most of us changing our minds during the course of the year. A comparison of the results will be interesting, but not necessarily conclusive, in deciding future policy.

The joint Vietnam fieldtrip, with KGV following in the groove established by SIS, was planned in the Autumn Term & took place in February 2001. Two mixed parties visited Dalat in the Highlands and Nha Trang on the coast. The trip proved very successful , with teachers from WIS and SGS making reconnaissance visits on the same outing. It is planned to repeat the trip in January 2002.

The focus last year was on KS5, and this year KS4 will be in the forefront as new syllabuses come in September 2001. Although all ESF schools are now using the same EDEXCEL A syllabus in Sixth Form, we hope that our present autonomy will be maintained for GCSE, where opinion is divided between the merits of London and the Midlands.

Easily the most satisfactory use of our time is when stodgy agenda items founder and we discuss resources. Map extracts, internet sources, videos which fill a specific gap are vigorously traded. This is what the group should be about .

And as surely as the seas do rise and the fjords fill , the earth turns upon its axis and the sun heads back towards the southern tropic , so Ian McKirdy will return as chairman of the group ere the equinox is upon us

Kenny Wright / KGV

Primary Geography Group

The Geography group had a very industrious year last year and we were lucky to have hard working and determined people on our team. We had to say goodbye to Yasmin Jamal, our chair who has been sorely missed but we also had a few new faces to help us out!

The groups main focus was to try to complete work started in the previous year. We have been compiling a bank of EAL vocabulary with pictures to support class teachers and to help children who might struggle with some of the more abstract vocabulary related to Geography topics and our local environment. This was actually quite a difficult task as it entailed roaming the web and searching for suitable pictures and also learning how to download these and present them in a suitable form. Thanks to Chris Smith who gave up much of his time to help us work out how best to achieve this. Well done to all those people who learnt a new thing or two along the way!

Another major task that our group have been involved in was completing a skills grid for key stage one and two that we hope will be very useful for informing place in our various schemes of work that are already in place in our schools. All of this work has been added to the Geography site on Shambles and so can be accessed by anyone who is interested in seeing what we got up to.

I would just like to say thanks to everyone as I know that we all devoted many hours to the Geography group last year and it is often hard to do this alongside other responsibilities. I hope you all agree that the results show it was all worthwhile.

Colette Davis / Bradbury



Secondary Science Development Group

During the past year, the Secondary Science Curriculum Development Group has busied itself addressing the new A/S and A-Level syllabuses, and in particular with the Directed Study aspect. The group recommended to the ESF that the Directed Study system be discontinued in favour of contact lessons for all practical subjects. It was deemed that the restricted contact time remaining to teach the subjects after facility for practical sessions had been apportioned was grossly inadequate.

The group also recommended that class sizes for science subjects be capped at a level as recommended by the Association for Science Education, and that the ESF appoint a safety officer to inspect all schools and advise on safety matters. The plight of laboratory technicians was also represented by recommendations that the conditions of service for technicians should be kept favourable, i.e. following the government conditions of service, so that experienced laboratory technicians will still be attracted to ESF schools.

On the question of INSET, the group recommended to the ESF that a major INSET be funded for all subjects on the theme of challenge at Key Stage 3 and related initiatives. Facilitators from the U.K. should be invited to run the courses.

R. J. Minns / Chairman SCDG



Primary Science Group.

2000-2001 was dominated by information technology. Our INSET day focused on e-board training with Chris Smith. We had not realised how much we had to learn! Differentiation within the group was 'wide'. As the day progressed this divide narrowed a little, I think.

Our goals were 'rose tinted' until we 'saw red'. The joys of I.C.T were experienced by one and all! We all left with more skills, which we were able to use with our classes. The limitations of the e-boards were also acknowledged, as websites need to be active. Our listserv:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PSSGinESF>

has been used throughout the year. This tool gives us access to all members of the group. The 'hot list' on useful science web sites will continue to grow.

A great deal of time and effort was spent on KS1 and KS2 Moderation days for science. I would like to thank the group for their help and the particular support from Jane Straker, Barbara Hunter, Mary Pennington and our colleagues Maureen Palmer, Chad Pheasant and Andrea Brittan. They all worked very hard to make the days a great success.

Barbara and Jane attended the Association of Science Education Conference and were able to feed back at meetings and share the latest trends and initiatives in science. This information was also disseminated through the Moderation days.

I have been most fortunate to work with all of you. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a special thank you to Jane Straker (secretary) and Mary Pennington (vice chairperson) for their help during the year. We bid farewell to Mary and wish her a happy new year in her new role as 'Mum'.

