

**Final Evaluation Report of the Pilot Project
on Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs)**

Supplementary Section – case studies and vignettes

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Case studies of effective whole school approaches

Example One – Primary School A

This good practice example shows how the building of reliable, trustworthy relationships between the principal and the SENCO in School A has contributed to further implementation of inclusive educational practices during the SENCO Pilot Project.

The principal of School A has prior experience of implementing IE, gained when she was in the position of vice principal. Apart from having a good knowledge of SEN, she is passionate about supporting students with SEN. As the SENCO described:

“What the principal does is always for the sake of students and teachers. She gives me 100% support – never questions or becomes fussy about my work . . . She gives me professional advice and not criticism. More importantly, we have a shared vision and common goals towards IE. She is keen to take part in the briefing sessions of the SENCO Pilot Project and is well informed of recent trends and developments.”

Likewise, the principal, who is an open-minded leader, highly commended the SENCO:

“I’m willing to listen. Anyone can come and share ideas with me. Of course, I need to balance the interests of different stakeholders. Yet, I’ve to admit that the SENCO is a person with great perseverance. She is very clear about what she is doing and why she is doing this and that. She can explain with confidence what students with SEN need and what helps them most.”

In recognition of the importance of work relating to IE and SEN, the principal at School A had already assigned a senior teacher ranked at Primary School Mistress (PSM) to lead the student support team. Together, this colleague and the principal had, before the launch of the SENCO Pilot Project, provided SEN support and developed IE through the implementation of whole-school approaches. These approaches included the use of SEN funding to employ additional resource teachers, the adoption of small-class teaching and co-teaching, and making use of external experts and/or community resources for professional support. At the start of the SENCO Pilot Project, the leader of the SEN support team took on the demanding role of SENCO. The school then implemented a number of initiatives with the aim of identifying effective support strategies to enhance the learning effectiveness of students with SEN. These initiatives included in particular:

- further implementation of small-class teaching and co-teaching in junior forms as a form of support for early intervention
- making the SENCO into a key member of the curriculum development team
- creating a task force, with members including the principal, the SENCO, the curriculum leader and subject panel heads, to further promote classroom teaching through collaborative lesson planning, peer observations and follow-up briefings at staff meetings as an ongoing teaching improvement process

- changing lesson design and the pace of lessons to make phased learning clearer and more available for students with SEN or those with prior low attainments, for example, providing short revision opportunities at the start of the lesson, breaking lessons into smaller chunks and creating homework accommodations
- reviewing the special education training needs and profiles of teachers and arranging for them to receive relevant training in a more systematic manner, with the priority given to new teachers, core members of the student support team and including teaching assistants where appropriate.

As the principal emphasised:

“Catering for learner diversity in the classroom is the school’s major concern. This shouldn’t be confined to the design of graded worksheets only. Going back to basics, we’ll have to critically examine our everyday classroom strategies to ensure that the needs of diverse learners can be fully addressed. Sometimes teachers are just too focused on getting a correct answer quickly. Further questioning is needed to let other students with SEN or those with prior low attainments learn how to get the answer from contextual cues.”

Trust in the SENCO is also reflected in the allocation of power for being responsible for budgeting of SEN resources and handpicking members to join the student support team. As a matter of fact, the SENCO has been performing a leadership role owing to her credibility and status in school. As the principal said:

“The SENCO feels more empowered from the SENCO professional development programmes and networking activities. She is able to stand firm when handling parents’ inappropriate requests or fighting for the benefits of students with SEN, including special examination arrangements, organising after-school activities or deploying manpower resources to assist in SEN support.”

The SENCO expressed that:

“Some colleagues may complain about me for my reduced teaching load. First of all, I should be professionally competent. They can find me working busily every day. Any colleagues can seek my advice on how to handle a particular student with SEN. Besides, I have to manage my own classes well. Once I’m able to gain trust with my colleagues, my team can work more smoothly. Luckily, I’ve been leading the student support team for many years, prior to the launch of the SENCO Pilot Project. There’s enough time for me to learn and grow professionally.”

