



# **Study on Challenges, Effective Policies, and Best Practices of Ordinary Schools in Educating Students with Special Educational Needs in Hong Kong**

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## Executive Summary

### **A. Research Background, Objectives and Methodology**

1. The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) commissioned the research team of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, the Education University of Hong Kong, to conduct a project entitled “Study on Challenges, Effective Policies, and Best Practices of Ordinary Schools in Educating Students with Special Educational Needs in Hong Kong” in 2019. This research employs a mixed-method approach to collect data and opinions from different stakeholders through questionnaires, focus group interviews, individual interviews, and case studies to examine the effectiveness of the current integrated education (IE) in primary and secondary schools in-depth and to provide relevant policy suggestions for the future development of IE.
2. The purpose of this Study is (i) to review literature and research materials on local and overseas practices and strategies for providing IE to students with special educational needs (SEN); (ii) to assess the understanding of school principals, school administrators, and teachers regarding the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO), the Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Code of Practice on Education), and students with SEN; (iii) to collect the views of school principals, school administrators, and teachers in ordinary schools on implementing IE for students with SEN; (iv) to explore the challenges faced by ordinary schools in implementing IE and supporting students with SEN; (v) to evaluate the effectiveness of government policies in promoting IE and providing equal learning opportunities for students with SEN; (vi) to identify good practices initiated by in-school professionals to achieve IE, support students with SEN, and provide them with equal learning opportunities through case studies; and (vii) to make policy recommendations based on the collected data and information to ensure that students with SEN can get access to and receive fair treatment in the mainstream school system.
3. The school survey started in October 2020 and was finally completed in November 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. 141 ordinary schools participated in this Study, of which 60 were primary schools, and 81 were secondary schools. The school principal and one Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) of each participating school were invited to fill out the questionnaire. The total number of teachers surveyed was 1 532, of which 704 were primary school teachers and 828 were secondary school teachers.
4. Based on the data collected from the school survey, the research team adopted purposive sampling in selecting 15 primary schools and 12 secondary schools to participate in individual interviews and focus group interviews. Half of them were “relatively successful schools”, while the other half were “relatively less successful schools” in IE implementation. Interviews began in June 2021 and were completed in December 2021. In total, there were 106 respondents. 15 individual interviews with primary school principals and 12 individual interviews with secondary school principals were conducted. 15 individual interviews with primary school SENCOs and 16 individual interviews with secondary school SENCOs were arranged. A total of 28 clinical professionals (15 from primary schools and 13 from secondary schools) were interviewed, including social workers, school counselors, educational psychologists (EPs), clinical psychologists, and speech therapists. 10 parents of students with SEN in primary schools and 10 parents of students with SEN in secondary schools were interviewed.
5. Based on the data collected from the school survey, the research team selected 8 schools with relatively successful implementation of IE (including 4 primary schools and 4 secondary schools)

for case studies in June to July 2021 with the aim to identify good exemplars of IE in primary and secondary schools and the key factors for the success and obstacles in achieving good practices of IE.

## **B. Literature Review and Key Findings of Questionnaire Surveys**

From the literature review, successful governing factors affecting the implementation of IE include comprehensive support programmes and the use of integrated databases to deepen parents' understanding of their children's growth. From a policy perspective, emphasis should be placed on teacher professional development, with teacher training helping frontline teachers deal with daily teaching challenges. Finally, an inclusive society relies on the tolerance and acceptance of students with SEN and parents, and strengthening mutual trust and understanding among different stakeholders.

The main results of the overall questionnaire survey are as follows:

### **i) Understanding towards DDO and Code of Practice on Education**

*All three stakeholder groups admitted their understanding of DDO and Code of Practice on Education. But overall, teachers had a lower understanding than SENCOs and principals.*

1. Over 90% of the interviewed primary and secondary school principals (91.5%) and SENCOs (92.9%) agreed that they understood DDO and the Code of Practice on Education. Among teachers, approximately 60% (58.6%) of the respondents believed that they understood this ordinance and Code of Practice.
2. Regarding the understanding of IE, the average agreement level of the description of IE among primary and secondary school principals and SENCOs was 3.01, indicating their overall agreement on the description of IE, whereas the average agreement level among teachers was 2.88.

### **ii) Current Practices and Evaluation of Integrated Education in Schools**

*The three stakeholders had an overall good understanding of SEN type classification. However, teachers were slightly less aware that Mental Illness (MI)<sup>1</sup> has been classified as one of the SEN categories, and there were also concerns regarding the pressure on SENCOs and frontline teachers to provide support for different types of students with SEN.*

3. In general, the three major stakeholders had a profound understanding of the current classification of students' SEN. Over 80% of principals, SENCOs and teachers were aware of the eight general categories, except principals and teachers had relatively limited understanding of the inclusion of MI as a category of SEN. Comparing with more than 95% (96.5%) of SENCOs who knew that MI is one of the SEN types, only approximately 76% of teachers (76.1%) knew about it. It is worth noting that 35.0% of SENCOs and 21.8% of teachers in primary schools thought that academic underachiever is one of the SEN types.
4. In general, SENCOs in primary and secondary schools have to take care of various types of students with SEN. Primary school SENCOs (66.7%) had to take care of students with Intellectual Disability (ID) more than secondary school SENCOs (52.5%), while secondary school SENCOs had to take

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<sup>1</sup> Mental illness (MI) was only added to the category of SEN in the 2017/18 school year.

care of students with Speech and Language Impairment (SpLI), Hearing Impairment (HI), Physical Disability (PD), and Visual Impairment (VI) more than primary school SENCOs. The differences of the four types of SEN were between 3 and 15 percentage points.

5. Secondary school SENCOs (83.5%) and teachers (39.3%) had to handle students with MI more than primary school SENCOs (55.9%) and teachers (11.2%). In contrast, primary school teachers (35.1%) had to handle students with ID more than secondary school teachers (29.4%), while secondary school teachers (37.6%) had more cases of students with HI than primary school teachers (27.9%).
6. Both SENCOs and teachers pointed out that they felt quite stressed when facing students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). While taking care of students with MI, the stress experienced by SENCOs was significantly higher than that of teachers.
7. Overall speaking, SENCOs perceived that they were under the greatest stress while supporting students with MI, with the average score of 3.25 (3 represents that a bit stressful); secondary school SENCOs were under greater pressure while supporting students with MI, with the average scores of 3.38 and mean score of 3.07 for primary schools SENCOs. In contrast, primary school SENCOs were under the greatest pressure when supporting students with SpLI with the average scores of 3.27, while 2.71 for secondary school SENCOs.

*Both primary and secondary schools have provided services or measures to cater for the individual needs of students with SEN, but the overall performance of secondary schools was relatively worse than that of primary schools in this regard.*

8. In both primary and secondary schools, the priority of services or measures to cater for the individual needs of students with SEN is "Curriculum/Assessment Accommodation" (87.9%), "Hiring Teaching Assistants" (87.2%), "Providing Professional Therapy and Counselling" (84.4%) and "Hiring Support Teachers" (84.4%).
9. However, it is noted that secondary schools did not provide services or measures to cater for the individual needs of students with SEN as much as primary schools in general. For instance, "Designing School-based Curriculum" was less likely to be introduced in secondary schools (40.7%) than primary schools (71.7%) by 30 percentage points, "Small-Class Teaching" was less likely to be implemented in secondary schools (46.9%) than primary schools (73.3%) by around 25 percentage points, and "Setting up Individual Education Plan (IEP)" was less prevalent in secondary schools (56.8%) than primary schools (75.0%) by around 20 percentage points.

*The three stakeholders also agreed that tight teaching schedules/heavy teaching workload and heavy administrative work were the major difficulties in implementing IE in schools.*

10. All three major stakeholders agreed that the most difficult aspect of implementing IE was the tight teaching schedule / heavy teaching workload. Over 80% of surveyed principals (81.6%), teachers (85.3%), and SENCOs (85.8%) held similar views. Compared with their counterparts in secondary schools (77.8%), principals in primary schools (86.7%) perceived tight teaching schedules / heavy teaching workload as the most challenging.
11. Besides, over 70% of principals (70.2%) and SENCOs (70.9%) also expressed that the related administrative work brought about by IE was heavy. In contrast, 68.8% of the teachers surveyed considered the lack of manpower as the second difficulty in implementing IE.

### **iii) Self-evaluation from SENCOS and Teachers towards Integrated Education Practices**

*Secondary school SENCOS and primary school teachers showed a higher self-efficacy towards IE practices in general, indicating that primary school SENCOS and secondary school teachers still have a competency gap compared to the above two groups in the actual practices of IE.*

12. For the self-assessment completed by SENCOS about their competency, out of 25 items, SENCOS in secondary schools scored at least 3 (3 represents agreement with the assessment description) on average in 11 items, while the respective figure for their counterparts in primary schools was 6. Among all the 25 items, secondary school SENCOS also had higher mean scores than primary school SENCOS in 16 items.
13. In the self-assessment about their competency in implementing IE completed by teachers in primary and secondary schools, the average scores of all items were generally less than 3.0. Among the 19 items of self-assessment, the average scores of secondary school teachers of 18 items were lower than those of their counterparts in primary schools.
14. The average scores of secondary school teachers' ratings of "I am familiar with the resources that students with SEN need for learning" and "I can accurately gauge the progress of comprehension of curriculum by students with SEN " were 2.42 and 2.47, respectively, which were lower than 2.50. The average score of "I am familiar with the resources that students with SEN need for learning" was 2.46 rated by overall teachers, indicating that the teachers surveyed do not know much about the resources that students with SEN require. The findings also show that secondary school teachers have difficulty in accurately grasping the progress of understanding of the curriculum by students with SEN.

### **iv) Evaluation of Integrated Education Policy Effectiveness**

*Schools believed that the Learning Support Grant (LSG) had provided resources for schools to employ different professional support personnel and purchase professional support services.*

15. Principals thought that the LSG was the most helpful in purchasing external professional services (91.5%), followed by employing full-time and/or part-time teaching staff (85.1%) and full-time support staff (78.7%).
16. Both primary and secondary schools deployed LSG mostly on purchasing external services and hiring full-time / part-time teaching staff. 85.0% and 81.7% of primary schools respectively deployed the grant on purchasing external services and employing full-time / part-time teaching staff, while for secondary schools, the figures were 96.3% and 87.7% respectively. Overall speaking, secondary schools deployed more LSG resources than primary schools in various ways, except for strengthening home-school cooperation. While 55.0% of primary schools deployed the grant on strengthening home-school cooperation, only 53.1% of secondary schools did so, slightly lower than primary schools. In contrast, secondary schools (71.6%) deployed LSG more than primary schools (41.7%) in organizing learning or cultural integration activities.

*The three stakeholders agreed that integrated education policy measures could generally achieve their supporting effect and assist schools in implementing integrated education, but their views were different.*

17. Principals, SENCOS, and teachers also held positive opinions about the overall IE policy support measures. Principals thought that the setting up of the post of SENCO was the most effective support

measure with the overall mean score of 3.48 (3 represents that the policy and support measures are helpful). The post of SENST was deemed the second most effective support measure rated by principals overall, with a mean score of 3.44.

18. SENCOS considered that the promotion of School-based Educational Psychology services and the provision of more systematic and adequate teacher training were the most effective support measures with the mean scores of 3.48 for both items. “To provide SENCO posts” was rated second with an average score of 3.38, which the secondary school SENCOS rated a higher mean score of 3.49, while the average score rated by primary school SENCOS was 3.22.
19. Teachers had similar views with SENCOS in the aspect of providing more systematic and adequate teacher training, while the overall mean score was 3.19, which teachers of both primary and secondary schools rated 3.19. Yet, they considered adding the post of School-based Speech Therapist as the most effective support measure with the highest mean score of 3.21, which primary school teachers rated a higher mean score of 3.24 than that of secondary school teachers (3.18).

#### **v) Current Situation of Home-school Cooperation in Integrated Education**

*Home-school cooperation in integrated education is gradually improving, but still faces some difficulties.*

20. The data showed that the most preferred means of communication between schools and parents are telephone and other instant messaging channels (92.9%), followed by Parent day meeting (90.8%) and arranging professionals to meet with parents (88.7%). Over 60% of primary schools would arrange parent courses/workshops (65.0%), however, it is not a common practice in secondary schools (43.2%).
21. The surveyed SENCOS and teachers mentioned the difficulties in dealing with the problems of students with SEN with their parents because parents were busy to support the needs of students with SEN after school and due to the lack of required skills and knowledge of looking after their children with SEN. The average agreement level of SENCOS and teachers regarding the lack of parental support after school were 3.25 and 3.10, respectively. The average agreement level of SENCOS and teachers regarding parents' lack of required skills and knowledge to take care of their children with SEN were 3.23 and 3.07, respectively.
22. Teachers in primary and secondary schools considered that parents resisted to seek professional help or advices, with the average agreement level of 2.63 for both. However, SENCOS disagreed about this view, with the mean score rated 2.38. Teachers also agreed that parents had difficulty in gathering information to support students with SEN while the overall mean score of agreement level rated by teachers was 2.52, though SENCOS disagreed about this point with the mean score of 2.21.

### **C. Results of Individual Interviews and Focus Group Interviews**

#### **I. Current Curriculum Implementation (Learning, Teaching, and Assessment)**

*Current primary and secondary school curriculum is considered as too tight.*

1. Stakeholders in both primary and secondary schools (including principals, SENCOS, and teachers) indicated that the greatest problem in implementing IE was the “packed” curriculum plan. It is difficult for schools and frontline teachers to make enough time and space to cater for the needs of

students with SEN effectively. They also agreed that requiring students with SEN to study mainstream curriculum and meet mainstream assessment reflected the inequality in the education system of Hong Kong. In addition, SENSTs had mentioned that some teachers did not have their sense of achievement when teaching students with SEN, a consistent phenomenon found in the results of the survey.

*Students with SEN still face unified public assessments at different stages of learning.*

2. Currently, students still face different unified public assessments, including Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) for Primary 3, Primary 6, and Secondary 3 students, Pre-S1 Hong Kong Attainment Test (Pre-S1 HKAT), and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE). This not only puts heavy pressure on schools but also affects the learning outcomes of students with SEN at different stages of schooling, as the curriculum is too challenging for them to catch up with the learning progress. Although there are different assessment accommodation measures available for students with SEN to apply for, these measures have limited effectiveness. However, since schools have a post of Primary School Curriculum Leader, SENCOs indicated that the assistance of the curriculum leader in enhancing the effectiveness of classroom support at Tier 1 was significant, which had helped improve the overall learning and teaching effectiveness.

## **II. Effects of Placing Resources in Integrated Education by the Government**

*Functions and roles of Special Educational Needs Coordinator*

3. SENCOs reported that the work of handling students with SEN covered a wide range of aspects, including early identification, student support, and arranging IEP. These tasks could not be completed independently by SENCOs, who, in fact, require the support from students, parents, teachers, and other professional support personnel to implement the Whole School Approach (WSA). As SENCOs play the role of coordination, they are responsible for communicating and negotiating with different stakeholders. SENCOs also stated that the current school policies or the assistance of professional support agents were still insufficient. In the school context, SENCOs always have to collaborate with various subject teaching teams or administrative teams in providing different accommodations for students with SEN, but strengthening the cooperation among teachers was considered challenging due to lack of power. Principals in primary and secondary schools agreed that catering for the needs of students with SEN should not be solely the responsibility of SENCOs, which should be shared by all teachers.

*Current status of implementation of professional support and Individualised Educational Plan*

4. Although different professional support personnel, such as EPs and speech therapists, regularly arrange school visits to provide professional support, the resources are still insufficient. EPs indicated in their interviews that due to their insufficient school visits, it would not be possible for students with SEN to receive continuous assessment, making it difficult for the SENCOs to adjust their relevant support according to the changing needs of the students with SEN. Social workers also stated that given that EPs' visits could not be scheduled as routine, teachers and social workers in schools sometimes had to play the role of the EP in providing support to students with SEN.
5. In terms of IEP, SENCOs reflected in their interviews that IEP could bring noticeable results to students, but it required collaborative practice and engagement of different stakeholders. Therefore,

SENCOs in primary and secondary schools expressed that schools had to identify students based on the urgency of their needs and situations to guarantee IEP could be effectively implemented. However, IEP was not a favorable practice in the secondary school context as indicated in school survey findings due to the constraints posed by HKDSE. In comparison, primary schools may have greater flexibility in identifying students with SEN supported by IEP.

#### *Deployment of resources and its flexibility*

6. Stakeholders in primary and secondary schools (including principals, SENCOs, teachers, and various professional support personnel) all expressed that the continuous increase in allocation of resources by the Government in recent years helped the schools promote IE. However, according to principals in primary and secondary schools, the scarcest resource is the human resources because it is hard to find suitable personnel to assist schools in implementing IE, especially the lack of professional support agents who are specialized in taking care of a particular type of students with SEN. Therefore, it is recommended to set up permanent professional support personnel positions to attract relevant professionals in providing support to the schools in need. Besides, principals had also pointed out that increasing resources alone without a change in the education system would not help overcome the current difficulties encountered in IE.
7. SENCOs pointed out that there were restrictions in the deployment of LSG, and SENSTs could not fully support their work. Moreover, most of the resources had been used to hire professional support personnel, which did not help to alleviate the overloaded administrative tasks and long working hours of SENCOs. Therefore, it is hoped that the Government could provide clear guidelines on using the LSG so that SENCOs could utilize resources more effectively and plan the development of IE in view of the school-based needs.

#### *Teacher professional development for Integrated Education*

8. Principals believed that professional training could deepen teachers' understanding of IE and their skills in taking care of students with SEN. Most teachers were also willing to receive training on students with SEN, which can help teachers, including the disciplinary and counselling team, life planning team, and class teachers, facilitate in understanding how to support students from different roles and reduce their over-reliance on the leadership of the student support team or SENCOs so that WSA could be adopted in the implementation of IE. However, the teachers also reported that they feel pressure on the training. At present, in-service teachers mainly improved their skills through training courses provided by tertiary institutions, but the quality and content of the courses would affect its overall effectiveness.

#### *Role and current status of Government and tertiary institutions in supporting ordinary schools to implement Integrated Education through collaboration*

9. The Education Bureau (EDB) and different tertiary institutions have been organizing various training activities, including sharing sessions, lectures, etc. However, the teachers mentioned that some of the courses emphasized too much on theory and lack practical ideas how that could be applied in teaching. Teachers could only make reference to the sharing of cases in the courses, but they might not be able to execute it in their teaching practices. In particular, course instructors might not have relevant expertise in various subject disciplines, making it difficult to provide practical support for teachers of different subjects simultaneously. SENCOs and principals commented that in addition to providing professional support, the Government could proactively collaborate with

universities to conduct research on IE and improve its effectiveness by examining the current implementation in local schools.

10. With the increasing attention to IE in society and the education sector, principals in primary and secondary schools suggested that the Government could consider adding IE as a core subject in teacher education. It could benefit teachers in early identification in their future teaching and collaborating with professional support agents to apply theory into practice. Some EPs stated that the provision of training courses in supporting students with SEN had been implemented for several years. Nevertheless, with increasing attention and changes in treatment methods and standards, the training courses have to be updated in time to align with the policy changes. Some parents believed that the success of IE implementation in schools depended on the vision of the principals. If the school lacks an open-minded and long-term vision for the development of IE, the results will not be fruitful.

### **III. Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic and Class Suspension on Integrated Education and Inclusive School**

#### *Challenges to students' mental health status and support*

11. According to the interviews of primary and secondary school principals, schools have conducted various support activities to provide mental health education for students, parents, and teachers, increase the awareness of different stakeholders on this topic, and support students' mental health with preventive strategies. However, in respect of the reduction in face-to-face communication and the changes in life rhythm and habits due to COVID-19 epidemic, students' emotional problems were aggravated. Students in need might not actively seek help during online learning, which had made professional support harder. During that period, parents' insights and assistance became more significant.
12. Most interviewed social workers found that parental education could help them understand the information about mental health, such as symptoms of mental illness as well as the needs of students with mental problems, etc. Meanwhile, some schools had provided parents more opportunities and platforms for open discussions and enabled all stakeholders to face up to the mental health issues and gave support and assistance to students with mental health needs.

#### *Cross-professional support to Integrated Education*

13. The social workers stated in the interviews that identifying students with mental health needs often relied on observation by people around them, depending on whether they could attempt early evaluation and arrange a referral. It would also be affected by people's awareness level of mental health. Interviewed psychologists indicated that mental health cases may vary greatly. As far as parents are concerned, parents expressed that in coping with exceptional circumstances with their children, they were also confused about the methods to help their children. Some institutions or universities would organize related activities, such as lectures or training, to help parents and their children and create a supportive atmosphere in the community.
14. While mental health issues usually involve privacy issues, it is difficult for social workers to collaborate with the student support team to provide holistic support in academic, emotional, and growth aspects based on the needs of students. In addition, social workers in primary and secondary schools commented that the current waiting time for psychiatric diagnosis and evaluation was too

long, obstructing immediate support for students. Besides, a doctor's diagnosis could only confirm the situation of students and might not be able to give some suggestions on the support and accommodations for psychological problems, which would make the school support difficult.

#### *Views about inclusive schools*

15. Principals of primary and secondary schools mentioned in the interviews that schools had actively promoted mutual help among students and built up inclusive and positive values. They had also tried to adopt peer support to deal with students' emotional problems. Establishing an inclusive atmosphere in the school is also subject to the participation of teachers. The teachers believed that all parties concerned should also pay attention to teachers' mental health and handle their needs so that positive values could be gradually infiltrated into students through daily teaching.
16. With the development of IE, teachers may need to handle the learning diversity of students. However, while teachers need to spend much of their time in the classroom dealing with the issues of students with SEN, it is challenging to take care of all students in the class. This is also unfair to students who do not have SEN. Some principals of primary schools stressed that attention should also be paid to the teacher-student ratio in each class when implementing IE. However, given that the small-class teaching policy has not been officially adopted in secondary schools, it echos with the survey finding that small-class teaching policy is not the prevalent support strategy in secondary schools.

#### **IV. Current Status of Parents' Taking Care of Children with SEN and Home-school Cooperation**

*Parents' motivation for seeking help increases. But timely service support may not be available due to financial difficulties.*

17. Based on parents' interviews, it is more likely for the parents of students with SEN in secondary schools to accept their children with SEN and actively seek help, while their counterparts in primary schools still had slight resistance to accepting that their children were with SEN. Therefore, SENCOS and social workers pointed out that parental education was indispensable. They emphasized that enhancing parents' awareness of children with SEN at an early stage could help ease their wariness so that their children could be assessed and treated at the earliest possible time.
18. In the interviews, parents of primary schools mentioned that the waiting time for government services was too long, while private therapy services were extremely expensive and unaffordable, resulting in their children with SEN unable to receive timely service support. They commented that the inavailability of suitable support services was also a shortcoming of the existing professional support services.

#### *Maturing of home-school cooperation*

19. In terms of home-school cooperation, parents indicated that if they had regular and good communication with SENCOS, they would have greater confidence in schools and would allow their children to receive support. SENCOS also stressed that gaining parental trust was essential in promoting home-school cooperation and making it easier to support students with SEN. In addition, EPs stated that parent-child conflicts tended to increase during school closures due to the epidemic. How parents should improve communication and get along with their children in the future is a

significant challenge for promoting home-school cooperation because it will affect behaviours of students with SEN at school and may bring burdens to school.

## **V. Deep-Seated Social Norms and Values**

### *Impact of exam-oriented culture and social atmosphere on students with SEN*

20. Some secondary school teachers still view receiving university education as the only goal of the study, putting much pressure on students with SEN. Furthermore, the entire Hong Kong environment places too much emphasis on academic performance, resulting in the negligence of the personal abilities of students with SEN. Some parents even argued that their children were keener to take the HKDSE than they were, showing the great influence of the exam-oriented culture.
21. Some secondary schools have tried to assist students with SEN by providing the direction of a non-academic pathway of their children and career counselling to parents of students with SEN so as to eliminate their worries about the prospects of their children. As for primary schools, principals have said that students have to face many assessments, examinations, and tests under the current education system. What primary schools could do is to make students dislike learning less. In the long run, the test-taking culture may put students, teachers, or schools at a disadvantage.
22. Even though the social inclusion for students with SEN has been dramatically improved, there is room for improvement in social acceptance in general. In interviews, parents of primary schools pointed out that parents of other students were dissatisfied that their children were disturbed by students with SEN in class. SENCOS and social workers also shared similar views that some parents lied about their child that he/she was a student with SEN in order to benefit from the accommodation measures in examination. Some parents still hold reservation about letting their children study in special schools. It shows that Hong Kong society is not truly inclusive.

## **D. Results of Case Studies**

### *Overview and characteristics of Integrated Education implementation in schools*

1. All schools participating in the case study have adopted WSA in implementing IE. The student support team can assist all their school teachers and other relevant stakeholders in supporting students with SEN. The support measures include small-class teaching, after-school tutoring, IEP, various concentration improvement and social skills groups, homework, curriculum, and assessment accommodations, etc. Schools can also make full use of the government resources to purchase different professional support services so that students with SEN can receive professional support apart from teaching and learning.
2. Both primary and secondary schools have tried to provide diversified support services based on their respective school contexts and the types of students' SEN. With the support of the school management, some schools are able to build up an inclusive campus environment and cultivate the inclusive culture and atmosphere properly in alignment with their school vision and religious background.

### *Good exemplars of Integrated Education implementation in primary schools*

3. Some primary schools are able to provide support through utilizing small-class teaching, reducing

the number of students in each class, and implementing a pull-out approach. Since the schools have received additional resources to hire SENSTs, the pull-out classes are also taken charge of by SENSTs to provide more in-depth support for students with SEN.

4. Some schools cooperate closely with parents of students with SEN to alleviate their doubts and wariness by explaining to them in detail about their children's performance at school. In addition, some "relatively successful schools" invite parents to observe the lessons and participate in parent-child activities, which improves parents' perception of the school and enables teachers to observe parents' interaction with their children with SEN. It can help teachers further understand the family backgrounds of students with SEN and situations.
5. Some "relatively successful schools" focus on cooperating with the community and professional groups to enhance the overall effectiveness of the support by adopting a diversified support model. Schools provide specialized support services and interventional treatment for different types of students with SEN through purchasing different professional support services to improve their social skills and help them adapt to school life and learning environment.
6. Those schools adopting a co-teaching approach create more space and capacity for teachers to exchange teaching ideas and co-plan lessons together by reducing the number of teaching periods of the teachers concerned. The teaching plan for students with SEN is personalized as much as possible, and teaching support based on the strengths of students with SEN is provided. Some "relatively successful schools" also keep track of the learning progress of students with SEN closely and make appropriate accommodations to actualize differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction refers to teachers' adjusting the learning environment, content, process, and outcomes based on students' learning conditions, abilities, and interests in order to improve their learning performance (Jockey Club "Diversity at Schools" Project, n.d.).

*Good exemplars of Integrated Education implementation in secondary schools*

7. Given the fact that secondary schools are not implementing small-class teaching at the moment, the high number of students in each class poses difficulties to teachers in supporting students with SEN. Therefore, schools provide support in a small-class teaching mode with the pull-out approach through a co-teaching strategy. The pull-out class approach enables teachers to cater to the learning difficulties of students with SEN with a teacher-student ratio of approximately 1:4 or 1:5. Teachers can also observe the other aspects of the students with SEN through the support during the pull-out classes, which is beneficial for student support team in providing more comprehensive support to those students.
8. School principals' support is crucial for engaging the whole school in IE. On the one hand, SENCOs would be empowered to lead, integrate and coordinate all works related to IE more effectively. On the other hand, schools would encourage teachers to participate more in training related to IE and provide relevant school-based training opportunities.
9. Some "relatively successful schools" emphasize improving teaching and learning support at Tier 1; SENCOs lead teachers to conduct action research to review and improve the teaching and learning effectiveness in supporting students with SEN. The action research results would also be shared with different subject panels for feedback. Thus, the community of practice that promotes differentiated instruction in schools has gradually been formulated.

## **E. Recommendations**

The successful implementation of IE relies on the integration of various aspects, including government policies, home-school cooperation and professional development of teachers. Therefore, based on the findings of this study and overseas experiences, policy recommendations are suggested under three domains: (1) Teaching and Learning, (2) Government Policy Measures Support, and (3) Professional Support and Home-School Cooperation.

### **i) Teaching and Learning**

The following seven recommendations apply to both primary schools and secondary schools.

#### **Recommendations Require the Government to Increase Resources or Change Current Policies**

1. **Establishment of school-based SEN curriculum and assessment criteria: Schools can design school-based SEN curriculum and assessment criteria based on the abilities and learning levels of students with SEN within the school.** Through adjustments in teaching, learning, and assessment, it can avoid the continued difficulty of students with SEN in secondary and primary schools in catching up with mainstream curriculum, which will weaken their learning motivation and lead to feelings of frustration.
2. **Establishment of the new position of “Curriculum Development Master/Mistress (Integrated Education)”:** The development of IE in Singapore indicated the a special new post entitled Allied Educator (Learning and Behavioural Support) [AED(LBS)] as a specially-trained personnel can have a positive impact in supporting students with learning and behavioural needs. Hong Kong should also establish a new allied professional post to support IE development in schools. As SENCOs are already overwhelmed by the current workload, **it is necessary to set up a new post with the title “Curriculum Development Master/Mistress (Integrated Education)” (CDMIE)** to provide significant support for designing school-based SEN curriculum and assessment criteria in ordinary schools. Apart from better preparing school-based SEN curriculum design, as well as the criteria of teaching, learning, and assessment, this new position can assist schools in implementing differentiated instruction, setting tiered curriculum and assessment content for students with SEN.

#### **Recommendations to Optimize Existing Policies and Measures**

3. **Promoting diversified or alternative assessment methods beyond paper-and-pen assessment:** At present, each student with SEN may still need to face public assessments which mainly rely on paper-and-pen at different stages of schooling, students with SEN (especially students with Specific Learning Difficulties and SpLI) are at a disadvantage. **It is recommended to adopt more diversified assessment methods in the public examinations in future, and avoid the excessive use of paper-and-pen assessment to measure the learning outcomes of students with SEN.** Schools can be further encouraged to minimize the frequency of students with SEN participating in unified examinations or assessments and substitute them with alternative and diversified assessment strategies.
4. **Comprehensive assessment of student abilities in student selection at different learning stages to reduce the impact of high-stakes examinations:** It is also important to reduce the impact of high-stakes examinations in student selection at different stages of schooling and **try to fully consider assessing students abilities comprehensively and accurately according to students’ strengths, interview performance, achievements of whole-person development, etc.**

5. **An increase in the number of school visits by EPs and establish a cross-professional of practice for integrated education:** Since SENCOs do not have the chance to communicate with individual professional support personnel on a regular basis, their opportunities for professional growth and learning are impeded. In particular, the insufficient stationing time for EP in schools greatly affects the students' assessment progress and efficiency. **In addition to continuously increasing the stationing time of EP in schools, a cross-professional community of practice for IE should be established.**
6. **An increase in the number of visits by various professionals to schools and districts for exchanges:** The research team also recommends that **the Government should arrange more opportunities for different professional support personnel to visit schools and districts for more professional exchanges and conduct school-based/district-based teacher/parent development activities.** Professionals can also share their expertise with different stakeholders and frontline personnel who take care of students with SEN on a daily basis through teacher workshops, parents' talks, seminars, etc.
7. **An increase in sharing of successful experiences and challenges in supporting students with SEN:** It is recommended that sharing more successful exemplars of implementing IE in schools (such as tracking the success cases and challenges encountered in supporting students with SEN, as well as allowing SENCOs and teachers to witness the achievements of their efforts) as an empowerment for educators.

## ii) Government Policy Measures Support

The following 9 suggestions are applicable to both primary and secondary schools, although Suggestion 13 is more suitable for primary schools.

### Recommendations Require the Government to Increase Resources or Change Current Policies

8. **Increasing the flexibility of current school resource utilization:** With the continuous increase in the number of students with SEN, the current deployment and calculation methods of the LSG may not be able to meet the actual needs of different school contexts despite the fact that sufficient financial resources are provided. **The deployment of school resources should be more flexible.** The research team recommends that if some schools have too many students with SEN and their entitlements have reached the upper limit of Threshold 3, additional allowances could be allotted in proportion to the number of remaining students after calculation.
9. **Discretionary approval for schools reaching Threshold 2 or above for LSG to continue using some of the remaining funds:** When schools hire SENSTs, they need to deduct part of the LSG after the change of teaching posts. For some schools with a large number of students with SEN, this arrangement inevitably affects their support services and planning. Therefore, the research team recommends that **the Government could allow schools that reach Threshold 2 or above to continue using part of the remaining grant according to their individual school contexts to ensure that the school can provide sustainable support.**
10. **Allowing schools that are currently unable to hire school-based speech therapists to temporarily use related funds to hire other professional support personnel:** Due to the long-lasting shortage of speech therapists, some schools have not been able to hire School-based Speech Therapists, resulting in ineffective resource utilization. To this end, the research team suggests that

**a transition period should be considered so that those schools that are currently unable to employ school-based speech therapists can temporarily use the relevant funds to hire other professional support personnel** to meet the immediate needs of schools.

11. **Setting up permanent posts for professional support personnel:** With reference to the establishment of the post of school-based speech therapist, the research team recommends **setting up permanent posts for professional support personnel so that schools can employ suitable professional personnel according to their school-based needs to fill these permanent positions**, such as counselors, occupational therapists, or other professionals, to increase the human resources for supporting IE.
12. **Promoting small-class teaching in secondary schools:** Although the Government has been actively promoting small-class teaching in the last decade, the emphasis is still placed on primary schools and has not yet been extended to secondary schools. The research team recommends that **the Government could further promote small-class teaching in secondary schools by reducing the number of students in each class in order to give teachers more capacity to take care of each student with SEN.**
13. **Encouraging primary and secondary schools that meet the Threshold 2 or above for LSG to implement small-class teaching and increase the teacher-to-class ratio in every ordinary school for supporting integrated education:** The findings of the case studies demonstrated that small-class teaching is a necessary factor for the implementation of cooperative teaching. The research team recommends that **every primary and secondary school that reaches Threshold 2 or above should be encouraged to implement small-class teaching to support IE.** The maximum number of students per class should be reduced to 20, while at the same time there should be an increase in the corresponding number of teachers. In the long run, the Government can also consider **adjusting the teacher-to-class ratio upward in each ordinary school** by increasing the number of teachers to implement small-class teaching, making small class teaching one of the policy measures to support IE.

#### Recommendations Require Optimizing Existing Policies and Measures

14. **Increasing the quota for in-service teachers to receive training on integrated education, offering more related training courses, and improving teachers' understanding and skills on DDO, Codes of Practice, and integrated education:** Even though the Government continues to promote the professional development of teachers and provide different types of in-service teacher training on IE, there are still over 40% (45.2%) teachers who have not completed the relevant courses. The survey findings also reveal that their understanding of DDO and Codes of Practice on Education are relatively lower than principals and SENCOS. In this connection, the research team recommends **increasing the quotas of in-service teachers' training on IE and offering more IE training courses to increase teachers' understanding of DDO and Codes of Practice on Education, as well as knowledge and skills required for supporting students with SEN.**
15. **Strengthening university-school partnerships and promoting ongoing professional development:** In addition, the research team also suggests **strengthening university-school partnerships to enhance teachers' capabilities in providing professional support.** The Government can strengthen the collaboration with universities to facilitate teachers to review their teaching effectiveness in IE and seek advice and support from university consultants.

16. **Including integrated education as a compulsory course in pre-service teacher education:** Based on their fruitful experiences in Canada, a systematic professional development framework could be established to facilitate the IE development. Hence, the research team recommends **the pre-service teacher education in the future should include IE as a compulsory course**. Participating in related training on IE can also **help eliminate teachers' traditional elitist views and avoid overemphasizing the improvement of academic abilities of students with SEN**.

### iii) Professional Support and Home-school Cooperation

The following 8 suggestions are applicable to both primary and secondary schools, although Suggestion 24 is more suitable for primary schools.

#### Recommendations Require the Government to Increase Resources or Change Current Policies

17. **Strengthening parent-school collaboration & public and parent education:** The questionnaire data indicated that parents are still unable to support the needs of students with SEN after school due to their busy schedules and lack of the skills and knowledge to care for children with SEN. Frontline teachers believe that parents still resist seeking professional help or advice. Parents indicated in the interviews that they have difficulty in accessing information on supporting their children with SEN. Since schools are the most easily accessible channels for parents of students with SEN to seek help, the research team recommends that **ordinary schools should actively promote home-school cooperation**, and the EDB should provide additional resources to promote parent education, enhance parent's awareness of IE and support for students with SEN, and break through the traditional notion that parents overly focus on the academic performance of their children with SEN.
18. **Educating the public to have more acceptance towards and inclusion of students with SEN:** It is recommended that **along with conducting more publicity, promoting integrated education, and improving the transparency of support information, the Government should educate the public to show more acceptance and inclusion of students with SEN**, and expand their pathway options for further education and career development, such as offering diversified pathways for further studies or vocational education. It is suggested to move away from emphasizing the success and failure of the HKDSE and promote Hong Kong as an inclusive society. According to the experiences of Singapore, an inclusive society requires continuous social acceptance. Therefore, the research team recommends the Government to consider setting a long-term policy direction to achieve a long-lasting inclusion in the community.
19. **Introducing cash allowance for parents of children with SEN to obtain therapy and assessment services, and establishing an electronic system for children with SEN:** For students with SEN and in a relatively difficult situation, parents from working-class families may not be able to afford the costly treatment and assessment services, as well as participating in different group activities. Therefore, the research team recommends the **disbursement of cash allowances to parents of students with SEN** so that their children can receive timely treatment and assessment services. According to the experiences of United Kingdom, every student with SEN would also be supported by IEP. Thus, the research team recommends **an electronic system for children with SEN should be established** so as to provide a comprehensive platform for their parents to track the school support and clinical treatment records of their children with SEN.

20. **Establishing a support network for schools, parents, and community support services:** Based on the above content, the research team recommends further **establishing a support network for schools, parents, and community support services**. Schools can refer to the principle of early identification and early support to enable parents of children with SEN to understand the support services and related resources currently available in the community at the earliest possible time. Community services can be regarded as a support for students with SEN outside school, and can continue to receive professional therapy services at the appropriate time.
21. **Strengthening mental health education through community support and implementing a "one school, one psychiatric nurse" scheme in the long term:** The SENCOs interviewed reflected that the "Student Mental Health Support Scheme" is an effective cross-team professional support programme, which is of great help in supporting students with mental health needs, but it does not guarantee sustainable benefit for students. If the Government could allocate more resources to increase the number of beneficiary schools, it would help schools provide more targeted support more effectively. Based on the current arrangements, the research team further suggests inviting **more social service agencies to join the programme, increasing the frequency of visits by psychiatric nurses to provide regular support, and considering the long-term establishment of a "one school, one psychiatric nurse scheme" to cope with the impact on students' mental health after the epidemic given there are sufficient human resources of related professional support personnel.**

#### Recommendations Require Optimizing Existing Policies and Measures

22. **Establishing a professional learning community of integrated education in ordinary schools:** The survey findings showed that teachers still have reservations about their confidence in implementing IE independently, and more than half of SENCOs (58.5%) and teachers (57.1%) also feel pressure in taking care of non-Chinese speaking students. It can be seen that when they have to deal with non-Chinese speaking students with SEN, the pressure they face will be greater. To this end, the research team recommends **establishing a professional learning community of IE in ordinary schools, supporting the learning experience and whole-person development of non-Chinese speaking students, identifying schools with rich experience in implementing IE to become seed schools**, and combining the current professional network support from the EDB to promote exchanges and experience sharing among ordinary schools so as to enhance the professional competence of schools and teachers in taking care of students with SEN and non-Chinese speaking students .
23. **Establishing a support network for non-Chinese speaking students and their parents:** When nurturing seed schools, the Government could consider enhancing their competence in supporting a specified type of students with SEN, which helps gradually improve the school competence in improving support effectiveness. Referring to the network of schools, parents, and community support service mentioned above, **supporting non-Chinese speaking students and their parents could also be included as part of the support content to improve the learning and adaptation effectiveness of non-Chinese speaking students in ordinary schools**. In case non-Chinese speaking students with SEN are identified, early identification and early support can also be provided.
24. **Incorporating values education and personal growth education to enhance students' awareness of mental health:** Survey data reflected that SENCOs experience the greatest pressure when taking care of students with MI, and SENCO interviews also indicated that supporting students with MI is more complex and has a greater impact on overall support effectiveness. As the number

of students with MI is increasing significantly, the research team recommends **integrating values education in personal growth education of primary schools in cultivating students' positive thinking and resilience, and to permeate mental and psychological health awareness into different subjects and school campus.**

## Chapter 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Research Background

Since the 1990s, integrating or accommodating students with special education needs (SEN) in regular school classrooms has become a global trend (Ainscow, 1999). The reason for this trend can be traced back to the Salamanca Statement in 1994. At that time, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (UNESCO, 1994) stated that "students with special education needs must be able to attend regular schools, which should use child-centered teaching methods to meet their special needs" (p. viii). This Statement also specifically pointed out that "inclusive values-based regular schools are the most effective means of combating discrimination, building an inclusive society and achieving universal education" (UNESCO, 1994, p. ix). In view of this, Hong Kong began to implement measures related to an inclusive society in the 1990s. First, in 1996, Hong Kong began to implement the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (hereinafter referred to as the DDO), followed by the implementation of integrated education (IE) in 2000. The Equal Opportunities Commission (hereinafter referred to as the EOC) formulated the "Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance" (hereinafter referred to as the "Code of Practice") in 2001, which not only emphasized that people with disabilities have equal opportunities to receive education, but also enabled individuals with SEN, their parents, and relevant parties to understand their rights and responsibilities. As equal education opportunities conform to the principles of the global inclusive education movement, the implementation of the Code of Practice has strengthened the development of IE in Hong Kong. Although this code is not a guide to IE, it provides practical guidance for the legal requirements of the Ordinance (Education Bureau, 2012; Equal Opportunities Commission, n.d.).

Since the 1999/2000 academic year, IE has been implemented in all public ordinary schools. According to the DDO and "Code of Practice on Education" all educational institutions have the responsibility to provide equal educational opportunities to qualified students, including students with SEN. According to the Education Bureau (EDB)'s definition, students with SEN refer to those who require special educational support due to learning or adaptation difficulties, the main categories include: (1) specific learning difficulties (SLD); (2) attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); (3) autism; (4) speech and language disorders (SpLD); (5) intellectual disability (ID); (6) hearing impairment (HI); (7) physical disability (PD); (8) visual impairment (VI); and (9) mental illness (MI) (included as a SEN category since the 2017/18 academic year). The goal and benefits of IE do not only benefit students with SEN but also benefit other students, parents, and the entire society. In addition, the government also implements a dual-track special education system. The EDB will arrange for students with more severe or multiple disabilities to enroll in special schools to receive enhanced support services, based on expert assessments and recommendations and with parental consent. The government will arrange for other students with SEN to enroll in ordinary schools.

In recent years, the government has taken various measures to support the teaching and learning of students with SEN in regular schools that admit them. For example, starting from the 2017/18 academic year, the EDB created, in three phases, a teaching post under the establishment in each public primary and secondary school, who serve as special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) to enhance the support of IE. In addition, the learning support grant has been restructured since the 2019/20 academic year and extended to all public ordinary schools, with increased grant amounts for the three-tier support mode. If a school admits a higher number of students with SEN, the EDB will also provide additional permanent teaching posts to those schools. The EDB also implements various support measures to address the needs of students with autism or MI.

In view of the fact that IE has been implemented in Hong Kong for some time, the EOC has commissioned the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching from the Education University of Hong Kong (referred to as the research team below) to carry out a project entitled “Study on Challenges, Effective Policies, and Best Practices of Ordinary Schools in Educating Students with Special Educational Needs in Hong Kong”. This Study collected data and stakeholders' opinions through methods such as questionnaire surveys, focus group interviews, individual interviews, and case studies, to thoroughly examine the overall effectiveness of IE in primary and secondary schools at present, and to provide relevant policy recommendations for the future development of IE. The entire Study began in October 2019 and was originally scheduled to be completed in October 2020. However, due to the outbreak of COVID-19 in 2019, all research data collection was finally completed in December 2021.

## 1.2 Research Objectives

Based on the above background, the main objectives of this study are:

- to review literature and research materials on local and overseas practices and strategies for providing IE to students with SEN;
- to assess the understanding of school principals, school administrators, and teachers regarding the DDO, the Code of Practice on Education, and students with SEN;
- to collect the views of school principals, school administrators, and teachers in ordinary schools on implementing IE for students with SEN;
- to explore the challenges faced by ordinary schools in implementing IE and supporting students with SEN;
- to evaluate the effectiveness of government policies in promoting IE and providing equal learning opportunities for students with SEN;
- to identify good practices initiated by in-school professionals to achieve IE, support students with SEN, and provide them with equal learning opportunities through case studies; and
- to make policy recommendations based on the collected data and information to ensure that students with SEN can get access to and receive fair treatment in the ordinary school system.

## 1.3 Members of Research Team

<b>Position in Research Team</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Academic affiliation</b>
Principal Investigator	Professor Ko, Po Yuk	Director of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Professor (Practice) of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, the Education University of Hong Kong

<b>Position in Research Team</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Academic affiliation</b>
Co-Investigator	Professor Yan, Zi	Co-Director of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, Associate Director of the Assessment Research Centre, Associate Head of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, the Education University of Hong Kong
Senior Research Assistant	Mr. Chun, Wai Sun Derek	Senior Research Assistant of the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, the Education University of Hong Kong

#### 1.4 Structure of Study Report

Chapter 1 of this report introduces the background and purposes of the Study. Chapter 2 outlines the research objectives and scope, as well as the research methodology, including research design, questionnaire design tools, and sampling methods. Chapter 3 provides a literature review and summary, including a discussion of the history of the development of IE in Hong Kong and a comparison of development cases from other regions, to provide insights for the development of IE in Hong Kong. Chapter 4 presents the results of the stakeholder questionnaire survey. Chapter 5 presents the results of the interview study. Chapter 6 presents the results of the case study. Chapter 7 provides recommendations and a summary of the Study.

## Chapter 2 Research Methods

### 2.1 Research Design

This Study adopted a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative research primarily used a questionnaire survey to examine the measures taken by ordinary primary and secondary schools to support students with SEN, identify the challenges faced by schools in supporting these students, and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of IE policies in schools. Based on the perspective of school management, the Study aimed to discover good examples of implementing IE and provide further suggestions for the future development of IE.

The qualitative research was divided into three parts. The first part was an international comparative case study, which reviewed the experiences of implementing IE in different places and summarizes the effective strategies and practices. The second part involved individual interviews and focus group discussions to understand the experiences of different stakeholders in schools in dealing with and supporting students with SEN, as well as exploring their opinions on the current situation of IE. The third part used a case study approach to deeply understand the practices and measures of individual schools in implementing IE and explore good examples of implementing IE. In addition, the triangulation analysis method was used in qualitative research to examine whether the results obtained from survey can reflect the current support status of IE by interviewing different stakeholders, ensuring that the data is more consistent and objective.

Therefore, this Study was divided into four parts: international comparative case studies, questionnaire surveys, individual interviews and focus group discussions, and school case studies. The main research contents are briefly summarized as follows:

#### International Case Comparison Study

The first part was an international case comparison study. By reviewing the history and development of IE in different regions, factors and potential challenges affecting IE were explored. This was used to compare the current situation of IE in Hong Kong and to summarize effective practices and strategies for implementing IE.

#### Questionnaire Survey

The second part was a questionnaire survey. The interviewees included principals, SENCOs, and teachers from ordinary primary and secondary schools. There was a total of three sets of questionnaires (see Appendices 3 to 5). Based on consultation with EOC and consideration of Hong Kong's overall education policies and professional needs, the overall questionnaire design covered the following areas:

- Interviewees' awareness of the DDO, Code of Practice on Education, concept of IE, and students with SEN.
- Interviewees' experiences and stress levels in supporting students with SEN in their schools.
- Interviewees' opinions on implementing IE to support students with SEN in ordinary schools.
- Interviewees' views on the main challenges faced by their schools and other ordinary schools in implementing IE, and how IE can meet the learning needs of students with SEN.
- Interviewees' opinions on the effectiveness of current IE policies in Hong Kong, and the provision of equal education opportunities for students with SEN.

- Self-assessment of interviewees' abilities to implement IE (applicable only to SENCOs and teachers).
- Interviewees' opinions about the current status of home-school collaboration in implementing IE (applicable only to SENCOs and teachers).

#### Individual interviews and focus group interviews

The third part consisted of individual interviews and focus group interviews. The interviewees included stakeholders of IE, i.e. principals, SENCOs, frontline teachers, professional support personnel (including social workers, speech therapists, counselors, educational psychologists (EPs), and clinical psychologists), and parents. There was a total of 5 sets of interview questions. The overall interview guide was designed based on consultation with the EOC and consideration of Hong Kong's overall education policy and professional needs, including the following areas:

- Personal background and school information, the current situation of IE in their school, personal experiences in implementing and arranging IE, and understanding of IE.
- Current practices and reflections on IE in the school, as well as teaching and learning and professional support for students with SEN.
- Policy development for school-based IE and professional support from external organizations.
- Inclusive classroom practices and whole-person development strategies for supporting students with SEN.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures on the practice of IE and students with SEN and their parents.
- Overall evaluation of IE and its future direction.

Due to the different roles of parents and other stakeholders in IE, the interview content included:

- Understanding of IE.
- Experiences in caring for children with SEN and selecting schools for them.
- Overall opinions on school and other professional support services.
- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures on students with SEN and themselves.
- Overall evaluation and future direction of IE.

