

# External School Review Report

## St. Paul's School (Lam Tin)

**School Address:** 10 On Tin Street, Lam Tin, Kowloon

**Review Period:** 9 to 11, 15 and 18 December 2025



Quality Assurance Division  
Education Bureau

March 2026

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

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

### **ESR Team**

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		<b>Ms CHAN Pui-yan</b>
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## 1. External School Review Methodology

- 1.1 The ESR team conducted the review in December 2025 to validate the school self-evaluation (SSE) and its impact on the school's development. Suggestions are made to facilitate the school's continuous improvement and development.
- 1.2 The ESR team employed the following methods to understand the situation of the school:
- Scrutiny of documents and data provided by the school before and during the ESR;
  - Observation of 36 lessons taught by 36 teachers;
  - Observation of various school activities, such as the national flag-raising ceremony, form teachers' period and band busking; and
  - Meetings and interviews with the key stakeholders of the school including the school management<sup>1</sup>, teachers, specialist staff, parents and students.

## 2. Current Development of the School

- 2.1 The school aims to nurture students as knowledgeable, civic-minded and conscientious individuals who are prepared to serve others and contribute to society, in line with the core values of Catholic education.
- 2.2 The class structure approved by the Education Bureau and the number of students<sup>2</sup> in the current school year are as follows:
- | Level              | S1  | S2  | S3  | S4  | S5  | S6  | Total |
|--------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Number of Classes  | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 5   | 30    |
| Number of Students | 150 | 154 | 151 | 149 | 140 | 138 | 882   |
- 2.3 The principal has assumed leadership since the 2024/25 school year. Three vice-principals have each served the school for more than 20 years, and over half of the teachers have been teaching at the school for exceeding 10 years.
- 2.4 The previous ESR report (2013) made the following recommendations: (1) strengthening the Planning-Implementation-Evaluation (P-I-E) cycle and improving the quality of SSE for continuous school development; and (2) enhancing the effectiveness of classroom learning and teaching.
- 2.5 The major concerns of the previous school development cycle (SDC) (2022/23 to 2024/25 school years) are: (1) Relationship – Culture: to foster in our school an atmosphere of mutual trust, understanding and unity in which individual

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

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

students and teachers are able to grow; and (2) Agency – Ethos: to form our students into integrated women who are academically prepared and fully equipped to take their place in society and carry on their various responsibilities particularly in the home, in their profession and in the community in which they live.

- 2.6 The major concerns of the current SDC (2025/26 to 2027/28 school years) are: (1) to enhance learning effectiveness and inspire inquisitive minds through self-regulated learning; and (2) to promote wellness for students, teachers and parents through building balanced lives.

### 3. External School Review Findings

- 3.1 The school sets clear and student-centred objectives, demonstrating coherent progression across SDCs, driven by more effective SSE to inform strategic planning.**

3.1.1 The school has strengthened the P-I-E cycle in response to the recommendations made in the last ESR. While specific targets are set, success criteria are now more measurable, with clearer quantitative indicators complemented by qualitative evidence of student learning and development. A blend of data sources, including the Stakeholder Survey, the Assessment Program for Affective and Social Outcomes and teachers' observation, is thoroughly analysed. In particular, these data are compared across years, with findings discussed at different levels of meetings to evaluate student performance and identify emerging needs, such as balancing academic aspirations with student well-being. The effective use of the SSE findings contributes to coherent progression between cycles. The shift from earlier emphases on building supportive relationships and fostering student learning responsibility to current focuses on students' wellness and self-regulated learning (SRL) reflects how the SSE outcomes have informed planning and addressed post-pandemic student needs. For example, the limited metacognitive awareness of students identified in the last SDC has shaped the current major concern (MC) regarding SRL, while the focus on promoting wellness extends its attention to mental health and positive self-image.

3.1.2 The objectives of the current SDC are student-focused and supported by aligned strategies. For instance, the target "inspiring students' inquisitive minds through SRL", which aims to cultivate SRL habits and skills for independent learning, is clear and specific. Similarly, the objective of "promoting wellness among students" is advanced through comprehensive initiatives, such as providing platforms for students to shine and implementing diversified wellness programmes. Subject panels and committees formulate suitable work plans aligned with the school's MCs, generally supported by appropriate evaluation to inform future planning.

**3.2 Distributed leadership and external partnerships have gradually driven school improvement; more professional development on key education issues can enhance teachers' professional growth.**

3.2.1 The school sustains a caring and positive learning environment with a clear direction toward nurturing students to become intellectually capable, morally responsible and spiritually grounded. It has progressively built a distributed leadership structure, with middle managers widely appointed and empowered to lead initiatives, such as cross-subject projects. Timely guidance is provided by senior leaders to ensure that the MCs are implemented through concrete plans. Established practices, including regular subject panel and committee meetings, scrutiny of documents and tiered reporting, continue to strengthen planning and monitoring. While communication channels are generally robust, teachers' involvement often occurs after initiatives have already taken shape, which may hinder shared ownership. Earlier consultation during the formative stages of new initiatives would be desirable to build consensus, foster mutual trust and reinforce collective commitment among teachers regarding the unified goal of enhancing student performance.