Inspired by new ideas generated from professional development sessions for SENCOs, a number of new initiatives have been tried out in the three-year Pilot Project period, including:

- using the ‘inclusive teaching checklist’ when observing colleagues’ lessons and providing follow-up feedback

- working closely with NGOs to make after-school intervention programmes more engaging, relevant and stimulating for students, for example, by embedding key skills in games and social activity
- implementing an intensive training programme for parents of children with dyslexia in the first year and autism in the second year in order to improve home-school collaboration
- making wider use of one-page profiles in remedial teaching groups and provision maps with RAG (red, amber green) colour ratings for keeping track of students' progress
- planning for succession
- sharing expertise with potential teaching fellows and support staff through peer mentoring and/or coaching.

As a result of this collective effort, the school has been making significant progress in promoting more inclusive teaching and learning and IE.

Example Two – Secondary School B

For many years, the principal at School B has rendered full support to the implementation of IE using a whole-school approach. From the start of the SENCO Pilot Project, the school had a solid foundation from which to build towards the next phases of development. A key member of the student support team was appointed to the role of SENCO. It was intended that the new-to-role SENCO should be able to step seamlessly into and follow existing SEN systems. Meanwhile, School B's vice principal continued to play a crucial role in monitoring and supervising the work of the SENCO.

In light of the increasingly complex challenges teachers face in today's classroom, cross-team collaboration was regarded as inevitable. Over the past years, the school has created many platforms to foster inter-departmental collaboration and communication. This is to ensure efficiency with less bureaucracy and avoid overlapping of work. At the system level, the vice principal, was considered to be the most suitable person to promote cross-team collaboration in the school. He was therefore the convenor to bring all concerned parties together and work on SEN-related matters, such as holding regular meetings for different year groups and reporting SEN interventions covering various areas falling in the purview of respective teams in the advisory visits conducted by EDB inspectors. As the vice principal explained:

“The actual implementation of a whole-school approach is like playing a football match in which each of the team members has a clear role to play. You don't need to kick a ball all the time in the game, but you have to carry it forward when it comes to you. To achieve this, there should be interdepartmental meetings. To make them fruitful, all participants should be well-prepared for meetings. After delivering presentations to the audience, participants are able to understand what others are doing and how they can supplement one another for the greater good.”

The new SENCO reported in interview that things tend to go more smoothly when fellow teachers are used to such collaborative school cultures. As she said:

“Although all of us are very busy, colleagues still take ownership and they don’t mind working more.”

To move towards a whole school approach to IE, it is the school’s policy that all teachers should share the responsibility for students with SEN at varying degrees. In order to communicate and share SEN information among class and subject teachers, the school uses student profiles, regular formal meetings to discuss and agree support and in-class support to help students take part by taking appropriate adaptations. More importantly, arrangements to support students with SEN and their transition planning have been progressing towards greater personalisation in recent years, starting with students’ strengths, preferences and aspirations as well as raising expectations. The change in mindset was described by the vice principal:

“. . . Why are remedial activities often located in after-school time-slots? This is indeed very exhausting, which also makes students feel more like a punishment for having difficulties. In fact, when is the best time for students to learn? It should be the normal lesson time on school days.”

Hence, the school has revised their after-school learning support programmes in order to maximise learning outcomes. Apart from the learning of core subjects, new subjects are introduced to provide a variety of scientific and creative activities after school. As the vice principal said:

“The introduction of this new subject not only helps students overcome their barriers to learning but also enriches their learning experiences in ways that are aligned with recent trends in education. Now, students are more motivated to stay behind, learning new topics in advance of formal teaching in normal lesson time. One example of success was a student with dyslexia in S6 who won the Hong Kong ICT Awards 2017: Best Student Invention Award. In the past, he refused to take part in after-school remedial activities but now he has won the silver trophy, the highest honour in senior secondary stream.”

Specifically, a strong emphasis is placed on building on strengths and exploring more accreditation and achievement opportunities, particularly for students with SEN. This was echoed by the principal, vice principal and new SENCO with examples of different strategies. The principal said:

“HKDSE is not the only option for students. There are other English tests offered by accredited organisations such as TOEIC, VES and IELTS. We have to help students make informed choices for possible study or career paths in accordance with their interests and abilities. Last year, a student with dyslexia was able to secure a place in a university in Taiwan because of his outstanding performance in Mathematics. There are two other

students who have planned to pursue studies in Korea and teachers are helping them to solicit relevant information in this respect.”