Our group are pleased to welcome Carolyn Andrews as our new chairperson.

Tricia Hamilton / BHS



Primary Admissions Group

Last year, the group's major objective was to take a long, hard look at the Admissions Pack used during admissions 'interviews' with a view to revising the procedures and activities. The pack had been in use in schools since June 1999.

A subgroup, consisting of Liz Randall, Carole Denny, Linda Quinton, Perry Tunesi and Jonathan Straker, was appointed to undertake the revision and representatives were invited from SNAGS, the Early Years Group and the EAL Group.

Grateful thanks go to Rob Buckley, Julie Shroff and Asma Syed for their input in the early stages, and also to admissions colleagues in all schools who responded speedily and in detail to a questionnaire about the pack.

All the views were considered and the pack has been amended and revised accordingly. After several drafts, copies of the final document were presented to the full group in May.

There is to be an INSET day on Wednesday 26th September at the Foundation Management Office for staff involved in admissions at which the materials and procedures will be introduced and disseminated. This will provide an exciting opportunity to facilitate further standardisation of procedures across the Foundation. The new pack will be trialled and evaluated during 2001/2002.

Having full schools has brought about a new array of challenges for the Foundation and raised many issues for the group to discuss. This year promises to be suitably eventful! Many thanks to Colin Page for his sterling secretarial duties. Being chair has its compensations – you don't have to write minutes!

Jonathan Straker / BHS

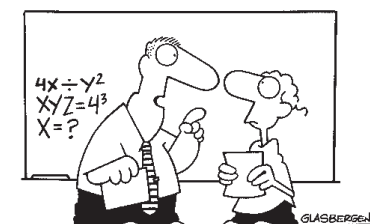
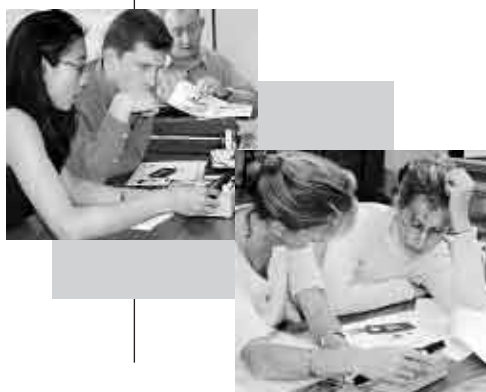
Primary D&T Group

Last year the group continued its efforts to promote and maintain the profile of Design and Technology in schools.

The last Design and Technology initiative year occurred fourteen years ago and there is an urgent need for a fresh initiative.

To support the ICT Initiative Year in 2001-02 the group has devised a pilot scheme to promote the teaching of control technology using Lego Robolab equipment.

D.E.G.Anderson / BS



"Algebra class will be important to you later in life because there's going to be a test six weeks from now."

Primary PE Group

Care to dance? And dance we did. The PE group had a great INSET evaluating the dance programmes currently being used in our schools, sharing ideas and collaborating to produce and bank of 'International Dances' to be used by everyone. Hopefully, all this hard work will be shared amongst the teachers in our Junior Schools to help support their delivery of dance on the curriculum. The ideas may also help in the arts & drama aspects of school life!

Many teachers are using ESL 'activity cards' to aid pupil learning in P.E. These cards were put together last year by the group and it is hoped that their use will continue to widen in our schools.

It has been another great year of Junior School sports. Many children have benefited from teacher and parent commitment to competitive sports. Thanks must go to those people who have given up many hours to coach, organise and help out in the extensive matches and tournaments we offer. The standard of ability of many of our youngsters seems to get better and better.

Special thanks need to go to Gay Thomson and Glenealy School for providing a great venue for our INSET day. For organising the big sporting tournaments, thanks go to Mike Young (Beacon Hill), Andy Thomson (Quarry Bay), Dave Cross (Shatin), Gay Thomson (Glenealy). Another good year team!!

Belinda Piper / Kowloon Junior School
piperbee@hotmail.com



Secondary Maths Group (SMOG)

The major modifications to our curriculum at KS5 continued to be the main focus of our discussions and work within the Secondary Mathematics Group this year. The Edexcel INSET in June 2000 provided the impetus for re-examining the issues surrounding Directed Study, and several schools implemented strategies to lessen the effects of the reduction in student-teacher contact time for our senior students. Planning also began for the introduction of A2 courses next year, and IB Mathematics at Sha Tin College.