3.2.2 The school demonstrates strategic acumen by leveraging its good partnerships with key stakeholders and proactively utilising external resources to enrich student learning and support. Parents contribute actively by volunteering and assisting in school major events, such as the school anniversary day. Alumni provide ongoing support across multiple areas, including funding scholarships and sharing expert insights in life planning forums, thereby reinforcing the Paulinian heritage and identity. In addition, the school effectively engages external professional support services and expands its network of partner schools, including tertiary institutions, as well as both local and Mainland sister schools. These collaborations broaden students' horizons and diversify their learning experiences.

3.2.3 A variety of professional development activities are arranged for teachers, including external workshops and a mentorship programme for new teachers. However, professional sharing remains largely confined to the subject level. A school-wide strategy is needed to systematise cross-subject exchanges, identify good practices and support teachers in applying them in their classrooms. Given the rapid development of education trends, some teachers have a less secure grasp of pedagogy for key initiatives such as information literacy and national security education. Strengthening teachers' capacity and fostering a culture of wider sharing of practical application would further enhance professional growth.

**3.3 The curriculum is generally broad and balanced; a more holistic planning for cross-curricular collaboration is required to strengthen synergy across subjects.**

3.3.1 In general, the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum,

providing students with diverse learning opportunities. At the senior secondary level, students are offered a wide range of elective subjects, applied learning and other languages subjects, while junior secondary (JS) students gain early exposure to other languages through taster programmes. Well-structured planning and co-ordination of other learning experiences across various domains, such as community service, career-related experiences, aesthetic and physical development, strengthen students' sense of responsibility and nurture competencies essential for whole-person development. In addition, the school enriches life-wide learning (LWL) through cultural exchanges, service-learning projects and leadership training, broadening students' horizons and learning experiences.

3.3.2 Though some refinements have recently been made to the JS curriculum, a further review is needed to ensure comprehensive coverage of core learning elements in technology education. Meanwhile, information literacy has been progressively promoted through assemblies and competitions, with samples of student work showing students' awareness of fact-checking and proper citation. However, collaboration across subject panels and committees on the fostering of information literacy remains limited. To enhance the coherence and synergy of these efforts, the school should formulate a holistic plan to strengthen co-ordination among subject panels and committees.

### **3.4 The school purposefully implements SRL and appropriately promotes STEAM education.**

3.4.1 The school has systematically implemented SRL as the MC in this SDC, shifting its emphasis from general study habits to the cultivation of specific SRL skills through pre-lesson preparation, note-taking and goal setting. Pre-lesson tasks are consistently adopted in lessons, while students have gradually developed the habit of completing these tasks. Technology-enhanced learning is suitably embedded in and outside the classroom, with e-learning platforms supporting SRL. Innovative practices, such as introducing essay revision tools powered by artificial intelligence (AI) within individual subject panels, demonstrate the school's readiness to explore emerging technologies.

3.4.2 STEAM education is thoughtfully promoted through hands-on projects, and an annual STEAM Day. Appropriate initiatives, ranging from gerontechnology designs enabled by Internet of Things (IoT) to aerospace-themed workshops and robotics training, are clearly evident. Several internal and external pull-out programmes have been introduced, with external resources aptly deployed to enrich students' learning experiences in STEAM, for example, through a Generative AI Aerospace Chatbot Workshop for Secondary 2 (S2) students. As revealed in some S3 student work, students identified the potential risk of a low heart rate during sleep. They then

designed a smartwatch to monitor the vital signs of elderly people using IoT and coding, demonstrating their ability to apply their knowledge of science and technology in authentic contexts.

**3.5 A positive learning climate and effective pre-lesson tasks are in place; enhanced task design, more varied questioning and increased positive reinforcement would further enhance learning effectiveness.**

3.5.1 A positive and harmonious learning environment is generally established, with clear learning objectives shared with students at the beginning of lessons. Teachers are friendly and approachable. Students are highly attentive and engaged in learning activities. In some lessons where teachers use encouraging language and positive reinforcement, such as inviting applause from peers or providing verbal praise to recognise students' effort, students show a greater willingness to attempt answers, elaborate on their ideas and persist in improving their responses fluently. However, such practices are less common across the lessons. Motivational strategies could be more widely adopted to foster an engaging learning atmosphere that allows students to demonstrate their learning with ease and confidence.