The vice principal said:

“Students with SEN get used to failure in primary and secondary schools and they don’t mind failing to hand in homework assignments. To better prepare students for life outside school, we teachers need to help students make meaning of their learning. Last year, we organised an outing to Super Terminal One as an inquiry-based learning (IES) activity. At first, several students with SEN refused to take part. Other students were curious to know how I was going to settle the confrontation. I persuaded them logistics was one of the four pillar industries in the Hong Kong economy and this visit tour was not just fulfilling examination requirement but also a credit to their future careers, either directly or indirectly. Eventually all the students participated in the visit and finished their reports for IES.”

The SENCO said:

“For students with SEN, there is no need to lower standards all the time. Developing a deeper understanding of the students enables us to help explore their strengths. For instance, students with SEN can also be recruited to the school’s debating team. These students can participate in inter-school debates, raising their self-esteem and also promoting useful skills in language and literacy. For example, our debating team leader is a student with dyslexia in S5. After relevant training, he is now able to write a debate script of more than 1,000 words on his own.”

Examples of lessons observed

Teaching English in a primary school

In this Primary Two (P2) English Language lesson there are 25 students. The teacher works on her own, without support from a co-teacher or teaching assistant. The lesson lasts 40 minutes.

The class start this lesson with a plenary revision of learning from the previous lesson. From their desks, they all sing a song using the phonic rhyme ‘-ick’. The teacher then invites them to move to the ‘learning base’ at the front of the room. Children bring their stools and gather in the space at the front of the room. The teacher introduces the objectives for today’s lesson – learning about the sound ‘-ock’.

Again, there is a song for ‘-ock’ that the children sing. They are encouraged to call out answers to the teacher’s questions and to volunteer ideas that will push the lesson forward. The teacher rewards useful ideas with praise, high-fives and the class gesture for ‘good work’. There is also a ‘star’ reward system in operation in the class for exceptional work. The teacher uses PowerPoint and video to teach the whole class the written forms of the sounds the students have been speaking and singing.

For parts of the lesson, the class breaks into sub-groups using a numbering system that is familiar to the children – all the ‘ones’ cluster together, all the ‘twos’ cluster together, and so on. The teacher rewards swift movement into and out of these groups with the ‘good job’ gesture. In their groups, the children are encouraged to interact and to discuss their ideas. If the room becomes too noisy, the teacher calls for a pause, using gestures and commands, and re-establishes a good working atmosphere. When the behaviour of individual children becomes unhelpful, the teacher checks that behaviour with warning cards placed at the edge of the board. These visual prompts were developed by the SENCO and operate as a whole school behavior management system familiar to all children.

For parts of the lesson, the children return to their own desks, working through individually named work cards differentiated for four levels of attainment. This phase is familiar to the children as the ‘listen and write’ part of class activity. The teacher helps children when they indicate that they are stuck by writing words or parts of words on the board. She uses hand gestures and her voice to remind children how letters blend together to make different sounds. The teacher also uses picture prompts to help children to remember words. Some of the work cards also have prompts that help learners to spell and write words.

The teacher provides step-by-step guidance to support learning during this phase of individual work. She constantly checks understanding and consolidation of learning. Peer support, in the form of designated ‘buddies’ known as ‘little angels’, is allocated to students with special educational needs. The ‘little angels’ support learning for their partners and encourage them towards successful outcomes, for example, by reinforcing links between sounds and letter shapes.

When she feels the class has moved far enough with individual work, the teacher calls for a pause, saying ‘all eyes on me’ and providing a gesture. There is a ‘lucky draw’ using a set of sticks with the names of the children in the class written on them. By drawing sticks out of a container one by one, the teacher nominates children at random to come out to show their work. Individual students come forward to the board to write words beside pictures. The teacher prompts writing for children who need support and the whole class read back the words written by individual students.

When the work cards are completed, they form little wrist bands that the children can wear and take home to show family members. The children clearly enjoy this intrinsic reward and are motivated by it. At the end of the lesson, the children again sing their phonics songs as a form of revision of what has been learned. The lesson wraps up on this enjoyable but purposeful note.