#### Case Studies

The fourth part was the school case studies, with a total of 8 cases selected, including 4 primary schools and 4 secondary schools. The selection criteria were based on schools that have relatively ideal overall data from the questionnaire survey and have positive evaluations in the industry of implementing IE. For the school case studies, the research team conducted documentary review, observed activities or classes in person, and conducted interviews with different stakeholders of the schools to understand the current situation of IE in the schools and explore opinions on promoting IE. The case study framework was divided into four main themes: management and organization, learning and teaching, home-school cooperation, and professional support and promotion of inclusive campus.

## 2.2 Sample Size and Sampling Method

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, all schools in Hong Kong were closed for a long period of time. Therefore, the research team postponed the invitation to participate in the Study to October 2020 and invited all regular schools in Hong Kong, including 589 primary schools and 506 secondary schools, to complete a questionnaire by their principals, SENCOs, and teachers. After obtaining the schools' consent, the research team contacted them again to discuss the details of distributing and collecting the questionnaire. To ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic did not affect schools' willingness to participate, the questionnaire collection methods included paper-based and online questionnaires to facilitate school arrangements. The entire questionnaire collection period started in November 2020 and ended in November 2021.

The research team used a systematic sampling method and a convenience sampling method to invite schools to participate in the study. Systematic sampling is a probabilistic sampling method used to distinguish effective sampling from a large sample. The research team randomly invited a specific number of schools in all 18 districts in Hong Kong to participate. After receiving a certain proportion of responses from the invited schools, the research team sent out invitations to all primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. While waiting for the invited schools to respond, due to the suspension of face-to-face classes again during the pandemic, the research team also used the convenience sampling method to invite individual schools to participate. Although convenience sampling may reduce the overall representativeness of the sample, it is still a more suitable sampling method in this situation because of the significant impact of the school closures on school operations and their willingness to participate in the Study. In the end, 60 primary schools and 81 secondary schools participated in the Study, with a total of 141 participating schools. Each participating school had to complete a principal questionnaire, a SENCO questionnaire, and 10-15 teacher questionnaires, with the sampling method for teacher questionnaires determined by the schools themselves to facilitate their arrangements.

The design of the individual and focus group interviews adopted a semi-structured interview approach. Semi-structured interviews refer to the design of interview outlines based on the research questions and objectives before the interview begins. However, during the interview process, the questions may not necessarily be asked in order, but rather may be flexibly adjusted based on the actual situation of the interview. Semi-structured interviews are conducted in a semi-open manner, which helps to enhance the fluency of the interview because respondents have different understandings and personal life experiences related to the questions being asked. When respondents are less restricted during the interview process, they are more likely to reflect and share their experiences and views with a more open attitude. The interview outlines for the five stakeholder groups were developed by the research team after considering the views of the EOC (see Appendices 4 to 7).

The sampling design for this interview was primarily based on purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling method that selects respondents who are most suitable for the study based on the research objectives. Since specific requirements and goals were already established for the selection of interviewees at the beginning of the Study, purposive sampling was used as the sampling method. When inviting schools to participate, the research team invited principals, SENCOs, frontline teachers, professional support personnel (including social workers, speech therapists, counselors, EPs, and clinical psychologists), and parents at the same time.

The research team conducted interviews with various stakeholders in IE to collect their opinions on the implementation of IE and explore the overall policy effectiveness and the impact of the support measures to schools, teachers, students, parents, and professional support personnel. This also supplemented the areas that may not have been covered by the questionnaire survey. In addition, triangulation analysis was

conducted on the results of the questionnaires as a preliminary interpretation. Therefore, this Study was designed as a multi-category study, with focus group interviews conducted with different stakeholders and a sample size that was representative to a certain extent. Ultimately, the research team conducted individual and focus group interviews from June to December 2021, in a period of six months, with a total of 106 interviewees. The detailed sample information will be presented in Chapter 5.

The research team primarily selected suitable schools to participate in this case study based on the overall results of the questionnaire survey. This case study adopted a multiple case study approach and applied an intrinsic case study approach. Intrinsic case studies focus on exploring the essence of a phenomenon and are more suitable for in-depth understanding of specific phenomena or special events. When researchers conduct a more in-depth and complete understanding of a specific research object, this type of case study approach is more appropriate. However, due to the intermittent suspension and resumption of classes during the research period, which greatly affected the operation of schools, the research team also used reputational case sampling. Reputational case sampling refers to using positive industry evaluations as the criteria for selecting cases in the case selection process to explore good examples of implementing IE, with the hope of summarizing the favourable factors and conditions for the sustained development of IE. In the end, a total of 8 cases were selected, including 4 primary schools and 4 secondary schools. This case study aims to explore the similarities and differences in implementing integrated education in different primary and secondary schools, collect relevant opinions on good examples of implementing IE, and identify the key success factors for implementing IE in a more in-depth manner. The research team conducted school case studies from June to July 2021, which lasted for two months.

### 2.3 Pilot Test

Prior to the formal commencement of the questionnaire collection and individual and focus group interviews, the research team invited current primary and secondary school principals, SENCOs, and teachers to provide feedbacks on the content and design of the questionnaires and interview questions. After collecting their feedbacks, the research team used it to revise the content of the questionnaires and interview questions, making the questionnaires and interview questions easier to be comprehended by the corresponding respondents.

### 2.4 Research Limitations

- As participation in this Study was voluntary, only 141 schools participated, rather than all ordinary schools in Hong Kong. Therefore, the research results can only reflect the situation of schools participating in the implementation of IE.
- Due to time and resource constraints, it was not possible to conduct long-term observation and exploration of the development and planning of selected cases in implementing IE. Therefore, the good examples in the selected school cases are only applicable for observation by the research team for case study analysis and serve as preliminary references.
- Due to the limited time frame of this research project, the research team was unable to use a longitudinal methodology but a cross-sectional methodology instead. Therefore, the research results only reflect the implementation situation at a specific time. Moreover, during the research period, schools were closed for a long period due to the outbreak of COVID-19, which affected the progress

of the research and ultimately resulted in the collection of all research data being postponed until December 2021, with the final report being submitted in 2022.

## Chapter 3 Literature Review

Ainscow and Miles (2008) argue that inclusive education requires mainstream schools to have an inclusive orientation and not to differentiate among students. This view resonated at the International Conference on Education in 2008, where over 100 education ministers and 153 countries agreed that inclusive education is a "general guiding principle for strengthening education to promote sustainable development, lifelong learning for all, and equitable access to education at all levels" (UNESCO-IBE, 2008). The UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on Education for All 2010 - Reaching the Marginalized emphasized three indicators to guide inclusive education policies, including accessibility and affordability, learning environment, and entitlements and opportunities, as benchmarks for incorporating inclusive education policies (UNESCO, 2010). Although these policies are helpful, there are still many issues and challenges in viewing inclusive education as a pathway to an inclusive society.

This chapter will first discuss the historical development of IE in Hong Kong and the latest policies supporting IE, followed by a comparative analysis of case studies on the development of inclusive education<sup>2</sup> in the UK, Canada, and Singapore. These three countries were selected for comparison because Hong Kong was once a British colony, and its special education coordination training framework was primarily based on the UK's approach, making it worthwhile to review its development of inclusive education. The Canadian experience comes from its longer history of inclusive education. Learning from its experience can help Hong Kong's future development of IE. As for Singapore, it is often compared with Hong Kong in different areas, especially in performance in education, and both compete with each other in international rankings. In addition, their social development is very similar, making it worthwhile to study as a case. After completing the comparative analysis of the case studies, this Chapter summarizes the experiences of the three regions as inspirations for the future development of IE in Hong Kong.

### 3.1 History of Integrated Education in Hong Kong

#### *3.1.1 Definition of Inclusive Education and its Related Concepts in Hong Kong Context*

##### Inclusive Education / Integrated Education

The Hong Kong Government considers integrated education and inclusive education as interchangeable concepts, but they are not seen as the same concept academically. According to the definition provided by UNICEF (2020), inclusive education broadly refers to the learning of all children, including those from diverse backgrounds (ethnicity, gender, language, physical disabilities) in the same classroom. On the other hand, the definition of integrated education in Hong Kong is similar to the international understanding of inclusive education. It specifically refers to the education of students with SEN alongside their typically developing peers in the same classroom (Sapon-Shevin, 2012). Academically, there are different interpretations of inclusive education. The term "inclusive education" also signifies "educating all students in the same classroom" (Okpareke, 2019). Sapon-Shevin also provides a similar explanation, stating that inclusive education represents a restructuring of educational services where all students, regardless of any presumed disabilities, receive education within the same community. Since the focus of inclusive education in Hong Kong primarily revolves around students with SEN rather than racial, gender, or linguistic minorities, the term "integrated education" and its related definition will be predominantly used in the following discussion. In simple terms, inclusive education is not a fixed educational model but rather a concept that aims to provide educational opportunities to all students and involves arranging educational content, curriculum,

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<sup>2</sup> The conceptual definitions of integrated education and inclusive education have different meanings at the policy level in different countries. Therefore, when explaining the development of integrated education in different countries, both terms will be used at the same time according to their background and policy visions.

extracurricular activities, etc., by the teaching staff (Okpareke, 2019). Furthermore, although the Hong Kong Government's notion of integrated education will be further explained in the following text, it differs from the widely promoted concept of inclusive education in other countries. Taking the United States as an example, inclusive education is not a singular educational model but follows a spectrum approach: from co-teaching students with SEN alongside their typically developing peers with additional support and guidance, to full inclusion where all students are treated equally without any special treatment for any student.

### Types of Special Educational Needs

In Hong Kong's IE, students with SEN are classified into nine major categories. According to the Government's definition, the categories of SEN include: ADHD; ASD; Speech and Language Impairment (SpLI); MI; HI; ID; PD; SLD; and VI (Education Bureau, 2021). However, the symptoms of students with SEN in these nine categories may overlap, and each school may admit students with different SEN.

#### *3.1.2 Development of Integrated Education in Hong Kong*

In 1994, the UNESCO Salamanca Statement was announced at the World Conference on Special Needs Education held in Spain by the UNESCO. It was the first United Nations document addressing SEN and inclusive education. The statement emphasized the importance of recognizing the right to education for all children, including those with SEN, and advocated against limiting educational opportunities for children (UNESCO, 1994). The statement called for the inclusion of inclusive education in the discussions on education and urged society to address the needs of students with SEN to ensure that their learning opportunities are not compromised by their needs. In response to the principles outlined in the Salamanca Statement, Hong Kong initiated pioneering research in inclusive education.

Another significant legislation that accelerated the promotion of IE in Hong Kong was the DDO enacted in 1996. The DDO clearly states that educational institutions cannot reject admission applications or deny participation in any activities within the institution based on the disabilities of students, unless the institution can demonstrate unreasonable difficulties or inability to provide necessary activities or curriculum for students with SEN. To fulfill the obligations and responsibilities outlined in the aforementioned documents, the Hong Kong Government began to implement inclusive teaching in the public education system and launched a pilot programme for IE in 1997.

#### Pilot Project on Integrated Education in 1997 and the Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance in 2001

In 1997, the Hong Kong Government launched a pilot project on IE in seven primary schools and two secondary schools. The program focused on "whole school approach" (WSA) with the goal of "creating an inclusive school culture" (Education Bureau, 1999). The related documents indicated that the pilot project aimed to encourage all stakeholders in the school to work together to promote individual education plans (IEPs) and enable students with SEN to receive education within the ordinary school environment through guidance teachers, accommodations to the curriculum and teaching content, and assistive devices. The end-of-term evaluation report of the program after two years showed that the IE program performed well, but improvement was needed in areas such as leadership and teacher training. The report also stated that the interaction mechanism between teachers and parents, as well as the division of responsibilities among stakeholders in the school, were important for IE. Based on the report, the program was expanded to 20 primary and secondary schools in the 1999/2000 academic year and increased to 40 in the 2000/01 academic year with the support of school management, teachers, students with SEN, and parents.

At the same time, the EOC published the “Code of Practice” in 2001, attempting to clarify the legal responsibilities of educational institutions under the ordinance, explain how to develop equal opportunity policies, and provide examples of the roles and responsibilities of school management and teachers.

### Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme in 2001 and Learning Support Grant in 2003

The Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme (IRTP) was launched by the Hong Kong Government as a follow-up initiative to the Pilot Project on Integrated Education in 2001, after the latter ended. The IRTP was mainly divided into two parts. It allowed each school to set up additional classes for 8 to 15 eligible students and allowed the school to retain one "enhanced class" teacher and grant. The goal was to provide schools with an opportunity to move away from the traditional class-based teaching mode and use additional resources to allow students with SEN to get the help they need (Education Bureau, 2019a).

Starting from 2003, the Hong Kong Government suspended the provision of the IRTP to primary schools. Schools that had adopted the IRTP could retain the program, but new schools or those that had not used the IRTP before had to use the Learning Support Grant (LSG) to hire staff and purchase services (Education Bureau, 2019a). The LSG subsidy level was divided into three levels according to the severity of students' SEN, with more resources allocated to students with more severe needs. However, there was a limit on the amount of subsidy for each school, with a maximum allocation of HKD 1.65 million.

### “Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education” in 2008

In 2008, the EDB launched the "Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" (the Guide) to further assist schools in promoting the WSA model. The guide included multiple areas of school operation, including school management and organization, learning and teaching, student support and performance, collaboration with external stakeholders, as well as monitoring and promoting effectiveness (Education Bureau, 2020). The guide was also updated and some content was removed according to the Government's funding model for special education and IE.

### 2019 Learning Support Grant Updated Measures

According to an EDB document in 2019, the EDB believed that the current system lacked flexibility and failed to provide appropriate adjustments for students with SEN. As a result, they proposed a reconfiguration of IE, merging the IRTP and LSG into a single funding model. The schools fully adopt the LSG model. This would enable schools to adopt a more flexible and efficient approach to funding allocation (Legislative Council, 2019).

## **3.2 The Development of Inclusive Education in Hong Kong**

### *3.2.1 Support for Students with Special Educational Needs*

#### Funding Models for Special Education

As mentioned earlier, the IRTP and LSG were the two main funding models for students with SEN and IE in Hong Kong. The EDB has been promoting the use of the LSG model across all schools. There are several main differences between the IRTP and LSG:

1. The IRTP has two funding calculation models: the old model is based on a class of 8-15 students with SEN, while the new mixed model allows schools to retain one teacher from the old model and receive the corresponding grant. The LSG is calculated as each student with SEN as a unit and based on the severity of the student with SEN.

2. The IRTP provides funding based on the number of classes in a school, regardless of the students' SEN levels. If a school has two special classes with number of students within the criteria, it can receive funding for two teachers, regardless of the number of students in each class. The LSG model, however, is based solely on the number of students with SEN in school.
3. The IRTP allows schools to hire teachers at a relatively stable salary level based on the number of classes. The LSG model does not link teacher salaries to funding, as hiring has changed to not related to position. Therefore, teachers are mostly hired through contracts or bidding. Teacher salaries are directly tied to the number of students, rather than the number of classes.

### *3.2.2 Three-tier Support Model*

According to different EDB documents, Hong Kong currently adopts a three-tier support model, which provides support to students based on their individual situations (Education Bureau, 2020):

Tier 1 - Students with mild or short-term learning or adaptation difficulties will be identified early and their needs will be addressed through optimized teaching.

Tier 2 - If students continue to experience learning and adaptation difficulties in classroom learning or daily life, the school will arrange group training, additional support or counseling for them. Teachers should allow students to practice the skills and knowledge acquired in Tier 2 in regular and Tier 1 support classes.

Tier 3 - If students have persistent and severe learning or adaptation difficulties, the school will plan the students' individual learning goals through an IEP, and repeatedly allow students to apply the knowledge and skills learned in Tier 3 support classes in Tier 1 and 2 support classes (Education Bureau, 2020).

Individualized education system refers to the use of systematic assessments, including questionnaires filled by teachers, scales filled by parents, and observations of relevant education workers, to develop a tailored learning plan for the student. Each student will have corresponding cross-disciplinary professionals to assist in analyzing the data and defining suitable learning goals for the student (Education Bureau, 2020). In order to help Tier 3 students apply the skills they have learned in different situations, the IEP is not limited to one-on-one counseling, but is a plan that spans the three-tier support structure, ensuring that students can use the skills they have learned in regular classes, specially designed support groups, and individual counselling. At the same time, parents can use the tools developed by professionals at home to practise and train their children in different skills. Through individualized intensive and specialized support and training, the individualized learning system hopes to supplement the shortcomings of students in Tier 1 and 2, ensuring that students can practise, apply, and master skills in different situations.

The EDB stated that the three-tier support model aims to identify students in need early so that teachers do not have to wait for assessment and funding before providing assistance. Some scholars also agree that such arrangement can address the issues of "Test and Treat" and "Wait-to-Fail" in the past, thus providing better quality education and practicing IE in Hong Kong (Lu Xiuxia and Cheng Peiyun, 2009; Education Bureau, 2020). However, there have been cases reflecting loopholes in the three-tier support model, including the fact that the model is mainly based on school-based support and cannot provide individualized assistance to students. Classes that offer additional training also require a certain number of students to be opened, and complaints have been made about the lack of transparency in these classes. The school may also not proactively report to parents the level of support their child is receiving, the services they have received, and whether the grant has been used on their children, raising doubts about whether the services can effectively improve the learning experience and outcomes of students with SEN (Oriental Daily, 2019).

### 3.2.3 Whole School Approach

According to the Guide, WSA refers to the coordination of school policies, culture, and measures (Education Bureau, 2020), and it has seven major characteristics:

Table 3.1: Characteristics of Whole School Approach proposed in the “Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education”

Characteristics of WSA	
Whole School Consensus	All staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students;
Curriculum Accommodation	The school curriculum can be adjusted or expanded to cater for students’ diverse learning needs;
Accommodations in Teaching	Diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment to cater for students’ diverse learning needs;
Peer Support	Learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organized;
Teacher Collaboration	Teachers work together and support each other, for example, by collaborative teaching;
Classroom Support	Specialists collaborate with teachers in improving the learning environment, e.g. arrange collaborative teaching for the benefit of all students;
Assessment Accommodation	Assessment methods are adjusted to facilitate students’ demonstration of their learning outcomes

The Guide also lists various performance indicators for schools and how to achieve a culture of inclusion, clearly indicating that the EDB hopes that every member of the school community can be respected and the differences among different members are understood. Through integrated measures, students, whether with or without SEN, can receive quality education. The Guide provides the basis for schools to promote IE, such as what measures to take, what documents to compile, and what professional personnel to hire, so that schools can start with the basics, assign roles to all educators in the school, and enable students with SEN to integrate into ordinary schools.

### 3.2.4 Identification and Support Mechanism for Special Education Needs

The process of identifying and assisting students with SEN in ordinary schools is mainly divided into four stages:

Stage One: Taking Primary 1 student as an example. After admission in September, the teacher will, from September to December, focus on observing the student's performance and pay attention to whether individual students have difficulties in learning and adapting, and determine whether the difficulties are temporary or persistent, and whether there are academic, language, ability, social skills, or other problems.

Stage Two: From December to January, if the frontline teacher believes that a student may have learning difficulties, they can fill the "Observation Checklist for Teachers". Based on the results of the checklist, students with mild or significant learning difficulties are identified.

Stage Three: If the student is identified with learning difficulties, the following procedures will be carried out:

1. Counseling: The student support team will arrange various support for students in need, discuss accommodations to the curriculum and evaluation with the student's parents, and monitor the student's progress.
2. Consultation: The EP dispatched to the school will assist in analyzing the student's results and formulating a counseling plan, and provide additional assessments for students with severe learning difficulties.
3. Expert assessment: Evaluate and counsel based on the results analyzed by the EP.

Stage Four: In the next academic year, the entire process will be adjusted according to the student's progress. If the student is making good progress, they will continue to be monitored and supported as needed. If the student's progress is not as expected, the school may provide additional support and request that the EP to continue to evaluate and revise the counseling plan. (Education Bureau, 2020)

The EDB has also developed various tools to identify students with learning difficulties, including the "Checklist" mentioned earlier, the "Observation Checklist for Identifying Students with Speech and Language Impairment", the "Chinese Literacy Assessment", the "Child Assessment" and other assessment tools. Regarding students transitioning to secondary school, schools can also obtain "the specialist assessment reports" and the scores of "Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test" from primary schools for a detailed understanding.

It can be seen that the EDB has already provided a timetable for schools to identify and assist students with SEN, as well as providing multiple tools to help teachers identify students in need as early as possible. However, this system cannot avoid being questioned by many parties. First, the current SEN assessment procedure is mainly through teachers' observation before referral to professionals. If teachers have not received relevant professional training, some students may be overlooked, or some students' problems may be exaggerated, thus delaying their learning. Moreover, because some students did not study in Hong Kong in their early years and are often ignored when they transfer to primary schools in higher grades, students are only identified when they enter secondary school, reflecting the loopholes in the current system - only identification at during the initial stages of Primary 1 and Form 1, ignoring transfer students or students who enter higher grades (Hong Kong Economic Journal, May 21, 2018).

### *3.2.5 Establishment of "Student Support Team" and Special Educational Needs Coordinator*

#### Members of the "Student Support Team"

As mentioned above, the school will be advised to establish a student support team, whose main members include the principal and vice-principal, the SENCO and SEN support teachers, the school-based speech therapist, teaching assistants responsible for supporting students with SEN, subject teachers responsible for related students, curriculum development director, counseling director, counselors and school social workers. EPs or other professionals dispatched by the EDB will attend when needed (Education Bureau, 2020).

### Special Educational Needs Coordinator

The SENCO is crucial in supporting students with special learning needs, and the relevant responsibilities and qualifications are detailed as follows:

1. According to the five basic principles of the promotion of IE, strategically plan, implement, monitor, review and evaluate various support measures for students with SEN and the resource deployment which includes the appropriate use of the LSG and the flexible deployment of the school's manpower resources, etc.;
2. Promote early identification and early intervention for students with SEN through multi-disciplinary team approach;
3. Collaborate with functional teams and/or teachers in various teams in the school to devise support programmes, curriculum and teaching accommodations, and special examination and assessment arrangements for students with SEN;
4. Guide fellow teachers in the school to adopt effective support strategies to enhance the learning effectiveness of students with SEN through arrangements such as collaborative lesson planning and collaborative teaching and lesson study;
5. Collaborate with the guidance team in the school to cater for the learning needs of students with MI by giving advices from perspectives of learning and teaching as well as resource deployment, and strengthen mental health education;
6. Promote home-school cooperation and work with parents to support students with SEN;
7. Review the special education training needs and profiles of teachers in the school, arrange relevant training for teachers in a systematic manner, and plan and organize school-based professional development activities to enhance the capacity of the teaching team; and
8. Strengthen external liaison with parties such as professional, community resource providers and parents to better coordinate various parties and resources for supporting students with SEN in school.

It can be seen that the role of the SENCO is very important and he/she will face many challenges. According to documents from the EDB, any teacher who wishes to take this position must have at least three years of work experience and receive at least 120 hours of training before being appointed as SENCO (Education Bureau, 2019b). It is clear that if an ordinary school wishes to promote a teacher from within to become a SENCO, the school must invest a lot of resources in that teacher, even if the EDB provides a subsidy for one SENCO for each school. The school still needs to find a replacement teacher to maintain the original teaching if a teacher leaves his/her original position.

Another issue is the ratio of SENCOs to students with SEN (Audit Commission, 2018). Even if the school can successfully convert existing teachers into SENCOs or successfully hire from outside the school, as of the 2018/19 academic year, nearly 400 primary schools have more than 30 students with SEN (Legislative Council Secretariat, 2019). Even if the school may hire relevant IE teaching assistants, there is already a huge gap between the number of students and SENCOs, making the workload difficult to manage.

#### *3.2.6 Teacher Professional Development*

In order to help frontline educators cope with the increasing number of SEN students due to IE, the Government has provided funding to schools since the early stages of promoting IE to assist teachers in learning about special education, IE, and the skills needed to deal with students with SEN.

According to the current framework for the professional development of IE teachers, in-service teachers can take basic, advanced, and specialized courses, with three levels of courses:

1. Basic courses: 30 hours of courses, mainly including strategies for caring for different learning needs, how to adjust the curriculum and assessment methods, etc. Upon completion, teachers can provide Tier 1 support under the "three-tier support model".
2. Advanced courses: 102 hours of courses, mainly including core and elective units, school-based project studies for teachers to practise, and subsequent permission to provide Tier 2 support.
3. Thematic courses: divided into three specialized topics based on the needs of students: cognitive and learning needs, behavioral, emotional, and social development needs, and sensory, communication, and physical needs; in addition to providing Tier 3 support, more in-depth assistance can also be provided for individual types of SEN (Education Bureau, 2020).

To promote training of sufficient teachers in schools to cope with the promotion of IE, the EDB has also established training goals in three cycles, as listed below:

	First Cycle	Second Cycle	Third Cycle
The training targets set for each public sector ordinary school to achieve by	2011/12	2014/15	2019/20
At least ___ of teachers should complete the Basic Course	10%	10-15%	15-25%
At least ___ teachers should complete the Advanced Course	3	3-6	6-9
At least ___ teachers should complete the Thematic Course on SLD	one Chinese language and one English language; and at least one teacher should complete the related Thematic Course to cater for other types of students with SEN;	three to six teachers (with at least one teacher completing the course(s) under each category as far as possible);	six to nine teachers (with at least one teacher completing the course(s) under each category as far as possible);

The above course categorization and training goals were actually established by the EDB in the 2007/08 academic year when they began to promote WSA. They developed a suitable schedule in the hope that schools could gradually arrange different teachers to receive relevant training in order to promote IE. However, the related estimates fell short of expectations. According to the report of the Audit Commission (2018), until the beginning of the third cycle in the 2016/17 academic year, many schools still failed to meet the goals, with the most serious problem being the advanced course, where nearly 70% of schools did not meet the goals.

### **3.3 Curriculum, Teaching, Assessment Accommodations, and Home-School Cooperation**

#### *3.3.1 Curriculum and Teaching Accommodations*

According to the Guide (Education Bureau, 2020), teaching accommodation can be appropriately adjusted based on the three-tier support model:

1. **Quality teaching:** create a pleasant and engaging atmosphere in the classroom; allow students to study in groups; provide more ways of expression and allow alternative ways of submitting homework, such as underlining or circling answers instead of writing, adjustments according to student interests, and provide opportunities to practise newly learned content.
2. **Additional support:** increase extra group guidance outside the classroom and collaborative teaching; focus on addressing areas where students have special needs; allow IEPs.
3. **Intensive individualized support:** invite relevant professionals through the student support team; develop IEPs to focus on improving individual skills (behavior management, learning or adaptation skills, understanding routines, and enhancing self-care abilities).

#### Assessment Accommodations

To develop appropriate assessment criteria, schools and educators can follow the Guide to develop goals, including adjusting long-term and short-term plans, communicating with parents of students with SEN and assisting in adjusting expectations of parents, students, and the school regarding further education and future career paths. Additionally, when setting goals, educators should pay attention to the frequency of assessments and refer to the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound). If students receive IEP or other intensive support plans, teachers should also consider dividing steps and recording progress weekly to facilitate other colleagues or parents in understanding the progress.

Furthermore, when developing assessment criteria and student progress, comparisons can be made from multiple aspects, including the difference in academic performance between other students, the difference in progress between students who receive support starting from the same baseline, whether curriculum tailoring is still necessary after counseling, and improvements in behavior, social, and interpersonal skills, etc. At the same time, assessment methods within education institutions can also be changed in response to the degree of curriculum and teaching accommodations. Regarding progressive assessment, the school does not need to adopt a uniform approach and can allow students to be evaluated in different ways (such as oral questioning). However, since summative assessment must maintain fairness, any accommodated content or exam exemptions must be approved through internal discussions and professional opinions. If the exam is a public assessment, special arrangements can be made directly with the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority with corresponding information submitted to assist in the application.

#### *3.3.2 Home-School Cooperation*

An important part of IE is to ensure good cooperation between schools and parents for accommodating information exchange about the student's situation and developing the most appropriate strategies. To maintain good operation of home-school cooperation, each school should establish a continuous communication mechanism. At the beginning of the semester, teachers will explain the "Three-tier Support Model" to parents, provide detailed information, and establish contact channels. During the semester, if students are identified as being in the Tier 2 or Tier 3, meetings with professionals will be arranged as needed, and progress reports, such as reporting student progress on parent day, will be used to report student progress and explain relevant information. At the same time, the school will also encourage parental involvement, proactively contact parents and express understanding, care, and sympathy for their performance (Education Bureau, 2020). The home-school

mediation mechanism will also be an effective mediation channel when there is any conflicts or disputes between the two parties. The school will also follow the consistent personal data privacy protection system to protect the rights and interests of parents and students.

Home-school cooperation plays an important role in the promotion of IE because communicating with parents helps to ensure that any adjustments to the curriculum, teaching, and assessment can incorporate parents' opinions. In addition, parents generally accept IE, believing that it helps their children to interact with different people and develop good qualities such as care, tolerance, and responsibility (Hong Kong Institute of Education Special Educational Needs and Inclusive Education Centre, 2012). However, insufficient channels for parents to receive information can prevent students from receiving corresponding services. Even though the EDB now provides schools with different levels of support, establishes a SENCO, provides subsidy support, and arranges professional services, some schools may be concerned about their reputation and may not want outsiders to know that there are students with special needs in the school, thereby choosing not to disclose the information (Lu, 2016). This situation was also reflected in the report of the Audit Commission (2018), which showed that the School Profiles published by the "Committee on Home-School Co-operation" only disclose a small amount of information about supporting special education, making it difficult for parents to find suitable schools and adding another layer of difficulty to home-school cooperation. In short, the most important issue with home-school cooperation is actually related to public perception. Parents and the public lack understanding of special education needs, and even if their own children may have different learning difficulties or special needs, parents may refuse to recognize or avoid discussing them, resulting in students not being diagnosed and intervened in a timely manner.

### **3.4. Resource Utilization, Promoting Effectiveness and Review Mechanism**

As a government-funded policy measure, the effectiveness of resource utilization in IE is not an exception to review. According to the EDB's documents, the resource utilization in IE is mainly based on the principle of "individual calculation, overall use" (Education Bureau, 2020). Each school will receive the first round of funding in the first semester, and then receive adjusted support in the second semester based on the new cases reported during the semester, and adjust the school's teaching staff and funding after the end of the semester. At the same time, in order to improve efficiency, the EDB also has certain procedural guidelines: schools need to first review the student profile in the student support record book and review the external resources that assist IE, and then make good use of LSG and SEN support teachers (SENSTs). In addition to hiring personnel and purchasing services, they can also add necessary facilities and then monitor and review the effectiveness.

When schools develop their resource utilization plans, they can refer to the contents of the Guide and follow the guidelines of the EDB on financial control and school administrative management. At the same time, the school should also establish a regular monitoring mechanism to understand the support work schedule when outsourcing services, and arrange regular reviews with service providers. The school should also conduct mid-term or annual reviews regularly to review the overall performance of students and the gap between students who receive support. At the same time, schools can also conduct self-evaluations using the "Performance Indicators for Hong Kong Schools" to review student progress, especially whether students in the Tier 2 and Tier 3 need to adjust their support levels.

### 3.5 Current Situation and Data of Integrated Education in Hong Kong

#### 3.5.1 Number of Students with Special Education Needs

The number of students with SEN in Hong Kong has been steadily increasing in recent years, from around 43 000 students in the 2016/17 academic year (Figure 3.1), to nearly 60 000 students in the 2021/22 academic year, of which approximately 40% are students with SLD and the rest have other types of SEN (Legislative Council Secretariat, 2022).

Figure 3.1 Numbers of students with SEN in Hong Kong Public Sector Ordinary Schools (Legislative Council Secretariat, 2022)

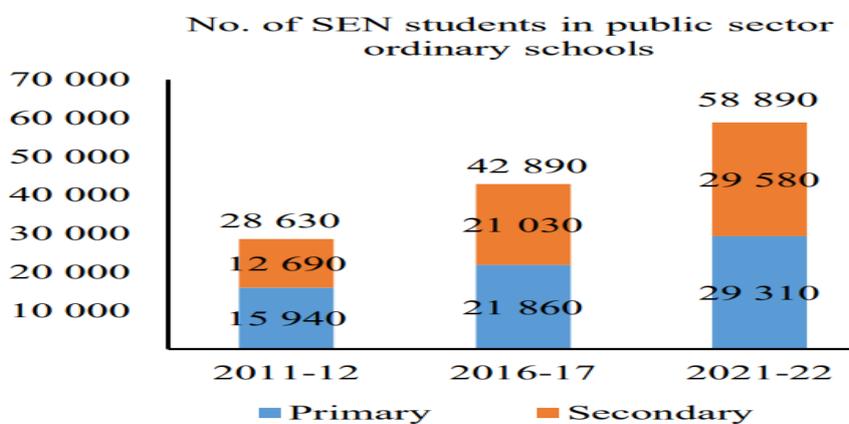
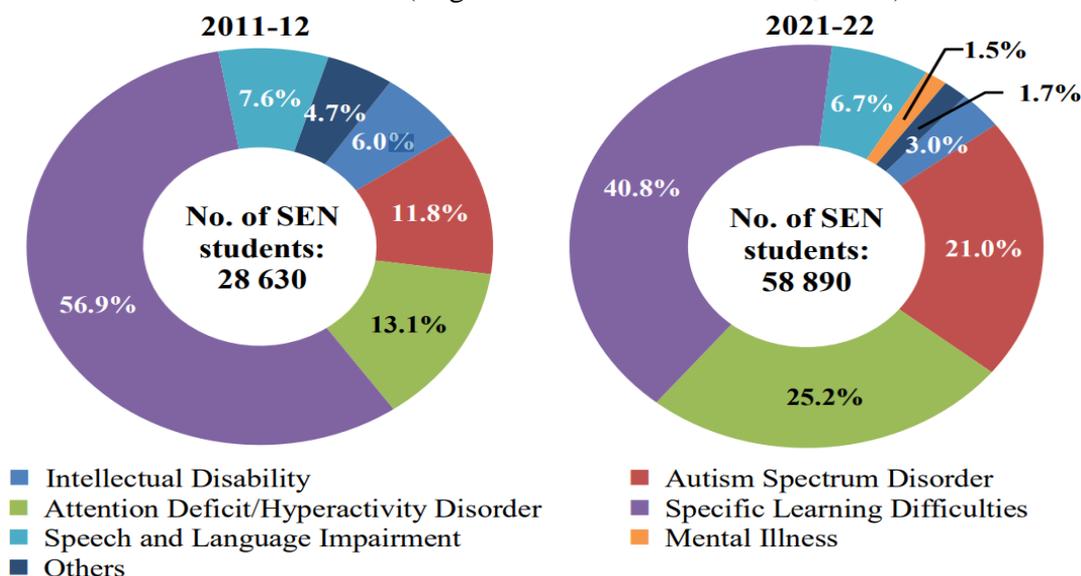


Figure 3.2 Types of SEN students in public sector primary and secondary ordinary schools (Legislative Council Secretariat, 2022)



In addition, the number of students with SEN participating in public examinations has also increased. According to data from the EDB, the number of students who applied to be special needs candidates in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, and requested special arrangements such as modified test papers and response formats, assistive devices, and extended examination time, has increased from approximately 2 700 in 2018 to about 3 200 in 2020, accounting for an increase in the proportion of the total number of candidates from 4.5% to 6% (Education Bureau, 2021b).

### 3.5.2 Distribution of students with Special Educational Needs

In the IE model currently promoted by the Hong Kong Government, the "three-tier support system" is an important tool for supporting students with SEN. The number of students who continue to have special needs in the Tier 2 and Tier 3 is an important indicator for understanding and observing the overall distribution of students with SEN in Hong Kong and their integration into ordinary schools.

In terms of the number of Tier 2 students in each primary and secondary school, the number of students in primary schools has increased from just under 28 000 in the 2019/20 academic year to over 30 000 in the 2021/22 academic year. For secondary schools, the number of students has increased from over 21 000 in the 2019/20 academic year to over 24 000 in the 2021/22 academic year (Education Bureau, 2023) (Figure 3.3). The number of Tier 3 support students has increased from just under 2 100 in primary schools in the 2019/20 academic year to over 2 300 in the 2021/22 academic year, and from over 1 500 in secondary schools in the 2019/20 academic year to over 1 800 in the 2021/22 academic year. This reflects that more schools are accepting students with more severe SEN, and more schools are implementing IE. (Education Bureau, 2023)

Figure 3.3: Numbers of Tier 2 and Tier 3 students with SEN in Hong Kong Public Sector Ordinary Schools (Education Bureau, 2023)

Tier of support required by students	No. of students					
	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Tier-2 support	27 959	21 502	28 609	23 033	30 028	24 377
Tier-3 support	2 094	1 552	2 252	1 671	2 324	1 836

In terms of the number of schools, the overall figures were lower before the 2018/19 academic year as schools could support students with SEN from other resources. In the 2018/19 academic year, only 381 primary schools provided Tier 2 support services and 349 primary schools provided Tier 3 support services. However, as of the 2020/21 academic year, the numbers had increased to 454 primary schools providing Tier 2 support services and 431 primary schools providing Tier 3 support services (Education Bureau, 2022) (Figure 3.4). In secondary schools, there were 384 schools providing Tier 2 support services and 335 schools providing Tier 3 support services in the 2018/19 academic year. However, in the 2020/21 academic year, these numbers had slightly increased to 389 schools providing Tier 2 support services and 342 schools providing Tier 3 support services (Education Bureau, 2022) (Figure 3.4). This reflects that more ordinary schools are gradually accepting more students with SEN requiring Tier 3 support, while also illustrating the continuous increase in the overall number of students with SEN in Hong Kong.

Figure 3.4: Numbers of public sector ordinary primary and secondary schools providing Tier 2 and Tier 3 support <sup>3</sup>(教育局，2022)

Tier of support required by students	Number of schools <sup>Note</sup>					
	2018/19		2019/20		2020/21	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
Tier-2 support	381	384	455	389	454	389
Tier-3 support	349	335	427	340	431	342

<sup>3</sup> In the 2018/19 school year and before, ordinary schools were provided with additional resources under various modes, including the LSG, the Integrated Education Programme and the IRTP, to support students with SEN. Since such additional resources were provided under different modes, some of the schools (e.g. primary schools adopting IRTP) were not required to report to the EDB on the tier of support of each student. Hence, the figures for the 2018/19 school year are lower than the actual figures.

### 3.5.3 Schools receiving Special Educational Needs Subsidies

In addition, subsidies for students with SEN received by schools and allocations for promoting IE by schools have significantly increased from HKD 1.39 billion in 2016/17 to an expected amount of over HKD 3.4 billion for the 2020/21 school year (Education Bureau, 2021b). Furthermore, the funding modes have also undergone changes. In 2016/17, around 140 primary schools still used the IRTP, while about 100 schools still adopted a mixed mode. There were 210 primary schools using the LSG. However, since the EDB wanted to standardize the use of the LSG in primary schools, all of the approximately 450 primary schools in Hong Kong were required to adopt the LSG in 2020/21.

On the other hand, the total subsidy amount received by each school has increased due to policy adjustments. In 2016/17, more than 90 mixed mode schools could only receive subsidies of no more than HKD 600,000 based on the old subsidy ceiling. In contrast, at least 180 schools using the LSG could receive more than HKD 600,000 in subsidies. According to EDB documents, if Hong Kong can fully adopt the LSG, more than 400 schools will be able to receive more than HKD 600,000 of subsidies in 2020/21, with only 40 schools receiving less than HKD 600,000, consistent with the overall increase in subsidies mentioned earlier.

## 3.6 Inclusive Education in the United Kingdom

### 3.6.1 Background

Since the *Salamanca Statement* of the UNESCO (UNESCO, 1994) called on all countries to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities to ensure that all children learn together, regardless of differences or disabilities, and pointed out that mainstream schools offering inclusive education is the most effective way to combat discriminatory attitudes and achieve Education for All, the UK has been advocating for "inclusive education" for all children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in mainstream schools and prohibiting schools from adopting discriminatory policies against inclusive education (Department for Education and Skills, 2001; Department for Education and Employment, 1997; Department for Education and Department of Health, 2015; Great Britain, 2014). Inclusive education has three meanings, including: 1) for all students, opposing any exclusionary and discriminatory behavior towards students; 2) meeting the diverse needs of students and providing education suited to their physical and mental development needs; 3) providing continuing education to prepare students for adulthood and independent living. The UK education department classifies children with SEND into four categories: 1. communication and interaction; 2. cognition and learning; 3. social, mental and emotional health; 4. sensory or physical, and divides support for children with SEND into 13 categories. It is worth noting that Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is not included in the support category list in the UK, which is to avoid creating labeling effects. Therefore, the category for intellectual disabilities is also named Learning Difficulty.

The UK is one of the countries that has implemented and developed inclusive education earlier and more rapidly. The authorities focus on integrating students with SEN into mainstream schools, advocating for starting with the education system to eliminate barriers and enable students to learn wholeheartedly. UNESCO (2009) also believes that schools must be committed to effectively meeting the learning needs of all children in any situation, hence whole-school support for inclusive education is crucial. Teachers should work in a professional environment that proactively promotes inclusion, as a negative attitude poses a barrier to students' learning. Hosford and O'Sullivan (2016) found that whether schools can establish a sustained and positive learning atmosphere is directly related to teachers' confidence and ability in teaching in inclusive classrooms. Teachers who receive support perform more confidently in managing student provocative behavior, implementing inclusive education, and collaborating with peers. This suggests that schools should promote relevant cultures and values internally to make teachers feel supported by the school they work for and the entire

education system (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). After decades of effort, inclusive education in the UK has achieved fruitful results, but the issue of whether children and young people with SEND should attend mainstream schools or special schools is still a controversial topic in the UK education sector.

### 3.6.2 Overview of Development of Inclusive Education in the UK - From Integration to Inclusion

In 1976, the UK Parliament passed the *Education Act 1976*, which explicitly supported the inclusion of children with disabilities in mainstream schools under Section 10 of Clause 6, laying the legal foundation for inclusive education in the UK. The *Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970* which was enacted in 1990 transferred responsibility for caring for children with SEN from health authorities to education authorities (Montgomery, 1990), becoming the UK's first initiative to include intellectually disabled children in regular education and expanding a new service to children with learning difficulties. Children diagnosed as "educationally subnormal (severe)" would have the right to receive special education and new schools would be established for them. The *Warnock Report*, published in 1978, proposed the addition of the "integration/inclusion" element to special education and facilitated the establishment of the inclusive/integrated education system, becoming the UK's top policy in the past thirty years to ensure that all children with SEND have equal learning opportunities in mainstream classrooms (Sikes, Lawson, & Parker, 2007; Trussler & Robinson, 2015). Armstrong, Armstrong, and Spandagou (2010) pointed out that the report began to shift the focus of inclusive education to creating schools to assist children with learning difficulties and advocated avoiding stigmatization effect. Terms such as "moderately" or "severely educationally sub-normal" were replaced by "moderate" or "with severe learning difficulties." However, the law has also been criticized for failing to force local education authorities (LEA) to move towards integration/inclusion of special education models (Thomas & Vaughan, 2004). Warnock (2005) also acknowledged that the law did not include dyslexia and social deprivation as SEN, weakening the responsibility of social service agencies to disadvantaged children.

In the 1990s, the UK's inclusive education further emphasized the role of mainstream schools in supporting students with SEN. The introduction of the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (hereafter referred to as the *Code of Practice*) in the *Education Act 1993* (Department of Education (DoE), 1994) outlined the identification and assessment of students with SEN in mainstream schools. This guideline involves the allocation of resources and designated procedures for all levels of schools, such as statutory assessments and transparent information exchange. In addition, mainstream schools need to appoint a teacher as the Special Education Coordinator to ensure that all procedures in the *Code of Practice* are followed and to meet the SEN of students through a five-stage model and the individual education plan (IEP) (Ellis, Tod, & Graham-Matheson, 2008). The introduction of the *Education Act 1993* ensured that LEA and mainstream schools fulfilled their legal obligations under the *Code of Practice*. One of the key points of the *Code of Practice* is that if parents believe that they cannot choose the most appropriate type of school for their children, they can seek help from LEA. Another key point is to emphasize and cover the partnership between parents and schools, which is related to parental knowledge and rights. In 1997, the Department for Education and Employment published the first *White Paper Excellence in Schools*, emphasizing the government's priority in raising educational standards and fulfilling its commitment to promoting inclusive education. The policy Green Paper *Excellence for All Children: Meeting Special Educational Needs* not only specifically listed the commitment and direction of promoting inclusive education (Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), 1997), but also further revised the content of each area within the *Code of Practice*, especially in the early identification of learning difficulties, measures to support students with special learning needs, and clear procedures for teacher professional development.

After the turn of the millennium, the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act* (SENDA) was introduced in 2001 and became the guiding framework for inclusive education in the UK. The law provides extensive protection against discrimination for children with SEN. In addition to requiring

schools to treat children with SEN the same as other children and make reasonable adjustments to support their needs, it also gives parents of children with SEN the right to choose the school they prefer. Since then, the government has regulated how LEA can provide the best support conditions and environment for inclusive education in their areas (Department for Education and Skills (DfES), 2001), and has launched a new *Code of Practice* to clarify the new legislative content. The revised guideline emphasizes the inclusion of children with SEND into mainstream schools, and proposes key concepts of school-parent cooperation, student participation, and school collaboration with other communities and professional organizations (Ellis et al., 2008).

The culture of inclusive schools in the UK began to develop in the second half of the 20th century and placed great emphasis on teachers' professional autonomy in inclusive education classrooms (Booth & Ainscow, 2002). At that time, inclusive education was seen as an internal demand rather than a trend to meet the needs of children with SEND. The concept of inclusive schools combined the needs and expectations of local schools and professional groups to effectively cultivate students' holistic development. Therefore, the success of such schools depended mainly on their leaders. The school formed its own vision under the leadership of an energetic management team with clear ideas, embodying an internal belief in creating an inclusive culture (Vančíková et al., 2021).

### 3.6.3 Legislation for Inclusive Education in the UK

Currently, the legal framework for providing education to students with SEN in the UK includes the *Children and Families Act 2014*, the *Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001*, the *Education Act 1996*, the *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*, the *Equality Act 2010*, and statutory guidance issued by the Department for Education, such as the *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice* (UK Public General Acts, 1996; UK Public General Acts, 2001; UK Public General Acts, 2010, UK Public General Acts, 2014). According to these laws, if a student experiences learning difficulties and requires special education services, they are considered to have SEN. At present, children with a *statement of SEN* must attend mainstream schools, unless this arrangement conflicts with either (a) the wishes of the child's parents or (b) the inability to provide effective education for other children (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2013). If no special or exceptional circumstances arise, children with a *statement of SEN* must attend mainstream schools. After the implementation of the *Children and Families Act 2014* in September 2014, the existing *statement of SEN* will be replaced by a more comprehensive *Education, Health and Care plan*. Children and young people with an *Education, Health and Care plan* must attend mainstream schools (UK Public General Acts, 2014; Bainham & Gilmore, 2015). The *Children and Families Act 2014* stipulates that each student aged 0-21 with SEN will be provided with a tailored *Education, Health and Care plan*, covering education, health services, and social care services, including a personal budget direct to the student. Individual education plan should be developed by the SENCOs, class teachers, subject teachers, and outside experts, and should be regularly discussed with the student and their parents. The content of the individual education plan should include (1) short-term goals set for or by the student, (2) teaching strategies used, (3) professional support services provided, (4) timetable for reviewing the plan, (5) criteria for measuring the success of the plan, and (6) overall outcomes of the individual education plan (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2013). Individual education plan must be reviewed at least twice a year, with an annual review of the *statement of SEN* (or *Education, Health and Care plan*) in the ninth year of schooling (the third year of secondary school, when the student is 13-14 years old) and the years of schooling hereafter, and must include post-secondary school transition planning.

In addition, parents or schools can request the assessment by the local authority for students suspected of learning difficulties, but the school must obtain parental consent beforehand. The local authority will identify and evaluate students with SEN by seeking opinions from different institutions/people, including parents, schools, educators, doctors, EPs, social service agencies, and any qualified

individuals who can provide opinions, to determine whether to issue a *statement of SEN* (or an *Education, Health and Care plan* issued after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014) and young people aged 0-21 can also request to be evaluated (UK Public General Acts, 2014). If any student with SEN does not have a regular teacher, they can be evaluated by a mainstream teacher who is qualified to teach students of the same age. Local authority must review a child's *Education, Health and Care plan* at least once a year to ensure that the services provided are still appropriate for the child's needs. For students who have not previously been issued a *statement of SEN*, the local authority will only conduct a reassessment at the request of their parents. Local authorities must comply with parental requests, unless they have conducted a statutory assessment within six months prior to the date of the request or it has been confirmed that a statutory assessment is not necessary.

### 3.6.4 Professional Development for Inclusive Education in the UK

In the UK, there are no statutory requirements for qualifications specific to special education teachers in the context of inclusive education in schools. However, anyone who wishes to teach in public schools, including special schools, must obtain Qualified Teacher Status. Applicants for Qualified Teacher Status must have basic knowledge and teaching skills in the area of SEN. If there are hearing or visually impaired students in the class, teachers must also obtain additional qualifications (Florian & Rouse, 2009). Schools in the UK are required to appoint a SENCO, who is responsible for 1) overseeing the daily operation of the school's SEN policy; 2) coordinating support measures for students with SEN; 3) liaising with teachers, parents, and other professionals regarding matters related to students with SEN; 4) providing advice and support to other teachers and staff in the school; and 5) managing all records of students with SEN. The *Children and Families Act 2014* imposes a statutory duty on schools to ensure that the SENCO is "co-ordinating the provision of services and support for pupils with SEN" (Department for Education and Department of Health, 2013). Schools must also provide disabled students with treatment that is not inferior to that provided to other students, and make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that disabled students are not disadvantaged. Schools must also develop strategies and plans for using facilities and materials to enable disabled students to adapt more effectively to the school curriculum and campus life, and to benefit more from the education and related support provided by the school. This includes improving the way of information is distributed to students with disabilities (currently, information is mostly distributed in written form to non-disabled students).