Several schools took part in the South East Asia Mathematics Competition held in Kuala Lumpur during April. Not only were there outstanding individual performances by our students, but our schools also held prominent positions in the overall team competitions as well. In particular we must congratulate the students from South Island who won the award for the best overall team. Our sincere thanks to many colleagues who gave up their time for this competition and for the Dragon competition which was held in Hong Kong. The huge interest shown by all concerned has reinforced our participation in such competitions to the extent that we have begun preparations to hold this major competition in Hong Kong next year.

Our group welcomed Martin Bamber as Head of Mathematics at West Island School, whom we must thank for his input during the recent cross-phase moderation day. All who attended this day recognised the huge impact the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy will have on our primary and secondary students. The move toward the use of QCA/SAT testing was also seen as a very positive step to help inform our curriculum planning and in raising the standards of our pupils. We anticipate much more productive cross-phase work will result from these sessions and a much smoother and richer transfer of data between primary and secondary schools. Our thanks also to Andrea Brittan, Bill Mason and Mike Spencer, for their preparation and input into these successful sessions.

We look forward to a productive year ahead, and hopefully more frequent opportunities for our mathematics teachers to meet and exchange views.



F. Roy White / Sha Tin College
frw@sc.esf.edu.hk



Primary Maths Group

The main focus of our work last year was an in-depth look at the U.K. National Numeracy Strategy. As a group we believe that the strategy has major implications for the teaching and learning of Mathematics in our schools. We are, therefore, seeking to promote certain aspects of the strategy more widely. The group has benefited enormously from the generous contribution of ideas and work from Joanne Cadman and Steph Clitheroe of Bradbury School. We extend our best wishes to Steph who has not been with us this year, and look forward to welcoming her back soon. We were also delighted to welcome Mary Scarborough to the group.

We took a good look at the latest QCA test materials and were happy to be able to modify some of the papers, alongside the ARR group, in order to make them more culturally inclusive. We discussed at some length the benefits of the test data being generated, and the implications for our schools.

Once again, we have been hosted by a number of schools this year and thanks go to those whose hospitality exceeded all expectations, most notably, the culinary expertise demonstrated at the Peak. In addition, the use of their new computer suite enabled us to review a range of the most up to date Mathematics software.

The group was active in the presentation of the KS2 and Cross-Phase moderation days and has appreciated the opportunity to work alongside Andrea Brittan, Fran Crouch and Martin Bamber in order to strengthen already significant links with secondary colleagues.

We wish Joanne the best of luck as she heads for Australia and on to pastures new, and welcome Bill Mason as the new chair of the group. *(Bill has already managed to resource our schools with Numeracy training materials, and enough copies of the Strategy documents to get us going).* Thanks to Mark Joyce for his detailed and accurate minutes and, as always, to Nick Manley who never tires of giving his time and energy to the cause!

It has been a pleasure chairing such a pro-active group. We look forward to taking our work forward next year!

Mike Spencer / CWB
mspencer@cwbs.edu.hk





Secondary ICT Teachers (SITT)

Whenever you think that you have got things sorted out, there's always something waiting round the corner to be dealt with in teaching and this holds very true in the world of ICT. New technologies and initiatives to be evaluated, new websites to check out, not to mention new examinations to take on board, the list is seemingly endless. There is one thing that is guaranteed to bring no surprises though and that is the fact that as soon as you've updated the very last computer in the school to the latest version of your chosen word processor and spreadsheet, a new "better" version is launched. Instantly the cries of "I've heard it's really good, when are we getting it" start to bubble up and the cycle of evaluation and implementation starts all over again.

This situation is common to any organization using ICT as a normal part of the daily routine and secondary schools are no exception. It's a fact of life that the explosion in technological developments is only going to grow more quickly every year and that we've got to try to keep up if we are to give our students the best chances in the future. As with most things though, "throwing" money at the problem rarely does any good and so it has been a major consideration (sometimes even a tough task) of the SITT group to evaluate the growing technological wants of schools and staff against simply replacing obsolete hardware and peripherals. Wireless communications, gigabit networks, video conferencing, they have all been under scrutiny this year and there will be an ever increasing list this year. As long as there is ICT, the SITT group will have its work cut out keeping up with technology that could only be imagined the year before.

Alan Dickson / SC



Primary ICT Teachers (PICTT)

Last year got off to a great start with the news that the ESF had allocated extra ICT funding to all ESF schools. Each school had to submit a bid, outlining what they would like to spend money on in order to upgrade and develop the ICT provision in the school. The amount of money in the fund was not enough to grant everyone their requested amount, but in most cases it allowed schools to move from an Acorn platform to a Windows one either in the ICT room, the classrooms or both. In all the primary schools the majority of the networked computers are now Windows machines. We welcomed the extra money allocated by ESF, but we are aware of the need to have a properly funded hardware replacement scheme in place, in order that schools can develop and maintain a high level of ICT resources.