In general, this is a lesson with a good positive working atmosphere. It is a happy room but learning is also very purposeful. The children are interested in the work, curious about what comes next, and highly motivated to participate and learn. There are good, trusting and respectful relationships between peers and between the children and the teacher. The session uses a wide variety of teaching strategies and the learning is inclusive: all the children learn at their own pace and level and everyone is included in the session, including

the four children in the class with identified SEN, two further suspected cases and three children who do not have Chinese as their home language.

Key learning points from this lesson:

- the lesson is sub-divided into brief phases of different types of activity
- the class is mobile and makes use of different spaces in the room for different parts of the lesson
- different groupings are used during the lesson – whole class, group work, pairs and individual work
- transitions between different groupings are fast and smooth – time and resources are used purposefully
- flexible seating arrangements ensure that learning is student-centred and collaborative
- requests for individual children to show their work are randomised so there is no domination by eager or favoured children
- there is peer support and interaction between peers in groups
- the learning is multi-sensory and multi-modal, using songs, sounds, images, body movements, signs and gestures
- talk in the lesson is supported by signing, gesture and pictures – communication is clear and fully supported
- the teacher uses a range of forms of input to maintain variety in the lesson – talking, writing on the board, video, PowerPoint etc
- there is a clearly understood and recognised system for rewarding good work in groups and by individuals
- activities are self-reinforcing, rewards are integral to learning and learning is fun
- there are clear and accessible subject-specific objectives for the lesson and these objectives are shared with the children
- the lesson integrates all strands of the subject so the children have a chance to practise the full range of skills
- assessment and opportunities to check understanding are built into the lesson
- students are encouraged to lead and contribute to the learning in the lesson
- positive learning behaviours in the class are actively encouraged
- there are clear rules and routines with a recognised set of structures for managing behaviours that become disruptive, for the class, for groups and for individuals
- good links are maintained between learning in school and life at home.

Teaching Chinese Language in a secondary school

This Secondary One (S1) intensive Chinese Language lesson involves 12 students, six with identified SEN. The teacher works with a teaching assistant (TA) through the double lesson, lasting an hour and ten minutes.

The teacher introduces his lesson plan at the start, explaining that the class will be looking at a classical poem in Chinese. However, the lesson starts at a very different place. The teacher divides the class into pairs and gives them brief contemporary passages about life in

their area of the city written on laminated cards. The challenge is for the students to read their passage to their partner, taking no more than one minute – and then to swap so that all the students get a chance both to read and to listen.

After this safe and familiar introduction to the lesson, the teacher identifies some students to read their passages to the whole class. The teacher maintains a cheerful atmosphere for this phase of the activity and encourages the class to applaud student readings. The teacher encourages peer comment on the readings and draws out some issues himself. There are smiles around the room, and more encouragement, praise and applause.

Having established this positive and supportive working atmosphere, the students move back to their own desks and open their textbooks. The teacher identifies the poem they will be analysing in today's class – but links the themes of this classical verse to the local and contemporary experiences the students have just been reading about. The teacher encourages students to contribute their own ideas about how historical events can be linked to the personal experiences of young people in Hong Kong.

The teacher introduces a worksheet relating to the poem. On a visualiser, he models completing the worksheet, demonstrating to students how elements of the sheet can be filled in and explaining difficult vocabulary. The teacher encourages students to contribute ideas about how the sheet can be completed and shows how these ideas may or may not work.

Together, the students start to build up a sense of the physical features of the location of the events in the poem. In order to consolidate these ideas, the teacher encourages the students to draw pictures of the scene described in the poem. The teacher suggests that these drawings can be aids to the students' realisation of the scene and, later, to their memories of the poem.

The teacher takes in the students' pictures and the class looks at them together on the visualiser. This is fun. Some of the drawings provide opportunities for laughter, but the students also draw ideas from one another that they can incorporate into their own drawings. The teacher, meantime, gains good insight into the degree to which students have understood the poem.

The teacher and the students work through the poem using these strategies, line by line, building up an understanding of the content and the imagery of the poem. They alternate between quiet individual student work and phases of sharing their findings with the whole class. Together they begin to explore the deeper themes and meanings in the poem. The students make written notes on their insights into the poem and continue to supplement these with drawings that the teacher says will 'help them to remember'. The teacher demonstrates ways of approaching challenging elements in the poetry on the visualiser and also shows examples of the students' work, both written and pictorial.