The *Children and Families Act 2014* and the new *Code of Practice* also emphasize the involvement of parents, especially in the provision of comprehensive information and support during the decision-making process. Relevant legislation sets out six rights for parents of students with SEN, including (a) the right to have their children educated according to their wishes, (b) the right to request an assessment, reassessment, or review of their children's educational needs, (c) the right to be notified if the local authority decides to conduct an assessment, (d) the right to make complaints about the decisions of the local authority, (e) the right to participate in the development of their children's *statement of SEN* (or Education, Health, and Care Plan), and (f) the right to receive opinions and information about their children's educational needs. The revised *Code of Practice* stipulates that registered early childhood education institutions have a responsibility to promote equal learning opportunities for children with SEN, including providing support for children with SEN or disabilities. If the practices of LEA or public schools (in the UK, some special schools are operated by LEA) are unreasonable, do not fulfill their statutory duties, or fail to meet an appropriate level when fulfilling their duties, the Minister of Education may intervene, and parents may also file complaints. The *Code of Practice* also specifies that if a dispute cannot be resolved at the local government level and the complaint relates to the unreasonable practices of the governing body of a public school or the local authority, the Minister of Education may issue a directive requiring the governing body of public school or local authority to exercise its powers or fulfill its duties.

### 3.6.5 Challenges of Inclusive Education in the UK

Adequate resources are crucial for promoting inclusive education, and therefore the UK government has invested heavily in promoting it. Its policy is based on ensuring that all children receive appropriate support to demonstrate their learning outcomes in the classroom and achieve success in their daily lives, relying on the use of materials, experts and support personnel tailored to their needs. Woodcock and Woolfson (2019) found that teachers value working with professionals who specialize in working with children with SEND, but the number of professional support personnel and the support they receive are limited. A report from the UK Department for Education indicates that since 2010, the number of SEND children receiving mainstream education in the UK has been increasing and is the highest proportion of children with *Education, Health and Care Plan* (Department for Education, 2018). As more children are diagnosed, teachers must be prepared and have a responsibility to meet the needs of all learners (Maciver et al., 2018). However, teachers face daily challenges in implementing inclusive education to ensure that all children learn effectively and make expected progress, while also facing multiple pressures in managing diversity in the classroom (Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019). Aldaihani (2011) studied the obstacles faced by the UK in developing and implementing inclusive education, including conflicting policies and daily challenges in implementing inclusive education in schools (time and coordination difficulties, misunderstanding of workload, lack of space, and staff's negative attitudes). Devarakonda and Hodkinson (2021) pointed out that although UK school teachers are proficient in the rhetoric of inclusive education, the forms of inclusion they discuss are not recognized by academia. Most of the interviewed teachers are limited to conceptual understanding and use inclusive rhetoric to conceal a resistant attitude. For teachers, resistance arises from three factors, including 1) additional workload brought about by inclusive education, 2) the impact of students' behavioral problems in the classroom, and 3) the effectiveness of inclusive education is affected by continual educational reforms. The vast majority of teachers (70%) stated that inclusive education is difficult to sustain because it is difficult to achieve effective inclusion in every lesson, and preparing "inclusive materials" takes a lot of time (Hodkinson, 2010). Unfortunately, there is still resistance to inclusive education in the UK academic and social community, and overcoming these obstacles requires the joint efforts of the entire education community (Hodkinson, 2007; Devarakonda & Hodkinson, 2021). In addition, many students have not received appropriate support because of the slow process of departmental approval. The UK government's 2017/18 report showed that as of 2018, there were 2,060 cases of *Education, Health and Care Plan* applications pending, nearly three times higher than in 2010. In 2017, a total of 5 800 students with SEN were expelled from school during their 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade years, as some schools did not want the overall performance of their school's General Certificate of Secondary Education to be lowered (Devarakonda & Hodkinson, 2021). It can be seen that although the concept of inclusive education is highly praised in the UK, when it is actually integrated into the formal education system, there are still various problems, but the overall effectiveness is still satisfactory.

## 3.7 Inclusive Education in Canada

### 3.7.1 Background

Canada has been implementing inclusive education for nearly forty years since the adoption of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* in 1982 (Department of Justice, 1982), and has rich experience in this area. As a country that advocates multiculturalism and inclusiveness, Canada is considered an important reference example in dealing with social divisions and addressing learning diversity (Timmons, 2007). Prior to *The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education* published by UNESCO in 1994, which repeatedly used the term "inclusion" and provided specific visions, Canada had already put inclusive education into discussions on schools and school development (Porter & Richler, 1991). In the 1970s, a series of important reports were published,

including *One Million Children: A National Study of Canadian Children with Emotional and Learning Disorders* and *Standards for Education of Exceptional Children in Canada*. These reports questioned the value of special education which isolated students with SEN from regular educational programs. After the reports were released, the public increasingly supported the arrangements to integrate children with SEN into regular classrooms. The term "inclusion," which is now formally established in Canadian inclusive education for disabilities and education, originated in the late 1980s when Marsha Forest and her husband Jack Pearpoint held a special education seminar at Frontier College in Toronto, Ontario, attended by participants from across North America. The attendees felt that the education progress of people with disabilities was not ideal in the special education model, both academically and socially. The attendees indicated that the progress of inclusive education was rather slow. The special education model is a passive education mode/system because its philosophy emphasizes enrolling students in schools that are suitable for their degree of disability. Therefore, after detailed discussions at the meeting, the term "inclusion" was adopted as the preferred term for the vision of people with disabilities, and the term "inclusion" quickly became popular and was later adopted by parents, advocates, and educators.

However, since 1994, Canadian inclusive education has been both praised and criticized by different people, and it remains a controversial educational issue. Nevertheless, the values of inclusive education have been accepted by more and more countries. Much academic research (such as Bunch and Valeo's (2004) study) strongly supported promoting inclusive education and compared the achievements of special education and inclusive education. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in 2008 confirmed global inclusive education for students with disabilities and increased attention to other marginalized groups, but this caused confusion in Canadian inclusive education. As most provincial governments adopted a laissez-faire attitude towards special education, it showed that they did not fully value inclusive education. Bunch (2015) pointed out that the situation of inclusive education in primary schools (about 9 years) and middle schools (about 4 years) in Canada was different from that in most countries. According to the Canadian Constitution, the federal government has no actual power to influence primary and secondary education systems, and the power to decide the ways of practicing inclusive education in Canadian primary and secondary schools is held by provincial and regional governments. Even in the late 1980s, when special education terms such as "mainstreaming" and "inclusion" were widely used in Canada, many education departments of regional governments still confused "integration" with "inclusion", and used them as synonyms (Winzer, 1999). Winzer (1999) clearly stated in her special education model diagram that Canadian inclusive education does not use the term "integration" and does not divide students into categories based on the degree or type of their disabilities, but many Canadian governments and educators seem to misunderstand the difference between these two models.

### *3.7.2 Overview of Development of Inclusive Education in Canada*

According to scholars' research, the history of inclusive education in Canada can be divided into four stages (BC Disability, 2022; Graham & Jahnukainen, 2011; Sokal & Katz, 2015; Sokal & Katz, 2020):

#### 1900-1940s (Stage One): educational institution was simply a dumping ground for special students

Historically, students with SEN were not included in the education system and were seen as a burden, typically located at the margins of the education system. It wasn't until the 1920s that discussions on equal educational opportunities began to emerge, and special education curriculum started to be integrated into the mainstream education system. Although this was a significant milestone, students with SEN were still concentrated in segregated classrooms, and individual learning differences were rarely considered. Public perception still believed that educating students with disabilities alongside regular students would affect their learning outcomes.

### 1950-1960s (Stage Two): starting to see students with SEN as individuals

After decades of segregation, Canada began promoting community-based special education frameworks in the 1950s and 1960s. During this period, parent groups, community living organizations, and professional associations emerged, such as the Canadian Association for Community Living and the Canadian Association for Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities. These types of organizations promoted awareness of special education, pooled resources, and developed coordinated and consistent advocacy strategies among teachers, parents and specialists, leading to public schools beginning to accept students with disabilities. In order to eliminate the isolation of special education, schools began to relax their assessment and enrollment standards. However, even when students with disabilities were no longer segregated from regular classrooms, they were still largely separated from regular students in terms of attending classes, resulting in students with disabilities still being in a very disadvantaged position.

### 1970-1980s (Stage Three): emergence of a new wave of research

As Canadian community organizations and parent groups continued to advocate for greater equal learning opportunities for students with SEN, an increasing amount of academic research began to support their push for inclusive education. Since Dunn (1968) questioned the effectiveness of segregating intellectually disabled students, a large amount of related research and systematic evaluations emerged, with results clearly indicating that students with SEN would benefit from inclusive education, and concerns about its impact on regular students' learning and development lacked sufficient evidence. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, several Canadian provinces also introduced new school acts for students with SEN, and barriers between special education classrooms and regular student groups began to disappear. Inclusion became the mainstream approach to special education, and the demand for inclusive education continued to increase, with classroom support, including differentiated instruction and other inclusive teaching methods, gradually being promoted.

### 2000s to present (Stage Four): confirming the rights of students with special educational needs

Inclusive education has been included in many of Canada's current acts and conventions as a right for school children. For example, Article 24 of *UNCRPD*, which came into effect in Canada in 2010, stipulates that students with disabilities have the right to receive the support they need in the mainstream education system and to be treated equally with other students in the community. The *British Columbia School Act* and many other provincial acts also require measures to ensure that students with SEN in mainstream classrooms receive the support they require. With 30 years of experience and the results of a large amount of previous research, the basis of current research and practical experience is more convincing than ever before in terms of supporting the development of inclusive education.

#### *3.7.3 Canadian Inclusive Education Legislation*

According to the *Ontario Education Act*, an "exceptional pupil" is defined as a student who "has behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities that require them to have a special education program or service". In addition, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which came into effect in 1982, states that policies by the school district to place students in segregated special classes may violate the students' right to receive equal education under the Charter. The *Regulation 181/98*, established in 1998, stipulates that when arranging a placement for an "exceptional pupil", priority should be given to placing the student in regular classes with appropriate support. The arrangement should meet the student's needs and be agreeable to the parents. If a decision is made to place a student in a special educational class, the school must provide written reasons for the decision. If regular classes cannot meet all of a student's needs, there are a range of placement options available from the authorities, including:

- (a) placing the student in regular classes but providing special services or special education instruction by qualified special education teachers or support professionals at certain times during the day;
- (b) placing the student in a special educational class for part of the day or for the entire day on school premises;
- (c) placing the student in a special educational class but providing partial inclusive education into regular classes; and
- (d) referring the case to a provincial government committee for consideration of placement in a provincial school for the blind, deaf, or deaf-blind, or a provincial demonstration school that serves students with severe learning difficulties.

In terms of parental involvement, *Regulation 181/98* stipulates that the principal of the local school must ensure that parents and students (if they are 16 years of age or older) are consulted in the development and review of individual education plans for students with SEN, and are provided with copies of the completed plan. The individual education plan for the student must include a form that accurately records the content of the consultation with parents and students (if they are 16 years of age or older). Parents and students (if they are 16 years of age or older) are asked to sign the form and indicate:

- (a) whether they were consulted in the development of the individual education plan;
- (b) whether they refused to be consulted;
- (c) whether they received a copy of the individual education plan; and
- (d) whether their opinions were recorded on the form.

The legislation also requires each school district to develop a special education parent guide that outlines the responsibilities of the school committee, the procedures for identifying students with SEN and determining their placement, the role of the local government's special education appeals committee, and information on the right of parents to appeal decisions made by the school committee to the appeals committee.

### *3.7.4 Inclusive Education Strategy in Canada*

The basic belief of inclusive education is to provide education to students with disabilities in a way that is similar to their non-disabled peers, allowing them to learn together. Inclusive education means that mainstream teachers treat all students in their class equally. However, regular teachers are not alone in this effort. Special education teacher (SET) provides support when needed, and education assistant (EA) can also play a supportive role, while parents and students can also play different roles. The Ontario Ministry of Education has a clear definition of the concept and vision of inclusive education. The 2005 report, *Education for All: The Report of the Expert Panel on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction for Students with Special Educational Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6*, proposes a set of guiding principles and related key themes:

#### Belief 1: All students can succeed

- All students can demonstrate competence in literacy and numeracy. Teachers can ensure their students' success by getting to know their learning progress through ongoing observation, assessment, and evaluation, and then carefully establishing the next steps each student needs to take in order to learn.

Belief 2: Personalized design and differentiated instruction are effective and interconnected means of meeting the learning or productivity needs of any group of students

- Personalized design ensures that the learning conditions and other learning environments are as usable as possible for students with SEN, regardless of their age, ability, or learning progress. Teachers should also aim to respond to the specific learning profiles of individual students with differentiated instruction.

Belief 3: Successful instructional practices are founded on evidence-based research, tempered by experience

- Children with special needs benefit most when teachers deliver programming informed by professional judgement, experience and domain knowledge supported by empirical evidence.
- Good pedagogy is based on good research. Basing instruction on sound research can improve teaching quality.

Belief 4: Each child has his or her own unique patterns of learning

- Students with SEN may receive important support and programming from a number of people, but the key educator for literacy and numeracy development is the classroom teacher(s). Classroom teachers are ideally placed to gather ongoing assessment data and monitor student learning. They have the advantage of knowing the child well and can provide valuable feedback for others working with the student.
- Patterns of learning may vary greatly within a classroom. Teachers need to plan for diversity, give students tasks that respect their abilities, use dynamic and flexible grouping for instruction, and provide ongoing assessment to cater for students' learning diversity.

Belief 5: Classroom teachers need the policy support to create a learning environment that supports students with SEN

The success of inclusive education involves changes in policy, curriculum, systemic structures, and teaching practices (Katz, 2013; Koster et al., 2009). As mentioned above, each province in Canada has the right to develop its own policies, and the establishment of inclusive education policies is quite common. Education departments across Canada have been committed to changing curriculum content and assessment methods, increasing human and financial resources, and advocating for teacher professional development to further support the implementation of inclusive education. Sokal and Katz (2015) classified the innovative strategies for inclusive education by authorities into two categories: academic inclusion and social inclusion.

**Academic inclusion:** For example, in British Columbia, the Ministry of Education has implemented significant reforms to individualized educational plans, related curriculum, and assessment through a policy called the *BC Education Plan*, which outlines five main goals aimed at increasing teaching flexibility and designing personalized teaching for children. The curriculum emphasizes interdisciplinary skills, no longer focuses on individual student abilities, and allows teachers to have discretion in adjusting teaching content in terms of learning focus (BC Ministry of Education, 2011). Other provinces also have arrangements for reviewing curriculum and assessment, exploring alternative teaching methods to solve increasingly complex classroom problems. Collaborative teaching models, differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2001), design thinking training (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), and universal design for learning (Rose & Gravel, 2010) have been the focus of Canadian teacher professional development courses and have begun to be implemented in classrooms across the country, promoting the professionalization of Canadian inclusive education.

**Social inclusion:** The education departments of each province have already developed curriculum reforms that emphasize academic inclusion and are trying to gradually address social inclusion issues.

Cavanagh (2014) believes that cooperation between representatives of health, social services, education, and community groups to promote inclusive education in Canada is becoming increasingly common and is an important step towards success (such as the Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL)). Education departments in different provinces also unanimously adopt Katz's (2013) Three Block Model of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to promote inclusive education. In addition to supporting teaching practices for academic inclusion, UDL also includes curriculum design that supports student self-concept, emphasizes learning diversity, improves students' sense of belonging and social inclusion, such as "responsive classrooms" (Northeast Foundation for Children, 2013) and the restitution programme (Gossen, 2013) as methods to promote social and emotional learning of children and youth in Canada, showing that social inclusion is beginning to receive more attention in Canada.

### *3.7.5 Challenges of Inclusive Education in Canada*

Due to the fact that each province has the right to formulate and implement laws and policies related to education, not all provincial and regional education departments in Canada have officially adopted and implemented the inclusive education framework (Alberta Education, 2011; Government of New Brunswick, 2006; Government of Nova Scotia, 2008; Government of Prince Edward Island, 2011; Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, 2012). McCrimmon (2015) found that Canadian educators face multiple challenges when implementing inclusive education in classrooms, including large class sizes, long working hours, insufficient financial resources, and demands from administrative departments and/or parents that exceed the school's capacity (Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, 2008). One of the most common challenges in inclusive education in Canada is whether teachers are willing to prepare and design inclusive classrooms. De Boer, Pijl, and Minnaert (2011) pointed out that new graduates are more willing to accept inclusive education than experienced teachers, but the main obstacle is that teachers are concerned that they will not be able to catch up with their teaching requirements when working with students with SEN. In fact, the length of training has a positive impact on attitudes towards inclusive education (Avramidis & Kalyva, 2007), and strengthening teachers' understanding and experience in children with SEN can significantly enhance their self-efficacy and effectiveness in inclusive education classrooms (Batsiou, Bebetos, Panteli, & Antoniou, 2008). However, the current bachelor's degree programs in education in Canada still do not consider inclusive education as a compulsory subject. McCrimmon (2015) examined the compulsory courses in the education faculties of four well-known Canadian universities and found that some universities did not require trainee teachers to systematically understand the definition and/or description of inclusive education and children with SEN, and to improve classroom practices through instructional experience. This is the current deficiency.

In addition, Jacquet's (2008) research also pointed out that due to the lack of training and understanding of children with disabilities among teachers, there is a gap between policy and practice of inclusive education and the reality of teachers' teaching environment. Although many academic institutions have academic staff specializing in researching children with special learning needs (such as special education), the bachelor's degree programs in education in Canada do not seem to include inclusive education content in the compulsory courses for teacher training, which leads to most trainee teachers lacking confidence in implementing inclusive education without additional training or experience, and lacking the professional knowledge needed to effectively guide students in inclusive education environments, thereby affecting the development of inclusive education in Canada (Loreman, 2010; Loreman, Sharma, & Forlin, 2013). Since the bachelor's degree programs in Canada are conducted in a dual-degree manner, students need to complete other bachelor's degree courses while studying for an education degree, and additional course content places too much burden on many students. Therefore, the Canadian government has developed some specialized courses to provide necessary on-the-job training on inclusive education for teachers, enabling them to effectively adapt to inclusive education environments. At the same time, the government also has provided key

short-term certificate courses in inclusive education, established a systematic training plan, and increased different frontline experience sharing sessions/seminars, to improve the professional knowledge and ability of teachers to implement inclusive education. In the long run, the Canadian government is currently studying the inclusion of inclusive education as a compulsory subject in undergraduate education programs, and it is believed that it can further improve the ability and professional level of teachers in inclusive education classrooms in the future.

### **3.8 Integration/Inclusive Education in Singapore**

#### *3.8.1 Background*

After Singapore gained independence in 1965, the government's education system paid little attention to the education of people with disabilities or special needs. Although there were calls for integration/inclusive education in the late 1980s, children with disabilities were still segregated in special schools in Singapore since the early 1960s, until inclusive education was officially implemented in Singapore in 2005 (Lim & Nam, 2000; Poon, Musti-Ra, & Wettasinghe, 2013; Yeo, Neihart, Tang, Chong, & Huan, 2011). Prior to 1988, services for people/students with disabilities in Singapore were provided by 7 volunteer associations in 11 special education schools. Starting in 1990, the Ministry of Education and the National Council of Social Services each contributed half of the funding (Quah, 1993). As Singapore continued to flourish in the 1980s and 1990s, its educational achievements were widely praised internationally, leading to a continued separation of traditional and non-traditional forms of learning. Gradually, Singapore developed a dual track education system consisting of mainstream schools and special schools (Poon, Musti-Ra, & Wettasinghe, 2013). Mainstream schools traditionally catered to regular students, while special schools were responsible for educating students with disabilities. The Ministry of Education and the National Council of Social Services currently support 13 voluntary welfare organizations (VWOs) in managing 20 special schools (Walker & Musti-Rao, 2016).

The legal provisions related to the idea of inclusive education in Singapore can be traced back to the recommendations of the Advisory Council for the Disabled (1988, pp. 37-38), which stated that "where appropriate and feasible, children with disabilities should receive special education within the regular education system. A child should only be placed in a special school when he is unable to receive good education in a regular school." However, there was little progress in this area until the Singapore government advocated for the establishment of an inclusive society in 2004, with an open and inclusive attitude towards all Singaporeans, including people with disabilities (Ibrahim, 2004). Only then did inclusive education become one of the education policies. While promoting the inclusion of students with disabilities into mainstream schools, the government also promised to invest SGD 55 million annually from 2008 to improve the special education environment and conditions in mainstream and special schools (Teo, 2004). This policy change was seen as a milestone in Singapore's implementation of inclusive education, as the government's policy stance prior to this was that if students with disabilities could not cope with the demands of the mainstream environment, it was the best to meet their needs in a separate school system (Lim, 2004). This policy trend lasted for decades resulted using a dual-track education system in Singapore.

#### *3.8.2 Overview of Development of Inclusive Education in Singapore*

Due to the relatively short history of teacher training in special education in Singapore (Lim and Thaver, 2008), most teachers did not receive training in teaching students with disabilities or in creating inclusive classrooms in the early 21st century. However, by 2018, 79% of teachers had received training in inclusive education (OECD, 2019). In response to policy initiatives for an inclusive society, the government began providing funding, school infrastructure, and teacher training

for students with special needs in 2004. In 2005, the government established Special Needs Officers (renamed Allied Educators for Learning and Behaviour Support (AEDs[LBS]) in 2009) and Teachers of Students with Special Needs (TSNs) to support students with special needs, and provided ongoing training in inclusive education to support children with mild to moderate disabilities in mainstream schools (Lim and Tan, 2001).

At the same time, the Ministry of Education proposed two models to promote professional development in inclusive education. The first model is to establish inclusive education teams in mainstream schools, led by AEDs(LBS), to support mainstream school teachers and students with mild to moderate dyslexia and high-functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to learn together. The second model is to select a group of teachers in designated mainstream schools and provide training to them as the primary human resources in the school to support students with disabilities and SEN (Ministry of Education, 2005). The Ministry of Education initially set a goal for 10% of teachers to receive training in schools with SEN, which was revised to 20% of all teachers in 2012, with the proportion gradually increasing based on training conditions. This indicates that the responsibility of mainstream school teachers to support students with disabilities and SEN will gradually increase. However, professional personnel who provide support in the form of AEDs(LBS) cannot be transformed into long-term teacher assistants in the classroom, and mainstream school teachers cannot transfer their responsibility to support students with SEN to AEDs(LBS) because there is only one AED(LBS) per school on average (Chan, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2005). As the responsibility to support students with SEN and disabilities falls on all mainstream school teachers, all teachers must have the beliefs, values, and skills to implement inclusive education and actively promote the inclusion of students with SEN and disabilities in mainstream schools.

Lim and Tan (2001) pointed out three important social factors that hinder inclusive education in the Singaporean education system: (1) the marketization of the education system to promote competition; (2) schools' risk-adverse attitudes towards inclusive education as a negative impact on school rankings and competition, and (3) an elite-oriented education system. Under the influence of these potential social factors, special education in Singapore has evolved from complete segregation to partial inclusion, and then from partial inclusion to full inclusion. Students with moderate to severe disabilities will be placed in one of the 20 local special schools for education (Ministry of Education, 2012), while students with mild disabilities who can enter mainstream curricula based on cognitive abilities will belong to the general education system and receive support from the inclusive education system. It is estimated that 2.5% of school-age children (about 13 000) have disabilities or SEN. Among them, an estimated 7 600 are in mainstream schools and another 5 400 are in special schools (Lim, 2016). Recent data shows that the number of students with SEN in mainstream schools has rapidly increased since 2018 to over 26 000, twice as many as in 2013 (Sin and Tai, 2019). The Ministry of Education (2019) estimates that 80% of students are in mainstream schools and 20% are in special schools.

### *3.8.3 Concept and Practice of Singapore's integration/Inclusive Education Policy*

Singapore's inclusive education has continued to develop, helping Singapore move towards a more inclusive society. The policy decision to allow mildly disabled students to be included in mainstream schools has made Singapore a more inclusive society. Operti, Walker & Zhang (2013) proposed three policy concepts on how to create a more inclusive education environment in Singapore, including: 1) creating a common societal understanding of inclusive education to promote fundamental mindset changes, 2) restructuring schools to provide comprehensive support to all learners, and 3) empowering inclusive teachers to address the diversity of learners.

## **1) Creating a Common Societal Understanding of Inclusive Education to Promote Fundamental Mindset Changes**

Operti, Walker & Zhang (2013) pointed out that establishing a common societal and cultural understanding of inclusive education is essential for Singapore because the barriers to expanding integration/inclusive education often originate from the education system itself. Foreman (2001) stated that integration/inclusive education involves educating students with learning difficulties or at risk of learning difficulties in the same educational environment with non-disabled peers. To create an inclusive education system and help society to better understand integration/inclusive education, an education system that encourages all students to learn together, including resource allocation, manpower training, and teacher professional development, etc., should be created. Under the influence of deep-seated traditional Singaporean elitist values, creating an integration/inclusive education environment still faces significant challenges. The culture of integration/inclusivity in an inclusive society will help narrow the unfair education gap. Inclusive education is a critical measure for promoting social inclusion and a change in social norms.

## **2) Restructuring Education to Provide Comprehensive Support to all Learners**

Inclusive education emphasizes the need to promote personalized education and reform the general education system. Therefore, as inclusive education develops, special schools should gradually be phased out, and it is important to provide continuous services to meet the needs of all learners, including those with and without disabilities.

### Student welfare and infrastructure

Student welfare includes the physical, mental, and social well-being of all students. Inclusive/integrated/special education schools should have facilities that can accommodate children with disabilities and provide accessible pathways in classrooms. It is essential to educate parents and students about the accessibility features and to train teachers to create a safe and accessible classroom for all learners.

### Inclusive/integrated education curriculum

An inclusive/integrated education curriculum does not lower the standard of education, but it is flexible in how students can achieve these standards and should be adaptable to all learners. The curriculum should encourage teachers to practice inclusive/integrated teaching methods, choose learning methods and locations that suit individual students, and respect their needs (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2010). Operti, Walker & Zhang (2013) point out that regardless of the learning differences among students, an inclusive/integrated education curriculum aims to provide a framework for learners and their families to choose the path that suits them best. All students with SEN should have access to professional, high-quality special education teachers, and support personnel at all times. Specifically, existing special schools can be transformed into inclusive education resource centers to serve mainstream schools in the vicinity. The transformation of these resources will make qualified special education workers and resources used by special schools available to all learners.

## **3) Empowering Inclusive Teachers to Address the Diversity of Learners**

Teachers need to understand and believe that they need to be better prepared before entering the teaching profession in order to make appropriate teaching decisions for students with SEN and disabilities; otherwise they will not be able to cope with inclusive classrooms. Mainstream teachers should not overly transfer the responsibility of inclusive education work to teachers who support students with special needs in mainstream schools (hereafter referred to as support teachers). They should also receive training on the basic principles, goals, strategies, and content of inclusive education. In addition, special education workers must have the same employment standards and professional development opportunities as mainstream school teachers. Currently, the one-year training program for special education workers can only provide a basic understanding of inclusive

education, and the differences in professional qualifications, salary levels, and in-service training between special education workers and mainstream school educators undermine their ability to provide effective support. As there are not many options for special education workers to receive further training, high-quality special education workers cannot only support students with SEN but also provide ongoing professional development for mainstream school teachers in the classroom.

The above policy ideas for inclusive education began to be gradually implemented in 2016. In 2011, Singapore launched an education reform called "Student-centric, Values-driven" to explore and attempt to reverse the education culture that overly emphasizes students' individual abilities. In addition, the National Council of Social Service has been publishing a three-stage plan to promote social inclusion since 2006. Especially the second social inclusion plan from 2012 to 2016 promotes Singapore's vision of an inclusive society and the actions that must be taken to meet the needs of people with disabilities. Four important policy principles are proposed to support the needs of people with disabilities and their families (National Council of Social Service, 2012):

- (i) To take an inclusive approach towards persons with disabilities;
- (ii) To recognize the autonomy and independence of persons with disabilities;
- (iii) To take an integrated approach with the support of the people, public and private sectors to enhance the effectiveness of social inclusion; and
- (iv) To involve the community as a source of support and empower families to care for their disabilities.

The committee further believes that Singapore must reform its practices in special education, especially by incorporating students with disabilities into the *Compulsory Education Act* to effectively promote the development of inclusive education. In response to this, the Ministry of Education announced in 2017 that students with disabilities and SEN would be included in the regulatory framework of the *Compulsory Education Act*, and all students with disabilities would receive free mainstream or special school education by 2019. In addition, the Ministry of Education published the "Bringing out the Best in Every Child" document in response to education reform in 2015, which specifically outlines how current education policy measures and curriculum can meet the needs of all students. The document particularly emphasizes that Singapore will create a diverse education landscape and provide various learning opportunities through multiple pathways to best cater to their different interests, strengths, and learning needs. This clearly provides important policy support for inclusive education, promoting the Singapore education system to become more inclusive so that students with disabilities or SEN can receive more effective care within the education system. With the increase in the number of students with SEN in mainstream schools, school human resources and professional development pathways have also expanded (Strogilos & Lim, 2019). Currently, the teaching professional team that supports inclusive education in mainstream schools, apart from psychological counseling services, is mainly composed of teachers, learning support coordinators, and allied educators (Strogilos et al, 2021). Learning support coordinators are mainstream teachers who have received training and mainly help lower primary school students with difficulties in reading, writing, or arithmetic. Allied educators are support staff who provide support through classroom support, individual or group training (such as literacy skills, social skills, learning, and organizational skills), transition support, and research to support the learning and behavioral needs of students with SEN and disabilities, and provide support with support teachers in teaching different subjects (Ministry of Education, 2012).

#### *3.8.4 Difficulties Faced by Inclusive/Integration Education in Singapore*

Walker & Musti-Rao (2016) identified the most common problems and challenges facing inclusive/integration education in Singapore, including (a) the traditional that hinders equal learning opportunities; (b) a curricular and pedagogical focus on standardized assessment scores, and (c) a

teacher training program that does not include basic education concepts and knowledge in the contents of essential curriculum.

In terms of cultural and institutional barriers, the dual education system in Singapore is a major obstacle to the inclusion of people with disabilities into society. Although many policies and procedures implemented in Singapore aim to help build a prosperous nation and develop its human capital, these policies inevitably weaken opportunities for people with disabilities and exclude them from mainstream education. For example, this system exempts students from the opportunity to receive mainstream education and allows them to attend special schools, which only deepens the divide between mainstream and special education (Poon, Musti-Ra, & Wettasinghe, 2013). As international society increasingly values inclusive education, Singapore has also signed the *UNCRPD* along with 132 other countries, committing to provide equal rights and dignity for people with disabilities (Ministry of Social and Family Development, 2013). The government's continued transformation lays the foundation for building an inclusive school system in Singapore.

Students in special education schools in Singapore also face many obstacles in terms of curriculum and support, as National Exams are a part of compulsory education in Singapore. Singaporeans have always had high expectations for National Exams. Therefore, when facing the exam every year, local students, teachers, and parents all experience a sense of overwhelming pressure (Ang & Huan, 2006). Although mainstream teachers are encouraged and willing to support students with SEN in the classroom, the curriculum and assessment methods in preparing for National Exams do not provide sufficient support for students with SEN. Although mainstream school teachers have received inclusive education training, pre-service teachers who have received inclusive education training and teachers who have the most contact with people with disabilities have a significantly better attitude towards inclusive education than those who have not received training (Thaver, Lim & Liao, 2014), large class teaching cannot provide academic and learning support for students with SEN and disabilities to succeed in mainstream schools (Walker & Musti-Rao, 2016). Although authorities have provided many accommodations for students with SEN to participate in exams, such as approving additional exam time compared to mainstream students, larger font size on the exam paper, and allowing the use of a keyboard, these accommodations actually undermine the confidence of students with SEN because the exam results will indicate that they were obtained under special conditions (Poon, Musti-Ra & Wettasinghe, 2013). Although mainstream schools are considered "inclusive," there is still room for improvement in the understanding of the concept of "inclusive" when students with disabilities do not receive the daily support, personnel, and teaching methods they need to succeed in a competitive exam system.

The educational gap/barrier between mainstream students and students with SEN in Singapore is partly due to a lack of preparation and training for teachers in schools. The National Institute of Education (NIE), where all Singaporean teachers are trained, imposes very high entry requirements for being a mainstream teacher. There are three pathways to becoming a mainstream teacher: (a) completing a 2-3 year Professional Diploma in Education; (b) completing a one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) for those who already hold a Bachelor's degree; or (c) obtaining a four-year Bachelor's degree in Education (Arts or Science). In contrast, becoming a special education worker is relatively simpler. Those interested in teaching students with SEN can become support teachers, teach in special schools, or become allied educators in mainstream schools. Allied educators and support teachers work together to provide support for students with mild SEN (such as dyslexia, ASD, and ADHD) in mainstream schools (Ministry of Education, 2014).

Nevertheless, all of the above educators need to obtain a Diploma in Special Education (DISE) from the National Institute of Education (NIE). The focus of the DISE course is on child development, inclusive education theory, and understanding the learning needs and difficulties of people with disabilities. Graduates of the DISE course are able to identify disabilities, diagnose and assess students, and plan the support measures. However, the DISE course only takes one year to complete, and it is the only qualification required by the Ministry of Education (MOE) for teaching students

with SEN, so the number of special school teachers is not too large. In addition, regarding the resource for early identification of children with SEN, although the number of students with SEN and disabilities is increasing under the Child Development Program (Ho, 2007), there is a lack of well-trained early childhood educators who can provide quality services to young children with SEN. Furthermore, due to the limited number of EPs who provide free diagnostic testing by the Ministry of Education, school-age children still have to wait a long time for assessment (Poon, Musti-Ra & Wettasinghe, 2013). In summary, although Singapore has not yet enacted legislation for inclusive education, its experience in teacher professional qualifications and other areas is worth learning from (Curcic, 2009).

### **3.9 Insights on Hong Kong Inclusive Education from Three Case Studies**

In summary, the following three aspects can be learned from the experiences of inclusive education in the three places:

1. Comprehensive support plans for students with SEN: The UK requires that every student with SEN should have a comprehensive support plan, not just individualized educational plans for severe cases. In Hong Kong's current three-tier support model, it can be considered to match each student with SEN with corresponding community support services and provide basic skills to assist parents in supporting their children's happy learning and growth. To provide the above information and teach relevant skills, a comprehensive database should be established for schools and parents to refer to at any time.
2. Teacher professional development and support strategies: Hong Kong's current teacher professional development and support strategies have corresponding professional training courses compared to the three case studies. However, in terms of overall support strategies, reference can be made from Canada's experience which more teachers can be arranged to receive training and become allied inclusive teachers so that they can effectively support regular teachers and students with SEN in their respective schools. On the other hand, referring to Singapore's experience of setting up allied educators to support students with SEN, the government should allocate additional resources to hire more teaching or professional support staff to support students with SEN when individual schools have a greater need. In the long run, after increasing the number of staff, schools can consider setting up school-based inclusive curricula to reduce the pressure on students with SEN in mainstream curricula and achieve a win-win situation.
3. Improving transparency of family-school cooperation to promote inclusive society: Inclusive education in Hong Kong has been implemented for twenty years, and social acceptance has increased significantly compared to the past. However, in terms of family-school cooperation, referring to the UK's experience, schools can try to establish a partnership with parents, explaining to parents more about the reasons for arranging different support measures for their children with SEN, and explaining the school's philosophy of inclusive education to strengthen parents' confidence and trust in the school. At the same time, referring to Singapore's experience, as social acceptance increases, Hong Kong should strive to establish an inclusive society as its goal. Only from social understanding to change in education system and with full support can students with SEN or disabilities truly integrate into society, and promote Hong Kong to become an inclusive society.

## Chapter 4 Findings from School Survey

The entire school survey was conducted from October 2020 to November 2021, and the collected data was based on the 2020/21 academic year. After the data compilation, a total of 141 ordinary schools participated in this Study, with 60 primary schools and 81 secondary schools. There were 1 532 teachers participated in the questionnaire survey from these 141 interviewed ordinary schools, including 704 primary school teachers and 828 secondary school teachers. However, due to the situations of participated schools, not all schools submitted questionnaires from their principals, SENCOs, and teachers. Out of all questionnaires collected, 104 schools fully submitted all sets of questionnaires', with 47 primary schools and 57 secondary schools.

Regarding the analysis of the survey, the research team used a four-point scale where 1 represented "strongly disagree" and 4 represented "strongly agree." If the mean score was above 2.5, it indicated that the respondents tended to agree with the statements.

### 4.1 Sample Data

Among the 141 participating schools, aided schools constituted the majority, accounting for over 80% of both primary and secondary schools, at 81.5% and 86.7% respectively (Table 4.1). There was one caput primary school and three private schools participating in the Study, while there were no such secondary schools participated. Direct subsidized scheme schools accounted for about 10% (12.3%) of secondary schools, whereas there was only one direct subsidized scheme primary school that participated.

**Table 4.1: Categories of School Subsidies**

Category of School	Overall (n=141)	Primary Schools (n=60)	Secondary Schools (n=81)
Government Schools	8 (5.7%)	3 (5.0%)	5 (6.2%)
Aided Schools	118 (83.7%)	52 (86.7%)	66 (81.5%)
Caput Schools	1 (0.7%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
Direct Subsidy Scheme Schools	11 (7.8%)	1 (1.7%)	10 (12.3%)
Others (Private schools)	3 (2.1%)	3 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)
	141 (100.0%)	60 (100.0%)	81 (100.0%)

In terms of principal training in special education (Table 4.2), approximately more than half of the primary and secondary school principals have received professional development courses for teacher (such as 30/60/90 hours Course in "Catering for Diverse Learning Needs"), accounting for 54.3% and 50.0% respectively. The proportion of principals who with major or minor in special education/integrated education at the undergraduate level or have pursued a master degree in special education was relatively low, each accounting for less than 10%. However, more than one-third of primary and secondary school principals have never received any related training, accounting for 34.6% and 33.3% respectively.

**Table 4.2: Principal's Participation in Special Education Training (PQ18)**

Special/Integration-related Education training	Overall (n=141)	Primary School (n=60)	Secondary School (n=81)
Professional development courses for teacher (such as 30/60/90 hours Course in “Catering for Diverse Learning Needs”)	74 (52.5%)	30 (50.0%)	44 (54.3%)
Undergraduate Major or Minor in Special/Integrated Education	8 (5.7%)	2 (3.3%)	6 (7.4%)
Course for Teachers of Children with Special Educational Need (TCSEN)	17 (12.1%)	6 (10.0%)	11 (13.6%)
PGDE in Special Education	16 (11.3%)	8 (13.3%)	8 (9.9%)
Master of Education in Special Education	7 (5.0%)	5 (8.3%)	2 (2.5%)
Others	7 (5.0%)	5 (8.3%)	2 (2.5%)
Never received any related Training	48 (34.0%)	20 (33.3%)	28 (34.6%)

In terms of years of experience (Table 4.3), approximately half of the primary and secondary school principals had relatively less experience, ranging from 1 to 5 years. Among them, the proportion of primary school principals was relatively lower, at 46.7%, while for secondary school principals, it was 54.3%. About 20% of primary and secondary school principals had 6 to 10 years of experience, with proportions of 22.2% and 25.0% respectively. The proportions of principals with 11-15 years, 16-20 years, and 21 years or more of experience were all less than 10% for both primary and secondary schools, except for primary school principals with 16-20 years of experience, which was slightly higher at 13.3%.

**Table 4.3 Experiences as Principal (PQ19)**

Experience as Principal	Overall (n=141)	Primary School (n=60)	Secondary School (n=81)
1-5 years	72 (51.1%)	28 (46.7%)	44 (54.3%)
6-10 years	33 (23.4%)	15 (25.0%)	18 (22.2%)
11-15 years	10 (7.1%)	4 (6.7%)	6 (7.4%)
16-20 years	15 (10.6%)	8 (13.3%)	7 (8.6%)
21 years or above	11 (7.8%)	5 (8.3%)	6 (7.4%)

Table 4.4 shows that the average teaching experience (including past and current schools) of the responded SENCOs was 19.69 years. In terms of experience in IE (including past and current schools), the average was 8.82 years. However, primary school SENCOs had a longer average experience of 9.11 years, while secondary school SENCOs had an average of 8.61 years. Regarding weekly hours of teaching periods of SENCOs, the overall average was 10.91 hours of teaching periods. However, secondary school SENCOs had an average of 11.53 hours of teaching periods, slightly higher than the average of 10.05 hours of teaching periods for primary school SENCOs.

**Table 4.4 Average Years of Teaching Experience of SENCOs, Average Experience in Supporting Integrated Education, and Average Weekly Hours of Teaching Period (SQ15, SQ16, SQ18)**

Average Years of Teaching Experience of SENCOs, Average Experience in Integrated Education, and Average Weekly Hours of Teaching Period	Overall	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
	Mean (standard deviation, SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
How many years of teaching experience do you have? (including your previous and current serving school)	19.69 (7.92)	19.37 (7.63)	19.93 (8.17)
What is your years of experience in inclusive education (including past and current teaching positions)?	8.82 (5.16)	9.11 (5.66)	8.61 (4.78)
How many hours per week do you have for teaching?	10.91 (4.20)	10.05 (4.08)	11.53 (4.20)

Table 4.5 shows that the responded SENCOs spent a considerable amount of time on IE supporting work. Approximately half of the primary and secondary school SENCOs spent 25 hours or more per week on IE support, accounting for 49.4% and 51.7% respectively. Less than 10% of SENCOs in both primary and secondary schools spent 1-5 hours or 6-10 hours per week on IE support. Similarly, less than 20% of SENCOs spent 11-15 hours, 16-20 hours, or 21-24 hours per week on IE support.

**Table 4.5: Weekly Time Spent on Integrated Education Support by SENCOs (SQ17)**

Weekly Time Spent on IE Support:	Overall (n=141)	Primary Schools (n=60)	Secondary Schools (n=81)
1-5 hours	7 (5.0%)	5 (8.3%)	2 (2.5%)
6-10 hours	8 (5.7%)	4 (6.7%)	4 (4.9%)
11-15 hours	19 (13.5%)	6 (10.0%)	13 (16.0%)
16-20 hours	19 (13.5%)	7 (11.7%)	12 (14.8%)
21-24 hours	17 (12.1%)	7 (11.7%)	10 (12.3%)
25 hours or above	71 (50.4%)	31 (51.7%)	40 (49.4%)

Primary and secondary school SENCOs have received relevant training (Table 4.6). Over 80% of them have participated in the Basic course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (30 hours). For the Advanced course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (102 hours), over 80% of secondary school SENCOs have attended (86.4%), while the proportion is lower for primary school SENCOs, with only 75.0%. Regarding the Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN (Cognition and Learning Needs), a lower percentage of secondary school SENCOs have attended, accounting for only 24.7%. For the Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN (Sensory, Communication and Physical Needs), both primary and secondary school SENCOs had lower participation rates, at 25.9% and 16.7% respectively. Other courses had participation rates of 40% or higher for both primary and secondary school SENCOs.

**Table 4.6: Special Education Training Attended by SENCOs (SQ19)**

Training Course on Special Education	Overall (n=141)	Primary Schools (n=60)	Secondary Schools (n=81)
Basic course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (30 hours)	117 (83.0%)	48 (80.0%)	69 (85.2%)
Advanced course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (102 hours)	115 (81.6%)	45 (75.0%)	70 (86.4%)
Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN (Cognition and Learning Needs)	44 (31.2%)	24 (40.0%)	20 (24.7%)
Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN (Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs)	74 (52.5%)	30 (50.0%)	44 (54.3%)
Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN (Sensory, Communication and Physical Needs)	31 (22.0%)	10 (16.7%)	21 (25.9%)
Professional Development Programme for Mental Health: Mental Health Promotion at Schools and Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs	73 (51.8%)	27 (45.0%)	46 (56.8%)
Others	30 (21.3%)	10 (16.7%)	20 (24.7%)
Never received any Related Training	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Table 4.7 shows that approximately 45.2% of primary and secondary school teachers have never received any related training. Among the teachers who have received training, the most commonly attended course was the "Catering to the Needs of Diverse Learners" basic course (30 hours), with over 30% of primary and secondary school teachers participated, accounting for 33.1% and 32.8% respectively. There was a higher percentage of secondary school teachers participating in courses related to promoting mental health and supporting students with mental health needs, at around 10.5%, while only 4.8% of primary school teachers have participated in this course.

**Table 4.7: Special Education Training Attended by Teachers (TQ18)**

Training Course on Special Education	Overall (n=1 532)	Primary Schools (n=704)	Secondary Schools (n=828)
Basic course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (30 hours)	505 (33.0%)	231 (32.8%)	274 (33.1%)
Advanced course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (102 hours)	213 (13.9%)	91 (12.9%)	122 (14.7%)
Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN (Cognition and Learning Needs)	104 (6.8%)	54 (7.7%)	50 (6.0%)
Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN (Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs)	121 (7.9%)	53 (7.5%)	68 (8.2%)
Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN (Sensory, Communication and Physical Needs)	57 (3.7%)	19 (2.7%)	38 (4.6%)
Professional Development Programme for Mental Health: Mental Health	121 (7.9%)	34 (4.8%)	87 (10.5%)

Promotion at Schools and Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs			
Others	121 (7.9%)	63 (8.9%)	58 (7.0%)
Never received any related Training	659 (43.0%)	295 (41.9%)	364 (44.0%)

Regarding the teaching experience of teachers (Table 4.8), the overall average years of teaching experience of teachers was 14.76 years. The average years of teaching experience of primary school teachers was lower at 14.46 years, while secondary school teachers had an average years of teaching experience of 15 years. However, there was a larger variation in years of teaching experience among primary school teachers, with a standard deviation of 8.99. A similar situation is observed among secondary school teachers, with a standard deviation of 8.96.

**Table 4.8 Years of Experience as Teacher (TQ13)**

Years of Experience as Teacher	Overall (n=1 532)	Primary School (n=704)	Secondary School (n=828)
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
How many years of teaching experience do you have? (including your previous and current serving school)	14.76 (8.97)	14.46 (8.99)	15.00 (8.96)

Table 4.9 shows that in both primary and secondary schools, half or more of the teachers served as class teachers. Among them, a higher percentage of secondary school teachers (62.6%) took on the role of class teachers compared to primary school teachers (50.0%). As for careers and life planning, no primary school teachers assumed this role, while 10.5% of secondary school teachers did. Secondary school teachers were also more involved in counseling roles, accounting for 21.0%, whereas only 9.7% of primary school teachers served in this capacity. However, when it comes to curriculum development, a smaller proportion of secondary school teachers (3.4%) were involved, while 19.3% of primary school teachers took on this role. The percentages of primary and secondary school teachers serving in roles such as discipline and guidance, activities, life education, IE, and academic affairs fell between 10% and 20%. The role of arts education had a lower representation, with only 4.2% of primary school teachers and 6.0% of secondary school teachers assumed this role.

**Table 4.9 Roles of Teachers in School (TQ15)**

Role of Teachers	Overall (n=1 532)	Primary Schools (n=704)	Secondary Schools (n=828)
Class teacher	870 (56.8%)	352 (50.0%)	518 (62.6%)
Academic Committee	257 (16.8%)	108 (15.3%)	149 (18.0%)
Guidance & Counselling Committee	242 (15.8%)	68 (9.7%)	174 (21.0%)
Discipline Committee	225 (14.7%)	90 (12.8%)	135 (16.3%)
Co-Curricular Activities Committee	221 (14.4%)	101 (14.3%)	120 (14.5%)
IE Committee	200 (13.1%)	81 (11.5%)	119 (14.4%)
Moral and Civic Education Committee	177 (11.6%)	92 (13.1%)	85 (10.3%)
Curriculum Development Committee	164 (10.7%)	136 (19.3%)	28 (3.4%)
Careers and Life Planning Committee / Further Study and Career Counselling Committee (Only applicable on Secondary Schools)	87 (5.7%)	-	87 (10.5%)
Arts Education Committee	77 (5.0%)	42 (6.0%)	35 (4.2%)
Others	204 (13.3%)	103 (14.6%)	101 (12.2%)

Table 4.10 shows that the distribution of class of teaching among teachers participated in the survey was relatively even across grades. In secondary schools, the proportion of teachers teaching each grade was approximately 50%, with the lowest percentage in the Form 1 at 48.2% and the highest in Form 4 and Form 6 at 52.8%. In primary schools, except for a lower representation of teachers in Primary 1 at 37.1%, the proportions for other grades fell between 40% and 50%.

**Table 4.10 Class of Teaching of Teachers (TQ16)**

Class of Teaching	Primary Schools (n=704)	Secondary Schools (n=828)
Grade 1	261 (37.1%)	399 (48.2%)
Grade 2	317 (45.0%)	408 (49.3%)
Grade 3	302 (42.9%)	427 (51.6%)
Grade 4	325 (46.2%)	437 (52.8%)
Grade 5	329 (46.7%)	428 (51.7%)
Grade 6	299 (42.5%)	437 (52.8%)

Table 4.11 shows that the most prevalent type of students with SEN taught by teachers in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 school years was ADHD, accounting for 79.5% of the teachers. The next most common type was students with autism, accounting for 67.9%. VI and physical disabilities/motor coordination difficulties are less frequently encountered by teachers, each accounting for less than 10% of cases, at 8.0% and 9.1% respectively. On average, each surveyed teacher taught the highest average number of students with SLD, which reached 6.80 students, followed by students with ADHD at 5.06 students.