3.5.2 To develop students' SRL habits, teachers assign appropriate pre-lesson tasks, such as searching for information, listening to audio materials, and reading articles. Students have developed a habit of preparation, with some demonstrating skills such as note-taking and highlighting key points. In more effective lessons with well-designed tasks, teachers effectively connect the pre-lesson tasks to lesson content, deepening students' understanding and clarifying misconceptions. They also design tasks that are connected to students' daily experiences to facilitate meaningful discussion or that scaffold tasks from simple to complex. In other lessons, teachers create an inquiry-based environment and properly guide students to think from multiple perspectives. Students are highly engaged, work collaboratively to co-construct knowledge, articulate outcomes clearly with elaboration, and exhibit critical thinking when challenged. Conversely, in lessons with weaker task design, teachers rely heavily on direct instruction or assign tasks that provide little room for discussion and collaboration. With limited opportunities for reasoning, student participation diminishes, and their learning progress is seldom tracked during lessons. Refining task design to foster collaboration and encourage reasoned responses would enhance student engagement and allow teachers to better gauge their understanding.

3.5.3 Teachers frequently ask questions to check students' understanding and provide timely feedback. In some effective lessons, varied techniques, such as prompting and probing, elicit extended responses, stimulate deeper learning and encourage students to build on peers' ideas or respond to subtle hints. Students in these lessons engage eagerly, demonstrate higher-order thinking and express well-reasoned viewpoints. Teachers provide specific

feedback that further probes student thinking, empowering them to refine their answers. In contrast, in some less effective lessons, the limited use of diverse questioning and incisive feedback by teachers restricts opportunities for higher-order thinking and deep learning. Teachers are encouraged to adopt open-ended and thought-provoking questions, along with concrete feedback to strengthen students' understanding and promote reflective learning.

### **3.6 The school provides targeted initiatives for student support; enhancing school-level co-ordination would maximise the impact of values education.**

3.6.1 The school demonstrates commendable capacity in diagnosing students' developmental needs and aligning support measures accordingly. Appropriate provisions are made for students with special educational needs and those requiring life-planning guidance. Targeted activities are exemplified by form-specific thematic programmes and talks that address key developmental themes such as adaptation and cyberbullying. The Paulinian Diary is a well-conceived initiative that guides JS students to set personal and academic goals while embedding elements of life planning and values education. This endeavour is enriched through collaboration among committees, for example, S1 students interview family members about their occupations and pledge responsibilities to themselves, their families, and society, thereby linking life planning with values education in a meaningful and authentic way. Evidence from student reflections indicates sustained behavioural changes, including taking increased responsibility in household chores, which have earned recognition from their parents and peers.

3.6.2 Subject panels and committees consistently embed the priority values advocated by the EDB, alongside the core values of Catholic education, into subjects and school activities. Annual themes are appropriately set to deepen students' understanding of good virtues, with subject panels organising related activities. For instance, under the theme of "responsibility and commitment," students voted for historical figures exemplifying commitment, then created online profiles with comic-style illustrations and textual descriptions highlighting their life stories and demonstrations of responsibility. This enables students to consolidate their learning and engage more meaningfully with the promoted values. Service learning remains a hallmark of the school, providing authentic contexts for students to practise empathy and social responsibility. S2 students visit elderly homes to show their care, while S5 students collaborate to operate charity bazaars, nurturing compassion and reinforcing the school's mission of cultivating socially responsible individuals.

3.6.3 National education is steadily promoted by integrating its elements into subjects, LWL activities, and school events, such as quizzes, competitions, and teacher-led sharing sessions on national development. This further enhances students' understanding of history, culture and national security while strengthening their sense of belonging. The well-planned STEAM Day

was themed “China Aerospace Beidou and Meteorology Experience”, featuring satellite simulations and expert talks; it exemplifies the school’s effective use of national aerospace achievements to ground STEAM learning in real-world contexts and organically connect it with national development, fostering students’ sense of national pride. Flag-raising ceremonies observed during the inspection were conducted with solemnity, with students showing appropriate attitudes. A reflective speech by a student representative on the Nanjing Massacre thoughtfully highlighted the importance of remembrance and encouraged peers to contribute to our country. While subject panels and committees implement values education within their domains, the absence of an overarching plan often results in duplicated efforts and limited opportunities for synergy. Enhancing school-level co-ordination could provide a comprehensive view of implementation, systematically align efforts and maximise the impact of values education on students.