The teacher introduces the idea of memorising lines from the poem. He encourages students to choose a partner to work with and to go into pairs. In their pairs, the students try remembering a line each in turn. Steadily they work through the poem this way.

The teacher asks individual students round the room to remember a line to recite to the whole class. He then introduces the idea that homework will be to memorise the whole poem. The students read the poem aloud together as a way of revision. They are invited to reflect again on the meaning of the poem and to go back over their notes and drawings. By this stage, each student has a good personalised record of their responses to the poem in the form of their worksheets, their notes and their drawings.

To close the lesson, the teacher returns to the opening phase and invites students again to talk about some personal experiences that they now feel relate to the poem. Students come out to the front of the room to present their ideas to the whole class. They review what they have done together and the lesson closes.

In this way, by the end of the lesson, each student has read, written, spoken and listened, sometimes in pairs and sometimes in front of the whole class. They have related a challenging classical poem to their own contemporary experiences. They have been focused but they have also engaged their creativity and enjoyed some fun and laughter.

Throughout the lesson, the TA has moved around the room, quietly supporting the learning and the responses of all the students. Throughout the lesson, the students have been very engaged, listening with attention when listening is required and focusing on tasks as they are presented. Throughout the lesson, the teacher has held the students' attention while engaging with them as learners but also as individual young people.

Key learning points from this lesson:

- the teacher shares the objectives of the lesson with students at the start, conveying an overview of the planned lesson and a clear sense of purpose
- the teacher establishes and maintains a warm, trusting and supportive atmosphere throughout the lesson
- the pace of the lesson is varied, moving through sequences of different forms of activity
- the lesson begins with familiar activity closely linked to students' personal experiences and engages with more challenging steps in learning later in the session
- there is a variety of forms of student grouping – individual work, paired work, group work and whole class activity
- students are encouraged to contribute their own ideas during all phases of the lesson
- there is peer support, peer critique and peer encouragement
- students are enabled to make choices within the lesson, choosing working partners, assignments and roles in paired activity
- students are enabled to personalise their responses and to make notes and records that are meaningful to them
- spoken and written text is supported with visual aids and prompts that are personal to each student
- challenging concepts are related to the concrete everyday experiences of students
- the teacher models the completion of key activities for the students and demonstrates to them ways in which they can scaffold their learning

- the teacher uses a range of modes of presentation, including direct instruction, open dialogue, student exploration and individual activity
- students are encouraged to solve problem within the lesson and the teacher shows how both constructive and mistaken responses can be usefully explored
- learning is fun and interactive – there is trust and the students are confident to take risks, make mistakes and explore ways to resolve difficulties
- assessment and regular opportunities to check comprehension are integral to the flow of the lesson
- there are frequent opportunities for review and revision throughout the lesson
- all strands of the subject are woven into planning for the lesson so that there is even coverage of key learning points
- homework is carefully introduced at a stage in the lesson when there is still time for reflection and clarification
- the lesson ends with the recapitulation of familiar activity.

Vignettes providing evidence of the impact of the SENCO on whole school approaches

Curriculum issues related to learning and teaching

Vignette 1:

An ad-hoc learning support team has been set up since the 2016 to 2017 school year to work on curriculum and teaching adaptations as well as the production of differentiated materials. The team is led by a vice principal who is also the leader of the Academic Affairs Team. The team is made up of core subject teachers of S1/2 classes. Participating teachers work collaboratively with their panel heads to develop differentiated curriculum plans and assessment opportunities. The process works in a similar way to lesson study. Lesson observations and meetings are held across subjects so that teachers of different subjects can learn from one another. The knowledge and experience gained is first disseminated to fellow teachers of the same subject. As a result of this work, the S1 curriculum for the three core subjects, namely Chinese Language, English and Mathematics, is divided into three levels:

- core material for all students including:
 - a simplified version for students with lower attainments
 - a standard version for the majority of students
- enriched elements for students with higher attainments.

As for assessment policies, the design of examination papers is divided into these levels, comprising core items (70%), elementary items (30%) and enrichment items (10%) for bonus marks. The school intends to develop and accumulate further materials phase-by-phase.

Vignette 2:

When the new principal came to this school in the second year of the SENCO Pilot Project, it was noted that SEN support was not perceived as part of whole school development

planning. Self-directed learning is the school's major concern but subject panel heads keep saying the lower-streamed classes are not yet ready to be self-directed learners.