**Table 4.11 Types of Students with SEN that Teachers Have Cared for and the Corresponding Number of Students (TQ17)**

Types of Students with SEN	Number of teachers who taught this type of students with SEN in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years (n=1 532)	Average number of students with that type of SEN taught by each teacher who had experience in teaching that type of SEN
Student with ADHD	1 218 (79.5%)	5.06
Students with ASD	1 040 (67.9%)	3.25
Students with SpLI	804 (52.5%)	4.15
Students with SLD	707 (46.1%)	6.80
Students with MI	671 (43.8%)	3.11
Students with ID	534 (34.9%)	2.84
Students with HI	500 (32.6%)	1.50
Students with PD	139 (9.1%)	1.63
Students with VI	122 (8.0%)	1.26

Table 4.12 shows that more primary school teachers have dealt with students with ADHD and ASD, accounting for 81.0% and 73.2% respectively. There were fewer of them handled students with VI and physical disabilities/motor coordination difficulties, representing 6.1% and 7.0% respectively. On average, each surveyed primary school teacher has taught on average 6.01 students with SLD.

**Table 4.12 Types of Students with SEN that Primary Teachers Have Cared for and the Corresponding Number of Students (TQ17)**

Types of Students with SEN	Number of teachers who taught this type of students with SEN in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years (n=704)	Average number of students with that type of SEN taught by each teacher who had experience in teaching that type of SEN
Student with ADHD	570 (81.0%)	4.72
Students with ASD	515 (73.2%)	3.37
Students with SpLI	383 (54.4%)	4.41
Students with SLD	336 (47.7%)	6.01
Students with ID	294 (41.8%)	2.74
Students with MI	246 (34.9%)	3.23
Students with HI	219 (31.1%)	1.35
Students with PD	49 (7.0%)	1.82
Students with VI	43 (6.1%)	1.30

The situation of secondary school teachers was similar to that of primary school teachers (Table 4.13), but the percentage of secondary school teachers dealt with students with ADHD and ASD was slightly lower than that of primary school teachers, at 78.3% and 63.4% respectively. However, on average, each secondary school teacher has handled a higher number of students with SLD, reaching an average of 7.52.

**Table 4.13 Types of Students with SEN that Secondary Teachers Have Cared for and the Corresponding Number of Students (TQ17)**

Types of Students with SEN	Number of teachers who taught this type of students with SEN in the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years (n=828)	Average number of students with that type of SEN taught by each teacher who had experience teaching that type of SEN
Student with ADHD	648 (78.3%)	5.35
Students with ASD	525 (63.4%)	3.14
Students with MI	425 (51.3%)	3.05
Students with SpLI	421 (50.8%)	3.90
Students with SLD	371 (44.8%)	7.52
Students with HI	281 (33.9%)	1.61
Students with ID	240 (29.0%)	2.95
Students with PD	90 (10.9%)	1.53
Students with VI	79 (9.5%)	1.24

#### **4.2 Understanding of Disability Discrimination Ordinance and Code of Practice on Education under Disability Discrimination Ordinance**

Regarding the understanding of the DDO and the Code of Practice on Education (Table 4.14), over 90% of the surveyed primary and secondary school principals (91.5%) and SENCOs (92.9%) agreed that they understand these ordinance and code of practice. As for teachers, nearly 60% (58.6%) of the respondents believed that they have an understanding of these two legislations.

**Table 4.14 Understanding of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance and the Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance among primary and secondary school principals, SENCOs, and teachers (SQ7, PQ8, TQ2)**

Stakeholders	Overall	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
	Frequency (Percentage) <sup>4</sup>	Frequency (Percentage) <sup>4</sup>	Frequency (Percentage) <sup>4</sup>
Principal	129 (91.5%)	53 (88.3%)	76 (93.8%)
SENCO	131 (92.9%)	57 (95.0%)	74 (91.4%)
Teacher	897 (58.6%)	434 (61.6%)	463 (55.9%)

### 4.3 Understanding of Types of Special Educational Needs and Integrated Education

The results in Table 4.15 reflect that primary school principals generally understood the types of SEN as defined by the EDB. Over 90% of the respondents were able to identify the following eight categories of SEN defined by the EDB: students with SLD, students with ADHD, students with ASD, students with ID, students with SpLI, students with HI, students with PD, and students with VI. Over 80% of them also recognized that students with MI fall under the category of SEN. However, close to 30% of primary school principals (28.8%) believed that students with slightly poorer academic performance are included in the EDB's designated SEN category, and 10% of the surveyed primary school principals were uncertain or unclear whether students with weak understanding abilities are considered as SEN.

**Table 4.15 Understanding of Primary School Principals on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (PQ9)**

Understanding of Primary School Principals on Categories of SEN as Defined by the EDB	Principals			
	Primary Schools (n=60)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/ Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	59	17 (28.8%)	40 (67.8%)	2 (3.4%)
(2) Students with SLD	59	59 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(3) Students with ADHD	59	59 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	59	59 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(5) Students with ID	59	56 (94.9%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (5.1%)
(6) Students with SpLI	59	57 (96.6%)	2 (3.4%)	0 (0.0%)
(7) Students with HI	59	57 (96.6%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.7%)
(8) Students with PD	59	55 (93.2%)	2 (3.4%)	2 (3.4%)
(9) Students with VI	59	55 (93.2%)	2 (3.4%)	2 (3.4%)
(10) Students with MI	59	49 (83.1%)	7 (11.9%)	3 (5.1%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	59	10 (16.9%)	45 (76.3%)	4 (6.8%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	59	8 (13.6%)	45 (76.3%)	6 (10.2%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	59	4 (6.8%)	53 (89.8%)	2 (3.4%)

Note:

(1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the percentage of respondents who “agree” or “disagree” that he/she understands this ordinance and the code of practice to all respondents.

The results in Table 4.16 reflect that secondary school principals had a clearer understanding of the categories of SEN as defined by the EDB compared to primary school principals. Over 90% of the respondents believed they can distinguish the nine categories of SEN defined by the EDB. Among them, all secondary school principals were aware that students with ADHD are SEN.

**Table 4.16 Understanding of Secondary School Principals on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (PQ9)**

Understanding of Secondary School Principals on Categories of SEN as Defined by the EDB	Principals			
	Secondary Schools (n=81)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/ Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	81	5 (6.2%)	71 (87.7%)	5 (6.2%)
(2) Students with SLD	81	75 (92.6%)	5 (6.2%)	1 (1.2%)
(3) Students with ADHD	81	81 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	81	80 (98.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)
(5) Students with ID	81	77 (95.1%)	1 (1.2%)	3 (3.7%)
(6) Students with SpLI	81	79 (97.5%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.2%)
(7) Students with HI	81	78 (96.3%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.2%)
(8) Students with PD	81	76 (93.8%)	3 (3.7%)	2 (2.5%)
(9) Students with VI	81	78 (96.3%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.2%)
(10) Students with MI	81	73 (90.1%)	4 (4.9%)	4 (4.9%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	81	12 (14.8%)	63 (77.8%)	6 (7.4%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	81	19 (23.5%)	56 (69.1%)	6 (7.4%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	81	10 (12.3%)	67 (82.7%)	4 (4.9%)

Note:

(1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.

Table 4.17 shows that overall, principals of primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong had a general understanding of the categories of SEN as defined by the EDB. Over 90% of the respondents were able to distinguish the eight categories of SEN defined by the DB. However, there was a slight deviation in the understanding of students with MI (87.1%), and therefore, the recognition rate for this category fell below 90%. Nevertheless, close to or more than 10% of the principals still included other students in the SEN category.

**Table 4.17 Understanding of School Principals on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (PQ9)**

Understanding of Principals on Categories of SEN as Defined by the EDB	Principals			
	Overall (n=141)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/ Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	140	22 (15.7%)	111 (79.3%)	7 (5.0%)
(2) Students with SLD	140	134 (95.7%)	5 (3.6%)	1 (0.7%)
(3) Students with ADHD	140	140 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	140	139 (99.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)
(5) Students with ID	140	133 (95.0%)	1 (0.7%)	6 (4.3%)
(6) Students with SpLI	140	136 (97.1%)	3 (2.1%)	1 (0.7%)
(7) Students with HI	140	135 (96.4%)	3 (2.1%)	2 (1.4%)

(8) Students with PD	140	131 (93.6%)	5 (3.6%)	4 (2.9%)
(9) Students with VI	140	133 (95.0%)	4 (2.9%)	3 (2.1%)
(10) Students with MI	140	122 (87.1%)	11 (7.9%)	7 (5.0%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	140	22 (15.7%)	108 (77.1%)	10 (7.1%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	140	27 (19.3%)	101 (72.1%)	12 (8.6%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	140	14 (10.0%)	120 (85.7%)	6 (4.3%)

Notes:

(1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.

(2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

Table 4.18 reflects that primary school SENCOS had a better understanding of the SEN categories defined by the EDB compared to primary school principals. Over 90% of the respondents were familiar with all nine SEN categories defined by the EDB, including students with autism (98.3%), ID (96.7%), SpLI (96.7%), VI (98.3%), and MI (96.7%). SLD, ADHD, HI, and PD were recognized as SEN categories by all interviewed primary school SENCOS. It is worth noting that 35.0% of primary school SENCOS also considered students with poorer academic performance belong to the SEN category, which was a higher proportion compared to other respondent groups. This indicates that some SENCOS still had a less clear understanding and awareness of the SEN categories.

**Table 4.18 Understanding of Primary School SENCOS on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (SQ8a)**

Understanding of Primary School SENCOS on Categories of SEN as Defined by the EDB	SENCOS			
	Primary Schools (n=60)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/ Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	60	21 (35.0%)	36 (60.0%)	3 (5.0%)
(2) Students with SLI	60	60 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(3) Students with ADHD	60	60 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	60	59 (98.3%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
(5) Students with ID	60	58 (96.7%)	2 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)
(6) Students with SpLI	60	58 (96.7%)	2 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)
(7) Students with HI	60	60 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(8) Students with PD	60	60 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(9) Students with VI	59	58 (98.3%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
(10) Students with MI	60	58 (96.7%)	2 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	60	5 (8.3%)	50 (83.3%)	5 (8.3%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	60	5 (8.3%)	52 (86.7%)	3 (5.0%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	60	6 (10.0%)	49 (81.7%)	5 (8.3%)

The results in Table 4.19 indicate that secondary School SENCOS and principals had similar levels of recognition for the SEN categories defined by the EDB. Similarly, all interviewed secondary School SENCOS (100%) acknowledged students with ADHD belong to the category of SEN. In comparison to primary school SENCOS, a small number of secondary School SENCOS (1.2%) expressed doubts about the EDB's categorization of students with SLD, HI, and PD as SEN.

**Table 4.19 Understanding of Secondary School SENCOs on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (PSQ8a)**

Understanding of Secondary School SENCOs on Categories of SEN as Defined by the EDB	SENCOs			
	Secondary School (n=81)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/ Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	80	7 (8.8%)	71 (88.8%)	2 (2.5%)
(2) Students with SLD	81	80 (98.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)
(3) Students with ADHD	81	81 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	81	80 (98.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)
(5) Students with ID	81	79 (97.5%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.2%)
(6) Students with SpLI	81	80 (98.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)
(7) Students with HI	81	80 (98.8%)	1 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)
(8) Students with PD	81	80 (98.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)
(9) Students with VI	81	80 (98.8%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)
(10) Students with MI	81	78 (96.3%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.2%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	81	9 (11.1%)	69 (85.2%)	3 (3.7%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	81	6 (7.4%)	71 (87.7%)	4 (4.9%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	81	13 (16.0%)	65 (80.2%)	3 (3.7%)

Notes:

- (1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.
- (2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

Table 4.20 shows that overall SENCOs of primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong had a higher level of identification with the SEN categories defined by the EDB than principals. Over 95% of the surveyed primary and secondary school SENCOs were familiar with the SEN categories defined by the EDB. The recognition of ADHD even reached 100%, indicating that SENCOs of primary and secondary schools had sufficient knowledge of the SEN categories defined by the EDB.

**Table 4.20 Understanding of SENCOs on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (SQ8a)**

Understanding of SENCOs on Categories of SEN as Defined by the EDB	SENCOs			
	Overall (n=141)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/ Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	140	28 (20.0%)	107 (76.4%)	5 (3.6%)
(2) Students with SLD	141	140 (99.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)
(3) Students with ADHD	141	141 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	141	139 (98.6%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)
(5) Students with ID	141	137 (97.2%)	3 (2.1%)	1 (0.7%)
(6) Students with SpLI	141	138 (97.9%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (0.7%)
(7) Students with HI	141	140 (99.3%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)
(8) Students with PD	141	140 (99.3%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)
(9) Students with VI	140	138 (98.6%)	1 (0.7%)	1 (0.7%)
(10) Students with MI	141	136 (96.5%)	4 (2.8%)	1 (0.7%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	141	14 (9.9%)	119 (84.4%)	8 (5.7%)

(12) Students with weak comprehension	141	11 (7.8%)	123 (87.2%)	7 (5.0%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	141	19 (13.5%)	114 (80.9%)	8 (5.7%)

Note:

(1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.

The results from Table 4.21 indicate that primary school teachers had a lower level of identification with the SEN categories defined by the EDB compared to both primary school principals and SENCOS. Less than 90% of the surveyed primary school teachers recognized students with PD (84.4%), VI (89.4%), and MI (73.7%) as SEN categories. Conversely, nearly 30% of primary school teachers considered students with deviant behavior (33.8%), weak comprehension skills (29.5%), and non-Chinese-speaking students (26.8%) as SEN categories.

**Table 4.21 Understanding of Primary School Teachers on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (TQ3a)**

Understanding of Primary School Teachers on Categories of SEN as Defined by the EDB	Teachers			
	Primary Schools (n=704)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/ Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	701	153 (21.8%)	483 (68.9%)	65 (9.3%)
(2) Students with SLD	701	682 (97.3%)	9 (1.3%)	10 (1.4%)
(3) Students with ADHD	701	681 (97.1%)	7 (1.0%)	13 (1.9%)
(4) Students with ASD	700	680 (97.1%)	12 (1.7%)	8 (1.1%)
(5) Students with ID	697	652 (93.5%)	32 (4.6%)	13 (1.9%)
(6) Students with SpLI	699	637 (91.1%)	40 (5.7%)	22 (3.1%)
(7) Students with HI	699	649 (92.8%)	36 (5.2%)	14 (2.0%)
(8) Students with PD	698	589 (84.4%)	67 (9.6%)	42 (6.0%)
(9) Students with VI	699	625 (89.4%)	50 (7.2%)	24 (3.4%)
(10) Students with MI	697	514 (73.7%)	108 (15.5%)	75 (10.8%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	698	236 (33.8%)	378 (54.2%)	84 (12.0%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	698	206 (29.5%)	414 (59.3%)	78 (11.2%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	695	186 (26.8%)	446 (64.2%)	63 (9.1%)

Notes:

(1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.

(2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

The results from Table 4.22 indicate that the level of understanding of the SEN categories defined by the EDB among secondary school teachers slightly differed from that of secondary school principals and SENCOS. Compared to primary school teachers, less than 90% of surveyed secondary school teachers understood that of students with PD (84.0%) and students with MI (78.0%) were classified as students with SEN. However, the percentages of surveyed secondary school teachers recognized students with deviant behavior (31.0%), weak comprehension (25.7%), and non-Chinese-speaking students (20.2%) as SEN students were similar to those of primary school teachers, indicating that some secondary school teachers may not have a deep understanding of the SEN categories defined by the EDB.

**Table 4.22 Understanding of Secondary School Teachers on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (TQ3a)**

Understanding of Secondary School Teachers on Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau	Teachers			
	Secondary Schools (n=828)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	823	36 (4.4%)	709 (86.1%)	78 (9.5%)
(2) Students with SLD	824	790 (95.9%)	10 (1.2%)	24 (2.9%)
(3) Students with ADHD	823	798 (97.0%)	9 (1.1%)	16 (1.9%)
(4) Students with ASD	824	805 (97.7%)	6 (0.7%)	13 (1.6%)
(5) Students with ID	821	740 (90.1%)	51 (6.2%)	30 (3.7%)
(6) Students with SpLI	824	790 (95.9%)	21 (2.5%)	13 (1.6%)
(7) Students with HI	824	776 (94.2%)	28 (3.4%)	20 (2.4%)
(8) Students with PD	823	691 (84.0%)	87 (10.6%)	45 (5.5%)
(9) Students with VI	824	752 (91.3%)	45 (5.5%)	27 (3.3%)
(10) Students with MI	823	642 (78.0%)	111(13.5%)	70 (8.5%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	822	255 (31.0%)	460 (56.0%)	107 (13.0%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	820	211(25.7%)	519 (63.3%)	90 (11.0%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	823	166 (20.2%)	574 (69.7%)	83 (10.1%)

Notes:

- (1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.
- (2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

Overall speaking (Table 4.23), frontline teachers generally recognized the SEN categories defined by the EDB. However, there was a greater discrepancy in the level of understanding on students with deviant behavior, students with weak comprehension, and non-Chinese-speaking students compared to the surveyed primary and secondary school principals and SENCOS.

**Table 4.23 Understanding of School Teachers Regarding Categories of SEN as Defined by the Education Bureau (TQ3a)**

Understanding of School Teachers on Categories of SEN as Defined by the EDB	Teachers			
	Overall (n=1 532)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No	Not sure/Not clear
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	1 524	189 (12.4%)	1 192 (78.2%)	143 (9.4%)
(2) Students with SLD	1 525	1 472 (96.5%)	19 (1.2%)	34 (2.2%)
(3) Students with ADHD	1 524	1 479 (97.0%)	16 (1.0%)	29 (1.9%)
(4) Students with ASD	1 524	1 485 (97.4%)	18 (1.2%)	21 (1.4%)
(5) Students with ID	1 518	1 392 (91.7%)	83 (5.5%)	43 (2.8%)
(6) Students with SpLI	1 523	1 427 (93.7%)	61 (4.0%)	35 (2.3%)
(7) Students with HI	1 523	1 425 (93.6%)	64 (4.2%)	34 (2.2%)
(8) Students with PD	1 521	1 280 (84.2%)	154 (10.1%)	87 (5.7%)
(9) Students with VI	1 523	1 377 (90.4%)	95 (6.2%)	51 (3.3%)
(10) Students with MI	1 520	1 156 (76.1%)	219 (14.4%)	145 (9.5%)
(11) Students with deviant	1 520	491 (32.3%)	838 (55.1%)	191 (12.6%)

behavior				
(12) Students with weak comprehension	1 518	417 (27.5%)	933 (61.5%)	168 (11.1%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	1 518	352 (23.2%)	1 020 (67.2%)	146 (9.6%)

Notes:

(1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.

(2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

In summary, based on the results from Table 4.15 to 4.23, the secondary and primary school principals, SENCOs, and teachers had a general understanding of over half of the SEN categories defined by the EDB. Among the seven SEN categories below, more than 90% of the respondents believed they belong to the EDB's definition, including students with SLD, students with ADHD, students with ASD, students with ID, students with SpLI, students with HI, and students with VI. However, approximately 10% to 30% of principals, SENCOs, and teachers still consider students with poorer academic performance, students with deviant behavior, students with weak comprehension, and non-Chinese-speaking students as the EDB's designated SEN categories.

For students with PD and students with MI, over 90% of the SENCOs recognized them as SEN categories defined by the EDB. However, there were differences in the understanding of these two categories between primary and secondary school principals and teachers. More than 90% of the surveyed principals believed that students with PDs belong to the SEN category, while only about 80% of the teachers shared this view. As for students with MI, nearly all the SENCOs (96.5%) and over 90% of secondary school principals (90.1%) acknowledged them as part of the EDB's SEN category, while the understanding among primary school principals (83.1%) and surveyed teachers (76.1%) is similar but slightly lower.

Regarding the understanding of IE, primary school principals, SENCOs, and teachers generally shared a similar level of agreement in most of the statements (Table 4.24). However, primary school teachers showed less agreement with the statement "Separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them" (2.45). On average, the respondents' agreement levels for the other statements were 2.50 or above. The statement with the highest mean score was "education is a basic right that should be available to all children" with average agreement ratings of 3.76, 3.68, and 3.65 for primary school principals, SENCOs, and teachers respectively.

**Table 4.24 Understanding of Integrated Education Descriptions by Primary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ7, SQ6, TQ1)**

IE Description	Primary Schools		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
1. A child with SEN should be transferred to an integrated classroom and provide adequate supports	2.86 (0.66)	3.00 (0.36)	2.80 (0.61)
2. IE helps to create equal educational opportunities in schools	2.98 (0.67)	2.92 (0.42)	2.81 (0.61)
3. It is important to let every student equally receive educational opportunities	3.41 (0.67)	3.32 (0.53)	3.26 (0.53)
4. All children should be educated under an IE environment	2.71 (0.83)	2.68 (0.67)	2.53 (0.72)

5. Separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them	2.54 (0.68)	2.58 (0.59)	2.45 (0.67)
6. IE enables to achieve social inclusion	2.76 (0.63)	2.98 (0.50)	2.68 (0.64)
7. Compared with traditional classes, children with SEN learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers	3.10 (0.64)	2.95 (0.56)	3.16 (0.62)
8. The best result is achieved if each child with SEN is placed in an integrated classroom that best suits him/her	3.34 (0.58)	3.22 (0.58)	3.13 (0.58)
9. Inclusive curriculum can provide the best learning outcome for students with SEN	3.21 (0.52)	2.93 (0.60)	3.07 (0.54)
10. Education is a basic right that should be available to all children	3.76 (0.54)	3.68 (0.46)	3.65 (0.48)
11. IE will foster acceptance of differences among students	3.15 (0.61)	3.05 (0.46)	2.88 (0.58)
12. All children are capable of learning in IE settings	2.76 (0.70)	2.82 (0.53)	2.60 (0.69)
13. The students with SEN should be educated in mainstream classrooms as much as possible	2.66 (0.58)	2.71 (0.45)	2.53 (0.64)
Composite score	3.02 (0.38)	2.99 (0.24)	2.89 (0.37)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

In the context of secondary schools (Table 4.25), principals, SENCOs, and teachers also shared a similar level of understanding in more than half of the descriptions. Apart from secondary school teachers showing less agreement with the statements "separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them" (2.43) and "all children should be educated under an IE environment" (2.47), all three groups showed a positive inclination towards the other statement descriptions. The statement "it is important to let every student equally receive educational opportunities" received average agreement levels of 3.3 or above from all three groups. This reflected that all three groups had a sufficient understanding of the fundamental principles of IE.

**Table 4.25 Understanding of Integrated Education Perceived by Secondary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ7, SQ6, TQ1)**

IE Description	Secondary Schools		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
1. A child with SEN should be transferred to an integrated classroom and provide adequate supports	3.05 (0.61)	3.06 (0.57)	2.82 (0.63)
2. IE helps to create equal educational opportunities in schools	3.09 (0.62)	3.09 (0.48)	2.83 (0.64)
3. It is important to let every student equally receive educational opportunities	3.36 (0.68)	3.44 (0.57)	3.31 (0.54)
4. All children should be educated under an IE environment	2.63 (0.73)	2.65 (0.69)	2.47 (0.77)
5. Separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them	2.63 (0.66)	2.61 (0.60)	2.43 (0.68)

6. IE enables to achieve social inclusion	2.91 (0.57)	3.01 (0.51)	2.68 (0.65)
7. Compared with traditional classes, children with SEN learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers	2.91 (0.62)	2.85 (0.70)	3.10 (0.63)
8. The best result is achieved if each child with SEN is placed in an integrated classroom that best suits him/her	3.23 (0.60)	3.26 (0.56)	3.14 (0.61)
9. Inclusive curriculum can provide the best learning outcome for students with SEN	2.96 (0.61)	2.86 (0.59)	3.03 (0.54)
10. Education is a basic right that should be available to all children	3.65 (0.57)	3.64 (0.55)	3.66 (0.52)
11. IE will foster acceptance of differences among students	3.04 (0.64)	3.16 (0.53)	2.83 (0.62)
12. All children are capable of learning in IE settings	2.68 (0.74)	2.84 (0.66)	2.57 (0.69)
13. The students with SEN should be educated in mainstream classrooms as much as possible	2.84 (0.56)	2.87 (0.53)	2.52 (0.67)
Composite score	3.00 (0.39)	3.03 (0.34)	2.88 (0.38)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

In terms of understanding of IE, overall, principals, SENCOs, and teachers had a similar level of understanding towards more than half of the statements (Table 4.26). Statements such as "education is a basic right that should be available to all children", "it is important to let every student equally receive educational opportunities", and "the best result is achieved if each child with SEN is placed in an integrated classroom that best suits him/her" rated the average agreement levels of 3.14 or higher, indicating a higher level of agreement among the three groups of stakeholders.

Besides, in terms of the statements "IE helps to create equal educational opportunities in schools" and "IE will foster acceptance of differences among students", principals and SENCOs had a more similar understanding, with the average agreement levels around 3.01 to 3.11, while teachers had lower average agreement levels of 2.82 and 2.85 for these two statements. Another description that showed similar understanding among principals and SENCOs was "Compared with traditional classes, children with SEN learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers", with average agreement levels of 2.99 and 2.89 respectively, while teachers had a higher average agreement level at 3.13 for this statement. For the statement of "inclusive curriculum can provide the best learning outcome for students with SEN", principals and teachers had similar average agreement levels of 3.07 and 3.05 respectively, while SENCOs had a lower average agreement level of 2.89. For the statement "a child with SEN should be transferred to an integrated classroom and provides adequate supports", SENCOs had an average agreement level of 3.04, while principals and teachers had average agreement level of 2.97 and 2.81 respectively.

However, when comparing to principals and SENCOs, teachers as a whole tended to have more negative or neutral view on the statements "all children should be educated under an IE environment" (2.50) and "separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them" (2.44). The statements related to promoting IE and classroom practices, such as "IE enables to achieve social inclusion", "IE will foster acceptance of differences among students", "all children are capable of learning in an IE settings", and "The students with SEN should be educated in mainstream classrooms as much as possible", teachers had lower average agreement levels compared to principals and SENCOs. In summary, overall teachers had a slightly lower level of understanding of IE compared to principals and SENCOs.

**Table 4.26 Understanding of Integrated Education Perceived by School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ7, SQ6, TQ1)**

IE Description	Overall		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
1. A child with SEN should be transferred to an integrated classroom and provide adequate supports	2.97 (0.64)	3.04 (0.49)	2.81 (0.62)
2. IE helps to create equal educational opportunities in schools	3.04 (0.63)	3.01 (0.46)	2.82 (0.62)
3. It is important to let every student equally receive educational opportunities	3.38 (0.67)	3.39 (0.55)	3.29 (0.53)
4. All children should be educated under an IE environment	2.66 (0.77)	2.67 (0.68)	2.50 (0.75)
5. Separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them	2.59 (0.67)	2.60 (0.59)	2.44 (0.68)
6. IE enables to achieve social inclusion	2.85 (0.60)	3.00 (0.50)	2.68 (0.65)
7. Compared with traditional classes, children with SEN learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers	2.99 (0.63)	2.89 (0.65)	3.13 (0.63)
8. The best result is achieved if each child with SEN is placed in an integrated classroom that best suits him/her	3.28 (0.59)	3.24 (0.57)	3.14 (0.60)
9. Inclusive curriculum can provide the best learning outcome for students with SEN	3.07 (0.58)	2.89 (0.59)	3.05 (0.54)
10. Education is a basic right that should be available to all children	3.70 (0.56)	3.66 (0.52)	3.66 (0.51)
11. IE will foster acceptance of differences among students	3.09 (0.63)	3.11 (0.51)	2.85 (0.60)
12. All children are capable of learning in IE settings	2.71 (0.72)	2.83 (0.61)	2.58 (0.69)
13. The students with SEN should be educated in mainstream classrooms as much as possible	2.76 (0.57)	2.81 (0.50)	2.53 (0.66)
Composite score	3.01 (0.39)	3.01 (0.30)	2.88 (0.37)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

## 4.4 Implementation of Integrated Education in Schools

### 4.4.1 Factors Considered in Student Admission

Overall primary and secondary schools still prioritized "academic results and performances" as the primary criterion in student admissions (Table 4.27), with secondary schools (92.6%) placing more emphasis on this factor than primary schools (76.7%). In addition, over half of the schools considered "students' social interaction skills" (59.6%) and "students' emotional adaptability" (50.4%) as factors in student admissions. As for "practicing the principle of equal educational opportunities" and "to avoid violating DDO", only 47.5% and 35.5% of schools respectively, considered them during student admissions. Factors such as "subject to the sufficiency of professional human resources"

(37.6%) and "subject to the sufficiency of school infrastructure" (31.2%) are considered by only about 30% of the schools in the admission process. This indicates that the mainstream culture in local schools still primarily focused on academic performance as the main criterion for student admission, and the admission criteria for IE have yet to be widely adopted in primary and secondary schools.

**Table 4.27 Factors Considered in Student Admission in Primary and Secondary Schools (PQ1)**

Factors Considered in Student Admission (Can choose more than one options)	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Overall
	Frequency (n=60)	Frequency (n=81)	Frequency (n=141)
Academic results and performances	46 (76.7%)	75 (92.6%)	121 (85.8%)
Students' social interaction skills	37 (61.7%)	47 (58.0%)	84 (59.6%)
Students' emotional adaptability	35 (58.3%)	36 (44.4%)	71 (50.4%)
Practicing the principle of equal educational opportunity	32 (53.3%)	35 (43.2%)	67 (47.5%)
Subject to the sufficiency of professional human resources	23 (38.3%)	30 (37.0%)	53 (37.6%)
To avoid violating DDO	21 (35.0%)	29 (35.8%)	50 (35.5%)
Subject to the sufficiency of school infrastructure	20 (33.3%)	24 (29.6%)	44 (31.2%)
Subject to the sufficiency of financial resources	7 (11.7%)	12 (14.8%)	19 (13.5%)
Others	5 (8.3%)	4 (4.9%)	9 (6.4%)

#### 4.4.2 Class Grouping Arrangement for Students with Special Educational Needs

In the implementation of IE in primary and secondary schools, regarding class grouping arrangement (Table 4.28), more than half of the schools considered factors such as the age or abilities of students with SEN to determine their placement in regular classes. Primary schools (61.7%) tended to prioritize age-based arrangement for students with SEN, while secondary schools (67.9%) placed greater emphasis on the students' abilities. The practice of assigning students to classes based on their specific SEN category or placing existing students with SEN in segregated resource classes was less common, with only 19.1% and 2.8% of schools respectively, adopting these approaches. This indicates that ordinary schools predominantly integrated students with SEN into regular classes based on their abilities or age, which has been a long-adopted method in most ordinary schools. However, only a minority of schools were willing to adopt more innovative approaches to implement IE.

**Table 4.28 Class Grouping Arrangements for Students with Special Educational Needs in Primary and Secondary Schools (PQ2)**

Classroom Grouping Arrangement for Students with SEN (Can choose more than one option)	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Overall
	Frequency (n=60)	Frequency (n=81)	Frequency (n=141)
Students with SEN will be arranged in regular according to ability	25 (41.7%)	55 (67.9%)	80 (56.7%)
Students with SEN will be arranged in regular class according to their ages	37 (61.7%)	36 (44.4%)	73 (51.8%)
Students with SEN will be arranged into the segregated resource class for core subjects, and	33 (55.0%)	19 (23.5%)	52 (36.9%)

regular class for non-core subjects (according to age, ability, or the type of SEN)			
Students with SEN will be arranged in regular class according to their category of SEN.	12 (20.0%)	15 (18.5%)	27 (19.1%)
Current students with SEN will be arranged in segregated resource classes	3 (5.0%)	1 (1.2%)	4 (2.8%)
Others	5 (8.3%)	5 (6.2%)	10 (7.1%)

#### 4.4.3 Prioritized Factors in Nurturing All Students in Schools

Regarding the prioritized factors in nurturing all students (Table 4.29), primary school principals indicated "academic results and performances" (36.7%) as the top priority, followed by "students' social and interaction skills" (28.3%), and lastly "student emotional adaptability" (25.0%). The differences in priority among these factors were relatively small, indicating that primary school principals had relatively equal priority for these three factors.

**Table 4.29 Prioritized Factors of Primary School Principals in Nurturing All Students (PQ5)**

Prioritized Factors of Nurturing All Students	Primary Schools		
	Frequency (n=60)		
	1 <sup>st</sup> priority (i.e. chosen as 1)	2 <sup>nd</sup> priority = 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> priority = 3
Academic results and performances	22 (36.7%)	7 (11.7%)	25 (41.7%)
Students' social and interaction skills	17 (28.3%)	22 (36.7%)	16 (26.7%)
Students' emotional adaptability	15 (25.0%)	24 (40.0%)	14 (23.3%)
Others	5 (8.3%)	2 (3.3%)	0 (0.0%)

Note: Two primary school principals did not answer this question. The percentages in this table are calculated based on the number of valid questionnaires from principals in that category.

Secondary school principals (Table 4.30) also prioritized "students' academic results and performance" (64.2%) as the highest priority in nurturing all students, but the percentage was much higher than that of primary school principals. The second priority was "students' social and interaction skills" (16.0%), followed by "students' emotional adaptability" (9.9%), both of which were lower than the percentages of primary school principals.

**Table 4.30 Prioritized Factors of Secondary School Principals in Nurturing All Students (PQ5)**

Prioritized Factors of Nurturing All Students	Secondary Schools		
	Frequency (n=81)		
	1 <sup>st</sup> priority (i.e. chosen as 1)	2 <sup>nd</sup> priority = 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> priority = 3
Academic results and performances	52 (64.2%)	8 (9.9%)	19 (23.5%)
Students' social and interaction skills	13 (16.0%)	41 (50.6%)	19 (23.5%)
Students' emotional adaptability	8 (9.9%)	28 (34.6%)	37 (45.7%)
Others	9 (11.1%)	1 (1.2%)	1 (1.2%)

Principals (Table 4.31), regardless of primary or secondary schools, prioritized "students' academic results and performance" (52.5%) as the highest priority in nurturing all students, followed by "students' social and interaction skills" (21.3%), and lastly "students' emotional adaptability" (16.3%). It is evident that local schools still prioritized academic performance as the primary consideration. However, focusing primarily on academic performance may disadvantage some students with SEN, potentially leading to inequity for them.

**Table 4.31 Prioritized Factors of School Principals in Nurturing All Students (PQ5)**

Prioritized Factors of Nurturing All Students	Principals		
	Frequency (n=141)		
	1 <sup>st</sup> priority (option 1)	2 <sup>nd</sup> priority = 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> priority = 3
Academic results and performances	74 (52.5%)	15 (10.6%)	44 (31.2%)
Students' social and interaction skills	30 (21.3%)	63 (44.7%)	35 (24.8%)
Students' emotional adaptability	23 (16.3%)	52 (36.9%)	51 (36.2%)
Others	14 (9.9%)	3 (2.1%)	1 (0.7%)

Note: Two primary school principals did not answer this question. The percentages in this table are calculated based on the number of valid questionnaires from principals in that category.

#### 4.4.4 Utilization of "Learning Support Grant" by Schools

In terms of utilizing the LSG (Table 4.32), the majority of primary and secondary schools chose to use it for "purchasing external services" (91.5%) and "hiring full-time and/or part-time teaching staff" (85.1%). The next most common choices were "hiring responsible support staff" (78.7%) and "purchasing reference materials, teaching aids and other teaching resources" (73.8%), with over 70% of schools selecting these options. Approximately half of the schools allocated the grant towards "increasing resources for teachers' school-based training opportunities on integrated education" (51.1%) and "strengthening home-school cooperation" (53.9%). This indicates that the majority of schools primarily used the grant to purchase external services and hire support personnel, while allocating fewer resources to home-school cooperation and professional training.

**Table 4.32 Utilization of Government-provided "Learning Support Grant" by Primary and Secondary Schools (PQ3)**

Utilization of Government-provided "Learning Support Grant" (Can choose more than one options)	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Overall
	Frequency (n=60)	Frequency (n=81)	Frequency (n=141)
Purchasing external services	51 (85.0%)	78 (96.3%)	129 (91.5%)
Hiring full-time/part-time teaching staff	49 (81.7%)	71 (87.7%)	120 (85.1%)
Hiring responsible support staff	47 (78.3%)	64 (79.0%)	111 (78.7%)
Purchasing reference materials, teaching aids and other teaching resources	41 (68.3%)	63 (77.8%)	104 (73.8%)
Organizing learning or inclusive cultural activities	25 (41.7%)	58 (71.6%)	83 (58.9%)
Strengthening home-school cooperation	33 (55.0%)	43 (53.1%)	76 (53.9%)
Increasing resources for teachers' school-based training opportunities on IE	29 (48.3%)	43 (53.1%)	72 (51.1%)
Others	3 (5.0%)	0	3 (2.1%)

#### 4.4.5 Services or Measures for Supporting Individual Needs of Students with Special Educational Needs

In response to the individual needs of students with SEN (Table 4.33), over 80% of primary and secondary schools implemented "curriculum/assessment accommodation" (87.9%), "hiring teaching assistants" (87.2%), "hiring support teachers" (84.4%), and "providing professional therapy/counselling to students with SEN" (84.4%). Close to 80% of schools "make special assessment arrangements during exams" (79.4%) and "provide additional tutoring in learning after school hours" (78.0%). However, only 58.2% and 53.9% of schools "implementing small class teaching" and "designing school-based curriculum" respectively. There was a noticeable difference in the "implementation of small class teaching" and "designing school-based curriculum" between secondary and primary schools, with a difference of around 20 to over 30 percentage points. Regarding the setting of IEPs, it was less common in secondary schools (56.8%) compared to primary schools (75.0%), with a difference of approximately 20 percentage points. It can be seen that most schools provided various types of support to their students, with curriculum/assessment accommodation being the most common.

**Table 4.33 Services or Measures for Supporting Individual Needs of Students with SEN in Primary and Secondary Schools (PQ4)**

Service or Measure for Supporting Students with SEN (Can choose more than one options)	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Overall
	Frequency (n=60)	Frequency (n=81)	Frequency (n=141)
Curriculum/ Assessment accommodation	54 (90.0%)	70 (86.4%)	124 (87.9%)
Hiring teacher assistant(s)	55 (91.7%)	68 (84.0%)	123 (87.2%)
Hiring support teacher(s)	54 (90.0%)	65 (80.2%)	119 (84.4%)
Providing professional therapy/counseling to students with SEN (e.g. speech therapy, psychological counseling)	54 (90.0%)	65 (80.2%)	119 (84.4%)
Making special assessment arrangements (e.g. extra time, use of computer)	53 (88.3%)	59 (72.8%)	112 (79.4%)
Providing additional tutoring in learning after school hours	49 (81.7%)	61 (75.3%)	110 (78.0%)
Class grouping based on ability	42 (70.0%)	55 (67.9%)	97 (68.8%)
Providing parent guidance	42 (70.0%)	52 (64.2%)	94 (66.7%)
Setting IEPs	45 (75.0%)	46 (56.8%)	91 (64.5%)
Implementing small class teaching	44 (73.3%)	38 (46.9%)	82 (58.2%)
Designing school-based curriculum	43 (71.7%)	33 (40.7%)	76 (53.9%)
Others	1 (1.2%)	3 (2.1%)	2 (3.3%)

#### 4.4.6 Difficulties in Schools and Parents when Dealing with Problems of Students with SEN

According to the surveyed primary school SENCOs and teachers, there were various difficulties in handling students with SEN (Table 4.34). They unanimously agreed that parents are busy to support the needs of students with SEN after school and parents lack skills and knowledge to take care of their children with SEN were prominent difficulties. The average agreement levels from SENCOs were 3.23 and 3.37 respectively, while for teachers, they were 3.13 and 3.11 respectively. In addition, both SENCOs and teachers tended to disagree that it is difficult to contact and engage with parents.

**Table 4.34 Difficulties Faced by Primary School SENCOs and Teachers when Dealing with Problems of Students with SEN with Parents (SQ4, TQ12)**

Difficulty Faced when Dealing with Problems of Students with SEN with Parents	Primary Schools	
	SENCO	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
1. You and parents have different learning expectation on children with SEN	2.90 (0.63)	2.81 (0.50)
2. Parents resist to admit their children with SEN	2.70 (0.64)	2.84 (0.63)
3. Parents resist to seek professional help or advices	2.35 (0.63)	2.63 (0.63)
4. Parents are worried about their education level incapable to support their children with SEN in their family	2.70 (0.65)	2.91 (0.53)
5. Parents are busy so they cannot support the needs of their children with SEN after school	3.23 (0.53)	3.13 (0.53)
6. Parents are unclear what kind of professionals that they should ask for help or advices	2.83 (0.61)	2.88 (0.56)
7. Parents lack the skills and knowledge to take care of children with SEN	3.37 (0.52)	3.11 (0.51)
8. You do not have sufficient time to deal with the problems of SEN student with SEN	2.62 (0.64)	2.73 (0.62)
9. It is difficult for parents are difficult to gather the information about the support for children with SEN	2.17 (0.49)	2.51 (0.59)
10. It is difficult for you to contact ad engage with parents	2.05 (0.62)	2.25 (0.58)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

The interviewed secondary school SENCOs and teachers also identified various difficulties in handling students with SEN (Table 4.35). They unanimously agreed that parents are busy to support the needs of students with SEN after school and parents are lack of skills and knowledge to take care of their children with SEN were prominent difficulties. The average agreement levels for SENCOs were 3.26 and 3.12 respectively, while they were 3.08 and 3.03 respectively for teachers. In addition, both SENCOs and teachers tended to disagree that it is difficult to contact and engage with parents.

**Table 4.35 Difficulties Faced by Secondary School SENCOs and Teachers when Dealing with Problems of Students with SEN with Parents (SQ4, TQ12)**

Difficulty Faced when Dealing with Problems of Students with SEN with Parents	Secondary School	
	SENCO	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
1. You and parents have different learning expectation on children with SEN	2.80 (0.62)	2.77 (0.55)
2. Parents resist to admit their children with SEN	2.74 (0.64)	2.79 (0.63)
3. Parents resist to seek professional help or advices	2.40 (0.62)	2.63 (0.62)
4. Parents are worried about their education level incapable to support their children with SEN in their family	2.69 (0.64)	2.82 (0.52)
5. Parents are busy so they cannot support the needs of their children with SEN after school	3.26 (0.54)	3.08 (0.51)

6. Parents are unclear what kind of professionals that they should ask for help or advices	2.83 (0.60)	2.89 (0.53)
7. Parents lack the skills and knowledge to take care of children with SEN	3.12 (0.62)	3.03 (0.55)
8. You do not have sufficient time to deal with the problems of students with SEN	2.59 (0.58)	2.85 (0.63)
9. It is difficult for parents to gather the information about the support for children with SEN	2.25 (0.48)	2.52 (0.60)
10. It is difficult for you to contact and engage with parents	2.07 (0.51)	2.32 (0.60)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

The SENCOs and teachers interviewed still perceived various difficulties in handling students with SEN (Table 4.36). They unanimously agreed that parents are busy to support the needs of students with SEN after school, and parents are lack of skills and knowledge to take care of their children with SEN were prominent difficulties, with average agreement levels exceeding 3. Both SENCOs and teachers tended to disagree that it is difficult to contact and engage with parents.

Although SENCOs leaned towards disagreement, teachers believed that parents are resistant to seeking help or advices from professionals (2.63) and have difficulty in gathering information about the support for students with SEN (2.52). This indicates that parents play a crucial role in IE. As students spend the most time with their parents at home, the cooperation between parents and teachers is essential and critical. In the long run, a closer relationship between parents and schools is needed.

**Table 4.36 Difficulties Faced by School SENCOs and Teachers when Dealing with Problems of Students with SEN with Parents (SQ4, TQ12)**

Difficulty Faced when Dealing with Problems of Students with SEN with Parents	Overall	
	SENCO	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
1. You and parents have different learning outcome expectation on children with SEN	2.84 (0.62)	2.79 (0.53)
2. Parents resist to admit their children with SEN	2.72 (0.64)	2.81 (0.63)
3. Parents resist to seek professional help or advices	2.38 (0.62)	2.63 (0.63)
4. Parents are worried about their education level incapable to support their children with SEN in their family	2.70 (0.63)	2.86 (0.53)
5. Parents are busy so they cannot support the needs of their children with SEN after school	3.25 (0.53)	3.10 (0.52)
6. Parents are unclear what kind of professionals that they should ask for help or advices	2.83 (0.60)	2.88 (0.55)
7. Parents lack the skills and knowledge to take care of children with SEN	3.23 (0.59)	3.07 (0.53)
8. You do not have sufficient time to deal with the problems of student with SEN	2.60 (0.60)	2.80 (0.63)
9. It is difficult for parents gather the information about the support for children with SEN	2.21 (0.49)	2.52 (0.59)
10. It is difficult for you to contact and engage with parents	2.06 (0.56)	2.29 (0.59)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

#### 4.4.7 Channels of Communication, Consultation, and Support between Schools and Parents of Students with SEN

Regarding the communication, consultation, and support between schools and parents of students with SEN (Table 4.37), over 90% of schools used "telephone and other instant messaging channels (such as WhatsApp or WeChat)" (92.9%) and had "parent day meetings" (90.8%) to contact parents. Approximately 90% of schools had arranging professionals (such as EPs or speech therapists) to meet with parents" (88.7%), and 78.0% of schools had "regular contact between school social workers and parents". Less than 60% of schools followed up by "regular teacher-parent face-to-face contacts" (58.2%), "parent courses / workshops" (52.5%), and "introduction of resources about supporting students with SEN (such as online resources or community support services)" (54.6%). Less than 30% of primary and secondary schools organized "regular parent-teacher meetings" (29.1%), "parent tea / evening gatherings" (22.0%), and "parent volunteers" (16.3%).

It can be seen that there was a wide range of communication channels between schools and parents, with electronic communication being predominant. However, face-to-face contact was relatively less common. If schools needed to convey the latest support arrangements to parents, physical meetings were still preferred as they allow for direct input and feedback from parents, enabling further improvements and a deeper understanding of each parent's views on IE and their views on the school.

**Table 4.37 Channels of Communication, Consultation and Support between Primary and Secondary Schools and Parents of Students with SEN (SQ3)**

Channel of Communication, Consultation and Support between School and Parents of Students with SEN (can choose more than one options)	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Overall
	Frequency (n=60)	Frequency (n=81)	Frequency (n=141)
Using telephone and other instant messaging channels (such as WhatsApp or WeChat)	55 (91.7%)	76 (93.8%)	131 (92.9%)
Parent day meetings	54 (90.0%)	74 (91.4%)	128 (90.8%)
Arranging professionals (such as EPs or speech therapists) to meet with parents	53 (88.3%)	72 (88.9%)	125 (88.7%)
Regular contact between school social workers and parents	43 (71.7%)	67 (82.7%)	110 (78.0%)
School intranet / distribution of notices	46 (76.7%)	50 (61.7%)	96 (68.1%)
Regular teacher-parent face-to-face contacts	31 (51.7%)	51 (63.0%)	82 (58.2%)
Introduction of resources about supporting students with SEN (such as online resources or community support services)	34 (56.7%)	43 (53.1%)	77 (54.6%)
Parent courses/ workshops	39 (65.0%)	35 (43.2%)	74 (52.5%)
Holding regular parent-teacher meetings	18 (30.0%)	23 (28.4%)	41 (29.1%)
Parent tea / evening gatherings	8 (13.3%)	23 (28.4%)	31 (22.0%)
Organizing parent volunteers	13 (21.7%)	10 (12.3%)	23 (16.3%)
Others	1 (1.7%)	2 (2.5%)	3 (2.1%)

#### 4.4.8 Effective Ways to Enhance Communication with Parents of Students with SEN

SENCOs considered several methods helpful in enhancing communication with parents of students with SEN (Table 4.38). Four items with an average agreement level of 3 or above included "school encourages parents of students with SEN to participate in courses / workshops to support their

children" (3.04), "school invites parents to attend case conferences according to the situation of students with SEN" (3.43), "school introduces resources supporting students with SEN to parents (such as online resources or community support services)" (3.07), and "school regularly holds parent days for face-to-face meetings with parents of students with SEN" (3.00). Therefore, schools can try to strengthen communication and collaboration with parents through these channels, fostering mutual exchange and improving the quality of IE, while gaining a better understanding of the needs of different students with SEN. However, both primary and secondary school SENCOS did not consider "teachers providing their private mobile phone numbers for easy contact with parents of students with SEN" helpful in enhancing communication, with average agreement levels of 2.05 and 2.33 respectively.

**Table 4.38 Effective Ways Primary and Secondary schools' SENCOS Considered to Enhance Communication with Parents of Students with SEN (SQ5)**

Way in Enhancing Communication with Parents of Students with SEN	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Overall
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
School invites parents to attend case conferences according to the situation of students with SEN	3.53 (0.50)	3.36 (0.48)	3.43 (0.49)
School introduces resources supporting students with SEN to parents (such as online resources or community support services)	3.15 (0.40)	3.01 (0.43)	3.07 (0.42)
School encourages parents of students with SEN to participate in courses/workshops to support their children	3.22 (0.52)	2.90 (0.56)	3.04 (0.56)
School regularly holds parent days for face-to-face meetings with parents of students with SEN	3.05 (0.50)	2.96 (0.51)	3.00 (0.50)
School strengthens collaboration with the parent-teacher association to support students with SEN	2.70 (0.56)	2.73 (0.54)	2.72 (0.55)
School organizes parent volunteers to support students with SEN and their parents.	2.77 (0.56)	2.52 (0.52)	2.62 (0.55)
School holds regular tea / evening gatherings for parents of students with SEN	2.63 (0.55)	2.57 (0.54)	2.60 (0.54)
Teachers provides their private mobile phone numbers for easy contact with parents of students with SEN	2.05 (0.72)	2.33 (0.93)	2.21 (0.86)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree.