Over the years schools have built up a well selected collection of curriculum software for their Acorn computers, changing to Windows has meant we have had to go back to the selection process all over again. PICTT has spent a lot of time this year, discussing Windows software. We looked at the QCA Schemes of Work and tried to identify the best software with which to deliver the ICT curriculum. We have spent time looking at software recommended by group members, sharing experiences and lesson plans. Buying software for Windows with user licenses is much more expensive than it was for the Acorn, so we have to take care and choose wisely.

September 2000 saw us starting the ICT training in the majority of the primary schools. Some schools concentrated on the EAL training last year, and will commence the ICT training in September 2001. By the end of June 2001 it was expected that most of the teachers who started in September 2000 would have completed the training. Liz Hankin from the ICAA in the UK made two visits out to Hong Kong last year to support the training process in the Primary Schools. She will visit again this year.

The ICT departments in the Primary school have developed immensely over the last few years. They may have over 70 networked computers, broadband Internet access, a school based e-mail system and websites. It is a lot to maintain and develop therefore good and reliable technical support is essential. The funding for this support is still the responsibility of the individual schools, and pay and conditions vary from school to school.

We appreciate the time made available for Curriculum group and INSET meetings, and always put them to good purpose. This year a lot of discussion time and "hands on" experience has gone into looking at Windows software and hardware, ICT training, technical support, websites, fileservers security, web page authoring and various issues in the ICT development plan.

Last year the group members remained the same. No new members and no departing members. Marjory Anderson from Kennedy School who has been the PICTT Chairperson for the last two years passed on the role to Steve Hallam at Peak School.

The year ahead I expect will be as busy as the last, as it is a challenge trying to keep ahead of the rapidly changing world of ICT in Education.

Marjory Anderson / Kennedy School





Primary Mandarin Group

Mandarin has been taught in Kennedy School and Peak School since 1995 and from 1999 it has been fully implemented in all ESF primary schools.

The Primary Modern Chinese Curriculum Group was formally established in December 1999. It comprises nineteen primary Mandarin teachers from nine ESF primary schools and two kindergarten teachers from SheungWan and Tsing Yi Kindergartens.

During 1999-2000, various issues within ESF and within schools were raised and problems were identified. Through these discussions, colleagues from different schools felt supported and were brought even closer together! Their enthusiasm to work as a team, their support and care shown towards each other and their professionalism were overwhelming. This was evident in their sharing of resources, teaching strategies, problems and success.

One of the key issues was to bring consistency in teaching and learning across all primary schools. A steering group of four was formed to write the *Primary Mandarin Core Curriculum*. The Core Curriculum is written for non-native speakers using a communicative, spiral and sequential approach. The drafted language contents and curriculum issues were discussed and agreed upon by all colleagues before their inclusion in the Core Curriculum so that everyone would have a sense of ownership. To ensure continuity copies of the first draft were made available to all secondary colleagues for their comments. The final draft will be distributed in June 2001. On behalf of all colleagues, I must thank Jackie Tse from Beacon Hill School, Ann Lo from Clearwater Bay School and Clara Pang from Shatin Junior College for working so closely with me in completing this arduous task.

In 2000-2001, four INSET days were approved to discuss curriculum and other issues such as Hong Kong University's Mandarin students visits to ESF schools, IT approach (UKIA project by HKU) for teaching Mandarin through online internet, computer software demonstration, teaching methodologies from Pathfinder and continuity issues for language learning.

I must take this opportunity to thank Mr. David Coles for his strong and continuous support and guidance throughout these two years. I would also like to thank Mrs. Liz Muscroft and Mr. Doug Taylor for their encouragement and involvement in the group.

I should like to thank all my colleagues for their continuing support, trust and cooperation to make this a fantastic group to work with. Thanks to Caesar Chan, Clearwater Bay School, for chairing one of the twilight meetings and special thanks must go to Ganlo Fan, Peak School, for her committed role as the Group's Secretary. She has done a marvellous job in keeping everyone informed about the Group's activities. I am sure 2001-2002 will prove to be another productive year!