“Can we say these students have been taken care of simply by reducing the class size? Teachers always complain about their poor performance but they never question themselves why these students have to do the same homework assignment which is too difficult for them. IE doesn't work if the SENCO and curriculum leader fail to work collaboratively. Why? The support of students with SEN should eventually take place in the classroom. In this respect, panel heads and subject teachers also play a very important role.”

The school used to employ additional teachers for implementing small-class teaching in the lower-streamed classes. However, this arrangement was not found to be effective. This year, the principal has set the scene that the needs of students with SEN should be embedded as a key element in whole-school curriculum planning. Not unexpectedly, the curriculum leader is more willing to solicit the views of the SENCO where appropriate. The school has also created an additional deputy panel head post for the three core subjects. These colleagues are assigned to work together with the SENCO and her team. These deputy panel heads serve as a bridge of communication between the SENCO and the subject panel heads. Apart from exchange of ideas, they assist in lesson observations and scrutiny of differentiated worksheets. With reference to the inclusive teaching checklist, they give feedback on classroom practices, which are reflected back to the subject panel heads and the SENCO respectively. Subject panel heads welcome these comments on curriculum development needs specifically relevant to their subjects. The school intends to collate information on the effective support strategies used in a range of subjects.

Vignette 3:

To make learning more fun, the reading and writing skills training programme in this school was condensed from ten to four sessions for the learning of basic skills. Students were then encouraged to practise the skills they had acquired in a range of extension activities such as fireless cooking, balloon twisting, magic tricks and fashion accessories. For example, new vocabulary would appear again in recipes used in the fireless cooking lesson. Executive functioning skills were also subsumed in the learning process. A debriefing was given at the end of the training programme to help students deepen their understanding.

Increased focus on personalisation

Vignette 4:

A team of five to six support staff were appointed in this school as class level coordinators. They were made responsible for supporting individual students with SEN in respective year groups. These support staff made very good relationships with individual students, especially students with autism. On a needs basis, they are now often able to work together to follow through particular cases over a number of years.

Vignette 5:

In the first year of the SENCO Pilot Project, the use of one-page profiles enabled one student counsellor to discover that some students with SEN were interested to take part in the school abseiling team. These students, most of them with ADHD or SpLD, showed great interest in the sport, which was a new experience to them. They soon had the chance to participate in open competitions and began to win prizes. Team members were also invited to a live TV interview, which was a good opportunity to practise their communication and expression skills. These students are now studying in S5 or S6. Their teachers acknowledge that catching up entirely with the school curriculum will be difficult for them, but state that their learning attitudes have generally improved greatly in the past three years. As one teacher said:

“Students sometimes ask me why they have to maintain strict discipline in the abseiling team. I tell them it’s a formal training and not simply a game. This attitude is more important than how well they perform.”

Vignette 6:

One SENCO tells a story of working successfully with one student with behavioural issues:

“This student (with ASD) was accused of fighting and bullying other students. Each time he remained silent and never attempted to defend himself. The negative emotions accumulated until he noticed that we were willing to listen to both sides and get a full picture of the story. I devised a behavioural modification programme and discussed with him the reward he wanted to get. In fact, there was nothing he really wanted to get but he liked to be given the choice. Now we have built a good relationship, his behaviour has improved and the parents are pleased.”

Vignette 7:

In one school, alternative examination papers, labelled as ‘S’ papers, are specifically designed for students with severe SpLD and cognitive difficulties. The school allows staff to make 10% to 15% changes to ‘S’ papers as compared with standard examination papers. Examples of accommodations may include allowing students to give answers by numbering options so they do not have to write whole sentences. The school also potentially allows different scoring methods and separate invigilation according to the needs of individual students. On average, around four to five students per class level are deemed eligible to take ‘S’ papers although this is determined on a case-by-case basis.

Vignette 8:

Under the leadership of the vice principal in this school, there is a strong partnership between respective functional teams for the planning and delivery of life planning activities that align with the developmental needs of students at different stages of their lives. Under the Business-School Partnership Programme, the school provides a variety of career-related activities and work experience opportunities, particularly for students with SEN. With collaborative efforts, life planning newsletters are published periodically to provide useful information and to share the success stories of alumni. More importantly, it is reiterated that an academic route via the Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education (HKDSE) is not

the only option. Students are well-informed of possible pathways for further studies and/or work. Arrangements are made for some students to sit for Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) or International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests. After-school English tutorial groups are provided to better prepare students for these examinations.