#### 4.4.9 Care for Students with SEN by SENCOS and Teachers

The results in Table 4.39 show that all primary school SENCOS have dealt with the 13 categories of students during enumeration. All SENCOS have handled students with SLD and students with ADHD. Over 90% of the primary school SENCOS have dealt with students with SEN defined by the EDB, including students with autism (96.7%) and students with SpLI (93.3%). Among the 13 options, only the percentages for students with PD (25.0%) and students with VI (26.7%) were less than 50%. Students with MI (55.9%), students with ID (66.7%), and students with HI (69.5%) accounted for 55% to 70%, all falling within the EDB's definition. Conversely, the percentage of students with poorer academic performance handled by primary school SENCOS was high (98.3%), while the percentages for students with deviant behavior (76.3%), students with weak comprehension (78.0%), and non-Chinese-speaking students (55.9%) were all above 50%.

**Table 4.39 Percentage of Primary School SENCOS Handled Various Types of Students (SQ8b)**

Type of Student	SENCO			
	Primary School (n=60)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No such students in school	No handling of such students <sup>5</sup>
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	60	59 (98.3%)	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)
(2) Students with SLD	60	60 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(3) Students with ADHD	60	60 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	60	58 (96.7%)	1 (1.7%)	1 (1.7%)
(5) Students with ID	60	40 (66.7%)	14 (23.3%)	6 (10.0%)
(6) Students with SpLI	60	56 (93.3%)	1 (1.7%)	3 (5.0%)
(7) Students with HI	59	41 (69.5%)	14 (23.7%)	4 (6.8%)
(8) Students with PD	60	15 (25.0%)	35 (58.3%)	10 (16.7%)
(9) Students with VI	60	16 (26.7%)	38 (63.3%)	6 (10.0%)
(10) Students with MI	59	33 (55.9%)	17 (28.8%)	9 (15.3%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	59	45 (76.3%)	9 (15.3%)	5 (8.5%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	59	46 (78.0%)	8 (13.6%)	5 (8.5%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	59	33 (55.9%)	19 (32.2%)	7 (11.9%)

Notes:

- (1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.
- (2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

In the context of secondary schools (Table 4.40), the majority of SENCOS also needed to deal with students with ADHD (98.8%), ASD (98.8%), SpLI (97.5%), and SLD (96.3%), all accounting for over 90%. Regarding students with MI, the proportion of secondary school SENCOS handling such students (83.5%) was significantly higher than that of primary school SENCOS (55.9%).

**Table 4.40 Percentage of Secondary School SENCOS Handled Various Types of Students (SQ8b)**

Type of Student	SENCO			
	Secondary Schools (n=81)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No such students in school	No handling of such students <sup>5</sup>
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	79	71 (89.9%)	3 (3.8%)	5 (6.3%)
(2) Students with SLD	80	77 (96.3%)	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.5%)
(3) Students with ADHD	80	79 (98.8%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	80	79 (98.8%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)
(5) Students with ID	80	42 (52.5%)	26 (32.5%)	12 (15.0%)

<sup>5</sup> Indicating the school has handled this type of students with SEN but the respondent has not handled with such type of student with SEN.

(6) Students with SpLI	80	78 (97.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.5%)
(7) Students with HI	80	65 (81.3%)	12 (15.0%)	3 (3.8%)
(8) Students with PD	80	32 (40.0%)	37 (46.3%)	11 (13.8%)
(9) Students with VI	80	28 (35.0%)	40 (50.0%)	12 (15.0%)
(10) Students with MI	79	66 (83.5%)	11 (13.9%)	2 (2.5%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	80	55 (68.8%)	17 (21.3%)	8 (10.0%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	80	65 (81.3%)	9 (11.3%)	6 (7.5%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	80	35 (43.8%)	31 (38.8%)	14 (17.5%)

Notes:

- (1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.
- (2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

In terms of the allocation of responsibilities in handling different categories of students (Table 4.41), the majority of SENCOs needed to deal with students with ADHD (99.3%), students with SLD (97.9%), students with ASD (97.9%), students with SpLI (95.7%), and students with poorer academic performance (93.5%), all accounting for over 90%. Among them, SENCOs had relatively less contact with students with PD (33.6%) and students with VI (31.4%), both of which represented over 30%.

**Table 4.41 Percentage of SENCOs Handled Various Types of Students (SQ8b)**

Type of Student	SENCO			
	Overall (n=141)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No such students in school	No handling of such students <sup>5</sup>
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	139	130 (93.5%)	4 (2.9%)	5 (3.6%)
(2) Students with SLD	140	137 (97.9%)	1 (0.7%)	2 (1.4%)
(3) Students with ADHD	140	139 (99.3%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	140	137 (97.9%)	2 (1.4%)	1 (0.7%)
(5) Students with ID	140	82 (58.6%)	40 (28.6%)	18 (12.9%)
(6) Students with SpLI	140	134 (95.7%)	1 (0.7%)	5 (3.6%)
(7) Students with HI	139	106 (76.3%)	26 (18.7%)	7 (5.0%)
(8) Students with PD	140	47 (33.6%)	72 (51.4%)	21 (15.0%)
(9) Students with VI	140	44 (31.4%)	78 (55.7%)	18 (12.9%)
(10) Students with MI	138	99 (71.7%)	28 (20.3%)	11 (8.0%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	139	100 (71.9%)	26 (18.7%)	13 (9.4%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	139	111 (79.9%)	17 (12.2%)	11 (7.9%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	139	68 (48.9%)	50 (36.0%)	21 (15.1%)

Notes:

- (1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.
- (2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

In terms of teachers (Table 4.42), the majority of primary school teachers needed to handle students with poorer academic performance (95.0%), students with SLD (91.8%), and students with ADHD

(90.9%). However, they had less contact with students with PD (5.2%), students with VI (8.0%), and students with MI (11.2%).

**Table 4.42 Percentage of Primary School Teachers Handled Various Types of Students (TQ3b)**

Type of Student	Teachers			
	Primary Schools (n=704)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No such students in school	No handling of such students <sup>5</sup>
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	696	661 (95.0%)	19 (2.7%)	16 (2.3%)
(2) Students with SLD	691	634 (91.8%)	46 (6.7%)	11 (1.6%)
(3) Students with ADHD	693	630 (90.9%)	49 (7.1%)	14 (2.0%)
(4) Students with ASD	695	547 (78.7%)	121 (17.4%)	27 (3.9%)
(5) Students with ID	692	243 (35.1%)	358 (51.7%)	91 (13.2%)
(6) Students with SpLI	695	537 (77.3%)	124 (17.8%)	34 (4.9%)
(7) Students with HI	692	193 (27.9%)	410 (59.2%)	89 (12.9%)
(8) Students with PD	688	36 (5.2%)	513 (74.6%)	139 (20.2%)
(9) Students with VI	690	55 (8.0%)	499 (72.3%)	136 (19.7%)
(10) Students with MI	688	77 (11.2%)	472 (68.6%)	139 (20.2%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	687	379 (55.2%)	242 (35.2%)	66 (9.6%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	686	575 (83.8%)	86 (12.5%)	25 (3.6%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	688	335 (48.7%)	284 (41.3%)	69 (10.0%)

Notes:

(1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.

(2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

In secondary schools (Table 4.43), the majority of teachers also needed to handle students with poorer academic performance (94.7%), students with ADHD (89.7%), and students with SLD (89.0%). They also had less contact with students with PD (11.3%) and students with VI (14.5%). In terms of students with MI, the proportion of secondary school teachers handling such students (39.3%) was much higher than that of primary school teachers (11.2%), but still significantly lower than the proportion of secondary school SENCOs handling students with MI (83.5%).

**Table 4.43 Percentage of Secondary School Teachers Handled Various Types of Students (TQ3b)**

Type of Student	Teachers			
	Secondary Schools (n=828)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No such students in school	No handling of such students <sup>5</sup>
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	815	772 (94.7%)	21 (2.6%)	22 (2.7%)
(2) Students with SLD	817	727 (89.0%)	65 (8.0%)	25 (3.1%)
(3) Students with ADHD	816	732 (89.7%)	60 (7.4%)	24 (2.9%)
(4) Students with ASD	816	609 (74.6%)	164 (20.1%)	43 (5.3%)

(5) Students with ID	815	240 (29.4%)	442 (54.2%)	133 (16.3%)
(6) Students with SpLI	816	509 (62.4%)	245 (30.0%)	62 (7.6%)
(7) Students with HI	817	307 (37.6%)	420 (51.4%)	90 (11.0%)
(8) Students with PD	817	92 (11.3%)	573 (70.1%)	152 (18.6%)
(9) Students with VI	816	118 (14.5%)	551 (67.5%)	147 (18.0%)
(10) Students with MI	816	321 (39.3%)	389 (47.7%)	106 (13.0%)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	815	541 (66.4%)	206 (25.3%)	68 (8.3%)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	816	688 (84.3%)	85 (10.4%)	43 (5.3%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	815	319 (39.1%)	383 (47.0%)	113 (13.9%)

Notes:

(1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.

(2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

In Hong Kong, a higher percentage of primary and secondary school teachers handled students with poorer academic performance (94.8%), students with SLD (90.3%), and students with ADHD (90.3%), all of which accounting for over 90%. However, overall teachers have less handled students with PD (8.5%) and students with VI (11.5%). The proportion of teachers who have handled these two categories of students was only about 10% each (Table 4.44).

Overall, both SENCOs and teachers need to handle similar percentages of students with poorer academic performance, students with SLD, students with ADHD, students with deviant behavior, students with weaker comprehension, and non-Chinese-speaking students. Among them, the highest percentages were for students with poorer academic performance, students with SLD, and students with ADHD, with over 90% of SENCOs and teachers needed to handle these students. The percentages of SENCOs who needed to handle students with HI, students with PD, and students with VI were higher than those of teachers by about 20 to 40 percentage points.

**Table 4.44 Percentage of Teachers Handled Various Types of Students (TQ3b)**

Type of Student	Teachers			
	Overall (n=1 532)			
	No. of valid responses	Yes	No such students in school	No handling of such students <sup>5</sup>
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	1 511	1 433 (94.8%)	40 (2.6%)	38 (2.5%)
(2) Students with SLD	1 508	1 361 (90.3%)	111 (7.4%)	36 (2.4%)
(3) Students with ADHD	1 509	1 362 (90.3%)	109 (7.2%)	38 (2.5%)
(4) Students with ASD	1 511	1 156 (76.5%)	285 (18.9%)	70 (4.6%)
(5) Students with ID	1 507	483 (32.1%)	800 (53.1%)	224 (14.9%)
(6) Students with SpLI	1 511	1 046 (69.2%)	369 (24.4%)	96 (6.4%)
(7) Students with HI	1 509	500 (33.1%)	830 (55.0%)	179 (11.9%)
(8) Students with PD	1 505	128 (8.5%)	1 086 (72.2%)	291 (19.3%)
(9) Students with VI	1 506	173 (11.5%)	1 050 (69.7%)	283 (18.8%)
(10) Students with MI	1 504	398 (26.5%)	861 (57.2%)	245 (16.3%)
(11) Students with deviant	1 502	920 (61.3%)	448 (29.8%)	134 (8.9%)

behavior				
(12) Students with weak comprehension	1 502	1 263 (84.1%)	171 (11.4%)	68 (4.5%)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	1 503	654 (43.5%)	667 (44.4%)	182 (12.1%)

Notes:

- (1) The numbers in the table are calculated based on valid data only.
- (2) Due to rounding, the sum of individual percentages may not equal 100%.

#### 4.4.10 Pressure Felt by SENCOS and Teachers when Dealing with Students with SEN

In terms of any pressure felt by SENCOS and teachers when dealing with different types of students (Table 4.45), primary school SENCOS generally felt higher levels of pressure compared to primary school teachers. Primary school SENCOS felt less pressure when dealing with students with HI (2.41), students with PD (2.29), and students with VI (2.30). However, they felt the highest pressure level when dealing with students with SpLI (3.27). On the other hand, primary school teachers felt pressure when dealing with various types of students, with the highest pressure felt when dealing with students with ADHD (2.88). However, this pressure was still lower than the pressure felt by primary school SENCOS when dealing with the same category of students (3.15).

**Table 4.45 Pressure Levels Felt by Primary School SENCOS and Teachers when Dealing with Various Types of Students (SQ8c, TQ3c)**

Type of Student	Primary Schools	
	SENCO	Teachers
	Average pressure level (SD)	Average pressure level (SD)
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	2.67 (0.57)	2.68 (0.61)
(2) Students with SLD	2.85 (0.65)	2.80 (0.68)
(3) Students with ADHD	3.15 (0.63)	2.88 (0.84)
(4) Students with ASD	3.23 (0.62)	2.87 (0.78)
(5) Students with ID	2.52 (0.65)	2.57 (0.68)
(6) Students with SpLI	3.27 (0.77)	2.78 (0.88)
(7) Students with HI	2.41 (0.92)	2.51 (0.79)
(8) Students with PD	2.29 (0.89)	2.53 (0.80)
(9) Students with VI	2.30 (0.82)	2.53 (0.82)
(10) Students with MI	3.07 (0.72)	2.83 (1.01)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	3.00 (0.75)	2.84 (0.86)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	2.65 (0.71)	2.64 (0.66)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	2.55 (0.73)	2.58 (0.76)

Note: Pressure level 1 = Completely Not Stressful, 2 = Not Stressful, 3 = A Bit Stressful, 4 = Very Stressful

In the context of secondary schools (Table 4.46), SENCOS generally felt greater pressure when dealing with various types of students compared to teachers. Secondary school SENCOS felt less pressure when dealing with students with ID (2.27), students with HI (2.34), students with PD (2.25), students with VI (2.26), and non-Chinese speaking students (2.48). However, they felt the highest pressure when dealing with students with MI, with the average pressure level of 3.38. On the other

hand, secondary school teachers felt pressure when dealing with all types of students, with the highest pressure when handling students with ADHD (2.84). Nevertheless, their pressure level was still lower than that of secondary school SENCOs when dealing with this category of students (3.00).

**Table 4.46 Pressure Levels Felt by Secondary School SENCOs and Teachers when Dealing with Various Types of Students (SQ8c, TQ3c)**

Type of Student	Secondary Schools	
	SENCO	Teachers
	Average pressure level (SD)	Average pressure level (SD)
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	2.66 (0.65)	2.68 (0.65)
(2) Students with SLD	2.81 (0.60)	2.80 (0.69)
(3) Students with ADHD	3.00 (0.64)	2.84 (0.80)
(4) Students with ASD	3.03 (0.66)	2.77 (0.84)
(5) Students with ID	2.27 (0.74)	2.64 (0.68)
(6) Students with SpLI	2.71 (0.99)	2.69 (0.93)
(7) Students with HI	2.34 (0.65)	2.52 (0.73)
(8) Students with PD	2.25 (0.71)	2.41 (0.73)
(9) Students with VI	2.26 (0.75)	2.51 (0.78)
(10) Students with MI	3.38 (0.62)	2.79 (1.00)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	2.99 (0.67)	2.79 (0.83)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	2.69 (0.63)	2.69 (0.65)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	2.48 (0.68)	2.50 (0.75)

Note: Pressure level 1 = Completely Not Stressful, 2 = Not Stressful, 3 = A Bit Stressful, 4 = Very Stressful

In terms of the pressure felt by SENCOs and teachers when dealing with various types of students (Table 4.47), overall teachers felt a moderate level of pressure ranging from average pressure level of 2.46 to 2.86. They felt pressure when dealing with different types of students. On the other hand, SENCOs showed a larger variation in the average pressure level, ranging from 2.26 to 3.25. They were of the view that the pressure was relatively lower when dealing with students with ID, students with HI, students with PD, and students with VI. Both SENCOs and teachers indicated that they felt very high pressure when supporting students with autism or ADHD, with teachers feeling the highest level of pressure, with average pressure level of 2.82 and 2.86 respectively. However, when it comes to dealing with students with ADHD, autism, and MI, SENCOs felt higher average pressure compared to teachers. Overall, SENCOs face the highest pressure when supporting students with MI (3.25).

**Table 4.47 Pressure Levels Felt by SENCOs and Teachers when Dealing with Various Types of Students (SQ8c, TQ3c)**

Type of Student	Overall	
	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average pressure level (SD)	Average pressure level (SD)
(1) Students with poorer academic performance	2.66 (0.62)	2.68 (0.63)
(2) Students with SLD	2.83 (0.62)	2.80 (0.68)
(3) Students with ADHD	3.06 (0.63)	2.86 (0.81)

(4) Students with ASD	3.12 (0.64)	2.82 (0.82)
(5) Students with ID	2.37 (0.71)	2.61 (0.68)
(6) Students with SpLI	2.96 (0.94)	2.73 (0.91)
(7) Students with HI	2.37 (0.77)	2.51 (0.75)
(8) Students with PD	2.26 (0.78)	2.46 (0.76)
(9) Students with VI	2.28 (0.77)	2.52 (0.80)
(10) Students with MI	3.25 (0.67)	2.81 (1.01)
(11) Students with deviant behavior	2.99 (0.70)	2.81 (0.85)
(12) Students with weak comprehension	2.67 (0.66)	2.67 (0.66)
(13) Non-Chinese speaking students	2.51 (0.70)	2.54 (0.76)

Note: Pressure level 1 = Completely Not Stressful, 2 = Not Stressful, 3 = A Bit Stressful, 4 = Very Stressful

#### 4.4.11 Difficulties in Implementing Integrated Education in Schools

Primary school principals (86.7%), SENCOS (86.7%), and teachers (86.6%) all considered "tight teaching schedule / heavy teaching workload" as a difficulty faced in implementing IE. Over 70% of primary school principals (71.7%) and SENCOS (73.3%) perceive "heavy related administrative workload" as a difficulty, but teachers (46.9%) mentioned this difficulty relatively less often. Primary school principals (8.3%), SENCOS (5.0%), and teachers (14.6%) all indicated less frequently that "the Operational Guide on Integrated Education is unclear" as a difficulty. Primary school SENCOS also mentioned less frequently the difficulty of "lack of financial resources" (10.0%), accounting for less than 20%. (Table 4.48)

**Table 4.48 Difficulties Faced by Primary School Principals, SENCOS, and Teachers in Implementing Integrated Education (PQ6, SQ2, TQ4)**

Difficulties Faced in Implementing IE	Primary Schools		
	Principal (n=60)	SENCO (n=60)	Teacher (n=704)
	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)
Lack of manpower	42 (70.0%)	34 (56.7%)	481 (68.3%)
Heavy related administrative workload	43 (71.7%)	44 (73.3%)	330 (46.9%)
Insufficient professional trainings for teachers	35 (58.3%)	31 (51.7%)	321 (45.6%)
Insufficient teaching resources	26 (43.3%)	16 (26.7%)	388 (55.1%)
Difficult in finding school-based support services	14 (23.3%)	18 (30.0%)	154 (21.9%)
Tight teaching schedule / Heavy teaching workload	52 (86.7%)	52 (86.7%)	610 (86.6%)
Lack of financial resources	17 (28.3%)	6 (10.0%)	148 (21.0%)
Difficult in finding appropriate professionals for support	21 (35.0%)	23 (38.3%)	259 (36.8%)
Insufficient understanding of IE among teachers	24 (40.0%)	29 (48.3%)	190 (27.0%)

Unclear content of the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	5 (8.3%)	3 (5.0%)	103 (14.6%)
Too many students with SEN	31 (51.7%)	28 (46.7%)	462 (65.6%)
Others	6 (10.0%)	2 (3.3%)	21 (3.0%)

In the secondary school context (Table 4.49), principals (77.8%), SENCOs (85.2%), and teachers (84.2%) also considered "tight teaching schedule / heavy teaching workload" as a difficulty in implementing IE. Secondary school principals (4.9%), SENCOs (2.5%), and teachers (15.5%) mentioned less frequently that "unclear content of Operation Guide on Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" is a difficulty. They also encountered less often the difficulty of "lack of financial resources", with less than 20% of secondary school SENCOs (8.6%) reported it as a difficulty. It is noteworthy that all stakeholders agreed that "tight teaching schedule / heavy teaching workload" was a major difficulty in implementing IE, with more primary school principals than secondary school principals by nearly 10 percentage points (8.9 percentage points).

**Table 4.49 Difficulties Faced by Secondary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers in Implementing Integrated Education (PQ6, SQ2, TQ4)**

Difficulties Faced in Implementing IE	Secondary Schools		
	Principal (n=81)	SENCO (n=81)	Teacher (n=828)
	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)
Lack of manpower	46 (56.8%)	38 (46.9%)	573 (69.2%)
Heavy related administrative workload	56 (69.1%)	56 (69.1%)	457 (55.2%)
Insufficient professional trainings for teachers	47 (58.0%)	39 (48.1%)	408 (49.3%)
Insufficient teaching resources	39 (48.1%)	32 (39.5%)	496 (59.9%)
Difficult in finding school-based support services	19 (23.5%)	23 (28.4%)	201 (24.3%)
Tight teaching schedule / Heavy teaching workload	63 (77.8%)	69 (85.2%)	697 (84.2%)
Lack of financial resources	23 (28.4%)	7 (8.6%)	202 (24.4%)
Difficult in finding appropriate professionals for support	26 (32.1%)	24 (29.6%)	294 (35.5%)
Insufficient understanding of IE among teachers	30 (37.0%)	43 (53.1%)	312 (37.7%)
Unclear content of the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	4 (4.9%)	2 (2.5%)	128 (15.5%)
Too many students with SEN	36 (44.4%)	36 (44.4%)	454 (54.8%)
Others	3 (3.7%)	2 (2.5%)	25 (3.0%)

Overall, over 80% of the surveyed principals (81.6%), SENCOs (85.8%), and teachers (85.3%) perceived "tight teaching schedule / heavy teaching workload" as a difficulty in implementing IE. More than 70% of principals (70.2%) and SENCOs (70.9%) considered "heavy related administrative workload" as a difficulty in implementing IE. 68.8% of teachers viewed "lack of manpower" as a difficulty in implementing IE. Among the principals, 47.5% identified "too many students with SEN" and 62.4% identified "lack of manpower" as difficulties, while 59.8% of teachers shared the concern

of "too many students with SEN". In addition, 51.1% of SENCOs perceived "Insufficient understanding of IE among teachers" and "lack of manpower" as difficulties. (Table 4.50)

**Table 4.50 Difficulties Faced by Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers in Implementing Integrated Education (PQ6, SQ2, TQ4)**

Difficulties Faced in Implementing IE	Overall		
	Principal (n=141)	SENCO (n=141)	Teacher (n=1 532)
	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)	Frequency (Percentage)
Lack of manpower	88 (62.4%)	72 (51.1%)	1054 (68.8%)
Heavy related administrative workload	99 (70.2%)	100 (70.9%)	787 (51.4%)
Insufficient professional trainings for teachers	82 (58.2%)	70 (49.6%)	729 (47.6%)
Insufficient teaching resources	65 (46.1%)	48 (34.0%)	884 (57.7%)
Difficult in finding school-based support services	33 (23.4%)	41 (29.1%)	355 (23.2%)
Tight teaching schedule / Heavy teaching workload	115 (81.6%)	121 (85.8%)	1307 (85.3%)
Lack of financial resources	40 (28.4%)	13 (9.2%)	350 (22.8%)
Difficult in finding appropriate professionals for support	47 (33.3%)	47 (33.3%)	553 (36.1%)
Insufficient understanding of IE among teachers	54 (38.3%)	72 (51.1%)	502 (32.8%)
Unclear content of the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	9 (6.4%)	5 (3.5%)	231 (15.1%)
Too many students with SEN	67 (47.5%)	64 (45.4%)	916 (59.8%)
Others	9 (6.4%)	4 (2.8%)	46 (3.0%)

#### 4.4.12 Satisfaction with Current Implementation of Integrated Education in Schools

Regarding the satisfaction with the current status of implementation of IE in primary schools (Table 4.51), the satisfaction level of primary school principals was higher than that of SENCOs and teachers. The principals had an average satisfaction level higher than 3 in 8 out of 11 items, and their average satisfaction levels were higher than those of SENCOs and teachers in all items. The only exception is the lower average satisfaction level of principals (2.78) compared to SENCOs and teachers in the statement of "differentiated learning have been adopted in the lessons". Teachers, on the other hand, had average satisfaction levels below 3 in all items. The findings of SENCOs were similar to those of teachers, with the exception of "IEPs have been designed" (3.00), where their average satisfaction level was higher than 3, but their average satisfaction levels in other items were also below 3.

**Table 4.51 Satisfaction Level of Primary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers with Current Implementation of Integrated Education in Schools (PQ14, SQ14, TQ10)**

Items of Implementation of IE in Schools	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average satisfaction level (SD)	Average satisfaction level (SD)	Average satisfaction level (SD)
All staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students	3.20 (0.51)	2.88 (0.45)	2.96 (0.49)
The school mainstream curriculum can be adjusted and/or expanded to cater for different needs	2.92 (0.56)	2.64 (0.58)	2.84 (0.50)
Diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment are used to cater for students' diverse learning needs	3.03 (0.55)	2.97 (0.49)	2.93 (0.43)
Learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organized	3.10 (0.48)	2.86 (0.50)	2.93 (0.44)
Teachers work together and support each other, for example, for collaborative teaching	3.05 (0.53)	2.90 (0.51)	2.98 (0.47)
Improving the learning environment for the benefit of all students	3.15 (0.52)	2.98 (0.39)	2.94 (0.44)
Assessment methods are adjusted to facilitate students' demonstration of their learning outcomes	2.90 (0.58)	2.73 (0.58)	2.84 (0.54)
Differentiated learning have been adopted in the lessons	2.78 (0.62)	2.80 (0.58)	2.81 (0.54)
Students' differences are included in an integrated classroom	3.02 (0.51)	2.80 (0.58)	2.96 (0.44)
IEPs have been designed	3.05 (0.54)	3.00 (0.52)	2.89 (0.54)
Home-school cooperation can be implemented to promote parental education	3.05 (0.51)	2.81 (0.50)	2.95 (0.45)
Composite score	3.02 (0.37)	2.85 (0.37)	2.91 (0.34)

Note: Satisfaction level 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Satisfied, 4 = Very Satisfied

Regarding the satisfaction with the current status of implementation of IE in secondary schools (Table 4.52), the satisfaction level of secondary school principals was generally higher than that of SENCOs and teachers, with average satisfaction level above 3 in three items. The average satisfaction levels of secondary school teachers were below 3 in all items. Secondary school SENCOs showed the highest satisfaction with the item "IEPs have been designed", which received the highest average satisfaction level of 3.15, but their average satisfaction levels for other areas were also below 3.

**Table 4.52 Satisfaction Levels of Secondary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers with Current Implementation of Integrated Education in Schools (PQ14, SQ14, TQ10)**

Items of Implementation of IE in Schools	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average satisfaction level (SD)	Average satisfaction level (SD)	Average satisfaction level (SD)
All staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students	3.04 (0.54)	2.80 (0.51)	2.90 (0.53)
The school mainstream curriculum can be adjusted and/or expanded to cater for different needs	2.84 (0.51)	2.61 (0.62)	2.77 (0.53)
Diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment are used to cater for students' diverse learning needs	2.88 (0.53)	2.83 (0.54)	2.85 (0.50)
Learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organized	3.10 (0.52)	2.97 (0.55)	2.92 (0.52)
Teachers work together and support each other, for example, for collaborative teaching	2.88 (0.53)	2.83 (0.61)	2.85 (0.52)
Improving the learning environment for the benefit of all students	3.02 (0.42)	2.94 (0.48)	2.92 (0.47)
Assessment methods are adjusted to facilitate students' demonstration of their learning outcomes	2.85 (0.57)	2.71 (0.62)	2.81 (0.53)
Differentiated learning have been adopted in the lessons	2.68 (0.63)	2.66 (0.59)	2.72 (0.57)
Students' differences are included in an integrated classroom	2.88 (0.56)	2.84 (0.58)	2.84 (0.50)
IEPs have been designed	2.99 (0.54)	3.15 (0.57)	2.76 (0.59)
Home-school cooperation can be implemented to promote parental education	2.98 (0.50)	2.79 (0.56)	2.85 (0.53)
Composite score	2.92 (0.38)	2.83 (0.37)	2.84 (0.38)

Note: Satisfaction level 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Satisfied, 4 = Very Satisfied

Regarding the overall satisfaction with the implementation of IE in schools (Table 4.53), overall principals had an average satisfaction level above 3 in 5 out of 11 items. These included "all staff of the school acknowledge their responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students" (3.11), "learning groups, peer tutoring, and circles of friends are strategically organized" (3.10), "Improve the learning environment for the benefit of all students" (3.08), "IEPs have been designed" (3.01), and "Home-school cooperation can be implemented to promote parent education" (3.01). On the other hand, overall teachers had an average satisfaction level below 3 in all items. The average satisfaction level of overall principals was similar to that of teachers, except for "IEPs have been designed" (3.09). The average satisfaction levels of other items of overall SENCOs were also lower than 3.

Combining with the perspectives of the three stakeholder groups, the items of implementing IE that are more satisfied included "learning groups, peer tutoring, and circles of friends are strategically organized" and "improving the learning environment for the benefit of all students". Both interviewed principals (3.11) and teachers (2.93) expressed relatively higher satisfaction level with their school's

performance in “all staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students”.

**Table 4.53 Satisfaction Levels of School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers with Current Implementation of Integrated Education in Schools (PQ14, SQ14, TQ10)**

Items of Implementation of IE in Schools	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average satisfaction level (SD)	Average satisfaction level (SD)	Average satisfaction level (SD)
All staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students	3.11 (0.53)	2.83 (0.49)	2.93 (0.51)
The school mainstream curriculum can be adjusted and/or expanded to cater for different needs	2.87 (0.53)	2.62 (0.60)	2.80 (0.52)
Diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment are used to cater for students’ diverse learning needs	2.94 (0.55)	2.88 (0.52)	2.89 (0.47)
Learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organized	3.10 (0.48)	2.93 (0.53)	2.92 (0.49)
Teachers work together and support each other, for example, for collaborative teaching	2.95 (0.54)	2.86 (0.57)	2.91 (0.51)
Improving the learning environment for the benefit of all students	3.08 (0.46)	2.96 (0.45)	2.93 (0.46)
Assessment methods are adjusted to facilitate students’ demonstration of their learning outcomes	2.87 (0.57)	2.72 (0.60)	2.82 (0.53)
Differentiated learning have been adopted in the lessons	2.72 (0.62)	2.70 (0.59)	2.76 (0.56)
Students’ differences are included in an integrated classroom	2.94 (0.54)	2.82 (0.58)	2.90 (0.48)
IEPs have been designed	3.01 (0.54)	3.09 (0.55)	2.82 (0.57)
Home-school cooperation can be implemented to promote parental education	3.01 (0.50)	2.80 (0.54)	2.89 (0.49)
Composite score	2.96 (0.38)	2.84 (0.37)	2.87 (0.36)

Note: Satisfaction level 1 = Very Dissatisfied, 2 = Dissatisfied, 3 = Satisfied, 4 = Very Satisfied

#### **4.5 Self-Assessment of Competence and Confidence in Implementing Integrated Education by SENCOs and Teachers**

In the self-assessment ratings of job competence (Table 4.54), SENCOs in secondary school generally rated themselves higher than primary school SENCOs. The average scores for the 11 description items were above 3 for secondary school SENCOs, while primary school SENCOs had an average above 3 for only 6 items. Among all the description items, secondary school SENCOs had higher average scores than primary school SENCOs among 16 items. In addition, there were no item with an average score below 2.50 for secondary school SENCOs, while primary school SENCOs had one such item.

Among the 25 description items, overall SENCOs had 9 items with an average score of 3 or above. These included "I possess good communication skills" (3.15), "I possess coordination and

collaboration skills to maintain the student support teams and other teams in the school” (3.07), "I proactively care for and accept students with SEN" (3.40), "I adhere to professional ethics and demonstrate dedication and attitude" (3.34), "I can guide and coordinate teachers in formulating, implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating IEPs in accordance with the WSA" (3.01), "I can timely revise IEPs according to individual needs to facilitate and improve their implementation" (3.09), "I can conduct preliminary assessments of students with SEN and provide follow-up or referrals" (3.15), "I can provide emotional counseling and appropriate support to students with SEN" (3.08), and "I possess the knowledge and skills required to manage students with SEN" (3.01).

**Table 4.54 Self-assessment of Primary and Secondary School SENCOs' Competence in Integrated Education Practice (SQ13)**

Description Item	Primary schools	Secondary schools	Overall
	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)
I proactively care for and accept students with SEN	3.45 (0.50)	3.36 (0.48)	3.40 (0.49)
I adhere to professional ethics and demonstrate dedication and attitude	3.32 (0.53)	3.36 (0.48)	3.34 (0.50)
I can conduct preliminary assessments for students with SEN and provide follow-up or referrals	3.03 (0.45)	3.23 (0.48)	3.15 (0.45)
I possess good communication skills	3.18 (0.39)	3.12 (0.43)	3.15 (0.41)
I can timely revise IEPs according to individual needs to facilitate and improve their implementation	3.08 (0.38)	3.09 (0.45)	3.09 (0.42)
I can provide emotional counseling and appropriate support to students with SEN	2.92 (0.42)	3.20 (0.55)	3.08 (0.52)
I possess coordination and collaboration skills to maintain the student support teams and other teams in the school	3.02 (0.39)	3.11 (0.45)	3.07 (0.42)
I can guide and coordinate teachers in formulating, implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating IEPs in accordance with WSA	2.97 (0.41)	3.04 (0.45)	3.01 (0.43)
I possess the knowledge and skills required to manage students with SEN	2.92 (0.42)	3.07 (0.41)	3.01 (0.42)
I possess case management skills	2.98 (0.39)	3.00 (0.42)	2.99 (0.40)
I can comprehend the content of professional training and apply it to promote the development of IE in the school	2.87 (0.38)	3.02 (0.31)	2.96 (0.35)
I possess sufficient knowledge of special education	2.90 (0.47)	2.99 (0.43)	2.95 (0.45)
I am familiar with various teaching methods and strategies for different categories of students with SEN, such as the visual aids needed by students with autism in the learning process	2.95 (0.50)	2.93 (0.44)	2.94 (0.46)
I understand the current status and trends in the development of the special education field	2.93 (0.44)	2.94 (0.42)	2.94 (0.43)
I can organize and utilize knowledge related to the characteristics and issues of various types of students with SEN	2.93 (0.40)	2.91 (0.42)	2.92 (0.41)
I can promote home-school cooperation and design learning activities to promote the growth of students after understanding the family background of different students	2.85 (0.48)	2.93 (0.52)	2.89 (0.50)

I can effectively utilize resources related to SEN within the school and the Hong Kong education system	2.80 (0.40)	2.95 (0.44)	2.89 (0.43)
I can regularly conduct school-based training related to 'promoting the learning of students with SEN' to enhance the professional development of the whole team	2.85 (0.48)	2.83 (0.58)	2.84 (0.54)
I can provide suggestions and guidance for diverse assessments to meet the learning needs of students with SEN, and use assessment results to formulate appropriate learning goals and design teaching activities	2.88 (0.52)	2.79 (0.58)	2.83 (0.56)
I can lead the structure, functions, and division of labor within the school's subject groups and teams	2.85 (0.60)	2.78 (0.57)	2.81 (0.61)
I understand the content and application of Hong Kong's special education and rehabilitation policies, as well as other relevant regulations (such as DDO, inclusive indicators, new funding models, and WSA)	2.73 (0.44)	2.83 (0.49)	2.79 (0.47)
I understand the use of various technology-assisted or other assistive learning tools to promote the learning of students with SEN	2.65 (0.51)	2.70 (0.53)	2.68 (0.51)
I can assist students with SEN in developing their career planning abilities	2.40 (0.55)	2.86 (0.51)	2.67 (0.58)
I can plan and execute the study skills related to special education project	2.65 (0.54)	2.59 (0.60)	2.62 (0.58)
I can design special education curricula, carry out curriculum accommodation or tailoring, and design teaching content for students with SEN	2.60 (0.55)	2.52 (0.63)	2.55 (0.60)

Note: Score 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

In the self-assessment ratings of job competence in IE by teachers (Table 4.55), the overall average ratings for all description items were below 3. However, primary school teachers scored above or equal to 3 in two items: "I am able to change my teaching methods to accommodate learners with difficulties in learning" (3.02) and "I can show the caring and acceptance of students with SEN to the parents for supporting their children's learning needs" (3.00). The overall average score for the item "I am familiar with the resources that students with SEN need for learning" was below 2.50 for teachers, only 2.46, and the average score for the item "I accurately gauge the progress of comprehension of curriculum by students with SEN" was only 2.51. Except for the item "I have high expectations and aspirations for all students", secondary school teachers scored lower on each item compared to primary school teachers.

**Table 4.55 Self-assessment Primary and Secondary School Teachers' Competence in Integrated Education Practice (TQ9)**

Description Item	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Overall
	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)
I am able to change my teaching methods to accommodate learners with difficulties in learning	3.02 (0.42)	2.93 (0.44)	2.97 (0.43)
I can show the caring and acceptance of students with SEN to the parents for supporting their children's learning needs	3.00 (0.39)	2.87 (0.47)	2.93 (0.44)
I have good communication skills to explain the	2.93 (0.42)	2.86 (0.48)	2.89 (0.46)

learning situation of their children to the parents of students with SEN			
I can collaborate with other stakeholders including peer teachers and parents to meet the diverse needs of learners in an integrated classroom	2.89 (0.46)	2.77 (0.51)	2.82 (0.49)
I can manage an integrated classroom to ensure academic engagement of all learners	2.86 (0.48)	2.76 (0.54)	2.81 (0.51)
I am comfortable with behaviour management in integrated classrooms	2.86 (0.47)	2.77 (0.53)	2.81 (0.51)
I can work with the parents of students with SEN to support their children's learning needs	2.92 (0.44)	2.66 (0.57)	2.78 (0.53)
I apply different curriculum content to meet the learning diversity of students with SEN in integrated classrooms	2.80 (0.50)	2.66 (0.55)	2.72 (0.53)
I can provide parents of students with SEN with suitable learning strategies for supporting their children	2.80 (0.50)	2.61 (0.57)	2.70 (0.55)
I can carry out my role in screening, identifying, assessing and supporting students with SEN in an integrated classroom	2.75 (0.53)	2.63 (0.60)	2.68 (0.57)
I can use a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., portfolio assessment, modified tests, performance-based assessment, etc.)	2.69 (0.55)	2.67 (0.55)	2.68 (0.55)
I have high expectations and aspirations for all learners	2.62 (0.61)	2.64 (0.60)	2.63 (0.60)
I can have the knowledge and skills needed to manage with students with SEN	2.67 (0.53)	2.57 (0.57)	2.62 (0.55)
I can collaborate with other professionals (e.g., EPs or speech therapists) in designing suitable educational plans for all students	2.70 (0.56)	2.54 (0.62)	2.61 (0.59)
I can work with the parents of students with SEN to design IEPs for their children	2.69 (0.54)	2.52 (0.57)	2.60 (0.56)
I have professional counselling skills to relieve the emotional reactions and stress in supporting their children's learning of the parents of students with SEN	2.60 (0.56)	2.54 (0.59)	2.57 (0.58)
I can meet the learning expectations of parents of students with SEN for their children	2.59 (0.53)	2.53 (0.55)	2.56 (0.54)
I can accurately gauge the progress of comprehension of curriculum by students with SEN	2.55 (0.57)	2.47 (0.56)	2.51 (0.57)
I am familiar with the resources that students with SEN need for learning	2.50 (0.55)	2.42 (0.57)	2.46 (0.56)

Note: Score 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly agree

In terms of being most confident in making Students with SEN catch up with students without SEN (Table 4.56), primary school SENCOs had the highest confidence in "students' social and interaction skills" (55.0%), followed by "students' emotional adaptability" (36.7%). However, they were noticeably less confident in "students' academic results and performances" (3.3%).

**Table 4.56: Areas which Primary School SENCOS Had the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN (SQ1)**

Area which You Have the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN	SENCO		
	Primary Schools (n=60)		
	Most confident (i.e. chosen as 1)	Second confident = 2	Third confident = 3
Academic results and performances	2 (3.3%)	9 (15.0%)	43 (71.7%)
Students' social and interaction skills	33 (55.0%)	20 (33.3%)	4 (6.7%)
Students' emotional adaptability	22 (36.7%)	25 (41.7%)	7 (11.7%)
Others	1 (1.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

Note: Two primary school SENCOS did not answer this question. The percentages in this table are calculated based on the number of valid questionnaires from SENCOS in that category.

Secondary school SENCOS (Table 4.57) were also most confident (45.7%) in making students with SEN catch up with students without SEN in terms of social and interaction skills. The second area of confidence was "students' academic results and performances" (27.2%). They also had relatively less confidence (24.7%) in "students' emotional adaptation skills", which is lower compared to primary school SENCOS.

**Table 4.57: Areas which Secondary School SENCOS Have the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN (SQ1)**

Areas which You Have the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN	SENCO		
	Secondary Schools (n=81)		
	Most confident (i.e. chosen as 1)	Second confident = 2	Third confident = 3
Academic results and performances	22 (27.2%)	9 (11.1%)	44 (54.3%)
Students' social and interaction skills	37 (45.7%)	35 (43.2%)	5 (6.2%)
Students' emotional adaptability	20 (24.7%)	32 (39.5%)	26 (32.1%)
Others	2 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (1.2%)

Overall SENCOS (Table 4.58) are most confident (49.6%) in making students with SEN catch up with students without SEN in terms of social and interaction skills. The second area of confidence is "students' emotion adaptability" (29.8%), while they have relatively less confidence (17.0%) in "students' academic results and performances". This indicates that overall SENCOS were less confident in making students with SEN improve their academic performance, but they have more confidence in their social and emotional adaptation skills. It shows that even though academic performance is not the strong suit of students with SEN, stakeholders still hope to enhance their social and interaction skills through training to help them adapt in society.

**Table 4.58: Areas which SENCOs Had the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN (SQ1)**

Areas which You Have the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN	SENCO		
	Overall (n=141)		
	Most confident (i.e. chosen as 1)	Second confident = 2	Third confident = 3
Academic results and performances	24 (17.0%)	18 (12.8%)	87 (61.7%)
Students' social and interaction skills	70 (49.6%)	55 (39.0%)	9 (6.4%)
Students' emotional adaptability	42 (29.8%)	57 (40.4%)	33 (23.4%)
Others	3 (2.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (0.7%)

Note: Two primary school SENCOs did not answer this question. The percentages in this table are calculated based on the number of valid questionnaires from SENCOs.

Primary school teachers (Table 4.59) were most confident (53.8%) in making students with SEN catch up with students without SEN in terms of social and interaction skills. The second area of confidence was "students' emotional adaptation skills" (31.4%). However, they were relatively less confidence in "academic results and performance" (9.1%).

**Table 4.59: Areas which Primary School Teachers Had the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN (TQ11)**

Areas which You Have the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN	Teacher		
	Primary Schools (n=704)		
	Most confident (i.e. chosen as 1)	Second confident = 2	Third confident = 3
Academic results and performances	64 (9.1%)	101 (14.3%)	461 (65.5%)
Students' social and interaction skills	379 (53.8%)	222 (31.5%)	48 (6.8%)
Students' emotional adaptability	221 (31.4%)	310 (44.0%)	111 (15.8%)
Others	7 (1.0%)	1 (0.1%)	5 (0.7%)

Note: 29 primary school teachers did not answer this question. The percentages in this table are calculated based on the number of valid questionnaires from teachers in that category.

Secondary school teachers (Table 4.60) also had the most confidence (41.9%) in making students with SEN catch up with students without SEN in terms of social and interaction skills, although they were less confident compared to primary school teachers. The second area of confidence was "students' emotional adaptation skills" (33.5%). They had relatively less confidence (19.3%) in "students' academic results and performance", but it is still higher than the confidence level of primary school teachers.

**Table 4.60: Areas which Secondary School Teachers Had the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN (TQ11)**

Areas which You Have the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN	Teacher		
	Secondary Schools (n=828)		
	Most confident (i.e. chosen as 1)	Second confident = 2	Third confident = 3
Academic results and performances	160 (19.3%)	136 (16.4%)	439 (53.0%)
Students' social and interaction skills	347 (41.9%)	301 (36.4%)	117 (14.1%)
Students' emotional adaptability	277 (33.5%)	299 (36.1%)	178 (21.5%)
Others	11 (1.3%)	2 (0.2%)	5 (0.6%)

Note: 27 secondary school teachers did not answer this question. The percentages in this table are calculated based on the number of valid questionnaires from teachers in that category.

Overall teachers (Table 4.61) had the most confidence in making students with SEN catch up with students without SEN in terms of their social and interaction skills (47.4%), followed by their emotional adaptability (32.5%). However, they had less confidence in their academic results and performance (14.6%). This indicates that teachers, as a whole, prioritize social and interaction skills and hope that students with SEN can catch up with their peers in terms of social abilities, enabling them to adapt and integrate into society more easily.

**Table 4.61: Areas which Teachers Had the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN (TQ11)**

Areas which You Have the Most Confidence in Making Students with SEN Catch up with Students without SEN	Teachers		
	Overall (n=1 532)		
	Most confident (i.e. chosen as 1)	Second confident = 2	Third confident = 3
Academic results and performances	224 (14.6%)	237 (15.5%)	900 (58.7%)
Students' social and interaction skills	726 (47.4%)	523 (34.1%)	165 (10.8%)
Students' emotional adaptability	498 (32.5%)	609 (39.8%)	289 (18.9%)
Others	18 (1.2%)	3 (0.2%)	10 (0.7%)

Note: 29 primary school teachers and 27 secondary school teachers did not respond to this question. The percentages in this table are calculated based on the number of valid questionnaires from teachers.

## 4.6 Evaluation of Integrated Education Policy and Challenges Encountered

### 4.6.1 Overall Evaluation of Integrated Education Policy

Primary school principals, SENCOs, and teachers gave an average rating of 3 or above regarding the Government's IE policies and support measures for implementing IE in schools (Table 4.62). However, they rated relatively lower for "to strengthen IRTP (applicable to primary schools) / Sponsor a teacher to support academic low achievers (applicable to secondary schools) (Cancelled in the 2019/20 academic year)", with average scores of 3.05, 3.02, and 3.09 respectively. This indicates that stakeholders were generally satisfied with the Government's IE policies.

**Table 4.62 Ratings of Primary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers on the Government's Integrated Education Policy and Support Measures for Implementing Integrated Education in Schools (PQ11, SQ10, TQ6)**

Government's IE Policy and Support Measure	Primary Schools		
	Principal	SENCO	Teachers
	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)
To provide SENCO posts	3.48 (0.54)	3.22 (0.55)	3.12 (0.55)
To provide SENST posts	3.48 (0.57)	3.15 (0.57)	3.16 (0.55)
To strengthen IRTP (applicable to primary schools)/ Sponsor a teacher to support academic low achievers (applicable to secondary schools) (Cancelled in the 2019/20 academic year)	3.05 (0.61)	3.02 (0.65)	3.09 (0.55)
The LSG (new funding mode since 2019/20)	3.22 (0.56)	3.07 (0.48)	3.09 (0.48)
To create school-based speech therapist posts	3.48 (0.60)	3.37 (0.63)	3.24 (0.52)
To provide additional resources to support non-Chinese speaking students with SEN	3.32 (0.60)	3.07 (0.66)	3.15 (0.53)
To provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings	3.47 (0.60)	3.48 (0.50)	3.19 (0.51)
To promote school-based educational psychology services	3.45 (0.53)	3.45 (0.59)	3.13 (0.50)
To publish the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	3.20 (0.61)	3.15 (0.57)	3.00 (0.54)
Others	2.42 (1.03)	2.12 (0.61)	2.56 (0.95)

Note: Score 1=Completely Not Helpful, 2=Not helpful, 3=Helpful, 4=Very helpful

In the secondary school context (Table 4.63), secondary school principals, SENCOs, and teachers gave average scores of 3 or above for the various policies and support measures mentioned in the questionnaire, except for the average rating given by teachers for "To publish the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education", which is slightly below 3 (2.98). Overall, teachers had lower average ratings for each policy measure compared to principals and SENCOs. Nevertheless, there was still a general satisfaction with the Government's policies.

**Table 4.63 Ratings of Secondary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers on the Government's Integrated Education Policy and Support Measures for Implementing Integrated Education in Schools (PQ11, SQ10, TQ6)**

Government's IE Policy and Support Measure	Secondary Schools		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)
To provide SENCO posts	3.48 (0.50)	3.49 (0.50)	3.14 (0.59)
To provide SENST posts	3.41 (0.54)	3.35 (0.63)	3.19 (0.54)
To strengthen IRTP (applicable to primary schools)/ Sponsor a teacher to support academic low achievers (applicable to secondary schools) (Cancelled in the 2019/20 academic year)	3.22 (0.53)	3.20 (0.57)	3.13 (0.52)

The LSG (new funding mode since 2019/20)	3.28 (0.45)	3.25 (0.53)	3.11 (0.50)
To create school-based speech therapist posts	3.31 (0.56)	3.27 (0.61)	3.18 (0.57)
To provide additional resources to support non-Chinese speaking students with SEN	3.19 (0.45)	3.16 (0.56)	3.15 (0.53)
To provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings	3.41 (0.49)	3.48 (0.50)	3.19 (0.54)
To promote school-based educational psychology services	3.40 (0.52)	3.51 (0.50)	3.12 (0.57)
To publish the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	3.17 (0.47)	3.25 (0.48)	2.98 (0.58)
Others	2.69 (0.97)	2.70 (1.09)	2.33 (1.06)

Note: Score 1=Completely Not helpful, 2=Not helpful, 3=Helpful, 4=Very helpful

Overall principals, SENCOs, and teachers (Table 4.64) gave an average rating of 3 or above to the various Government policies and support measures mentioned in the questionnaire for implementing IE in schools, except for teachers' average rating for "to publish the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education" which was slightly below 3 (2.99). Overall principals believed that the most helpful policies and support measures included the "to provide SENCO post" (3.48), "to provide of SENST posts" (3.44), and "to provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings" (3.43). SENCOs considered "to promote school-based educational psychology services" (3.48), "to provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings" (3.48), and "to provide SENCO posts" (3.38) to be the most helpful policies and support measures. Teachers believed that the most helpful policies and support measures were "to create school-based speech therapist posts" (3.21), "to provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings" (3.19), and "to provide SENST posts" (3.18). In addition, the average rating given by interviewed SENCOs for "to providing additional resources to support for non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN" (3.12) was lower than that of principals and teachers.