**3.7 Student wellness and resilience are suitably promoted through cultivating character strengths, enhancing core competencies, and securing appropriate support from parents and teachers.**

3.7.1 The school has sustained a caring and supportive environment, where positive rapport between teachers and students across year levels is successfully fostered. Building on this foundation, priorities identified through the SSE findings have shifted pastoral care to focus more on student wellness. Student-centred strategies that nurture character strengths and core competencies, such as time management and goal setting, are suitably arranged to develop students’ resilience and confidence in buffering against adversity. Tailored form-specific workshops, for example, S4 study skills workshops and S6 relaxation workshops, provide students with practical skills for relaxation and stress management. In one session observed, students explored relaxation strategies through hands-on activities, such as applying calming scents. Additionally, thematic programmes and platforms showcasing diverse talents, including art exhibitions, singing and orchestra performances, further nurture students’ confidence and positive self-image. School-wide events such as Unity Fair highlight student leadership and participation; for example, health ambassadors coordinate game booths to promote mental and physical health. As observed, students actively conveyed health messages to their peers with sincerity and confidence, contributing to a joyful and inclusive learning atmosphere. These initiatives positively equip students with the necessary skills in self-care and resilience, thereby cultivating their psychological well-being.

3.7.2 The school has gradually strengthened its networks of support by actively engaging teachers and parents to reinforce students’ competencies in managing wellness. A good attempt has been made with the recent introduction of a form teacher period to enhance rapport between senior form

teachers and students. Peer-to-peer support, including Paulinian leaders, prefects, and the student association's representatives, consistently fosters cross-year bonding and encourages students to seek guidance from peers. For instance, Paulinian Leaders assist S1 students in establishing effective learning routines and adapting to the new environment, while guiding S3 students in the selection of elective subjects through one-to-one peer counselling. The school provides appropriate workshops on positive parenting practices, such as healthy parent-child communication and constructive behaviour guidance, to equip parents with skills for supporting their children. Online self-learning resources, including stress-coping strategies and communication tips, are suitably provided for parents to access at their own pace. These provisions further extend support into the home environment and reinforce the partnership between the school and families in promoting student wellness.

### **3.8 Students engage positively in school life, maintain respectful peer relationships, and excel in speech and debating competitions.**

3.8.1 Students exhibit positive engagement with various aspects of school life, interacting with teachers and peers in a polite and respectful manner. They participate earnestly in LWL activities, including thematic lunchtime events, where student leaders confidently share their school experiences with guests and take on responsibilities, such as coordinating game booths to promote mental health and delivering speeches during the national flag-raising ceremony. Their poise and talent are further reflected in musical performances during busking and orchestra sessions, where peers and teachers show support and appreciation, giving a round of applause that collectively enriching the vibrant school atmosphere.

3.8.2 In the past three years, the percentages of students meeting the general entrance requirements for local undergraduate university programmes and sub-degree programmes in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination were above the territory average of day school students. With consideration of the S1 intake and the school performance in the HKDSE Examination over the past three years, there is a clear need for improvement.

3.8.3 Students show keen interest in a wide spectrum of co-curricular activities, including physical and cultural pursuits, uniformed groups, and social services. They actively participate in territory-wide competitions across diverse areas such as language, art and sports. Their performance in speech and debating is particularly noteworthy, with students receiving numerous individual and team awards in inter-school events, notably the Hong Kong Schools Speech Festival and the Hong Kong Secondary Schools Debating Competition, reflecting their sustained participation beyond the classroom.

## 4. Conclusion and Way Forward

The school sets clear and student-centred objectives, and demonstrates coherent progression across its school development cycles. The current major concerns of promoting wellness and self-regulated learning are thoughtfully formulated with aligned strategies that help students build confidence, adaptability, and independent learning skills and habits. The school has progressively cultivated distributed leadership, empowering middle managers to lead initiatives. Good partnerships with parents, alumni, and external institutions are leveraged to enrich students' learning experiences and broaden their horizons. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, offering diverse learning opportunities for whole-person development. STEAM education is purposefully promoted, with students applying knowledge in authentic contexts. The school fosters a supportive and harmonious learning environment, with clearly defined learning objectives in the lessons. Teachers' friendly and approachable manners reinforce good teacher-student rapport. Students respond with high attentiveness and engage positively in the learning process. The student support measures are appropriate, exemplified by initiatives such as the Paulinian Diary and service-learning opportunities that embed proper values and life planning education. Additionally, wellness programmes, peer leadership and parent involvement further strengthen students' self-esteem, resilience, and healthy self-image. Students exhibit positive engagement and interact with teachers and peers in a polite and respectful manner. They actively participate in a wide spectrum of co-curricular activities, achieving notable results in speech and debating competitions.

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

- 4.1 School-level co-ordination across subject panels and committees, along with professional development, requires further enhancement. The school should establish a structured platform to strengthen collaboration and foster greater synergy. Capacity-building initiatives for teachers should be systematised to promote cross-subject sharing, build their capacity on key educational issues and support the adoption of effective pedagogies. Both lesson design and teachers' questioning strategies should be refined to deepen student engagement, encourage higher-order thinking, and cultivate a more stimulating learning atmosphere to maximise student learning impact.