Vignette 9:

A SENCO in one primary school reported on her work using the 'one-page profile'. She said: *"We seldom have time to ask students in what ways teachers can actually help or what rewards they like. From findings using the one-page profiles, one student said he wanted to get a Pikachu sticker as a reward. Another student said he was motivated simply by the teacher drawing a smile icon on his worksheet. A third student suggested that copying a word five times could help him remember. It's so simple. The information we obtain helps us to have more reflection on our teaching."*

SENCOs becoming more deeply involved in processes of review and evaluation

Vignette 10:

A school principal said:

"It is time we started a more structured evaluation to assess the effectiveness of intervention programmes. In this respect, we shouldn't rely on the findings from questionnaires. A CM (Certificate Master or Mistress) teacher is purposefully deployed to assist the SENCO in the student support team. She and her team mates may sit in and observe how well the students have progressed."

Vignette 11:

In one secondary school, the SENCO decided to conduct monitoring activities through observation and discussion with service providers. This SENCO plans to use student attainment data to compile a three-year record in order to track the impact of interventions on student outcomes.

In another secondary school, the SENCO plans to conduct a more structured evaluation in the year ahead through data collection and analysis. It was intended that a summary would be published to share findings with colleagues. The SENCO also plans to track student progression and employability after graduation as supplementary data.

SENCOs achieving improved communication with fellow teachers

Vignette 12:

In one primary school, the SENCO holds regular meetings with teaching colleagues each week to update information about students with SEN and to discuss support strategies. In due course, the school intends to build up a resource pool of shared ideas or strategies for inclusive teaching and learning based on these accumulated experiences. In this school,

three core subject teachers, including the SENCO, have arranged to teach the same class Chinese Language, Mathematics and English so that they can carry out peer observations and facilitate professional sharing about successful strategies.

Vignette 13:

In one secondary school, an ad hoc committee on curriculum development was established during the SENCO Pilot Project. Its major task was to support subject teachers in catering for learner diversity. Subject panel heads and the SENCO provided leadership and collaborated with members drawn from among core subject teachers. Each year, the composition of this group has been changed so that more teachers can be involved directly in the task of differentiating the curriculum and developing teaching strategies for supporting students with SEN. The knowledge and experience gained by participants can then be disseminated to other subject teachers around the school.

In the final year of the project, the SENCO introduced the 'inclusive teaching checklist' to the committee and provided input on how to better support students with ADHD and SpLD in subject classes by taking account of their learning needs and preferences. This was supported by the school's supervisor and principal who wanted to encourage teachers to foster participation, interaction, engagement and group dynamics in subject lessons in addition to focusing solely on attainment. A study tour to Taiwan to look at interactive lesson strategies has been arranged for subject panel heads in the year ahead.

Improvements for students

In relation to student outcomes, principals and SENCOs noted a series of improvements by the final year of the SENCO Pilot Project. These cannot all be attributed directly to the introduction of the SENCO but are associated with intervention programmes, revised practices and new initiatives implemented recently. These improvements included, in both primary and secondary schools:

- better peer relationships
- better teacher-student relationships
- improvements in social skills
- improvements in behaviours
- the development of greater self-understanding and self-confidence
- improved attitudes to learning.

Most significantly, however, in some schools these improvements included measurable or observable improvements in learning:

Vignette 14:

By the third year of the SENCO Pilot Project in one primary school, the SENCO reported no great difference in outcomes for students with or without SEN in the Basic Competency Assessment (BCA) and the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA).

Vignette 15:

In one secondary school, the SENCO stated that, in the third year of the SENCO Pilot Project, there was no great difference in the attainments of students with and without SEN. She said: *“The attainment gap between students with and without SEN is not so obvious. Sometimes, in fact, students with SEN may perform better academically than their classmates without SEN.”*

Vignette 16:

In one secondary school in the SENCO Pilot Project, the principal reported encouraging improvements in the value-added performance of students generally in the 2017 Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education (HKDSE), including the core subjects and the ‘best five’ subjects.

Richard Byers and Kitty Ho – December 2018