**Table 4.64 Ratings of School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers on the Government's Integrated Education Policy and Support Measures for Implementing Integrated Education in Schools (PQ11, SQ10, TQ6)**

Government's IE Policy and Support Measure	Overall		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)	Average score (SD)
To provide SENCO posts	3.48 (0.52)	3.38 (0.54)	3.13 (0.57)
To provide SENST posts	3.44 (0.55)	3.26 (0.61)	3.18 (0.55)
To strengthen IRTP (applicable to primary schools)/ Sponsor a teacher to support academic low achievers (applicable to secondary schools) (Cancelled in the 2019/20 academic year)	3.15 (0.57)	3.12 (0.61)	3.11 (0.53)
The LSG (new funding mode since 201/20)	3.26 (0.50)	3.17 (0.52)	3.10 (0.49)
To create school-based speech therapist posts	3.38 (0.58)	3.31 (0.62)	3.21 (0.55)
To provide additional resources to support non-Chinese speaking students with SEN	3.24 (0.52)	3.12 (0.60)	3.15 (0.53)
To provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings	3.43 (0.54)	3.48 (0.50)	3.19 (0.53)

To promote school-based educational psychology services	3.42 (0.52)	3.48 (0.54)	3.12 (0.54)
To publish the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	3.18 (0.53)	3.21 (0.52)	2.99 (0.56)
Others	2.59 (1.00)	2.37 (0.89)	2.42 (1.03)

Note: Score 1=Completely Not helpful, 2=Not helpful, 3=Helpful, 4=Very helpful

In terms of rating the effectiveness of IE policies (Table 4.65), the average agreement levels given by the three groups of primary stakeholders were all above 2.50, but none of the items exceeding 3.00. This indicates that the three groups of stakeholders slightly tended to agree that IE can achieve its policy goals. Apart from the aspect of "To enhance social acceptance of IE" where the average agreement level given by SENCOs (2.92) was higher than that of principals (2.78) and teachers (2.74), the average agreement levels for the various goals were generally similar among the three groups of stakeholders. This suggests that IE policies had indeed provided assistance to local schools.

**Table 4.65: Agreement Levels of the Effectiveness of Government's Inclusive Education Policies by Primary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ12, SQ11, TQ7)**

Goal of Government's IE policies	Primary Schools		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
To promote social inclusion	2.73 (0.61)	2.80 (0.55)	2.68 (0.57)
To promote professionalization of IE	2.85 (0.61)	2.83 (0.56)	2.74 (0.57)
To assist schools in implementing IE	2.93 (0.55)	2.88 (0.45)	2.77 (0.54)
To improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools	2.92 (0.62)	2.97 (0.55)	2.77 (0.57)
To ensure schools to build up cross-sectoral supports of integrated education network across schools, communities and parents	2.62 (0.59)	2.70 (0.62)	2.62 (0.60)
To promote schools to nurture innovative attitudes to ensure providing flexible supports for every student	2.72 (0.59)	2.70 (0.59)	2.67 (0.58)
To promote home-school cooperation and implement successfully	2.72 (0.64)	2.68 (0.62)	2.71 (0.59)
To ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support IE development	2.97 (0.58)	2.98 (0.50)	2.82 (0.53)
To enhance social acceptance of IE	2.78 (0.62)	2.92 (0.56)	2.74 (0.58)
To lead and coordinate IE development	2.88 (0.89)	2.93 (0.45)	2.74 (0.55)
Composite score	2.81 (0.43)	2.84 (0.38)	2.72 (0.44)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

The three groups of stakeholders in secondary schools also generally believed that IE can achieve its policy goals. Among them, the SENCOs had higher average agreement levels than principals and teachers for the effectiveness of various policies. They gave average agreement levels of 3 or above in four aspects: "to assist schools in implementing IE" (3.02), "to improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools" (3.06), "to ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support IE development" (3.08), and "to lead and coordinate IE development" (3.00). This indicates that IE has indeed achieved significant results.

**Table 4.66: Agreement Levels of the Effectiveness of Government's Integrated Education Policies by Secondary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ12, SQ11, TQ7)**

Goal of Government's IE policies	Secondary Schools		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
To promote social inclusion	2.81 (0.57)	2.83 (0.51)	2.64 (0.59)
To promote professionalization of IE	2.80 (0.53)	2.98 (0.49)	2.74 (0.57)
To assist schools in implementing IE	2.83 (0.59)	3.02 (0.38)	2.75 (0.56)
To improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools	2.81 (0.55)	3.06 (0.36)	2.75 (0.59)
To ensure schools to build up cross-sectoral supports of integrated education network across schools, communities and parents	2.57 (0.61)	2.91 (0.53)	2.56 (0.65)
To promote schools to nurture innovative attitudes to ensure providing flexible supports for every student	2.64 (0.58)	2.83 (0.52)	2.65 (0.61)
To promote home-school cooperation and implement successfully	2.60 (0.61)	2.81 (0.53)	2.62 (0.61)
To ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support IE development	2.89 (0.52)	3.08 (0.41)	2.77 (0.56)
To enhance social acceptance of IE	2.73 (0.55)	2.94 (0.60)	2.70 (0.62)
To lead and coordinate IE development	2.83 (0.50)	3.00 (0.52)	2.70 (0.61)
Composite score	2.75 (0.45)	2.95 (0.33)	2.69 (0.47)

Note: Agreement level: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

In respect of the agreement levels of effectiveness of IE policies (Table 4.67), the three groups of stakeholders generally believed that IE can achieve its policy goals. They considered "to ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support IE development" had been the most effectively achieved, with average agreement level of 2.79 or above. "To improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools" also received average agreement level of 2.75 or above, while "to assist schools in implementing IE" received average agreement levels of 2.76 or above.

Overall, the average agreement levels of the interviewed SENCOs for various policy goals were slightly higher than those of principals and teachers. However, except for the goals of "to Improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools" and "to ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support IE development", with average agreement levels of 3.02 and 3.04 respectively, the average agreement levels for all other goals were below 3. Therefore, while IE policies had achieved some results, there is still much room for progress and improvement.

**Table 4.67: Agreement Levels of the Effectiveness of Government's Integrated Education Policies by Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ12, SQ11, TQ7)**

The effectiveness of government's Integrated education policies	Overall		
	Principal	SENCO	Teachers
	Mean Score (Standard Deviation)	Mean Score (Standard Deviation)	Mean Score (Standard Deviation)
To promote social inclusion	2.78 (0.59)	2.82 (0.53)	2.66 (0.58)
To promote professionalization of IE	2.82 (0.56)	2.91 (0.53)	2.74 (0.57)
To assist schools in implementing IE	2.87 (0.57)	2.96 (0.42)	2.76 (0.55)
To improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools	2.86 (0.58)	3.02 (0.46)	2.75 (0.58)
To ensure schools to build up cross-sectoral supports of integrated education network across schools, communities and parents	2.59 (0.60)	2.82 (0.58)	2.59 (0.63)
To promote schools to nurture innovative attitudes to ensure providing flexible supports for every student	2.67 (0.58)	2.77 (0.55)	2.66 (0.60)
To promote home-school cooperation and implement successfully	2.65 (0.62)	2.76 (0.57)	2.66 (0.60)
To ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support IE development	2.92 (0.55)	3.04 (0.46)	2.79 (0.55)
To enhance social acceptance of IE	2.75 (0.58)	2.93 (0.58)	2.72 (0.60)
To lead and coordinate IE development	2.85 (0.53)	2.97 (0.49)	2.72 (0.59)
Composite score	2.78 (0.44)	2.90 (0.35)	2.70 (0.46)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

#### 4.6.2 Challenges of Integrated Education

Regarding the challenges of IE (Table 4.68), primary school principals (3.55) and teachers (3.37) believed that the biggest challenge at present is "there are too many types of students with SEN and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for IE". On the other hand, primary school SENCOs believed the greatest challenge as "the workload will increase under IE" (3.52). Primary school teachers tended to agree with all the challenges. However, the average agreement levels of principals and SENCOs are below 2.50 for the challenges of "schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement IE successfully" and "the academic achievement of students without SEN may be affected". In addition, the average agreement level of principals in the challenge of "Students with SEN will be rejected by students without SEN" was only 2.38, while the average agreement levels of SENCOs were also below 2.50 for the challenges of "schools do not have resources to purchase adequate special education instructional materials and teaching aids to support students with SEN" and "teacher performance will decline", at 2.45 and 2.36 respectively.

**Table 4.68: Agreement Levels of Challenges in Implementing Integrated Education in Hong Kong by Primary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ10, SQ9, TQ5)**

Challenge in Implementing IE	Primary Schools		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
There are insufficient resources to support IE development	2.90 (0.75)	2.77 (0.67)	2.92 (0.60)
There is an inadequate pre-professional staff available to support students with SEN (e.g., speech pathologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist)	3.13 (0.75)	3.20 (0.63)	3.01 (0.62)
Schools do not have resources to purchase adequate special education instructional materials and teaching aids to support students with SEN	2.51 (0.73)	2.45 (0.69)	2.74 (0.66)
Support measures from Government on IE are insufficient	2.85 (0.77)	2.90 (0.68)	3.05 (0.61)
Different organizations/tertiary institutions in the society have inadequate measures to support schools in implementing IE	2.83 (0.67)	2.75 (0.57)	2.90 (0.56)
Schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement IE successfully	2.47 (0.70)	2.42 (0.61)	2.64 (0.69)
It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in a classroom	3.05 (0.72)	3.12 (0.61)	3.23 (0.61)
The inclusion of a student with SEN in my class makes me feel stressful	2.98 (0.75)	2.62 (0.73)	2.97 (0.62)
There will be inadequate resources to implement IEP	2.83 (0.74)	2.87 (0.76)	2.77 (0.67)
The overall academic performance of the school will suffer	2.62 (0.64)	2.68 (0.62)	2.76 (0.65)
Teacher performance will decline	2.50 (0.81)	2.36 (0.68)	2.51 (0.66)
Schools are unable able to cope with students with SEN who do not have adequate self-care skills	3.38 (0.69)	3.22 (0.71)	3.01 (0.63)
The workload will increase under IE	3.48 (0.54)	3.52 (0.53)	3.25 (0.53)
Apart from teachers, other school staff members will be stressed with the presence of students with SEN	3.10 (0.63)	3.02 (0.59)	2.97 (0.56)
My school has difficulty in accommodating students with various types of SEN because of inadequate infrastructure (e.g. space for equipment, lack of equipment).	3.35 (0.76)	3.18 (0.65)	3.04 (0.62)
Students with SEN will be rejected by students without SEN	2.38 (0.56)	2.53 (0.65)	2.57 (0.66)
The academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected	2.33 (0.68)	2.32 (0.62)	2.53 (0.67)
Parents of children without SEN do not like placing their children in the same classroom with students with SEN	2.92 (0.56)	2.68 (0.67)	2.70 (0.65)

There are too many types of students with SEN, and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for IE	3.55 (0.65)	3.48 (0.65)	3.37 (0.60)
Composite score	2.90 (0.43)	2.85 (0.35)	2.89 (0.35)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

In the context of secondary schools (Table 4.69), principals (3.35) and SENCOs (3.36) both considered the current greatest challenge is "the workload will increase under IE". On the other hand, secondary school teachers (3.40) perceived the biggest challenge is "there are too many types of students with SEN, and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for IE". Secondary school teachers generally agreed with the aforementioned challenges of IE, except for a slight disagreement to "the academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected" (2.49). Secondary school principals and SENCOs had average agreement levels below 2.50 for the challenges "teacher performance will decline", "the academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected", and "parents of children without SEN do not like placing their children in the same classroom with students with SEN". In addition, SENCOs showed slight disagreement with the challenges "Schools do not have resources to purchase adequate special education instructional materials and teaching aids to support students with SEN" and "schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement integrated education successfully" with average agreement levels of only 2.48 and 2.40 respectively. These findings reflect the varying evaluations and perspectives of stakeholders in secondary schools regarding IE.

**Table 4.69: Agreement Levels of Challenges in Implementing Integrated Education in Hong Kong by Secondary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ10, SQ9, TQ5)**

Challenge in Implementing IE	Secondary Schools		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
There are insufficient resources to support IE development	2.81 (0.59)	2.79 (0.68)	2.94 (0.60)
There is an inadequate pre-professional staff available to support students with SEN (e.g., speech pathologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist)	3.04 (0.56)	3.09 (0.61)	3.00 (0.62)
Schools do not have resources to purchase adequate special education instructional materials and teaching aids to support students with SEN	2.63 (0.64)	2.48 (0.72)	2.75 (0.66)
Support measures from Government on IE are insufficient	2.88 (0.62)	2.79 (0.72)	3.05 (0.64)
Different organizations/tertiary institutions in the society have inadequate measures to support schools in implementing IE	2.89 (0.59)	2.81 (0.67)	2.90 (0.57)
Schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement IE successfully	2.54 (0.67)	2.40 (0.73)	2.61 (0.67)
It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in a classroom	3.22 (0.65)	3.28 (0.63)	3.24 (0.61)
The inclusion of a student with SEN in my class makes me feel stressful	2.65 (0.60)	2.51 (0.69)	2.83 (0.65)

There will be inadequate resources to implement IEP	2.81 (0.62)	2.68 (0.70)	2.82 (0.72)
The overall academic performance of the school will suffer	2.70 (0.58)	2.68 (0.64)	2.73 (0.68)
Teacher performance will decline	2.40 (0.55)	2.33 (0.59)	2.59 (1.23)
Schools are unable able to cope with students with SEN who do not have adequate self-care skills	3.25 (0.54)	3.05 (0.65)	3.05 (0.62)
The workload will increase under IE	3.35 (0.57)	3.36 (0.55)	3.28 (0.55)
Apart from teachers, other school staff members will be stressed with the presence of students with SEN	2.96 (0.54)	2.88 (0.57)	2.92 (0.56)
My school has difficulty in accommodating students with various types of SEN because of inadequate infrastructure (e.g. space for equipment, lack of equipment).	3.20 (0.68)	3.01 (0.68)	3.05 (0.63)
Students with SEN will be rejected by students without SEN	2.50 (0.63)	2.59 (0.64)	2.74 (0.67)
The academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected	2.40 (0.56)	2.09 (0.59)	2.49 (0.69)
Parents of children without SEN do not like placing their children in the same classroom with students with SEN	2.47 (0.59)	2.23 (0.61)	2.50 (0.64)
There are too many types of students with SEN, and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for IE	3.27 (0.63)	3.27 (0.68)	3.40 (0.61)
Composite score	2.85 (0.33)	2.75 (0.36)	2.89 (0.36)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

Three group of stakeholders considered the biggest challenges is "there are too many types of students with SEN, and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for IE" and "the workload will increase under IE". Surveyed principals (3.31) also viewed "schools are unable able to cope with students with SEN who do not have adequate self-care skills" as another huge challenge, while SENCOs and teachers believed that paying equal attention to all students in a classroom posed a more noticeable difficulty.

However, there are disagreements between principals, SENCOs, and teachers. Overall teachers tended to agree with all the challenges, while overall principals and SENCOs held opposing views to teachers regarding the challenges of "teacher performance will decline" and "the academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected". Overall SENCOs also were also not that agree with the challenges of "schools do not have resources to purchase adequate special education instructional materials and teaching aids to support students with SEN" (2.47), "schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement IE successfully" (2.40), and "parents of children without SEN do not like placing their children in the same classroom with students with SEN" (2.43).

**Table 4.70: Agreement Levels of Challenges in Implementing Integrated Education in Hong Kong by Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers (PQ10, SQ9, TQ5)**

Challenge in Implementing IE	Overall		
	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
There are insufficient resources to support IE development	2.85 (0.66)	2.78 (0.67)	2.93 (0.60)
There is an inadequate pre-professional staff available to support students with SEN (e.g., speech pathologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist)	3.08 (0.64)	3.13 (0.62)	3.01 (0.62)
Schools do not have resources to purchase adequate special education instructional materials and teaching aids to support students with SEN	2.58 (0.68)	2.47 (0.71)	2.75 (0.66)
Support measures from Government on IE are insufficient	2.87 (0.69)	2.84 (0.70)	3.05 (0.62)
Different organizations/tertiary institutions in the society have inadequate measures to support schools in implementing IE	2.87 (0.62)	2.79 (0.63)	2.90 (0.57)
Schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement IE successfully	2.51 (0.68)	2.40 (0.68)	2.63 (0.68)
It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in a classroom	3.15 (0.69)	3.21 (0.63)	3.24 (0.61)
The inclusion of a student with SEN in my class makes me feel stressful	2.79 (0.68)	2.55 (0.71)	2.89 (0.64)
There will be inadequate resources to implement IEP	2.82 (0.67)	2.76 (0.73)	2.80 (0.70)
The overall academic performance of the school will suffer	2.67 (0.61)	2.68 (0.63)	2.74 (0.67)
Teacher performance will decline	2.48 (0.68)	2.34 (0.63)	2.56 (1.01)
Schools are unable able to cope with students with SEN who do not have adequate self-care skills	3.31 (0.62)	3.12 (0.68)	3.03 (0.62)
The workload will increase under IE	3.40 (0.56)	3.43 (0.55)	3.26 (0.54)
Apart from teachers, other school staff members will be stressed with the presence of students with SEN	3.02 (0.58)	2.94 (0.58)	2.94 (0.56)
My school has difficulty in accommodating students with various types of SEN because of inadequate infrastructure (e.g. space for equipment, lack of equipment).	3.26 (0.71)	3.09 (0.67)	3.05 (0.62)
Students with SEN will be rejected by students without SEN	2.50 (0.61)	2.57 (0.64)	2.66 (0.67)
The academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected	2.37 (0.61)	2.18 (0.61)	2.51 (0.68)

Parents of children without SEN do not like placing their children in the same classroom with students with SEN	2.66 (0.62)	2.43 (0.67)	2.59 (0.65)
There are too many types of students with SEN, and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for IE	3.39 (0.65)	3.36 (0.67)	3.38 (0.60)
Composite score	2.87 (0.38)	2.79 (0.36)	2.89 (0.35)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

#### 4.7 Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Integrated Education Practices in Schools

In terms of the IE practices in schools (Table 4.71), primary school principals had higher ratings compared to SENCOs and teachers, with average agreement levels of 3 or above in 18, 8, and 9 statements respectively. However, principals (2.31), SENCOs (2.24) and teachers (2.36) all believed that students with SEN are currently unable to choose their preferred subjects according to their needs and interests, with average agreement levels below 2.50. Among the primary school SENCOs, the average agreement level for the IE practice "the school provides school-based programmes which suit the needs and interests of students with SEN" is slightly lower (2.68) compared to other respondents.

**Table 4.71 Agreement Levels of Primary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers on Practices of Integrated Education in Schools (PQ13, SQ12, TQ8)**

IE Practice in School	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
The school's mission statement reflects an inclusive ethos	3.22 (0.52)	3.03 (0.48)	2.95 (0.49)
The school's admissions policy facilitates the admission and participation at school of students with SEN	2.70 (0.70)	2.63 (0.64)	2.76 (0.57)
The school staff cooperates actively to provide services to students with SEN	3.10 (0.48)	2.97 (0.45)	3.01 (0.50)
The school adopts WSA to identify, provide for and review the educational requirements of students with SEN	3.23 (0.50)	3.10 (0.44)	3.08 (0.48)
The school actively promotes parental involvement and facilitates contact between parents and teachers	3.23 (0.47)	3.10 (0.44)	3.10 (0.43)
The school liaises with relevant external agencies regarding provision of services for students with SEN	3.33 (0.51)	3.10 (0.47)	3.10 (0.43)
The school takes account of situation of students with SEN to set up school development plan	3.10 (0.48)	2.85 (0.44)	2.93 (0.50)
The school's discipline policy / code of behaviour is suitably adjusted to take account of diversity in learning	3.10 (0.44)	2.98 (0.39)	2.91 (0.48)
The school's learning and teaching policy takes account of students with SEN	3.23 (0.47)	2.97 (0.41)	3.03 (0.44)
The school's assessment policy includes reference to students with SEN, including reasonable accommodations for examinations	3.33 (0.48)	3.20 (0.48)	3.15 (0.46)
All staff are encouraged to participate in professional development in special education	3.25 (0.47)	3.17 (0.58)	3.02 (0.49)

All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in dealing with students SEN	3.07 (0.52)	2.88 (0.55)	2.88 (0.54)
The school requires teaching staff and relevant professionals to keep close contacts to support students with SEN	3.18 (0.54)	3.00 (0.52)	2.98 (0.45)
The school provides school-based programmes which suit the needs and interests of students with SEN	2.97 (0.49)	2.68 (0.59)	2.81 (0.59)
The students with SEN can choose preferred subjects according to their needs and interests	2.31 (0.70)	2.24 (0.79)	2.36 (0.71)
Curriculum documents and teaching materials related to students with SEN are readily available to staff	2.85 (0.61)	2.82 (0.50)	2.78 (0.57)
Extracurricular activities that support learning are open to students with SEN	3.29 (0.46)	3.13 (0.50)	3.01 (0.44)
There is a direct link between the school plan and the learning and teaching programmes provided for students with SEN	3.05 (0.44)	2.75 (0.50)	2.89 (0.47)
Assessment outcomes of students with SEN are used to inform learning and teaching.	3.03 (0.40)	2.80 (0.51)	2.96 (0.48)
The school sets up, implements and reviews educational plans for students with SEN	3.08 (0.46)	2.90 (0.47)	2.91 (0.48)
The school offers an appropriate, safe and attractive environment for all students to create a sense of belonging and security	3.22 (0.49)	2.98 (0.43)	3.00 (0.45)
All students can participate in teaching and learning activities that are appropriate to their levels and challenging	3.15 (0.55)	2.95 (0.50)	2.85 (0.52)
All teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and methods that take account of student abilities, needs and interests	2.97 (0.52)	2.90 (0.47)	2.87 (0.51)
Modes of assessment and feedback (including homework) are differentiated by teachers according to their students' ability	2.93 (0.55)	2.90 (0.47)	2.85 (0.52)
There are procedures to assess the actual performance of students with SEN to ensure their individual plans comply with their abilities	2.93 (0.45)	2.77 (0.53)	2.84 (0.52)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

In the context of secondary schools (Table 4.72), teachers rated the IE practices in schools lower compared to principals and SENCOs. There were 4, 12, and 9 items respectively with average agreement level at 3 or below, with. However, secondary school SENCOs had a slightly lower average agreement level (2.55) on the statement of "all staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in dealing with students with SEN" compared to other respondents.

**Table 4.72 Agreement Levels of Secondary School Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers on Practices of Integrated Education in Schools (PQ13, SQ12, TQ8)**

IE Practice in School	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
The school's mission statement reflects an inclusive ethos	3.21 (0.52)	3.07 (0.54)	2.96 (0.50)

The school's admissions policy facilitates the admission and participation at school of students with SEN	2.74 (0.59)	2.78 (0.59)	2.76 (0.60)
The school staff cooperate actively to provide services to students with SEN	2.98 (0.52)	2.80 (0.60)	2.90 (0.59)
The school adopts WSA to identify, provide for and review the educational requirements of students with SEN	3.10 (0.56)	3.11 (0.45)	2.95 (0.52)
The school actively promotes parental involvement and facilitates contact between parents and teachers	3.12 (0.43)	3.01 (0.53)	2.99 (0.52)
The school liaises with relevant external agencies regarding provision of services for students with SEN	3.17 (0.41)	3.24 (0.48)	3.12 (0.46)
The school takes account of situation of students with SEN to set up school development plan	2.95 (0.57)	2.94 (0.60)	2.90 (0.57)
The school's discipline policy / code of behaviour is suitably adjusted to take account of diversity in learning	3.10 (0.61)	3.15 (0.57)	2.93 (0.54)
The school's learning and teaching policy takes account of students with SEN	3.14 (0.54)	2.98 (0.52)	2.96 (0.52)
The school's assessment policy includes reference to students with SEN, including reasonable accommodations for examinations	3.35 (0.50)	3.30 (0.48)	3.19 (0.49)
All staff are encouraged to participate in appropriate professional development in special education	3.22 (0.47)	3.14 (0.52)	3.03 (0.53)
All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in dealing with students with SEN	2.84 (0.58)	2.55 (0.69)	2.77 (0.59)
The school requires teaching staff and relevant professionals to keep close contacts to support students with SEN	3.07 (0.38)	2.96 (0.53)	2.94 (0.49)
The school provides school-based programmes which suit the needs and interests of students with SEN	2.80 (0.53)	2.70 (0.64)	2.77 (0.60)
The students with SEN can choose preferred subjects according to their needs and interests	2.83 (0.52)	2.81 (0.55)	2.72 (0.66)
Curriculum documents and teaching materials related to students with SEN are readily available to staff	2.86 (0.52)	2.70 (0.54)	2.72 (0.60)
Extracurricular activities that support learning are open to students with SEN	3.25 (0.34)	3.26 (0.47)	3.08 (0.49)
There is a direct link between the school plan and the learning and teaching programmes provided for students with SEN	2.94 (0.58)	2.82 (0.56)	2.87 (0.52)
Assessment outcomes of students with SEN are used to inform learning and teaching	2.95 (0.59)	2.88 (0.53)	2.89 (0.52)
The school sets up, implements and reviews educational plans for students with SEN	2.99 (0.51)	2.94 (0.53)	2.90 (0.52)
The school offers an appropriate, safe and attractive environment for all students to create a sense of belonging and security	3.22 (0.45)	3.10 (0.43)	2.99 (0.48)
All students can participate in teaching and learning activities that are appropriate to their levels and challenging	3.07 (0.47)	2.92 (0.47)	2.86 (0.52)
All teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and methods that take account of student abilities, needs and interests	2.81 (0.53)	2.69 (0.54)	2.77 (0.57)

Modes of assessment and feedback (including homework) are differentiated by teachers according to their students' ability	2.75 (0.56)	2.68 (0.54)	2.76 (0.58)
There are procedures to assess the actual performance of students with SEN to ensure their individual plans comply with their abilities.	2.88 (0.48)	2.73 (0.55)	2.79 (0.54)

Note: Agreement level: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

In terms of IE practices in schools (Table 4.73), overall principals, SENCOs, and teachers rated average agreement level of 3 or above for practices such as "the school adopts a WSA to identify, provide for, and review the educational needs of students with SEN", "the school actively promotes parental involvement and facilitates contact between parents and teachers", and "all staff are encouraged to participate in professional development in special education". Principals and SENCOs also gave average agreement level of 3 or above for practices such as "the school's mission statement reflects an inclusive ethos", "the school's discipline policies / code of behaviour is suitably adjusted to take account of diversity in learning", and "the school offers an appropriate, safe and attractive environment for all students to create a sense of belonging and security". Principals and teachers also gave an average agreement level of 3 or above for the practice of "the school's learning and teaching policies takes account of students with SEN", at 3.18 and 3.00 respectively. Regarding the practices such as "the school takes account of situation of students with SEN to set the school development plan", "the school requires teaching staff and relevant professionals to keep close contacts to support students with SEN", "the school sets up, implements, and reviews educational plans for students with SEN" and "all students can participate in teaching and learning activities that are appropriate to their levels and challenging", only principals gave an average agreement level of 3 or above, at 3.01, 3.12, 3.03, and 3.11 respectively.

Relatively speaking, according to Table 4.73, the school's current IE practices that received more praise from the three major stakeholders included "the school liaises with external agencies regarding provision of services for students with SEN", "the school's assessment policy includes reference to students with SEN, including reasonable accommodations for examinations," and "Extracurricular activities that support learning are open to students with SEN".

**Table 4.73 Agreement Levels of Principals, SENCOs, and Teachers on Practices of Integrated Education in Schools (PQ13, SQ12, TQ8)**

IE Practice in School	Principals	SENCOs	Teachers
	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)	Average agreement level (SD)
The school's mission statement reflects an inclusive ethos	3.21 (0.52)	3.06 (0.52)	2.96 (0.49)
The school's admissions policy facilitates the admission and participation at school of students with SEN	2.72 (0.63)	2.71 (0.61)	2.76 (0.58)
The school staff cooperates actively to provide services to students with SEN	3.03 (0.51)	2.87 (0.54)	2.95 (0.55)
The school adopts a WSA to identify, provide for and review the educational requirements of students with SEN	3.16 (0.54)	3.11 (0.44)	3.01 (0.51)
The school actively promotes parental involvement and facilitates contact between parents and teachers	3.17 (0.45)	3.05 (0.49)	3.04 (0.48)
The school liaises with relevant external agencies regarding provision of services for students with SEN	3.24 (0.46)	3.18 (0.48)	3.11 (0.45)

The school takes account of situation of students with SEN to set up school development plan	3.01 (0.53)	2.90 (0.54)	2.91 (0.54)
The school's discipline policy / code of behaviour is suitably adjusted to take account of diversity in learning	3.10 (0.51)	3.08 (0.51)	2.92 (0.52)
The school's learning and teaching policy takes account of students with SEN	3.18 (0.51)	2.97 (0.47)	3.00 (0.48)
The school's assessment policy includes reference to students with SEN, including reasonable accommodations for certificate examinations.	3.34 (0.49)	3.26 (0.48)	3.17 (0.48)
All staff are encouraged to participate in professional development in special education.	3.23 (0.47)	3.15 (0.54)	3.03 (0.51)
All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in dealing with students with SEN	2.94 (0.56)	2.69 (0.65)	2.82 (0.57)
The school requires teaching staff and relevant professionals to keep close contacts to support students with SEN	3.12 (0.46)	2.98 (0.52)	2.96 (0.47)
The school provides school-based programmes which suit the needs and interests of students with SEN	2.87 (0.52)	2.69 (0.62)	2.79 (0.60)
The students with SEN can choose preferred subjects according to their needs and interests	2.61 (0.65)	2.57 (0.72)	2.55 (0.70)
Curriculum documents and teaching materials related to students with SEN are readily available to staff	2.86 (0.56)	2.75 (0.52)	2.75 (0.58)
Extracurricular activities that support learning are open to students with SEN	3.26 (0.43)	3.21 (0.48)	3.05 (0.47)
There is a direct link between the school plan and the learning and teaching programmes provided for students with SEN	2.99 (0.53)	2.79 (0.54)	2.88 (0.50)
Assessment outcomes of students with SEN are used to inform learning and teaching.	2.99 (0.52)	2.84 (0.52)	2.92 (0.50)
The school sets up, implements and reviews educational plans for students with SEN	3.03 (0.49)	2.92 (0.51)	2.91 (0.50)
The school offers an appropriate, safe and attractive environment for all students to create a sense of belonging and security	3.22 (0.46)	3.05 (0.43)	2.99 (0.47)
All students can participate in teaching and learning activities that are appropriate to their levels and challenging	3.11 (0.50)	2.94 (0.48)	2.86 (0.52)
All teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and methods that take account of student abilities, needs and interests	2.88 (0.53)	2.78 (0.52)	2.82 (0.55)
Modes of assessment and feedback (including homework) are differentiated by teachers according to their students' ability	2.83 (0.56)	2.77 (0.52)	2.80 (0.56)
There are procedures to assess the actual performance of students with SEN to ensure the individual plans comply with their abilities	2.90 (0.47)	2.74 (0.54)	2.82 (0.53)

Note: Agreement level 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

#### 4.8 Overall Analysis of Supporting Non-Chinese Speaking Students

Table 4.74 shows that approximately 48.9% of SENCOS have dealt with non-Chinese speaking students, with a higher percentage in primary schools at 55.9% compared to 43.8% for secondary school SENCOS. Currently, 38.8% of primary school SENCOS and 32.2% of secondary school SENCOS reported that the school did not have non-Chinese speaking students. However, a significant number of interviewed SENCO (15.1%) stated that although their schools have non-Chinese speaking students, they have not had dealt with them. This percentage is higher among secondary school SENCOS at 17.5% compared to 11.9% in primary schools.

**Table 4.74 Situation of SENCOS' Dealing with Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

Have You Currently Dealt with Students in this Category? - Non-Chinese Speaking Students.	Overall (n=139)	Primary Schools (n=59)	Secondary Schools (n=80)
Yes	68 (48.9%)	33 (55.9%)	35 (43.8%)
The school do not have students in this category	50 (36.0%)	19 (32.2%)	31 (38.8%)
I do not handle students in this category	21 (15.1%)	7 (11.9%)	14 (17.5%)

Note: One primary school SENCOS and one secondary school SENCO did not answer this question.

According to Table 4.75, over 40% (43.5%) of primary and secondary school teachers currently deal with non-Chinese-speaking students. Specifically, a higher percentage of primary school teachers, at 48.7%, deal with non-Chinese-speaking students compared to 39.1% of secondary school teachers. However, 13.9% of secondary school teachers and 10.0% of primary school teachers indicated that although their schools have non-Chinese-speaking students, they have not dealt with them.

**Table 4.75 Situation of Teachers' Dealing with Non-Chinese Speaking Students**

Have You Currently Dealt with Students in this Category? - Non-Chinese Speaking Students.	Overall (n=1 503)	Primary Schools (n=688)	Secondary Schools (n=815)
Yes	654 (43.5%)	335 (48.7%)	319 (39.1%)
The school do not have students in this category	667 (44.4%)	284 (41.3%)	383 (47.0%)
I do not handle students in this category	182 (12.1%)	69 (10.0%)	113 (13.9%)

Note: 16 primary school teachers and 13 secondary school teachers did not answer this question.

When dealing with non-Chinese-speaking students, more than half of the interviewed SENCOS felt stress, with 57.1% of them feeling a bit or a great deal of stress. Primary school SENCOS felt greater pressure, with over 60% (62.5%) felt stress, while over half of the secondary school SENCOS (53.2%) also reported felt stress.

**Table 4.76: Pressure Felt by SENCOS in Dealing with Non-Chinese-Speaking Students**

To What Extent do you Feel Stress to Deal with Non-Chinese Speaking Students?	Overall (n=133)	Primary Schools (n=56)	Secondary Schools (n=77)
Completely not stressful	12 (9.0%)	6 (10.7%)	6 (7.8%)
Not stressful	45 (33.8%)	15 (26.8%)	30 (39.0%)
A bit stressful	72 (54.1%)	33 (58.9%)	39 (50.6%)
Very stressful	4 (3.0%)	2 (3.6%)	2 (2.6%)

Note: Four primary school SENCOS and four secondary school SENCOS did not answer this question.

As for teachers facing non-Chinese-speaking students (Table 4.77), more than half of the primary and secondary school teachers felt pressure, with over 50% (58.7%) of teachers feeling a bit or a great deal of stress. Similar to SENCOS, over 60% (62.2%) primary school teachers faced higher level of pressure while secondary school teachers exceed 50% (55.8%).

**Table 4.77: Pressure Felt by Teachers in Dealing with Non-Chinese-Speaking Students**

To What Extent do you Feel Stress to Deal with Non-Chinese Speaking Students?	Overall (n=1 443)	Primary Schools (n=658)	Secondary Schools (n=785)
Completely not stressful	154 (10.7%)	68 (10.3%)	86 (11.0%)
Not stressful	442 (30.6%)	181 (27.5%)	261 (33.2%)
A bit stressful	766 (53.1%)	367 (55.8%)	399 (50.8%)
Very stressful	81 (5.6%)	42 (6.4%)	39 (5.0%)

Note: 46 primary school teachers and 43 secondary school teachers did not respond to this question.

## **Chapter 5 Findings of Individual and Focus Group Interviews with School Stakeholders**

In addition to inviting principals, SENCOs, and teachers to complete questionnaires, this study also included a qualitative research component. Qualitative research refers to the individual interviews and focus groups with different stakeholders for gaining a deeper understanding of their personal experiences and perspectives, and analyze the policy measures of IE, its current state and the actual difficulties.

The research team conducted interviews with various stakeholders involved IE, including principals, SENCOs, frontline teachers, professional support personnel, and parents, to collect their opinions on the implementation of IE and explore the overall policy effectiveness and the impact of support measures on schools, teachers, students, parents, and professional support personnel. In addition, individual and focus group interviews were analyzed through triangulation analysis to provide preliminary interpretation of the questionnaire results. Therefore, this study had a multi-category design, conducted focus group interviews with different stakeholders and had a sample size that is representative to a certain extent.

### **5.1 Interview Design**

The interview design for this study adopted a semi-structured interview approach. Semi-structured interview refers to the design of an interview outline as the basis of the interviews based on the research questions and objectives before the interview begins. However, the sequence of questions is not necessarily fixed during the interview and can be flexibly adjusted based on the actual situation of the interview. Semi-structured interviews are based on the assumption that respondents have different perceptions and personal life experiences related to the research questions. Conducting interviews in a semi-open manner can improve the fluency of the interview. When respondents are subject to fewer restrictions during the interview process, it helps them to reflect and share their experiences and opinions in a more open manner. The interview outlines for the five major stakeholders were drafted by the research team taking into account the views of the EOC (see Appendices 4 to 7).

### **5.2 Sampling Methodology**

The sample design for this interview used purposive sampling as the primary sampling method. Purposive sampling involves selecting interviewees that are most suitable for the research based on the predetermined research objectives. Since specific requirements and objectives were already set for the interviewees at the beginning of this Study, purposive sampling was used as the sampling method. When the research team started inviting participants, schools were the main target, so when inviting schools to participate, principals, SENCOs, frontline teachers, professional support personnel, and parents were all requested to be interviewed. During sampling, different schools were divided into those that have successfully implemented IE and those that still have room for improvement based on the results of the questionnaire data.

### **5.3 Interview Samples**

The research team interviewed a total of 106 stakeholders from 27 schools, including 15 primary schools and 12 secondary schools. Half of the schools were considered more successful in implementing IE, while the other half still had room for improvement. The team conducted individual

interviews or focus group interviews starting in June 2021 and completed them in December 2021. The details are as follows:

Table 5.1 Sample details of interview respondents

Stakeholder	Primary Schools	Secondary Schools	Total Number of Respondents
Principals	15	12	27
SENCOs and SENSTs	15	16	31
Professional Support Personnel	15	13	28
Parents	10	10	20

The interview transcripts quoted below (information within parentheses) are coded using the combination of the school code and participant code, representing individual schools and participants.

## 5.4 Individual Interview and Focus Group Interview Findings

### 5.4.1 Status of Curriculum Implementation (Teaching, Learning, and Assessment)

#### 5.4.1.1 Curriculum and Assessment in Secondary Schools

Stakeholders in both primary and secondary schools (including principals, SENCOs, and teachers) clearly pointed out that the biggest problem in the current implementation of IE is the tight schedule of the existing curriculum, which makes it difficult for schools and frontline teachers to allocate sufficient resources to effectively address the needs of students with SEN.

*"Our timetable is packed, completely packed, and the biggest problem we face is that in a classroom, the class timetable is very intense, and basically there is no free time." (Secondary school principal) (SS02-PR)*

*"In schools, lessons are resources that colleagues notice. If you allocate some of the lesson periods to support moral education, and you allocate some of them to [IE], instead of telling teachers to teach outside of their normal classes, it affects the moral education of some students, and I did allocate a lesson period, so I know you value it." (Secondary school principal) (SS01-PR)*

They also unanimously agreed that requiring students with SEN to simultaneously receive mainstream education courses and assessment criteria is the root cause of educational inequality in Hong Kong.

*"Our principle for extra time [during exams] is that for students in Form 1 to 3, if there is a medical certificate and a request from their parents, basically we would approve it and arrange a special room for them with extra time. However, for Form 4 students who are considering extra time, they need to think again if they really need it for their DSE (Diploma of Secondary Education) [examination]. Even if they are in a lower form, if they don't take extra time, they can still rejoin this line (apply for extra time) later, but whether it is approved or not is up to the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority." (Secondary School SENCO) (SS02-SE)*

Currently, secondary school students still need to take the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE). This not only brings heavy pressure to schools but also prevents students with SEN from keeping up with the curriculum and affects their overall learning effectiveness throughout their secondary school years.

*"The teachers have high expectations for themselves and hope that their students excel. They also feel that going to university is the only way to a good future. Sometimes, teachers themselves think that going to university is the only option. Students with SEN reflected to counselling*

*teachers and social workers that 'Teachers always told us to enter university at lessons and which subject to study. I feel like they are letting everyone down because they cannot get into university'. Some students may even lose motivation and feel like it's not worth trying. So it is important for teachers to understand that there are different pathways available for students.'* (Secondary School Principal) (SS03-PR)

*"If a family sees that a certain subject or career path is suitable for their child with SEN, [they should think] whether [the child] should be able to take the public exams. There are some cases where students with anxiety or physical conditions may struggle to cope with the stress of exams at the expense of their health. It would be good to give parents some choices, say in Form 3, that are widely accepted and recognized by everyone."* (Secondary School SENCO)(SS04-SE+SW+ST)

*"There are challenges in terms of academic performance for students with SEN. Their abilities are limited and there are gaps in their learning. It is especially difficult for higher grade students, even with all the support provided by teachers such as study groups and tutoring from alumni. This may not necessarily result in a significant improvement in their grades and performance, and it may be difficult for them to pass the DSE exam and enter university."* (Secondary School SENCO) (SS05-SE)

*"We know that they are a bit behind others, they are backward, not just two years of difference. Some of them may only be at the level of junior primary school when they enroll in secondary school. If you make them take the DSE exam, you're basically pushing them too hard."* (Secondary School SENCO) (SS16-SE)

Teachers also cannot adjust their daily assessments given the difficulty of the content in public exams, which further undermines their students' motivation to learn.

*"Hong Kong places too much emphasis on academic performance. I think if we can change this mindset— there are many ways to learn, right? Each student with SEN has their own strengths. For example, we know that some students with SEN may have weak reading skills, but they may be good at drawing.... If you ask them to take the DSE exam and answer so many questions, they will definitely fail. No matter how you adjust it, it's not about their ability. I think what you need to do is give them something they can excel at, rather than something they know they will fail. It's about changing our mindset."* (Secondary School SENCO) (SS16-SE)

Although students with SEN can apply for various exam accommodations, they are not very effective for them.

*"Although you provided resources, does it mean that a student with MI in an ordinary school can definitely handle the DSE? I don't think so. They still have to study the DSE curriculum, which I think is quite challenging."* (Secondary School SENCO) (SS16-SE)

*"Actually, for students who are weaker in terms of learning abilities, extra time and other accommodations may not get many scores for them. In contrary, SEN may imply some behavioural problems or relatively complicated family backgrounds, support [in this regard] is more inadequate. For them, there are more problems, most likely about emotions or behaviours."* (Secondary School Social Worker)(SS09-SW)

#### **5.4.1.2 Primary School Curriculum and Assessment Situation**

In primary schools, due to the need to regularly take the Territory-wide System Assessment (TSA) and the Pre-Secondary One Hong Kong Attainment Test (Pre-S1 HKAT), the curriculum schedule is also very tight, and teachers have actual difficulty in having sufficient room to effectively cater to the learning diversity of students with SEN.

*"I think sometimes teachers' primary concern is not to hinder classroom progress, of course, if it seriously affects the progress, I understand. Or sometimes they may not have the time or willingness to deal with it, because teachers have to deal with TSA, Pre-SI (HKAT), and various assessments. If there is a problem, it may take half a lesson to handle, and teachers may not want to lose this half lesson and affect the progress afterwards." (Primary school SENCO) (PS04-SE)*

However, as the school has a curriculum development leader (CD), the interviewed SENCO stated that the Tier 1 (T1) assistance of the CD in improving classroom support effectiveness is crucial and helps improve overall teaching outcomes.

*"The new CD was willing to think together on how to improve lessons of all colleagues to reduce individual differences, and the EP is also very helpful." (Primary School SENCO)(PS02-SE)*

*"So I think the CD is promoting the T1 support, helping to address the learning diversity in T1, promoting a positive school, putting people first...and can take care of the learning diversity of students. So, the first step is to adjust the learning when the subject ability is not good. Then, we can focus on improving the abilities of the top students. Because I think this is what they want to do. If I can also help with this, they will be very motivated to start, and it will also make the teacher feel better and have a sense of ability and success in teaching." (Primary School SENCO) (PS06-SE)*

#### **5.4.1.3 Impact of Current Education System and Environment on the Implementation of Integrated Education**

Some interviewed primary and secondary school principals believe that the current school system lacks space and flexibility in curriculum accommodations. Relying solely on daily homework and exam accommodations do not help improve the learning effectiveness of students with SEN.

*"As for class hours, our timetable in Hong Kong is fixed, or what is called flexible class hours, it is a concept that is flexible to the extent that the students know how to move around automatically. It's like some kindergartens I've seen, where once you enter, the children know exactly what they want to do and move on to the next activity. Can this degree of freedom be introduced into our primary and secondary schools, which have very structured systems?" (Primary school principal) (PS06-PR)*

*"In the overall [educational] environment, teachers face certain difficulties, especially in how to help these students [with SEN]. It seems to me that controlling them in the classroom for ordinary learning is a huge [challenge]." (Secondary school principal) (SS01-PR)*

The interviewed SENCOs, social workers, and clinical psychologists from primary and secondary schools further emphasized that due to the overcrowded curriculum in Hong Kong, subject teachers often say that classroom progress cannot be hindered, or there may not be too much time to care for students with SEN. The relationship between teachers and students is mostly built in the classroom and in learning, lacking other exchange opportunities. Teacher-student dialogue is focused only on learning and it is difficult to establish good communication with students, and support for students is not comprehensive enough. This is indeed an unsatisfactory situation at present.

*"I think that for the T1 support, I may not really be able to support teachers in learning. Maybe in terms of student behavior, for example, he may have ASD or ADHD, I have some feasible solutions for colleagues, but in actual teaching, how to teach, maybe I majored in Chinese and I can help with Chinese, or our CD can help. But maybe for colleagues who teach English or mathematics, it is difficult for them to effectively take care of the differences in classroom, and the curriculum is too rushed, so they feel the difficulty, which is understandable." (Primary school SENCO) (PS03-SE)*

*"The teaching and learning aspect are actually something we have always struggled with. The EDB may hope that we can do it well, but it really depends on the situation of each school. While we understand that learning diversity can be promoted, simply sharing the message doesn't mean it can be implemented or that certain teachers, who may have had exposure to training and so on, can [try to] carry out the practice in their own classrooms or subjects.... It can be difficult for them to try it out, unless they are, say, already a subject head. So, I find this aspect challenging." (Secondary School SENCO) (SS02-SE)*

*"However, within the entire education system, there is no place for teachers to relieve some of their workload and provide more space for teachers and students to have some informal communication, instead of just exchanging knowledge from textbooks. I am certain that this can reduce many cases of emotional difficulties and the negative effects of hyperactivity disorder." (Primary school social worker) (PS08-RSW)*

*"I actually reflect on the concept of inclusion, the whole idea of IE, when I look at clinical practice. I personally think that this is a vision. That is, we actually hope for social inclusion, that some students with learning difficulties can also learn in the same environment. However, from actual observations, I feel that different schools will share: some students, or actually the students' behavioral problems are not too serious. When teachers may not be able to handle them, it not only affects the individual students themselves but also affects the learning of the whole class. Maybe after the teacher spent half of the class time dealing with their emotional problems, there are only 15 minutes left." (Secondary school clinical psychologist) (SS02-CP)*

In addition, SENSTs interviewed also said that some teachers have reported losing a sense of success when teaching students with SEN, which is consistent with the survey data and an area for improvement in the future.

*"Half of the class are students with SEN. How can we teach? Many colleagues say they do not feel successful in their teaching, because no matter how much effort they put in, the students still end up with a U grade (ungraded). For example, there are some our "helicopter parents" (parents who excessively intervene in their children's lives). They always ask me, 'please tell them not to take the exam, or ask them to be absent?' " (Secondary School SENCO) (SS15-SE)*

Based on the above interviews, in terms of curriculum arrangements, both primary and secondary schools face the problem of a tight curriculum and difficulty in accommodating, making it difficult for teachers to care for students with SEN in their daily teaching. In terms of assessment arrangements, both primary and secondary schools make accommodations for students with SEN, such as extra time, reading papers, etc. However, due to the restrictions of the HKDSE, secondary schools face greater constraints in making accommodations for exams, while primary schools still have some flexibility. However, such flexibility may not be a real help for students, as using the same exam to assess students with SEN is inherently unfair, and accommodations are merely a "fair" arrangement in terms of policy.

In the implementation of IE, education is the key. However, the exam culture and curriculum arrangements established in Hong Kong for many years have made it difficult for schools and teachers to improve the effectiveness of education under the policy of IE. For secondary schools, they have to face the HKDSE, and some compulsory courses and designated skills have become content that students must learn in secondary school. In order for students to be in line with the public exam, schools and teachers are unable to make curriculum cuts in the form of school-based curriculum. For primary schools, facing the TSA and the Pre-S1 HKAT, the curriculum frameworks and teaching objectives set by the EDB in the curriculum guidelines of various subjects also limit the accommodation of primary school curriculum. Based on the curriculum and policies established over the years, the inclusion of IE at present has not given primary and secondary school teachers room to make changes in the existing curriculum, and it is the tight curriculum that makes it difficult for

teachers to do the "education" work in IE, and also makes it difficult for teachers to abandon the elitist thinking that has been established for many years.