David Wu / KJS

Secondary Mandarin Group

At the beginning of 2000-2001 the curriculum group set out four objectives for the year:

a) development of A-level directed study materials

At all the meetings held in the year group members exchanged A-Level Directed Study materials they had developed, there had been exchange of materials through mail among members as well. At the full-day INSET on 11th May 2001 members reviewed the situation of exchange of information on Chinese teaching resources and agreed that much had been done in this respect.

b) review on use of textbooks and course programmes for background speakers and non-background speakers;

Books on teaching Mandarin to non-native speakers written by group member from IS were introduced to the group.

c) liaison with primary Mandarin Group re Mandarin curriculum continuity

At the INSET held on 30th November 2000 the Chair of the Primary Mandarin Group, David Wu, and Education Officer, David Coles, briefed members on the draft Primary School Mandarin Curriculum. Previously there had been visits between WIS and KS and between CWBS, KJS, BHS and KGV. Members believe that more communication with the Primary section was desirable and necessary.

d) review on choice of exam boards for students

At the full-day INSET the group reviewed the history of the move from GCSE Mandarin Chinese to IGCSE Mandarin Chinese examinations for KS4 students and exchanged information on the new GCSE syllabus members agreed that the new GCSE syllabus, with examinations on all the four skills, was more preferable. WIS, IS and SIS all intended to adopt the London board GCSE examination in June 2003, with SC likely to stay with IGCSE, whilst KGV would prepare Sets 1 and 2 students in Year 10 for IGCSE and Sets 3, 4 and 5 students for GCSE exams.

The major difficulty that the group experienced in the year has been the lack of time among group members for various things desired to be achieved yet members could not meet for an extended length of time to deal with such things.

The group has been really successful in carrying out its duties and here I would like to express my sincere thanks to group members Xinying Li of Island School, Frankie Cheung of KGV, Ita Lam of Sha Tin College, Janny Law of South Island School for their great contributions to the curriculum group and especially thank Xinying for writing the minutes.

By rotation, the new Chair in 2001-2002 will be Ms Ita Lam, the new Head of Chinese at KGV. Here I would like to wish Ita every success in her role next year.





ALESS

The Librarians' Curriculum Group, ALESS (Association of Librarians in English Speaking Schools) has continued to grow, and now has a membership of over forty librarians and teacher-librarians representing international schools all over Hong Kong. The group meets once a month at a variety of school-based venues. Last year the teaching of information skills and their implementation throughout the curriculum was high on the agenda, as has the evolving role of the school librarian as information specialist and teacher.

This year has seen the advent of the ALESS listserv, which has further encouraged the sharing of ideas and resources, and proved to be an excellent method of keeping everyone informed. It is open to all interested librarians and teachers...feel free to take a look: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ALESS>

Many members of the group embarked on the ICT INSET for Librarians - organised by the UK Library Association in conjunction with Canterbury Christchurch University College - which commenced in September 2000. There seemed to be some frustrations initially, but they were soon overcome and the participants are advancing steadily towards the fifth and final module in January 2002.

As well as welcoming some new members last year, the group has bid farewell to some long-standing members: Janet Ho (Sha Tin College), Sheila Crew (South Island School), Sue Dickson (Kowloon Junior School) and Jacinta Dougal (Bradbury School). We are grateful for their contributions over the years, and would like to say thanks, you will be missed, and good luck for the future.



Louise Kay / JCSRC

Early Years Group

The Early Years Group had an extremely busy and productive year in 2000-2001. The Educational Assistant's Conference which was held in January was, arguably the best ever, with a range of speakers participating and tremendous input and professionalism displayed by our E.A.'s. Feedback of responses from them about their role and its' expectations have been collated and circulated to all Principals - The group are hopeful that the content will be acted upon to enable greater credence to be attached to the very important and demanding job they have.

Rumour has it that the Secondary Phase would like to send some of their E.A.'s to our next conference!!!

We anticipate that the conference for the this school year will benefit from a presentation by Neil Griffiths., based on early years literacy and his development of a theme called "Story Sack".

The Group has also formed a working party to review the existing arrangements for Year 1 Baseline Assessment in ESF Schools.

A questionnaire was sent to all staff involved with the implementation of baseline to enable us to obtain as much data as possible on this early assessment process. We look forward to reporting back to Principles and staff with the findings and recommendations for ways forward.

Earlier in the year we were also fortunate to receive some INSET on the U.K Literacy Strategy which heightened our awareness of the organisation and management issues involved in its implementation. The presentation also made us aware of the implications this strategy may have for our own practice in Hong Kong. Many thanks go to Fran Atkinson for her input, Fran will be taking up a post at Bradbury School from September 2001.

There will, no doubt, be changes of personnel in the group for this year; one of which will involve a change of "chair" - Steve Atkins, who is based at Bradbury School, will take over the role from me as I am returning to the U.K. after 5 years at Quarry Bay School

As "chair" for the past two years, I have enjoyed the enthusiasm and commitment from the group and wish them continuing success in the coming years.

Carol Bailey / QBS