## **5.4.2 Effectiveness of Government's Continuous Investment in Integrated Education**

### **5.4.2.1 Functions and Roles of SENCO**

With the development of IE, the EDB began to establish the position of SENCO in every school starting from the 2017/18 school year to support students with SEN. However, the scope of work involved in the role of SENCO is extensive and the workload is enormous. It is difficult for a SENCO to handle everything alone. The interviewed SENCOs reflected that the work involved in supporting students with SEN is diverse, including early identification, planning support, and setting up IEPs. The work cannot be done independently by the SENCO alone and requires the support of students, parents, teachers, and other professional support personnel to implement the WSA.

*"Because SEN work involves many interconnected aspects. After identifying a Primary 1 student with SEN, you need to provide support, and after providing support, you need to form a support group. Within that group, some students may have practical needs, such as ADHD or autism. There are many things that are interconnected. When I need to create an IEP, for example, I may not be able to do it alone. I need to train my colleagues on how to create an IEP and how to handle different types of students. There may not always be support from colleagues, but that does not mean I have completed everything. When I need to follow up, I need to communicate with colleagues A, B, C, or the whole school on how to adjust for exams or how to handle difficulties encountered in assignments. Most of the time, colleagues or parents will come to me for help." (Primary school SENCO) (PS03-SE)*

In addition to being responsible for serving as a bridge to communicate and negotiate with stakeholders, the time, skills and effort required for SENCOs to handle complex administrative work has been a long-term source of pressure. Based on the need to coordinate the opinions of various stakeholders and support students with SEN according to the EDB's procedures, SENCOs' work often require a long-term effort to gradually take effect.

*"The SENCO really has to take care of everything. I have to follow up on the curriculum, but I can only slowly learn something, and I can't follow up in depth. I'm just a bridge to coordinate things, such as exam adjustments. My team has someone who goes into the exam committee, and I have a colleague who specializes in exam accommodations for students with SEN, including DSE arrangements." (Secondary School SENCO) (SS06-SE)*

In interviews, SENCOs in primary and secondary schools also indicated that current school policies and support staff are insufficient to meet their work demands. Within the schools, SENCOs often need to collaborate with subject teachers or administrators to provide students with different accommodations, but they lack the ability to strengthen collaboration among teachers.

*"In fact, the learning support team is in the academic side of EDB...it requires some effort to push forward... I asked for a mathematics vice teacher, a Chinese vice teacher, and a support teacher for English. For Chinese, English and Mathematics, I can push forward in junior forms, but for some curriculum-related matters, I need to rely on the three subject panel [heads], but how do I get them to listen to me?" (Secondary School SENCO) (SS09-SE)*

Interviewed primary and secondary school principals agreed that caring for students with special learning needs should not be the sole responsibility of the SENCO, but rather should involve the participation and promotion of all teachers in the school. The SENCO needs to be empowered to enhance their coordination ability to promote the overall development of IE in the whole school.

*"I think it is important for all colleagues to agree a mindset that we need to join forces to teach students with SEN, not just the responsibility of the SENCO, but also for all colleagues to have the heart to make our school inclusive. In addition, in the past, everyone was very taboo about privacy, but if we know the symptoms of the child's syndrome to some extent, we will be able to handle it better. All teachers in the school know about it, so when it comes to handling it, we understand it somewhat and reduce conflicts." (Primary School Principal)(PS05-PR)*

In addition, general teachers also have the responsibility and awareness to assist the SENCO in providing early support for students with special learning needs so that students can feel the care and assistance of the school as a whole.

*"I think communication in terms of information is very important. Because if they are some more severe cases, sometimes even students with self-harm tendencies, it is only a momentary thing, so we need to grasp more to provide support. I understand that it is really difficult to handle in private, but I think if the teacher often meets this student, they actually need to know." (Secondary School Social Worker)(SS15-SW)*

From the interviews, it can be seen that the EDB has established the position of SENCO in each school, and has formulated relevant work guidelines and procedures. SENCOs in primary and secondary schools also expressed that they can clearly understand the criteria and arrangements for their work. However, the relevant work cannot be completed solely by themselves, and the lack of understanding among other teaching staff also hinders support for students.

At the secondary school level, the needs of students with SEN are not limited to learning, and may involve emotional management, social skills, etc. All teaching staff need to participate and prevent dangerous situations in order to effectively support students in need. However, SENCOs lack sufficient ability to promote cooperation among teachers. Most of the support is still led by the SENCOs, which makes them very difficult. The problem faced by primary schools is to identify students who need support early. The identification process also requires the participation of all teaching staff, including daily observation, communication with parents and students, etc. However, teachers are burdened with the busy teaching work and do not have time to establish good communication with students beyond teaching, which also affects the efficiency of identification. After identification, various support work and plans also require the implementation by all teaching staff together. However, ordinary teachers still rely on the SENCO's planning and instructions, rather than supporting students' needs based on their own understanding.

#### **5.4.2.2 Current School Support on Integrated Education**

Although different professionals, such as EPs and speech therapists, regularly visit to schools to provide professional assistance, resources are still insufficient. EPs reflected in interviews that due to inadequate visits to schools, they were unable to meet the needs of too many students with SEN, which prevented students with special learning needs from receiving continuous assessments and made it difficult to adjust their support according to students' changes.

*"Perhaps the work of EPs is also limited, that is, now EPs serve alone, with a ratio of one to seven. Therefore, what can be done must be limited to the emergency cases. Then, when it comes to schools hoping to implement something, after they listen to my advice on how to do it, they can work in pairs with them or I can demonstrate it, and then they try to do it themselves. At least, I think that more confidence in the overall teachers will make it easier for them to implement in their own classes or with their own students... If the ratio of EPs in schools continues not to decrease, and the number of students with SEN in a school is so high, the ratio of one EP to students is constantly increasing. Therefore, I believe that more manpower is more important than money." (Secondary school EP) (SS01-EP)*

Interviewed social workers also stated that because EPs are not able to be stationed at schools, sometimes teachers and social workers at the school need to replace EPs to provide support, but the different professional skills weaken the effectiveness of support.

*"The division of labor on SEN work may belong to the group of EPs, with more support available. There is also a SENCO, and on our social work level, we also have EPs. Unlike in the past where EP was full-time at school, our division of labor does not have such a distinction. But now in schools, EPs only visit school according to schedule. So I think, in this situation, students with SEN will be taken care of by teachers or supported by in-school social workers." (Secondary School Social Worker) (SS05-SW)*

*"That is to say, I guess now only a psychiatrist can diagnose whether a student has MI, EP, CP (clinical psychologists), we all can't do it. Waiting for this takes the longest time, and I can only refer them to some very urgent services. Some students, I cannot immediately make referrals and can only chat with them, provide some temporary support, or refer them to go to public hospitals and wait, etc." (Secondary School Social Worker) (SS01-SW)*

Regarding IEPs, the SENCOs interviewed stated that the plans can bring significant impacts on students. However, IEPs require the participation of different stakeholders to achieve its ideal effects.

*"Because we have three meetings a year, the first one is actually for planning, and the second and the third one are for reviewing how the first half of the year went or the progress for the second half of the year. We need to adjust our support direction among us, which I think is very important. It's more systematic to plan some support for the students, different units also know how to cooperate with systematic support to review how each unit is doing, how students' progress is adjusted, whether it's goals or strategies, we will try to do it again, I think it's very important in the process." (Secondary School EP)(SS03-EP)*

*"Actually, the Tier 3 of IEP is necessary because some students may not really benefit from Tier 2 support, or we used to only provide some individual counseling, which is not perfect. In fact, IEP needs to be complemented with many things, including regular meetings, regular contact with parents, and EPs, maybe together to write some learning plans for each case, so the plan actually sets some small goals for the students. IEP is a focused project that can help children, especially cases of ID and ASD, where progress is significant." (Primary School EP)(PS01-SE)*

The SENCOs of primary and secondary schools interviewed stated that in order to ensure that students can receive practical support, schools will select students based on their urgent needs and circumstances to ensure that IEPs can be effectively implemented. In primary schools, schools tend to prioritize students who have difficulties in both academic, self-care, and personal growth aspects, such as students with autism or ADHD, while students with only special learning needs are usually not the first choice.

*"For IEP to be opened, it is best to provide individual support, but I don't want to open it and then fail to provide the quality of Tier 3 support that he needs. Because there are many meetings to follow up on for IEP, and the current staff of our support team cannot handle IEP." (Primary School SENCO)(PS02-SE)*

Secondary school SENCOs stated that due to restrictions of public examinations, IEPs are mostly for students in Form 1 to Form 3 to provide more time for support.

*"For students in Form 1 to Form 3, emotional management, daily routine, and interpersonal relationships may require [IEP], for example, for students with ADHD, ASD, or MI (mental illness), there is a chance that they may be the target of our IEP. For SLD (Specific Learning Disability), we may also consider whether we can help them while promoting their personal growth. We don't want to waste the positions for IEP, but we can't be excessive. Because an IEP is not just written, we examine several categories, so colleagues are busy, our subject teachers*

*need to help, our Resource Teacher needs to support subject teachers, sometimes some parts may require SENST to help, and sometimes social workers are needed, such as personal emotions or communication with family members. So we cannot be excessive. If not, if you write so much, everyone cannot do it, it is meaningless." (Secondary school EP) (SS01-EP)*

Regarding the Tier 3 support model in IE (i.e. IEP), both primary and secondary schools agree that the plan can effectively provide students with more comprehensive support, and this kind of support needs the joint efforts and implementation of different staff within the school to achieve results. However, primary and secondary schools also face a common problem, that is, the shortage of resources and staff, which leads to the need for schools to make choices when implementing the Tier 3 support in order to ensure the effectiveness of the support plan. In particular, secondary schools need to make choices in response to the restrictions of public exams, and student academic performance may also be a factor to consider. Primary schools tend to choose based on the student's personal growth and self-care abilities. These criteria are also based on the school situation and the school's approach to decide which students to support, which means that this effective support model cannot be widely used in more students.

For primary and secondary schools, the role of EPs is to assess students and provide professional support and advices. However, both primary and secondary schools have reported that EPs visit schools infrequently, and often rely on teachers or social workers to provide support measures for students. The difficulty is that social workers do not have publicly recognized qualifications in student assessment, and all support plans are only recognized with reports from EPs or psychiatrists. This situation means that the most commonly engaged professionals (such as social workers), who know students and understand their needs best, must wait for the judgments of other professionals before they can provide further support. This has a greater impact on primary schools, as the focus of primary education is to identify and support students early, and the need for long-waiting professional reports makes it difficult to achieve this "early" support. Therefore, teachers and social workers who work at the school can only identify individual cases early and provide support as soon as possible.

#### **5.4.2.3 Resource Deployment and Flexibility**

Stakeholders in primary and secondary schools, including principals, SENCOs, teachers, and various professional support personnel, have all indicated that the Government's sustained increase in resources has helped schools promote IE. Schools can use LSG to employ different professional support personnel, which can be used for different students, such as non-Chinese speaking students.

*"For example, when you talk about NCS (non-Chinese speaking students), it is also a way of caring for diversity... Personally, I think that non-Chinese speaking is also a branch of IE. If we have some funding or professional support that can be flexibly used according to the school's situation and needs, I think it would be ideal." (Secondary school principal) (SS03-PR)*

*"We use funding of LSG to hire some support teachers and assistants. I mainly coordinate the work of these teachers, ask them to divide the administrative and in-class support work. In addition, basically all students and support group administrative work have to be handled. The most time-consuming thing is contacting parents and meeting with parents, as well as contacting parents of students with SEN, which takes up more time." (Primary school SENCO) (PS02-SE)*

However, when utilizing related LSG, the SENCOs pointed out that they are constrained, and the SENSTs they hire may not be able to fully support their work because it is difficult to find suitable staff to assist schools in implementing IE, especially the lack of professional support personnel specialized in caring for a certain type of student with SEN.

*"Nowadays, the Government's IE is mainly in ordinary schools. The benefit is that they can integrate into mainstream society and live with ordinary people. This can enhance their social*

*skills. However, on the other hand, although the Government has provided a lot of resources in recent years, we still lack the so-called expertise to take care of a certain type of students. It depends on the overall school atmosphere and team because if it is not handled properly, it is easy to have bullying, but if handled properly, of course, it can achieve their educational goals."* (Secondary school principal) (SS15-PR)

*"Is it really that way? The current policy is to give you money to solve it anyway, but the problem is that I can't find it in the community, not that I can't find the people, but whether I can find suitable people who have the willingness and ability to help with IE."* (Primary school principal) (PS06-PR)

Moreover, most of the resources are used to hire professional support personnel, which does not help solve the problem that SENCOs have too many administrative tasks but insufficient working hours.

*"There is a lot of paperwork involved in our work, such as helping students with their DSE. The process of obtaining exemptions involves a lot of paperwork and is very time-consuming."* (Secondary school principal)(SS15-PR)

Therefore, to address the issue of staffing, it is recommended to establish permanent positions for professional support personnel to attract relevant professionals to join schools and provide support. This can help create a supportive atmosphere on campus and achieve a more ideal model of WSA.

*"If this [position] is not stable and is always filled through contracts, it is not enough to simply increase LSG and hire more teachers to deal with the increasing number of SEN paperwork. Students and parents require support, and using contracts is not ideal."* (Primary school SENCO)(PS06-SE)

In addition, some school principals pointed out that simply increasing resources without changes in the education system does not help improve the difficulties faced by IE.

*"In fact, for everything to be implemented, it is said that the whole school should participate. I think the EDB should offer some flexibility to schools. The EDB has implemented so many policies. Will there be priorities? We are not saying that we won't do the others, but we will gradually do them. Because there are too many things, our teachers don't have enough time. Sometimes teachers say, 'to take care of students' mental health, I also have to take care of my own mental health.' So one of our staff development is to take care of teachers' mental health."* (Secondary school principal) (SS03-PR)

From the above interviews, it can be seen that the Government's increase in resources for IE allows primary and secondary schools to have more funding to hire additional teachers or assistants. Secondary schools will use these resources to support more student groups, such as non-Chinese speaking students, while primary schools will use the resources to handle time-consuming administrative work.

Although primary and secondary schools have more human resources to support IE, they still face the challenge of finding support teachers or assistants with professional knowledge in IE, which hinders the optimal use of funds. This situation is related to the establishment of relevant positions. The EDB allocates funds for schools to hire teachers or assistants, which only allows primary and secondary schools to hire relevant personnel on a contract basis. Such instability results in high turnover rates for these positions and affects the continuity of support.

#### **5.4.2.4 Professional Development of Teachers in Integrated Education**

All interviewed principals believed that enhancing teachers' awareness is an important factor in implementing IE. Through training, teachers can deepen their understanding of IE, improve their

skills in caring for students with SEN, and help teachers in different roles, including discipline/guidance team, career planning teams, and class teachers, understand how to support students in different roles. This reduces the over-reliance of teachers on student support team or SENCOs and promotes the participation of the whole school in implementing IE.

*"In fact, everything we do, such as the whole school lesson planning system we just talked about, is based on Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Because we know that our professional development as educators will inevitably involve CPD at a certain stage. The most important thing about CPD is that you learn while doing it, and it's not just about you as an individual, but your team as well. So our belief is that the team is very important. We have put in a lot of effort in the past few years in building the team, and we believe that if we integrate students with SEN into it, it will be easier to achieve our goals." (Secondary school principal) (SS01-PR)*

*"WSA means a role for everyone. Everyone has something to contribute, and there is a whole-school policy. Every year, the EDB provides some SEN training, even mental health training, and NGOs also have similar training. We arrange colleagues to attend these training sessions, not just in the counseling team or SEN team, but gradually in other teams such as the discipline team, career planning team, class teachers, and even other colleagues. We have invited relevant professionals such as psychiatrists, social workers, and clinical psychologists to come and talk to us about how teachers should deal with students' growth problems and mental health issues." (Secondary school principal) (SS03-PR)*

For teachers, encountering students with special learning needs at campus and in classroom is common and inevitable. Therefore, the interviewed principals stated that most teachers are willing to attend various training to help themselves deal with the possible situations they may face.

*"They are very cooperative with the school's arrangements. When colleagues in charge require other colleagues to take courses on Tier 1, 2 and 3 or special courses on SEN, generally speaking, colleagues are very willing, possibly because they know there is a real need. In class teaching, they will definitely have the opportunity to encounter these students. Therefore, when they know that it is helpful to strengthen SEN teaching, colleagues are very willing to compile with the policy." (Primary school principal) (PS07-PR)*

However, interviewed teachers also expressed some pressure on training. Currently, in-service teachers mainly improve their skills through training courses offered by tertiary institutions. But the quality and content of the courses can affect their effectiveness. The EDB and different tertiary institutions organize various types of training activities, including sharing sessions and lectures, but some teachers expressed that some course content overemphasizes theory and lacks practical applications in teaching. Teachers can only use the case sharing in the course as a "reference", but they may not be able to apply it in daily teaching, especially since course instructors have limited subject expertise and find it difficult to provide practical support to teachers of different subjects.

*"To be honest, after completing the SENCO course, I even took the online version. At most, I could only talk about things like differentiated worksheets and visual strategies, but I haven't really implemented them. Maybe I've used them in mathematics or business, accounting and financial studies, but how do I apply that specialized knowledge to English, Chinese, and mathematics?" (Secondary school SENCO) (SS09-SE)*

*"I had been SENST for two years, we took a lot of courses, but none of them were really formal, and I believe they wouldn't have helped me much. Because they were still categorized, and they taught you how to do things, the sharing methods used by the public may not have as much theoretical support." (Secondary school SENST)(SS09-ST)*

As society and the education sector increasingly value IE, the interviewed primary and secondary school principals believe that it is worth considering adding IE as a core subject in teacher training. This will enable teachers to have a deep and professional understanding of caring for students with special learning needs and IE before entering the profession, and to understand the characteristics and needs of different students with special learning needs. This will help them to identify students' needs early in their teaching, and to collaborate with in-school support personnel in handling student situations in WSA during the theoretical and practical stages of their employment.

*"I think that in teacher training, we should add basic training for taking care of students with SEN. Taking care of different students with SEN can be an elective, but at least you need to know about it. Knowing that it is common, you should learn it. You don't have to worry about chasing the standard all the time." (Secondary school principal)(SS04-PR)*

*"Just as in teacher training, now that IE has become mainstream, the SEN course will be a core subject. It is a must-read." (Primary school principal) (PS09-PR)*

In the WSA, the awareness of teachers is important, but the IE policies and beliefs of decision-makers are equally important. Some EPs have pointed out that while training courses to support students with SEN have been implemented for several years, the courses also need to be updated in a timely manner to keep up with policy changes, increase in awareness as well as improvements in treatment methods and standards, so that frontline personnel can improve the situation more effectively and accurately.

*"A few years ago, mental health issues were included in SEN, which increased the focus in training and education. During their studies, they should have less exposure to real cases with mental health problems. EPs should handle some subclinical cases, even some standard cases of depression or anxiety, and have the ability to do so. Therefore, they will spend extra time after graduation to learn about different treatment methods and make up for the lack of experience in this area, so that they can do it with confidence. I think this is one of the areas that can be improved." (Secondary school EP)(SS11-EP)*

Some interviewed parents believe that the success of IE in schools depends on the belief of the principals. If schools lack an open and long-term vision in the development of IE, the effectiveness of policy implementation will be weakened.

*"I think the Government needs to educate school principals to accept. Secondly, they need to be open-minded. How much resources the school has received and spent on SEN from the Government and how those resources are allocated should be transparently monitored, so that we can make sure that children are not mistreated. I think monitoring is necessary. If schools use this money, the role of SENCO needs to be clear. Parents, teachers, and even training teachers should be educated too." (Primary school parent) (PS-PA02)*

SENCOs also believe that the Government can collaborate more with universities to conduct research on IE and review the effectiveness of implementation at local schools. Principals also agree that such research is useful for schools to learn from and review their own measures, in order to further improve their own development.

*"I know some research is conducted by universities, or the EDB itself has a team to conduct such research. I think these studies need to be localized. Different NGOs such as the Jockey Club have also invested in trying out some work. We need to summarize our local experiences and find our own methods, because our environment is unique." (Secondary school principal) (SS02-PR)*

For principals of primary and secondary schools, they believe that teacher participation is an important factor in implementing IE. Professional training not only helps schools establish a team consistent in its vision, but secondary school principals also believe that it contributes to the continuous development of individual teachers. The interviews show that in addition to recommending individual teachers to participate in external training, primary and secondary school

principals also organized whole-school teacher training to provide teachers with more opportunities to access relevant information. Given the current lack of IE training, primary and secondary school principals also suggest that relevant teacher training should be extended to pre-service teacher education programmes so that every prospective teacher has a certain understanding of students with special learning needs before entering the workplace. This would enable them to have certain abilities and skills to provide support in actual classroom situations and instructional design, while also alleviating the pressure brought by teacher development programmes.

For primary and secondary school teachers, in the context of IE, some teachers also agree that development programmes can help improve or support their teaching in the classroom, such as enhancing their understanding of students with special learning needs and understanding various accommodation strategies. However, the quality of courses offered by external organizations varies. Even after spending time studying, teachers may not be able to apply what they have learned in their own teaching. After all, IE is a whole-school policy, and the entire school team should continue to progress with policy development in order to achieve more ideal results. For secondary schools, the special learning needs that schools often face are mental health issues among students. Although mental health issues have been included in the scope of support in recent years, there is a lack of related professional training, which puts professionals in a "learning while doing" situation and affects the effectiveness of support. Therefore, secondary school EPs suggest that when implementing various support measures at the frontline, relevant training should also be added to training courses to allow professionals to be better prepared for support work.

### **5.4.3 Impact of Cross-Professional Support on Integrated Education and Creation of Inclusive Campus**

#### **5.4.3.1 Situation and Support for Students' Mental and Emotional Health in General and During the Epidemic**

The mental health of students is closely related to their personal growth, and both students themselves and parents and teachers should pay attention to their mental health. In order to enhance school's attention to mental health, according to interviews with primary and secondary school principals, schools will conduct mental health education for students, parents, and teachers through various activities in daily life, to increase stakeholders' awareness, and support students' mental health with preventive strategies.

*"Especially in the past year, we have done more preparatory work rather than defensive work. In education, we give students more understanding of their emotions and let them know that it is not taboo to talk about their difficulties and troubles. Sometimes they really cannot concentrate and sleep, which makes it difficult for them to return to school. It is not about avoidance, but about seeking help.... In recent years, the counseling team and SEN groups have made efforts to help students understand their emotions." (Secondary school principal) (SS03-PR)*

However, facing the various changes brought about by the epidemic in recent years, such as the reduction of face-to-face communication opportunities and changes in lifestyle habits, students' emotional problems have worsened. Especially during online learning periods, students in need may not actively seek help, making it more difficult to provide professional support which entails parents' insight and assistance to a larger extent.

*"For students with emotional issues, it is even more difficult because they may not be willing to seek help themselves and can only rely on others to actively ask them. However, during the pandemic, they may be even less willing to actively seek help, making the situation more difficult." (Secondary School EP) (SS03-EP)*

*"The first is mental health. For some people, face-to-face communication is very important. With fewer opportunities for this during the pandemic, many students, whether they have emotional problems or not, may face difficulties with their mental health...During the pandemic, many of their daily routines were disrupted, and they might not be able to master some of the self-care skills. From our observations, especially every time we resumed classes, they were very confused and unable to grasp the rhythm of going to school. This can also affect many other things, such as their emotions in learning, which I think is a difficult area for both secondary and primary school students."* (Secondary School EP) (SS02-EP)

Based on the above situations, most of the interviewed social workers also believe that parental involvement is an important factor in supporting students' emotions, and continuous parental education can help parents understand mental health-related information, such as symptoms of MI, how to identify students' mental needs, etc.

*"The school counseling team continuously holds some mental health lectures. For example, if you are studying in junior forms here, there may be three or four times when mental health is discussed, which enables students to learn about relevant knowledge, such as symptoms. There are also some large-scale programmes that the entire grade may participate in. The school also sets up booths and holds many different activities to give students some concepts of MI and mental health. (Secondary School Social Worker) (SS02-SW)*

The school can also provide more opportunities and platforms for parents to openly discuss mental health issues so that all stakeholders can face mental health problems and make it easier for students with mental health needs to receive support and assistance.

*"I think what needs to be done is to at least make the whole thing more normalized. For example, enhance everyone's acceptance level of mental health and emotional distress, because some students cannot accept these names, or parents cannot accept these names, and they are unwilling to seek treatment. Everyone thinks they have this need, but they are unwilling to face it, thinking that such things are weird, like monsters, so they are unwilling to see a doctor. Therefore, I think that if we can popularize these things and let everyone know that these things are normal and many people have them, when their acceptance level is higher, it will be smoother and easier for them to receive support."* (Secondary School Social Worker) (SS01-SW)

Regarding parental education methods, interviewed parents also agree that some activities organized by institutions or universities, such as talks and training, can help them and their children, while also establishing a sense of community support.

*"We definitely cannot rely solely on schools, we also need support from doctors, nurses, social workers, and the community. [I hope that if the community] has more [lectures], just like Baptist University has a subject on early childhood education, which does a lot of research and holds many of these talks. I think the talks are very helpful because they have a lot of data that can quickly support me in finding ways to help my child."* (Primary school parent) (PS-PA03)

In terms of supporting students' mental health, in addition to improving the identification skills of students, parents, and teachers, more professionals are needed to assist parents and teachers after identifying students with needs early on. Social workers interviewed in this Study indicated that identifying students in need of mental health support often requires the observation of people around them and early evaluation and referral, which also depends on the level of awareness of mental health of people around them.

*"First, it's observation, to see if there are any students that the teacher has noticed or sometimes it may be a classmate who noticed that this student is a bit different, or it may be the parents. When we receive this information, the first thing we do is ask for more information, that is, to understand their performance at school and at home, and then we will contact the student to*

*understand if they have any symptoms of MI. If so, after we complete the evaluation and think that he may have some mental health problems, we will make some referrals. If it is urgent, there are some community services that will be faster for him to see a psychiatrist; for those who may not be so urgent, they may be referred to public hospitals and other services. If he is diagnosed with some emotional problems, he can discuss with the school what accommodations can be made when he talks to the school and students." (Secondary school social worker) (SS01-SW)*

*"The changes in MI cases are significant. Even if students experience the same low mood, their symptoms and conditions may be very different. Therefore, it is crucial to provide adequate training for teachers to support these students. We are used to providing Tier 2 or Tier 3 support for students, but there are many resources available for students with MI. We may only intervene when their condition worsens and sounds an alarm. Regarding exam and homework accommodations, I think we provide relatively little support for students with MI compared to Tier 2 support." (Secondary school EP) (SS01-EP)*

Although primary and secondary schools now have professionals supporting students, such as social workers, counsellors, and EPs, mental health issues involve more privacy concerns, making it more difficult for social workers to collaborate with the student support team in schools. Therefore, they are unable to provide comprehensive support to students' study, emotional, and personal growth needs.

*"The tension level of MI cases is higher than the other eight categories, but because of privacy concerns, many people are unaware. When fewer people know, the support for these cases is unknown. The student support team is not responsible for these cases. Usually it goes to social workers. However, collaboration is difficult to define, such as how we support students in learning, and how social workers support them in mental health. It is challenging to know how to handle this type of students." (Secondary school social worker) (SS15-SW)*

In addition, social workers interviewed in primary and secondary schools all reflect that the long waiting time for psychiatric diagnosis and assessment currently hinders immediate support for students. The diagnosis by doctors only confirms the student's condition and may not necessarily provide support and accommodation methods for the student's psychological problems, which makes it difficult for schools to provide support.

*"If there is a medical certificate the success rate is higher, that is, if the doctor states clearly, when the school sees the medical certificate, it will be easier to accept, and the success rate will be higher. But sometimes, there are some psychological problems which doctors may not be able to provide too much support or accommodation methods, which will make it more difficult." (Secondary school social worker) (SS01-SW)*

*"As far as mental health issues are concerned, if there can be more resources to shorten their time to wait for a doctor, it would be a great help, because it really takes too long in terms of diagnosis and assessment. Some students doubt whether they have emotional problems, and in areas where the boundaries are unclear, it takes a long time for us to take them to see a doctor. I think that if we can reduce the wait, it will be much better for supporting them." (Secondary school social worker) (SS01-SW)*

From the above interviews, primary and secondary schools are committed to enhancing the attention of students, parents, and teachers to mental health. Through educational activities, they increase the awareness of all stakeholders in order to identify and support students in need early, and to establish an open and inclusive environment for students and parents who are in need. School principals are also committed to creating a caring learning environment to reduce the chances of students experiencing emotional problems and taking preventive measures. However, in recent years, due to the impact of the epidemic, there have been significant changes in students' learning environment, from school learning to home learning, which has reduced opportunities for group life at campus and also affected schools' support for students. Due to the lack of direct interaction opportunities, schools

have difficulties in providing timely support to students and need to rely on students or parents to actively seek help before remote support can be provided, greatly weakening the effectiveness of support.

However, in the support process, primary and secondary schools also need the help of professional staff. Currently EPs or psychiatrists have not been able to provide comprehensive support in either diagnosis or support. This situation means that although schools have spent a lot of effort and time preparing for parents and students, they still lack sufficient resources, especially professional human resources, to provide further support, resulting in schools being in a situation where they need to identify cases and then wait for support together, which affects the effectiveness of support and gradually affects the progress and results of support.

The interviews show that people whom students come into contact with in their lives should also have a certain awareness of mental health, which is closely related to the understanding of schools and society. Improving the public's awareness of mental health can help build a shared participation and early support environment. The above interviews also show that primary and secondary schools have been committed to gradually establishing an inclusive school environment through various educational work and then promoting it to the community. However, the changes in mental health cases are great, and symptoms or conditions can be very different for students with emotional needs, which is also a severe challenge for parents and teachers. Schools often only provide individual support when students raise an alarm, which is not ideal.

#### **5.4.3.2 Inclusive and Healthy Campus**

Schools are places for group activities. School atmosphere and mutual support among students are extremely important. In interviews, primary and secondary school principals also mentioned that they actively promote mutual assistance among students at campus, establish integrated and positive values, and allow students to learn more comfortably and feel more at ease at school. They also try to make good use of peer support to handle students' emotional problems.

*"We are very accommodating to students with SEN, and there is no discrimination among students because of SEN. First of all, we won't tell students that this classmate has SEN, but students can recognize it, especially those with mild ID. In implementing IE, it's not just about supporting students, but caring policies should also take care of their health, assistance, and even discipline. The discipline and counseling team is not just handling the problems of students with SEN. Basically, some students with mild ID are very well-behaved, but there are cases of bullying towards these students. Our policy is not to punish the bullying students, but to persuade them and encourage mutual support and help among classmates." (Secondary school principal) (SS14-PR)*

*"From the perspective of ordinary students, their mentality is very pure, without the complexity of adults. They just think that the classmate occasionally can't sit still or is sometimes noticed more by the teacher. We try to maintain a non-labeling campus, which is also the campus atmosphere we want to create. For parents who enroll their children in a school, for the school to admit students, and for the life of students with SEN on campus, not labeling is the basic premise. We will treat them as a family and not particularly label two-thirds of the family as 'ordinary family members' and one-third as 'special family members'." (Primary school principal) (PS07-PR)*

Establishing a good school atmosphere relies on the participation of teachers. Interviewed teachers indicated that all parties should equally value the mental health of teachers and address their needs, in order to gradually instill positive values in students during daily teaching, allowing them to grow up in an open environment, appreciate themselves, and develop their strengths from a young age.

*"I think it should start with the teachers, because if teachers themselves are under great pressure or often look worried, they won't be happy either. So, I would step back and first address the mental health of teachers, and then think about the students and how to instill positive values in them. It's something that needs to be done slowly, and holding large-scale activities can leave a deep impression on them. Also, the teacher's personal charm and how to manage the class are also important." (Secondary school teacher) (SS06-CL)*

With the development of IE, teachers need to face the learning diversity among students. However, teachers in the classroom need to spend more time dealing with the special learning needs of students, making it difficult to care for all students in the class, which is also unfair to students who do not have special learning needs. Some interviewed primary school principals also believe that while promoting IE, the teacher-to-student ratio and student-to-class ratio should be emphasized, allowing every student to receive comprehensive care.

*"In the classroom, there are students with different types of SEN. How to help them is a challenge because each type of students has different needs. I can help one type of students with educational accommodations, but they may not be able to help the second type of student, yet they are all in the same classroom. The most difficult situation for teachers is when there are two or three students with ASD and 8-10 students with ADHD in the same classroom. It's not just about taking care of them, but it's also difficult to normal teaching." (Secondary school principal)(SS02-PR)*

*"The Government wants to promote IE throughout Hong Kong, but they should also consider whether there are enough teachers to support this. Many special schools have already been closed. So, how do you use your resources? Can the overall ratio of students to teachers get better?" (Primary school principal)(PS05-PR)*

In terms of mode of integration, both primary and secondary school principals and support teachers interviewed believe that placing students with different types of SEN in the same classroom is not always ideal. Instead, when students have similar needs and characteristics, they can be taught together using more accommodating teaching methods. For example, if there are students in the class with poor concentration and a need to move around, teachers can design interactive activities in the classroom to facilitate learning in a more suitable environment.

*"If we idealize it, we can put children of similar categories and situations in the same class, which would make it easier for us to handle... For example, if there are children with attention deficit in the class, who need to move around, the teacher should incorporate more movement activities in the lesson design, and even have them do some exercises such as jumping during class." (Primary School SENST) (PS02-ST)*

The above shows that primary and secondary schools are committed to building an inclusive campus and creating an "education for all" school. Primary and secondary schools also start with teachers to change their attitudes and mental health, so as to create conditions for promoting caring and inclusive culture at school. At the same time, primary and secondary schools are committed to building a social circle for students, using peer support to help all students grow in a caring environment, where peers can also be aware of each other's needs and seek help early.

The "Catering for Student Differences - Indicators for Inclusion" established by the EDB indicates that the values of inclusion require all teachers and staff, students, school management committees, and parents to work together to create an integrated, collaborative, and stimulating campus. From the interviews, it can also be seen that primary and secondary schools are striving to establish this ideal vision in terms of culture, policies, and measures according to the indicators. However, during the process in which schools have made dedication and efforts, the implementation has made them powerless even with good intentions. Facing the diversity of special learning needs of students, handling the special situations of students in class, especially taking care of the learning differences is the most challenging part for teachers. If a student with special learning needs affects the class, the

teacher needs to deal with their problems or situations first, then take care of other students' learning, and at the same time, also think of appropriate methods to ensure that students have some learning effectiveness. This increases the pressure on teachers in the classroom. Overwhelmed teachers also find it difficult to cater to the needs of each student, and can only make trade-offs and sacrifices, which also affect the establishment of an inclusive culture.

#### **5.4.4 Status of Parental Care for Children with SEN and Home-School Cooperation**

##### **5.4.4.1 Situation of Family Support**

Regarding parental attitudes, based on the results of interviews with parents, secondary school parents are more accepting of their children's special learning needs than before and are willing to actively seek help and cooperate with relevant support. However, primary school parents are still relatively resistant to accepting that their children have special learning needs.

*"Six years ago, parents were more conservative about the individual needs of students. Many times, we would take a more proactive role and ask students if they have any learning needs that we can support. Then, parents would start to submit reports to the school. But now, many times on registration day, parents are already very proactive and want you to know about their children's situation so that they can receive appropriate help. This situation is really different from before. Now, parents are much more proactive." (Secondary school social worker) (SS15-SW)*

*"If the school only refers students in Primary 1, there is a gap in the acceptance level of parents, their willingness to participate, and their ability to provide support at home. They may still not accept that their child has some special learning needs or that they are different from other children in their grade. In this aspect, we need to convince parents and children to practise." (Primary school support teacher) (PS03-ST)*

During the interviews, some parents were found to have not let their children receive support early enough during their primary school years, causing them to miss the golden period of professional therapy. Therefore, interviewed SENCOs and social workers pointed out that parental education is indispensable, and early strengthening of parents' understanding of special learning needs can help reduce their wariness and enable their children to be assessed and receive treatment as early as possible.

*"In fact, we need to educate both parents and students because parents often have a huge influence on their children. For example, a friend recently discovered that her child has autism, but the mother was very out of control and would say negative things. It may be necessary for professionals to provide relevant knowledge and advice to parents as soon as they get hold of their children's diagnosis, as it can actually affect the student's growth. (Primary school social worker)(PS13-SW)*

A primary school principal also stated that there have been parents who did not recognize their children's special learning needs outside of academic achievements, which shows that parental education is necessary to change their mindset.

*"I have seen students who have special learning needs but have not been reported. It is very obvious, especially for those with autism. Their family members refuse to report it, and there is not much we can do to help. So the student continues to attend school without much progress because their mother does their homework for them, and their family does not have high expectations for their learning. Therefore, I think parental education is very important."(Primary School Principal) (PS01-PR)*

*"Basically, he doesn't have any talent in studying, or maybe his talent is not in academics, but rather in crafts or sports. But parents might think that crafts and singing are not useful at all. They might wonder what's the use of being able to run fast on a sports field if you can't do well in academics. This can cause frustration for the child, as parents may not be satisfied because they focus on the child's grades, which the child is unable to produce." (Primary School Principal) (PS08-PR)*

*"I have also seen some new arrival mothers say, 'we have never encountered such things before. Perhaps our child misbehaved and didn't listen to us before.' Therefore, I think parental education is important, and it should start early, not just in secondary school. We hope to identify and provide support to students earlier, rather than waiting until problems arise before remedying them. We need to take action in all areas, and parental education should start early, even in primary school. Sometimes we request parents to give us the records of their child in primary school." (Secondary School SENCO) (SS04-SE+RSW+ST)*

#### **5.4.4.2 Quality and Waiting Time of Professional Support Services**

Primary school parents interviewed indicated that the waiting time for government services is too long and the other private therapeutic services are also very expensive. Apart from affordability, it also results in their children with special learning needs being unable to receive timely service support. For example, children with Asperger's syndrome may need long-term treatment. If parents cannot afford private therapeutic services, it will affect their growth.

*"Because I am a single parent, I know that there are some services available outside, but many of them are very expensive, so I cannot afford them. The government services are not available to me either because of long waiting time. In fact, there are difficulties in this regard." (Primary school parent) (PS-PA06)*

*"My son started music therapy from Primary 2 onwards, it was private and referred by the principal. It was helpful to the brain of children with Asperger's syndrome, listening to frequencies, it cost \$700 per session, and we spent a lot of money listening for several years." (Primary school parent) (SS-PA05)*

*"My son was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome, and new environment would cause him a lot of stress, which I also have to bear.... If he stays in the community where the previous kindergarten was, it might be better for him to study in the same school with the kindergarten classmates. Everyone would feel more comfortable, and the transition would be better. They are willing to accept that he has Asperger's syndrome, and I am more willing to accept it too. In the end, there are some resources that allow us to let him receive treatment at the Heep Hong Society. Looking back, the resources around us were sufficient, including occupational therapy and physiotherapy until he was in Primary 5, and later transferred to [Prince of] Wales Hospital." (Primary school parent) (SS-PA05)*

In addition, the lack of suitable support services is also a weakness of the current overall professional support services.

*"In fact, there was a community center downstairs from my home, and they tried their best to help my son with his homework. During the process of registration, I told the staff that he has dyslexia. I understood that as a tutor, it might be frustrating to teach him as a regular student, but I couldn't find any other suitable services back then...so we went with it. But who knew that my son only started going in June, and by August it closed down. The reason was that the center had been relying on government subsidies, which were just barely enough, but when the rent went up, they couldn't sustain it." (Primary school parent)(PS-PA0)*

### 5.4.4.3 Home-School Cooperation

Regarding home-school cooperation, parents stated that if there is regular and good communication with the SENCO, they will have greater confidence in the school and allow their children to receive support at school. SENCOs also stated that gaining the trust of parents is an important part of promoting home-school cooperation and makes it easier to begin supporting students with SEN.

*"The parents like me very much and they even added me on WhatsApp. No wonder we have parents willing to volunteer. I have my own parent group, and parents like to see the one called coordinator...When I have a good relationship with parents, I am very honest and say, 'Mom, you're not doing it quite right'. Actually, parents are receptive because we have a good relationship. These are built on relationships." (Secondary School SENCO) (SS15-SE)*

*"The vast majority of parents are clearly starting from scratch, and they are the most difficult to deal with. If we can contact them well at this stage, it will be very easy for us to refer them to relevant resources. Basically, most parents have agreed in recent years, but there are three who didn't agree this year. However, I will call each of them and say, 'What will be the consequences if you don't do this? When you get to secondary school, the teacher won't know anything, there won't be timely support, you'll have to queue up to see an EP again. When they get to secondary school, they have a chance to get exam accommodations, which are even more necessary, and it will affect their university entrance.' When I talk about these things, they get scared, and then they agree!" (Primary School SENCO) (PS02-SE)*

*"I have a work phone and communicate with others through WhatsApp. I think WhatsApp is a great instant messaging tool because you don't have to coordinate times like you used to with phone calls. Sometimes when parents are busy, they might not have time to answer our phone calls, but with WhatsApp, I can leave a message or a voice recording and they can respond to me later when they have time. I think my communication with parents is good and very close. They can also contact me through WhatsApp if they have any issues and don't have to worry about me being off duty. Of course, I may not be able to respond immediately during holidays, but most of the time, they don't have to wait too long. These communication tools are very useful." (Secondary school teacher) (SS06-CL)*

The interviewed principals also indicated that the key to promoting home-school cooperation is to gain parental support, which relies heavily on the efforts of the SENCOs. In addition, EPs believe that there is an increasing trend of parent-child conflicts during the school suspension period due to the epidemic. How parents can improve their communication and interaction with their children in the future is a major challenge for promoting home-school cooperation, as it will affect the behavior of students with special learning needs in school and have an impact on the school.

*"Firstly, parents may not necessarily know how to handle students with SEN. During the school suspension period, both parents and students are at home, so there may be more friction. Besides dealing with how students socialize and communicate, we also have to handle some parent-child conflicts, such as how to help students with hyperactivity to concentrate. Therefore, this has become even more difficult. Secondly, some schools or organizations provide some training online, but most responses believe that face-to-face interaction is better. Of course, it is not completely ineffective, but the effectiveness of face-to-face training is greater than that of online training. So I think this is a bigger challenge. (Secondary School EP) (SS02-EP)*

In summary, parents of primary school students have insufficient understanding and tolerance towards students with special learning needs. Even if primary schools provide assistance, the parents may not accept their children's situation and needs. It affects the support and growth of students. On the other hand, parents of secondary school students are more proactive in seeking assistance when

their children are promoted to secondary school, making it easier for secondary schools to respond to students' needs and situations, and establish a good home-school cooperation relationship. In order to improve parents' understanding of special learning needs, principals and social workers in primary and secondary schools unanimously believe that parental education needs to be strengthened to help parents accept their children's needs and dispel stereotypes about students with special learning needs. In addition to enabling students to receive appropriate support as early as possible, a culture of appreciation and care should also be established for parents to appreciate students' talents beyond academics, so that students with special learning needs can also develop their potential and showcase their strengths.

In terms of parental support, some parents expressed their willingness to seek various forms of support, such as government and external organizations' therapy. However, government treatment has a long waiting time, and parents need to seek services from other organizations. The cost of these services is high, and parents have difficulty affording them. Also, suitable services for students' needs are lacking, and they cannot provide effective support for students. This forces parents to rely on school assistance, affecting the effectiveness of support and preventing the promotion of inclusive culture from schools to communities.

When promoting IE, schools and parents should understand each other's roles and responsibilities and actively strengthen communication and cooperation to provide appropriate support for students with SEN. The actual situation in primary and secondary schools shows that effective home-school cooperation can establish a relationship of mutual trust, enabling schools to help students connect with secondary schools early and receive support early after their transition to secondary school. For secondary schools, real-life cases illustrate the importance of communication with parents. In addition to working together to support students, a relationship of mutual trust can enable schools to support parents, deescalate parent-child conflicts, and allow students to grow up in a positive and healthy family atmosphere.

#### **5.4.5 Certain Social and Cultural Beliefs Remain Deep-Seated**

##### **5.4.5.1 Hong Kong's Exam-Oriented Culture**

At the school level, some secondary school teachers still view attending university as the only way out, which puts a lot of pressure on students with special learning needs. They may become demotivated because they cannot keep up with the learning pace. Moreover, the entire Hong Kong society places too much emphasis on academic achievement, which loses sight of the personal abilities of students with special learning needs.

*"In fact, Hong Kong has a relatively special situation, which is that we place more emphasis on grades. So parents are very nervous about this, and they are not willing to make accommodations... even if you offer them a chance, they will not want it, especially in some elite schools... Some children clearly need to go to special schools, but parents still want them to try, and the school has no right to refuse them. We will take care of them. However, the problem is that when parents realize that they cannot force their children, they want to go back to special schools, but they may have to wait in line for a long time and waste several more years." (Primary school principal) (PS01-PR)*

Some parents even claim that their children are more enthusiastic about taking the HKDSE than they are, which shows the great impact of the exam-oriented culture. At the primary school level, the principal stated that the current education system requires primary school students to face various assessments, exams, and tests, the only thing can do is to try to make them not hate studying. In the long run, in an exam-oriented culture, whether it is students, teachers, or schools, all may be losers.

*"Actually, sometimes I would just cheer up teachers and students. In primary school, you have to make them hold a pen and do your best to make them not hate studying, because we have to take the Pre-S1 HKAT to evaluate our school. And there's TSA tests, some of which even force the students to take it, especially the difficult ones, like for non-Chinese classes." (Primary School Principal) (PS06-PR)*

#### **5.4.5.2 Level of Social Acceptance and Growth of Students with SEN**

Although society's tolerance for students with SEN has significantly improved, there is still room for improvement in overall social acceptance. During interviews with primary school parents, some mentioned that other parents were unhappy with their children being disturbed by students with special learning needs during class.

*"Of course, parents want their children to learn in a good environment. There are a few students in the class who are assumed to be prone to violence or emotional outbursts, or they don't follow the rules in class, which prevents their children from learning or make them feel disturbed during class...The contradiction is the view of other parents to this student. If the teacher accommodates this student, the teacher or school will face great pressure and need a long time to figure out how we can accept this student. This is more difficult." (Primary School Principal) (PS08-PR)*

Interviewed principals, SENCOs, and social workers also reported instances where parents falsely reported their children as having SEN in order to gain an advantage during exams.

*"I used to teach a student whose mother gave them medication to improve their concentration, which resulted in them performing well in their studies. When they were in Primary 5 and 6, I didn't think they had ADHD, and many of my colleagues also didn't think so. But the mother was determined to make them an ADHD student... if a well-intentioned educator sees this, they will not only shed tears but also feel very heartbroken." (Primary school principal) (PS06-PR)*

In a fiercely competitive environment, some parents still insist on placing their children with severe SEN in ordinary schools, ultimately wasting their entire primary school years. The actual social atmosphere has not yet achieved true inclusive, as some parents still do not accept their children attending special schools.

*"In my district, some parents think, 'Oh, you want my child to attend a special school? I won't transfer them, or are you labeling my child?' The overall social atmosphere has not yet reached true inclusion. So when adults are not thinking in this way, how can children easily accept and discover each other's strengths?" (Primary school SENCO)(PS06-SE)*

The current examination system in Hong Kong creates a culture where society and parents place a strong emphasis on obtaining good grades. Primary and secondary schools are required to conduct various assessments and examinations according to the standards set by the EDB and society. This leads to schools and parents placing a high value on exams and training students for the sake of good grades. Primary schools focus on improving students' performance in the territory-wide system assessment to achieve good ratings and analysis. For secondary schools, the Pre-S1 HKAT serves as a placement test and also analyzes the abilities of students to reflect whether their level matches the school's standards. As public exams result in relevant score analysis and data, schools compete with each other, and these data become a bargaining chip for attracting students. Therefore, primary and secondary schools strive to improve exam results, forming a learning culture focused on grades, which requires students with special learning needs to receive exam "training". As for parents, the exam culture also makes them focus on grades, and they need to act according to the school's level and development, viewing grades as the key to their children's learning. Parents' attention to grades also prompts schools to make more accommodations to meet parental expectations and societal expectations, forming a vicious cycle.

As a result, the existing examination system influences parents, teachers, and schools, promoting the emergence of exam culture, which makes students more focused on grades than learning itself. The development of knowledge and skills becomes a tool for achieving good grades, which also makes stakeholders strive to improve students' grades while ignoring their other potentials and strengths. With the development of IE, parents can see that the Government and schools are investing a lot of resources in students with special learning needs, but they have different attitudes towards special arrangements for students. Regardless of their views, parents see their children's learning as a kind of interests, linking learning, grades, and future prospects, neglecting the purpose of learning for students' growth. Parents who accept IE only see the measures as beneficial, while those who oppose it resist their children learning together with those students, creating conflicts that frontline teachers and schools must bear. The policy of integration only puts students in the same space, and parents and students cannot truly view students with special learning needs as their peers. The atmosphere of integration often only remains in the classroom and the school. Therefore, changes need to be made at the parental and societal level to achieve true integration.

## Chapter 6 Results of School Case Study

### 6.1 Case Study Design

Based on the overall results of the questionnaire survey, the research team selected suitable schools to participate in this case study. This case study adopted a multiple case study approach and applied an intrinsic case study direction. Intrinsic case study thoroughly understands the nature of the phenomenon and is suitable for in-depth understanding of specific phenomena or special events. When researchers conduct more in-depth and comprehensive understanding of a specific research object, this case study approach is more suitable.

However, due to the intermittent suspension and resumption of schools during the research period, which had a significant impact on school operations, the research team also used reputational case sampling in addition to referring to the results of the questionnaire survey. Reputational case sampling refers to using positive evaluations from the sector as a criterion for selecting cases in the case selection process to explore good examples of implementing IE, with the expectation of summarizing the favorable factors and conditions for the sustained development of IE. In the end, a total of 8 cases, including 4 primary schools and 4 secondary schools, were selected as case study objects. The purpose of this case study is to explore in details the similarities and differences in the implementation of IE in different primary and secondary schools, explore relevant opinions on good examples of implementing IE, and identify the key success factors for implementing IE in schools.

The case study tools used in this study were *the Integration education Checklist: A Self-Assessment of Best Practices* published by Villa & Thousand (2021) and *the Catering for Student Differences – Indicator for Inclusion* in Hong Kong provided by the EDB (2008). A case study design framework checklist table that is consistent with the context of Hong Kong's education was designed (see Appendix 8).

### 6.2 Findings of Selected Cases

A total of 8 cases were selected for this case study, including 4 primary schools and 4 secondary schools. The selection criteria were schools that had relatively ideal implementation of IE as reflected in the overall data of the questionnaire survey, and had positive evaluations of implementing IE from the sector. The research team conducted case studies of the selected schools by reviewing documents, observing activities or classes in person, and conducting interviews with different stakeholders of the schools to understand the current situation of IE in the schools and explore opinions on implementing IE. The case study started in June 2021 and was completed in July, lasting for two months.

#### 6.2.1 School A

##### 6.2.1.1 School Background

School A is a primary school located in the New Territories. Its mission is to provide quality education for age-appropriate students in the district with a proactive and enterprising attitude. The school adopts WSA to IE, with the student support team serving as the leading coordinating group to assist in the implementation of programs and activities for students with SEN, including individual counseling, group activities, case conferences, and crisis management.

In the 2020/21 school year, School A had a total of 88 students with SEN, and about 25 students were not yet formally identified with SEN. Among them, the students with speech and language impairment and SLD were the most, accounting for 42 and 41 respectively, followed by 13 students with ADHD, and also 7 students with ASD. There were no students with PD, VI, emotional, and behavioral problems at that time.

### **6.2.1.2 Management and Organization**

#### **Team**

The total number of teachers in the school is 57, with 45% having received special education training.

The Student Support Team was established in the 2011/12 school year, coordinated by the principal and consisting of 12 members, including an EP, curriculum development leaders, the SENCO, SENSTs, social workers, class teachers, subject heads, and teaching assistants.

#### **Duties and Support Measures**

- Arranging pull-out guidance classes to provide the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme in various subjects for Primary 2 students with low academic achievement;
- Arranging pull-out guidance classes to provide the Intensive Remedial Teaching Programme in Chinese and English for Primary 3 students with low academic achievement;
- Arranging after-school guidance classes to provide academic support in Chinese, English, and Mathematics for Primary 1 to 6 students with low academic achievement ;
- Providing School-based Speech Therapy Service, offering group/individual speech therapy/training one to three times a month for students with SpLI;
- Arranging teaching assistants to provide after-school homework guidance for students in need under the supervision of teachers;
- Providing learning, homework, and assessment accommodations to students in need, recording their learning outcomes through classroom observation, and reporting to parents when appropriate;
- Establishing the "Big Brothers and Sisters, Learning Companion, and Guidance Ambassador" program to assist junior primary students;
- Establishing the "Peer Reading Companion" program to assist students with dyslexia in reading extracurricular books and improve their reading abilities;
- Organizing small groups for improving attention, reading and writing, occupational therapy, and social skills to teach relevant skills and improve learning and social abilities for students in need;
- Providing parent education, including talks, training courses, and workshops, to help parents understand the learning characteristics of students with SEN, cooperate with the school's measures, and provide home-based support; and
- Arranging teachers to participate in training related to caring for students with SEN provided by the EDB, inviting professional organizations to provide training, including supporting students with SEN in a WSA and teaching strategies for students with ASD.

#### **Overall support policies and strategies of the school**

The school promotes the school-based IE through appropriate administrative arrangements and staffing, including arranging teachers of various subjects to attend talks, workshops and training courses on IE, peer observation and exchange activities with teachers from other schools, enhancing teachers' professional development in the field of IE, completing the three-level professional

development framework and establishing a database of teachers' professional development on IE. The school has been implementing the three-level professional development framework since the 2007/08 school year. At present, at least 10% of teachers have completed 30 hours of basic courses, three teachers have completed 90 hours of advanced courses, and at least two Chinese and English teachers have completed 60 hours of thematic course on supporting students with SEN.

When the government establishes the position of the SENCO in every ordinary school, the school further extends its policies, resources and support measures for IE, and strives to establish a school culture of integration. Through resource allocation, appropriate and diversified support services are provided to students to enhance their learning effectiveness and assist them in integrating into school life. On the other hand, through establishing a regular communication mechanism and different channels, such as sunshine helpline, parent tea gathering, and parent day, the school works with parents to discuss strategies for supporting students and strives to make parents aware of the overall support policies of the school.

## **Whole School Approach**

### **Whole School Approach to Integrated Education**

The school is committed to establishing a culture of inclusivity through WSA to support students with special learning needs. By allocating resources, the school provides appropriate and diverse support services to enhance students' learning effectiveness and help them integrate into school life. The principal emphasizes that true "integration" means that even though students have special learning needs, the school does not differentiate them with special eyes after their admission, but treats them as ordinary students. (Principal Interview)

### **Expanding level of integration**

For students with special learning needs, the school provides varied levels of support. Subject teachers, resource teachers, and teaching assistants will continue to provide opinions on curriculum planning and counseling to meet the special learning needs of students while developing their potential. Accommodations are also provided during exams, such as reading papers and extra time arrangements. In dealing with some suspected cases, the school also provides these support and accommodations for students whenever possible before referral to suit their needs.

As for teachers, the school's SENCO coordinates IE affairs. Teachers can also use the different resources provided by the EDB, such as speech therapists and guidance teachers. The principal said that all teachers in the school are not resistant to the policies implemented by the bureau and cooperate with the school's arrangements. Teachers are also willing to participate in training courses on SEN because they will inevitably encounter relevant students in class teaching. When they know that it is helpful to teach students with special needs, teachers are happy to participate in training courses. (Principal Interview)

### **"Strength-based" Support**

In terms of subjects, the school adopts a "strengths-based" support principle. Teachers will prioritize students' strengths, advantages, or interests rather than their obstacles, and strive to develop students' potential. At the beginning of the semester, the class teacher also tries to identify the strengths or advantages of each student with special learning needs, and then the subject teachers of Chinese, English, and Mathematics jointly formulate measures to strengthen their strengths or advantages and implement them throughout the school year, giving students the opportunity to realize their strengths and allowing subject teachers to better understand each student. In daily arrangements, students can contact or make appointments with student guidance teachers in the counseling room before class,

during recesses and lunch time, and after class. Student guidance teachers also often talk to students during morning, recesses, and lunch time to enhance mutual assistance between teachers and students.

### **6.2.1.3 Learning and Teaching**

#### Class allocation

In terms of class allocation, while the school retains the elite class system, other classes are grouped evenly according to the grades of students. With each class with 27 students, the top 27 students in exam results in the whole grade can enter the elite class. There will be one elite class for Primary 1 and 2, and two elite classes for Primary 3 to 6. Other students and classes will be grouped evenly according to the grades of students, so each class may include students ranked fiftieth or sixtieth in the whole grade, as well as students ranked around one hundred or beyond.

However, the elite class system can easily lead to uneven distribution of teaching resources as perceived by parents. The principal stated that some parents believe that the elite class has more and richer learning content, and also think that the teachers who teach the elite class are more intelligent (principal interview). In response to parents' requests, more students will be flexibly arranged to enter the elite class, resulting in the elite class size reaching 29 students. For some students with special learning needs, such as those with autism or ADHD, if their learning ability and grades meet the requirements of the elite class, teachers who teach the elite class need to handle the special learning needs of these students while dealing with a larger number of students, which results in overlooking of these students easily, and it may be harder for teachers to attend to everyone's needs during class.

#### Differentiated curriculum arrangement

In terms of curriculum arrangement, it is planned and coordinated by the curriculum team for students with higher abilities. High-level thinking teaching is listed as the development focus of each subject. The school has begun to integrate "gifted education popularization" into the curriculum to enhance students' learning interest and ability and to develop their potential. A leap forward class in Chinese and English was added in Primary 5 to mainly assist ADHD students with good learning abilities in how to focus and learn more effectively, thereby improving their academic level. For students with weaker abilities, the school mainly uses supplementary teaching materials in Chinese and English subjects in Primary 2 and 3 to assist their learning. Supplementary teaching materials are designed and tested in small classes by the SENCO and student guidance teacher. The school also added small class teaching in Chinese and English subjects in Primary 3 to assist students with weaker abilities in catching up with the curriculum.

In accordance with the guidelines of the EDB, the school supports students with SEN in three-tier support model. However, as many teachers are involved in the Tier 1 support model, it is difficult to provide complete support. As teachers already have to consider many things in class, they may only address the needs of students with SEN later. According to the SENCO, even if teachers are willing to take care of every student in the classroom, as subject teachers, they hope to do better in gifted training within their subject team, so they may pay less attention to students with SEN (SENCO interview). Therefore, the school implements the "Performance Data Analysis" program specifically to analyze and display all students' grades comprehensively, and to provide differentiated instruction based on their individual abilities to cater for students' learning diversity.

### **6.2.1.4 Home-School Co-operation and Professional Therapeutic Intervention**

#### Attitudes of parents towards professional treatment

During the initial stages of IE, parents of students with special learning needs may not be willing to accept their child's issues. Even if teachers have observed the need for special learning support in some students in their early years, and the same behavior is observed at home, some parents still hold the idea of "wait until the child grows up before seeking medical help," which deters teachers' support and delays the time for receiving professional treatment. (Social worker interview)

In addition, a small number of parents have a lower acceptance level towards students with special learning needs, and may express to the school that they do not want their children to study with these students or to take care of them. In response to this situation, the school works hard to organize various parent activities, such as parent-teacher meetings and parent volunteer activities, etc., to allow parents of students with different learning abilities to get to know and understand each other. The school aims to eliminate prejudice in the minds of all parents, whether they are parents of regular students or parents of students with special learning needs, so that they can build mutual trust, set aside their preconceptions and accept each other.

#### Home-school cooperation and collaboration between parents and professionals

The school attaches great importance on home-school cooperation and has established a regular communication mechanism. Through various channels, such as the Sunshine Helpline, parent tea meetings, and parent days, the school works with parents to discuss strategies for supporting students. At the same time, the school actively promotes home-school cooperation and develops parent education. Student guidance teachers organize various parent activities, such as reading and writing parent workshops, to provide information and skills related to student learning, to help parents support their children's learning at home. SENCO shared that a parent of a student with special learning needs actively approached the school to participate in parent activities, with an aim to meeting different parents. Initially worried about his son's ADHD would cause other parents to have different perceptions on him, and being afraid of being known by others, he can now openly share his son's learning progress with other parents, demonstrating a harmonious relationship between home and school.

On the other hand, the school's speech therapist arranges for parents of students with communication difficulties to observe classes. As a result, parents can have a clearer understanding of their children's classroom performance and provide support after class. The speech therapist regularly contacts parents by phone to discuss the progress of treatment for students with speech and language impairment and explain the matters needing attention for after-school support. The SENCO pointed out that increasing opportunities for parents to interact with professionals can help increase parents' confidence in the school, and parents' trust in the school will also be enhanced as a result.

#### Changes in parents

As more resources are provided for students with special learning needs, parents have become more confident in the school's implementation of IE. This is because students can also receive help from different professionals and are treated equally in ordinary schools. From the parents' perspective, the SENCO believes that their children are not labeled, making it easier to eliminate parents' concerns and reduce the stigmatization of IE, thus increasing acceptance of the school's IE.

In addition, the SENCO revealed that parents were unwilling to indicate that their children were with special learning needs in the past because once it is recorded in the special education information management system, the data cannot be deleted, causing parents to hesitate and back away. However, the EDB has changed its regulations in recent years to allow parents to decide again before their children enter secondary school whether to agree to transfer relevant information to the secondary

school. Therefore, parents' attitudes have also become more open, reduced their wariness, which is beneficial for the school to provide corresponding support for students with special learning needs.

### **6.2.1.5 Promoting Inclusive Campus**

#### Creating an inclusive environment in classroom

As the school is committed to establishing an equal school atmosphere, it does not intentionally let other students know which students are with SEN. Nor does it overly create a special identity for them. When students are in the same classroom, their mentality is simple, thinking that the classmate occasionally cannot sit still or be paid more attention by the teacher. When students are allocated to different classes, they are only called by different class names. The teachers know the information of students with SEN, even which batch of students is in the remedial class.

The speech therapist also cooperates with the school to implement the "Phonetic Ambassador" program. After discussing with the teacher, the speech therapist selected and trained some Primary 5 students as "Phonetic Ambassadors" to help them master the relevant skills. Then the "Phonetic Ambassadors" will provide training to students with speech impairments to improve their pronunciation and speech. The SENCO said that the program not only helps to improve the speech ability of students with speech impairments but also helps to enhance their confidence because their speech becomes more fluent. The students who serve as "Pronunciation Ambassadors" will also become more proactive in assisting other students in need, cultivating their empathy and willing to help others.

#### Creating an inclusive environment outside classroom

The school has established a program that arranges senior students to assist students with special learning needs in answering homework questions or learning difficulties. The school does not reveal the category of students with special learning needs after pairing students, but teachers will explain in advance to the senior students some apparent symptoms of the students, such as "this student may be less patient." The purpose is to eliminate the labelling effect as much as possible, and allow students with special learning needs to learn and grow in a campus without labels. The principal emphasized that the school treats all students as a family and does not specifically divide two-thirds as "ordinary family members" and one-third as "special family members." (Principal interview)

In order to deepen students' quality in character, the school has also continued to hold teacher talks by EP for several years, to improve teachers' ability in handling students' emotions and behavior, crisis management skills, and strategies to understand and help students with SEN. In addition, the student guidance teacher cooperates with speech therapists to hold "joint meetings of speech therapy services for teachers" to provide professional training for all teachers. Furthermore, for every stakeholder, especially parents, recognition of IE is a key to success. The school places emphasis to students with SEN, proactively promotes inclusive campus and avoids labelling. Although there are special arrangements in daily learning, there is no distinction between ordinary students and students with SEN in post-test activities or sports activities. This school atmosphere makes parents trust that students are integrated into all students, rather than being separated or labeled. (Principal interview)

#### School resources allocation

To support students with SEN and those with low academic achievement, the school received additional resources allocated by the EDB, including Capacity Enhancement Grant, Intensive Learning Support Grant, School-based Educational Psychological Service, Comprehensive Top-up

Student Guidance Service Grant, WSA to IE, and strengthened School-based Speech Therapy services. These resources provide support in three areas of prevention, treatment, and enhancement for students, teachers, parents, and the school. In addition, the EDB's EPs provide year-round services, including parent talks, parent consultations, student groups, case consultations, case conferences, and referrals. The EP makes the student support policies and services more comprehensive and complete.

#### **6.2.1.6 Good Exemplars of implementing integrated education**

Implementing differentiated instruction and adopting a "strength-based" approach to effectively cater for students' diverse learning needs

In an atmosphere of equal education, the school hopes that students with special learning needs can also complete all their homework. Therefore, the school promotes differentiated instruction in the aspects of learning, teaching and assessment. Without affecting students' mental health, as long as students are willing and have motivation, teachers will also flexibly arrange for students to submit homework in different ways, such as allowing students to use highlighters to draw their homework to remind themselves, allowing them to express themselves through drawing, etc. In addition, in order to enable students with different abilities and needs to develop their potential, the curriculum team is responsible for planning and coordinating, arranges at least two "seed teachers" for each subject of Chinese, English, Mathematics and General Studies to participate in professional development courses on "catering for learning diversity" and allows them to share their learning within the school, building a professional learning community for promoting differentiated instruction within the school.

At the same time, students adopt a "strength-based" support model to enhance their confidence. Not only by identifying the strengths and advantages of each student through a one-page profile, so that students with special learning needs can develop their different potentials. The school also arranges for all Primary 6 students to fill out a one-page profile to guide students to examine their own strengths and reflect on their shortcomings, to ensure that the most ideal learning environment can be provided for students under an equal education environment. The school also encourages teachers to adopt a more appreciative and affirming attitude towards each student. If other students receive praise for achieving 90 points, students with special learning needs should also be recognized and affirmed for their efforts even if they achieve only 50 points, which also helps to support the positive development of students with SEN.

Satisfactory cross-teams collaboration

The SENCO is responsible for coordinating matters related to students with special learning needs, including all data related to these students and providing various services to all students with SEN, such as assigning teams and monitoring their work. For some students who are suspected of having special learning needs, meetings are held with relevant teachers from different departments in the three stages of each semester to discuss suspected cases within the class, such as students suspected of having ADHD. Through these meetings, the opinions of subject teachers are discussed to decide whether a referral is needed. Before referral, detailed information needs to be collected by the SENCO, such as filling out questionnaires for students suspected of having dyslexia, collecting grades, and understanding the opinions of parents.

The school has a teacher consultation mechanism where subject teachers can discuss student problems with student guidance teachers to strengthen teacher support. In the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, the number of cases referred to student guidance teachers by teachers accounted for nearly 30% and 30% of the total number of cases respectively.

Teaching assistants provide support to different subject teachers in classroom

In the classroom, subject teachers at the school can also apply for teaching assistants to assist students with special learning needs if needed. For example, during the promotion of e-learning at school, teaching assistants guide students in submitting homework on the e-learning platform, freeing up teachers' space to manage the learning progress of the entire class. Outside classroom, the school offers social groups where teaching assistants and social workers teach some senior students with autism to think positively. There are also various programs that allow students from the same school to support students with special learning needs as "Guidance Ambassador". This enables students to receive continuous help in both learning and social aspects, while also establishing an integrated school culture.

Strong foundation of mutual trust between school and parents

Parents of students with SEN can contact the guidance teachers and the SENCO by phone, or meet with student guidance teachers at school and receive services. In the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, the percentage of cases where parents actively requested services accounted for approximately 45% and nearly 50% of the cases where student counseling and consultation were provided by teachers. These figures reflect a good trust by parents to school and their willingness to receive its support and help. In addition, the school holds various types of parent workshops to reduce the concerns of parents of students with SEN and enhance parents' awareness of supporting their children's learning needs. For example, the school invites parents to share their experiences through the on-campus social worker, so that parents can better understand the referral procedures and situations, and avoid delaying medical treatment because they are afraid that their children need medication.

Early identification of students' needs and promoting a three-tier professional development framework

The EDB encourages SENCO and schools to identify students with special learning needs as early as possible and provide support. The school also tries to identify newly admitted Primary 1 students as early as possible. The school holds an orientation day for primary one students to assess their basic abilities, such as filling in their name and reading Chinese and English words. This allows the school to observe their fine motor function development, reading and writing abilities, and allocate classes according to their abilities. After identifying potential students with SEN, the school will arrange for them to attend phonics classes, character recognition classes, or small group classes at the beginning of the semester. The SENCO stated that some students with special learning needs showed significant improvement in their Chinese and English proficiency levels at the end of the school year.

The school places great emphasis on teacher professional development and often provides information related to counseling to teachers, and encourages and provides opportunities for teachers to participate in training courses, seminars, and workshops to strengthen their understanding of students' growth needs and emotional development, and to master communication skills with parents and students. Through the three-tier professional development framework, each teacher also needs to receive different special education training courses within a designated time frame.

#### **6.2.1.7 Challenges in implementing integrated education in school**

Rapid growth in students with special learning needs caused concern among school staff

The responsibility of the SENCO is to handle the needs of students with special learning needs. In recent years, the number of such students at the school has increased from 30-40 to over 100. The SENCO has reported that other staff members have expressed their discontent, stating that this has increased their workload. They also attribute the increase in the number of students with special learning needs to the SENCO's excellent performance, which has made the school accept more and more such students. This situation has put the SENCO in a difficult position.

#### A mismatch between professional support and school needs

Different institutions in the community offer various types of services to students with special learning needs, such as group training and attention training. However, these institutions may not necessarily meet the school's requirements in terms of administrative arrangements or curriculum content. When the actual service provided does not meet the conditions stipulated in the quotation procedure, it adds to the administrative work and burden of the school.

The school has not yet been able to hire a speech therapist to provide regular speech therapy for students and improve the situation of irregular therapy sessions in the past. The SENCO reported that some parents have attempted to arrange therapy services for their children by private speech therapists. However, but the cost is over a thousand dollars per session, making it difficult for parents who are not financially well-off to afford (SENCO interview). The school also does not have an EP. The SENCO has reported that the services of EPs are counted on a daily basis, which results in a few number of evaluations for some students. Some students who need evaluation have to wait until Primary 4 before the evaluation, which means that they cannot receive timely support, and the support for students with SEN is not ideal.

#### Incomplete understanding of integrated education by parents in general

For parents of students with special learning needs, some parents still do not accept the need to be referred of their children, which puts considerable pressure on teachers. Because parents can manage students' behavioral problems through scolding at home, they do not believe that this is a problem of special learning needs, and have been refusing professional support referrals. This not only makes it difficult for teachers to address students' real learning needs, but also affects students' growth and development.

For parents of some students who have slightly lower academic performance but do not meet the criteria for special learning needs, they may not understand why their children's academic performance is also not ideal, and why some students can participate in some guidance classes while their children are not eligible to participate. This caused concerns of differentiation and unfair feeling by some parents.

## **6.2.2 School B**

### **6.2.2.1 School Background**

School B is a government-subsidized full-day primary school located in the New Territories. The school adopts a WSA to IE. The SENCO systematically supports students' needs, with a focus on catering for individual differences. Students can receive appropriate care in regular classes and small group activities by integrating different resources. After expert assessment, students will be provided with different accommodations or IEP according to their needs. The school supports different growth needs of students through various parent-child activities and home-school cooperations.

In the 2020/21 school year, School B had a total of 33 students with SEN, and 8 students were not yet officially identified with SEN. Among them, there were the most students (16) were with SLD. At that time, there were no students with SpLI, PD, VIs, mental and behavioural problems in the school, and the remaining students with SEN were 1-3 students in each category.

### **6.2.2.2 Management and Organization**

#### **Team**

The school has a total of 25 teachers, of which 59% have received special education training.

The student support team is coordinated by the principal and consists of 10 members, including an EP, curriculum development leaders, SENCO, SENSTs, social workers, subject heads, and teaching assistants.

#### **Duties and Support Measures**

In the school's three-year development plan for the 2019-2022 academic year, areas for improvement were identified in the school culture and student support. The school document stated that the school will make good use of different resources to support the growth needs of students with SEN. Subsequently, the school proposed to reorganize the structure of the subject groups and strengthen cooperation between cross-subject groups in the 2019/20 student support group review plan, including:

##### Language triage system and small group teaching for Mathematics

- Provide small group learning classes for three main subjects - Chinese, English, and mathematics - for students from Primary 2 to 6 who have learning difficulties. The classes are taught by specialized teachers.
- Chinese: from Primary 4 to 6; English: from Primary 3 to 6; math: from Primary 2 to 6.
- Adjust the curriculum to enhance students' learning motivation and ability based on their foundation. Arrange students to join or leave the small groups according to their academic performance and predetermined mechanism.
- Use the Learning Achievement Measurement (LAMK) provided by the Education Bureau and school-based assessment data as reference materials to examine students' academic levels.
- Properly record the academic progress of small group students and input to the special education information management system as required.

##### Early identification of Primary 1 students

- Observe students' learning situations from September to early December of each school year and introduce the plan to parents.
- From November to December of each school year, the class teacher and subject teachers fill in the "Observation Checklist for Teachers" and/or "The Hong Kong Specific Learning Difficulties Behaviour Checklist (For Primary School Pupils)" based on the "Early Identification Programme for Primary One Pupils".
- Consult with EPs based on the identification results exported by the electronic checklist and arrange further assessments for students with SEN.

### Summary of student support

- Establish a summary of student support to enable parents to better understand the support situation of students with special learning needs via the summary and provide feedback and suggestions.
- The summary of student support will list the homework/exam accommodations and activity/small group records of the assisted students.
- All assisted students in the special education information management system have the summary of student support.

### Multiple learning assessments

The school conducts two tests and two examinations throughout the year, and implements different levels of progressive assessments in different subjects, including:

Language subjects: reading, writing, listening and speaking;

Mathematics: classroom assessments and unit quizzes;

General Studies: unit quizzes and thematic research.

Each subject arranges step-by-step exercises and arranges homework and test accommodations for students with SEN to suit their needs.

### **Overall support policies and strategies of the school**

The school is committed to building a caring and inclusive school, valuing the individual differences of students, and providing every student with opportunities to realize their potential.

- In response to the "three-tier support" model, each category of support plan and service has clear guidelines and referral mechanisms as a reference for the staff support strategy.
- The school provides diversified support programs to ensure that students with different abilities receive appropriate care, develop multiple intelligences, and enjoy a happy campus life.
- Deepen the home-school cooperation, increase communication channels, and help students grow physically and mentally. By utilizing electronic media, expand the scope of home-school cooperation.
- Utilize different internal and external resources to improve the quality of "learning and teaching" under IE and cater to the diversity of students' learning.

Regarding the professional development of teachers, the school actively arranges in-school and out-of-school professional exchange programs for teachers, among which special education training belongs to out-of-school professional seminars/trainings. More than 50% of teachers have participated in out-of-school professional development activities related to special education. In the 2020/21 school year, one teacher participated in the special education coordination professional development course provided by the EDB.

For the current three-tier support model, the WSA model of the Tier 1 is not only limited to individual subject teachers but requires the entire teaching team and even professionals in the school to work together. The SENCO also stated in the interview that the connection between teachers is very

important. Faced with personnel changes in the school, the SENCO and members of the learning support team will explain the school's whole school support procedures and content to new teachers and newly strengthened guidance teachers, such as the procedures of identifying students and handing over suspected cases to professionals. It is expected that every teacher can understand the content of the plan and the implementation situation, making the implementation of the WSA more effective. (SENCO interview)

In the implementation of the WSA, although the school's teaching team can understand the concept of IE, they may not have enough professional knowledge to deal with situations in practice due to various factors such as student attitudes and their different family backgrounds. As the school mostly has cross-boundary students, the resources under the current policy have not been able to fully meet the teachers' needs in this regard.

## **Whole School Approach**

### Whole School Approach to Integrated Education

Over the years, the school has been committed to continuing and deepening various support programs, with the aim to not only providing sufficient support to students with SEN, but also expanding to students of other grades. The school not only values students' academic development but also strives to develop students in different areas of learning to take care of their whole-person development, concerns the physical and mental development needs of students at different stage, tailor-makes and provides various types of appropriate learning support. The student support team also utilizes various internal and external resources to provide different types of groups to consolidate students' different learning needs, and enhance the quality of learning and teaching through different data.

When implementing the WSA, the school's teachers and staff have a certain understanding of the concepts of IE. The teacher team is also willing to accept various integration policies, such as class allocation arrangement. Although the school divides students into classes based on their academic performance, students with special learning needs, such as speech and language impairment, SLD, or ADHD, are also allocated to the same class. When facing students in their classes, some teachers also take the initiative to further their education and enroll in courses related to supporting students with special learning needs.

### Individual Education Plan

Under the guidance of EP, the school will provide personalized support for Tier 3 students. For learning, the school will arrange subject-specific teachers to provide 45 minutes of individual subject instruction for each subject for students each week. In terms of student physical and mental development, social workers will conduct at least 30 minutes of counseling sessions with students every week to understand their situations and needs. In order to make the program more effective and sustainable, both the learning support team and counseling team have set short-term and long-term learning goals, and teachers adjust the corresponding learning content according to different learning needs. Teachers also encourage and guide parents to cooperate at home to continue the content of individual learning plans, and will also set up reward programs according to the students' situations to encourage them in a positive way.

### Expanding the level of integration

During the interview, the principal emphasized that the school's IE should not be limited to students who have been identified by experts as having special learning needs, but to try to accommodate the

unique learning needs of every student. Students who have been diagnosed with special needs should be given extra attention and active support. Therefore, the school should provide space to enable diversity in learning for all students. For example, when facing students with higher learning abilities, the school will cultivate their perseverance and attitude towards others, so that they can be "not arrogant when winning, not discouraged when losing" (principal interview). At the same time, the school is committed to establishing a school atmosphere of mutual appreciation and recognition to build an integrated school. The school provides different opportunities according to the different potentials and strengths of students so that each student has the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities, and establishes an equal culture among students to avoid labeling and build their confidence. The principal cited an example of a student with dyslexia who had an interest in science. Through daily observations, the school understood the student's knowledge of science and used pictures to help the student learn and create new inventions. Finally, the student's invention was displayed at a public exhibition. It can be seen that the school's support for students with special learning needs is not limited to academics, but rather through analyzing their personality and interests, providing unique learning methods to stimulate their interest in learning and enhance their motivation (principal interview).

In addition, the school uses the "one-page profile" and student support summary to help teachers and parents better understand the needs of students and provide appropriate support. To support students in the Tier 2 of the Special Education Information Management System, the school conducts individual meetings to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the students and strengthens the understanding of questioning techniques and key points based on past experiences of using the one-page profile. At the same time, the school tries to understand from the students' perspective where they feel difficult and need help, in order to provide more targeted support methods. For all students in the Special Education Information Management System, the school also sets up student support summaries, which list the homework, test and exam accommodations, activities, or groups available for assisted students, so that parents can better understand the support situation of students with special learning needs through the summary and provide feedback and suggestions.

### **6.2.2.3 Learning and Teaching**

#### Curriculum and instructional accommodations

In terms of curriculum planning, subject teachers provide learning accommodation for students with special learning needs based on their abilities, and in situations where there is a report from an EP. These accommodations include adjustments to homework, assessments, or exemptions. The school also allows teachers in small group teaching teams to redesign the curriculum based on students' abilities and needs, with a flexibility to adjust the content of the learning materials to meet the students' needs.

In terms of daily instruction, the school also suggests teachers to use encouraging methods or other teaching strategies to enhance students' learning motivation. For junior primary school students, the school provides an after-school training for relevant students in Primary 1 to 3 called "Easy Reading" to enhance students' reading, writing, and vocabulary literacy skills. The program is supported by the EDB which provides teaching materials for teachers to use appropriate strategies to improve students' reading and writing abilities. Pre- and post-tests are used to evaluate students' progress and effectiveness. For upper primary school students, the school implements a tiered instruction program in Chinese subject for Primary 5 students. It provides focused and continuous training on reading and writing skills to consolidate their basic abilities and language foundation.

### Small group teaching

The school implements tiered support teaching in the upper grades, so the school needs to hire additional support teachers to teach students in groups. As the teaching positions of support teachers are hired by using special education resources, the frequent turnovers of group teaching teachers affects the effectiveness of students' learning. The school implements tiered teaching starting from Primary 4. Students with special learning needs, if they are identified with learning difficulties through assessment, will receive support until Primary 6. Under the guidance of the same teacher, the teacher can take care of the characteristics and needs of the students more comprehensively, but not every teacher in each class can provide continuous support throughout the upper primary stage. Support teachers mentioned in interviews that the diversity of learning needs for students with SEN will vary at different stages, so the stability of teachers also has a relative impact on students' learning. (Teacher interview)

### Teachers' attitude towards accommodation measures

Some teachers still have misconceptions about the concept of accommodation measures and believe that the help of other teachers or professionals is questioning their ability to work. They avoid immediate support, thinking that reducing homework for students questions their ability, or that teachers cannot effectively support relevant students. Teachers also do not immediately accept the help of the learning support team, but subconsciously believe that they need to protect their professionalism. The SENCO stated in the interview that if teachers can overcome this psychological barrier, the help of other teachers can benefit both students and themselves. The SENCO believes that the level of acceptance of concepts, especially the level of acceptance of peer support, needs to change gradually over time. (SENCO interview)

## **6.2.2.4 Home-School Co-operation and Professional Therapeutic Intervention**

### Parental attitudes

In the past, school education placed a heavy emphasis on academic performance, which has led to conflicts between some parents of students with special learning needs and the school on students' learning abilities. Some parents established fixed expectations for their children's academic performance, which may make them feel incapable of teaching their children and may also deny their children's abilities due to their academic performance. For example, while the school encourages parents to appreciate their children's abilities in visual arts, sports, music, etc., some parents may see these abilities as useless and only value their children's academic performance and undermine student's self-confidence. Meanwhile, some students may have emotional or behavioral problems, which may lead to conflicts with their parents, leaving parents at a loss and labeling their children as difficult students. (Interviews with principal and EPs)

Generally, parents do not have strong opinions about students with special learning needs who do not have behavioral problems, such as those with dyslexia, intellectual disabilities, etc., since their disabilities do not affect the classroom environment. However, for students with behavioral problems, such as those with ADHD, parents tend to believe that such students will disrupt the classroom order and are prone to impulsive behavior, which affects their children's learning. The SENCO emphasized in the interview that changes in parental attitudes should be gradual and require time. A case study of a student with special learning needs was used to illustrate this point. The student was diagnosed as having SEN in Primary 2, but the parent resisted the school's support until a major change in the family environment, causing the parent to realize that the student needs professional help. The SENCO cited this example to reflect that change in parent attitudes is a long-term process. (Interview with SENCO)

## Collaboration between the school and parents

The school attaches great importance to collaboration with parents and is committed to establishing a common philosophy through home-school cooperation to cultivate students. In terms of parent education, the school will hold various types of lectures and workshops to enable parents to self-improve in their spare time and apply the knowledge and skills they learned to family life.

Regarding student support, teachers will explain to parents the actual behavior and performance of their children at the beginning of each new semester, so that parents can understand the situation of their children and discuss support methods and effective strategies. In addition to expecting support strategies to extend to the family level to support students, parents are also given opportunities to express their opinions.

### **6.2.2.5 Promoting Inclusive Campus**

#### Creating an inclusive environment in classroom

The school's language subject in senior form adopts tiered teaching based on learning abilities, and students participate in various learning activities together in the classroom. For example, in the aspect of instructional activities, teachers will use electronic learning applications to assist students in learning. Other subjects such as mathematics are taught in original class, and teachers in the classroom are also committed to providing equal learning opportunities to students with different abilities to take care of the learning needs of all students.

#### Creating an inclusive environment outside classroom

The school focuses on students' moral education, so it held the "Well-being Power-up" program in the 2020/21 academic year for all students to enhance communication and interaction among students to jointly establish a good campus atmosphere. The program is an open participation activity for the whole school, and students assist relevant teachers and social workers to conduct different forms of positive activities during recess and lunch break, such as mindfulness, sharing, praise, mutual encouragement, etc., to help students establish positive and happy emotions. In addition, the school also arranges love angels, Understanding Adolescent Project, or junior and senior students who have fewer opportunities to participate in school services to strengthen the support network between students through hands-on activities.

In addition, the school has established a buddy program for students with special learning needs to establish good interaction between students and promote mutual learning and growth. The buddy learning program selects Primary 4 and 5 students to participate in weekly learning activities starting in October, and provides communication activities to Primary 1 and 2 students during afternoon breaks in November. Students use games such as flashcards and memory games to consolidate what they have learned in their daily lives in a natural way.

### **6.2.2.6 Good Exemplars of implementing integrated education**

#### Satisfactory small class teaching and accommodation strategies

The school mainly sets up group teaching for senior students, promotes curriculum accommodations and group support. In terms of group allocation, the school divides students in Primary 4 to 6 into three groups in each level, and regularly adjusts the groups according to the situation. The purpose is

to allow students to gain different experiences in teaching from different teachers, and group adjustments not only allow students to learn together with different classmates but also enable teachers to adjust the curriculum according to the abilities of the group. For example, teachers in a group with lower abilities would focus on teaching the key learning points of various topics, helping students to master the content and improve their academic performance.

Regarding students' learning situations, the school also makes use of various roles of teachers to provide multiple supports. For instance, class teachers keep close contact with parents of students with special learning needs, informing them of relevant arrangements and methods for handling students. They also work with school social workers to provide more comprehensive advice and external resources to parents. The school observes students' learning situations from September to early December each year, and introduces the Early Identification Scheme for Primary One Students to parents. In November to December, class teachers and subject teachers fill in the "Observation Checklist to Teachers" or "The Hong Kong Specific Learning Difficulties Behaviour Checklist (For Primary School Pupils)" according to the "Early Identification Programme for Primary One Pupils". Afterwards, the school arranges corresponding support strategies based on the results of the checklist, consults with EPs and arranges evaluations, and provides early support.

#### Increasing trust in home-school collaboration

Through the joint efforts of the school and parents, some parents of students with special learning needs are willing to work together to address the learning needs of their children and establish a mutual trust with the school. The principal cited an example of a cross-boundary student who was originally a student with SEN requiring Tier 3 support. Due to the father's work, the student had to drop out and study in Mainland China. But with the student's insistence, the father was willing to let his son return to the school for further studies. This shows that the school's support work has gained the trust of students and also reassured parents. (Principal interview)

#### Improved effectiveness of cross-subjects collaboration and cross-professional support

In recent years, the school has actively streamlined the structure of subject groups and strengthened cooperation between subject groups. By appointing a SENCO to participate in coordinating student support work, assigning core members to different support programs, and including teachers from various groups as members to facilitate the exchange of teaching ideas, support work for students in different projects can be more effectively carried out. At the beginning of each semester, the learning support team notifies all teachers of the progress of different students' support through a summary table, allowing all teachers to understand the timetable and purpose of various support measures and promoting the participation of all teachers, resulted in a smooth introduction and implementation of IE.

Since the academic year 2019/20, the school has implemented a "one school, one social worker" policy to strengthen the content of social work counseling services and support and supervision of the school social worker. Services include providing individual case consultations, emergency support for crisis events, and strengthening professional training. The school also uses "Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant" to purchase school-based speech therapy services. It engages an organization to plan and implement on-campus services at student, parent, and school levels. At the student level, the school will refer suspected or diagnosed students with speech and language impairment for review or assessment by teachers and various professionals, and develop and implement individual speech therapy plans for language-impaired students, and provide individual and group therapy support. At the parent level, the school will maintain regular contact with the parents of language-impaired students, and also meet with parents individually on a regular basis to let them understand their

children's language difficulties and support methods. At the school level, the school's speech therapists keep a complete list of language-impaired students and cooperate with teachers to write school-based speech therapy service plans and annual reports, hold regular preparation meetings with relevant teachers to discuss collaborative teaching strategies.

#### **6.2.2.7 Challenges in implementing integrated education in school**

Resistance from teachers in supporting students with special learning needs

The principal mentioned in the interview that some teachers still have biases towards students with special learning needs, believing that they cannot be taught and handled their behavioral problems with punishment which failed to build a culture of inclusivity. These thoughts not only affect the relationships among teachers but also make it difficult for students to trust their teachers and establish mutual relationships. In terms of teaching, some teachers rearrange the seating arrangement of students in response to their behavioral problems, such as separating each student by a certain distance during group learning, which deprives students of the opportunity to learn in groups.

The principal mentioned in the interview that the effectiveness of IE resources can vary depending on the school and the teachers even if they are abundant. Different ways of support by teachers are affecting the opportunities and development of students. The principal hopes that the support from teachers will not only be limited to policies, but also be more people-centered, so that students can grow up in an environment with relatively equal opportunities and resources. (Principal interview)

Insufficient number of visits by professional support staff

Currently, the school has various resources provided by the government, including EPs, speech therapists, and other professionals who regularly assess or provide speech therapy to students. However, the number of visits to the school is only once a week, students have to wait for up to two weeks for meeting with these professionals, affecting the effectiveness of the therapy. Currently, the school mainly communicates with subject teachers and parents of students with special learning needs through regular meetings to understand the students' situation and discuss support methods. Professional support staff provide support methods to parents and teachers. But due to the small number of visits to the school, the professions cannot observe the recommended methods regularly.

Different backgrounds of parents weaken the results of home-school cooperation

As most of the students in the school are cross-boundary students, some parents from Mainland China have not yet accepted their children's special learning needs. One factor is that Mainland parents have insufficient knowledge of special learning needs. The second factor is that the terminologies used in Mainland China are different from those in Hong Kong, such as students with autism tendencies being referred to as having word autism disorder in the Mainland. Some parents even resist receiving support because they consider their children's special learning needs as shameful and may even question the assessments made by experts in the school. This not only makes it difficult for teachers to address students' real learning needs but also affects their growth and development. At the same time, the school needs to align the two systems of Mainland China and Hong Kong for parents of cross-boundary students when providing support to cross-boundary students, but the resources for this are limited. The school needs to explain to parents the IE plan and its purpose in Hong Kong and then explain the school's support and direction. However, because the living areas are different, it is undoubtedly challenging for parents to distinguish between the two systems.

## **6.2.3 School C**

### **6.2.3.1 School Background**

School C is a subsidized primary school located in Kowloon. The school adopts a WSA to IE, including the establishment of a learning support team to provide support for students with special learning needs. Support measures include support small classes, after-school tutoring, IEP, early identification program for Primary 1 students, attention groups, reading groups, “Love Ambassadors Program”, homework accommodations, curriculum and assessment accommodations, etc. The school uses after-school learning and support programmes to offer after-school tutorial classes, interest classes, and outdoor learning activities. It also uses Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant to provide on-campus speech therapy services for students with speech and language impairment.

In the 2020/21 school year, School C had a total of 65 students with SEN, and 14 students were still not yet formally identified with SEN. Among them, the largest number of students (51) had SpLI, followed by 25 students with ADHD, 21 students with SLD, and 16 students with ASD. There were no students with PD, VI, or ID at the school at that time.

### **6.2.3.2 Management and Organization**

#### **Team**

The total number of teachers in the school is 58, of which 39% have received training related to special education.

The student support team includes the vice principal, the SENCO, the curriculum development leader, the student guidance officer, the extracurricular activities co-ordinator, the Chinese and English subject heads, the SENSTs, the counseling team teachers, the student counselors, and the school social worker. They collaborate with other subject teams, such as the curriculum development team and the training and counseling team, to jointly support students with SEN via WSA. There is a total of 14 people in the team.

#### **Duties and Support Measures**

- In terms of school facilities, the school has installed tactile guide paths and accessible toilets for people with disabilities, and a wheelchair lift on the stage in the auditorium.
- Support classes are arranged for the Chinese and mathematics subjects in Primary 2, and the Chinese subject in Primary 3 to provide early support for primary school students.
- Support teachers are arranged for the English subjects for Primary 1 to 3 to provide support for students with SEN in a collaborative teaching mode in the classroom.
- After-school tutoring classes are arranged for students with low academic performance, which are conducted once a week by school teachers in Chinese, English, and mathematics for Primary 1 to 6 students.
- In collaboration with the counseling team to implement the "Mentoring Scheme", which assigns different teachers as mentors to take care of some students with SEN. Teachers will meet with their matched students regularly to understand their problems and needs, and provide care, guidance, and encouragement.

- Providing learning, homework, and exam accommodations for students who in need , and through classroom observations, including meetings with group tutors/other professionals such as speech therapists, counselors, EPs, etc., contact parents to report on students' learning progress.
- The "Love Ambassador Program" is established to guide and review homework and study for junior primary school students with SEN during morning and lunchtime on Tuesdays and Fridays.
- The "Reading Buddy Program" is established to encourage students with SEN to read extracurricular books to enhance their reading interests and abilities.
- A "Summary of Support for Student" is created for each student with SEN to inform parents about the level of support, measures, and services provided to the student within the school.
- The learning support team regularly communicates with parents and arranges them to meet with the SENCO and speech therapists on Parent Day to promote communication and collaboration between parents and the school as well as among students, and provide parent education, including talks, training courses, workshops, and the thematic webpage of "Student Support Team" of the school intranet to allow parents to understand the learning characteristics of students with SEN and cooperate with the school's measures.

### **Overall support policies and strategies of the school**

The school is committed to establishing an inclusive culture and supporting students with SEN through WSA. Through resource allocation, the school provides appropriate and diversified support services to enhance students' learning effectiveness and help them integrate into school life. The school also values the home-school cooperation, establishes a regular communication mechanism, and discusses strategies for supporting students with parents through different channels.

The EP regularly supports students, parents, and teachers at the school, assesses and refers students who are suspected to have special learning needs, and discusses strategies for supporting students with parents and teachers, so that the school can provide comprehensive support to those in need. The school psychologist also organizes teacher seminars on "Tier 1 teaching support" and assists the student support team and curriculum team in implementing peer observation program so that teachers can review the effectiveness of different strategies for Tier 1 teaching support in the classroom.

### **Whole School Approach**

The principal pointed out that implementing IE is not just the responsibility of the learning support team or counseling team, but requires the cooperation of the entire school staff, parents, and even students themselves in order to succeed. Therefore, the learning support team designed a comprehensive procedural guide so that teachers can not only understand the details of the learning support team's work, but also the process of supporting students with SEN, in order to provide appropriate support to the students. The principal further emphasized that when teachers encounter or have initial concerns about children's learning or emotional problems, they generally refer them directly to the learning support team or counseling team for further processing. But it is more important for teachers to understand their own roles and be aware of where to pay attention to when supporting students with SEN.

The school implements small class teaching from Primary 1 to 6, with some levels having support classes to provide learning support services for students with special learning needs. After-school tutoring is also available for Primary 1 to 6 students with special learning difficulties or lower academic performance in Chinese, English, and Mathematics subjects. In addition, the school also receives assistance from tertiary institutions to provide the "Good Shepherd Project" on-campus

homework guidance class for students with SEN to effectively support students with different learning needs. The SENCO expressed that the homework class is well-received by parents and students with good results. The SENCO will contact tertiary institutions to seek continued support.

### **6.2.3.3 Learning and Teaching**

#### Differentiated instruction

Under the guidance of the learning support team and curriculum team, differentiated instruction is applied to daily teaching, coursework accommodation, and assessment accommodation. In terms of daily teaching, the school adjusts the teaching progress, and the small class teacher can adjust the teaching content according to the students' abilities. For example, in Chinese language subject, regular students will have a vocabulary lesson in one class, while in small class teaching, it is increased to two classes, allowing students more time to master basic knowledge, including character forms, meanings, pronunciations, stroke orders, etc., to lay a foundation for students with special learning needs to gradually cope with sentence and article learning.

In terms of teaching methods, teachers will design teaching activities suitable for students' abilities and interests according to their special learning needs, allowing students to learn according to their own abilities. For example, in small class Chinese language teaching, the focus is on enhancing students' interest in words, using methods such as guessing word meanings from pictures, association, and visualizing words to let students think, and then exploring stroke and structure of words, as well as providing opportunities to practise, so as to establish students' long-term memory of words. For mathematics subject, teachers will use different teaching aids to help students first understand mathematical concepts, and then consolidate them in written form to enhance students' interest in learning and also help to deepen their impression.

In terms of exams, students with special learning needs have certain accommodation arrangements, such as extra time and reading papers. However, the SENCO expressed in interview that the current assessment mode mainly relies on written evaluation, which affects the evaluation results of students with SEN even if they can understand the learning content or related concepts, especially in mathematics. This also affects the accuracy of teachers' assessment of students' abilities.

#### Diversified learning support groups

In order to provide comprehensive and continuous support for students with special learning needs, the school utilizes tutorial periods to set up various support groups and subject guidance sessions to allow students to receive guidance in small groups and individually improve their subject knowledge. Especially during online learning periods, students have fewer tutorial classes during full-time classes, so the school has established online tutorial classes for senior students to support them in dealing with homework problems. At the same time, online subject counseling classes are also offered, where teachers provide guidance to students on the learning difficulties of each subject. The school has also added support teachers for students in Primary 1 to 3 and established an English group which taught English classes via games to enhance students' interest in learning English. Even when half-day classes resume, the school still maintains online group support in the afternoons, and even sets up group classes on Saturdays to comprehensively support the individual learning needs of various types of students, such as students with ADHD who have better performance in face-to-face classes than in online classes. The school also has multiple student groups that cater for different student needs, such as holding Lego-based group therapy for students with autism to enhance their social communication skills. In addition to organizing Chinese and English reading and recitation groups and interactive games for students with dyslexia to consolidate their learning abilities, the school also arranges

emotional management groups for students with mental health issues to allow students to express their inner thoughts and emotions, thus helping them overcome psychological fears.

#### **6.2.3.4 Home-School Co-operation and Professional Therapeutic Intervention**

##### School-parent relationship

According to the observation of the principal, parents nowadays are less resistant when their children have special learning needs, which is the consequence of community education. The principal mentioned that parents were also more resistant to IE more than ten years ago. Most of them could not accept if they knew that their children were suspected by the school to have special learning needs. On the contrary, nowadays parents would pay close attention to their children's situation and even monitor them during their kindergarten years. Even if they know that their children have special learning needs, they will accept and seek different methods to provide support (principal interview). Therefore, the school regularly communicates and contacts with parents to understand the situation of students with special learning needs. At the same time, the school also establishes a good cooperative relationship with parents to nurture students together.

At the beginning of each semester, the school holds a parent meeting to let parents understand the situation and role of small-class teaching. At the same time, it also allows parents to understand the role they can play in their children's learning. In addition to supporting students in handling basic homework and dictation, the school also designs a reading table that allows parents to participate, so that parents can accompany their children in learning and progress, rather than just focus on scores. Throughout the school term, the school will also closely assist parents through face-to-face or phone contacts for bettering home-school cooperation and maintain friendship and mutual trust between the school and parents.

##### Organizing diversified group activities to enhance support for students and parents

The counseling team and student support team organize a series of activities to enhance teachers', parents', and students' awareness of positive education and mental health, including various types of student groups such as mindfulness groups, emotion management groups, as well as talks on discipline and positive parenting. The school's post-activity surveys showed that these activities effectively enhance the understanding and application skills of positive education and mental health among teachers, parents, and students. Parents believe that the activities inspire teaching work and enhance their skills in interacting and disciplining their children.

#### **6.2.3.5 Promoting Inclusive Campus**

##### Creating an inclusive environment in classroom

In order to meet the daily learning needs of students, the school creates a group learning atmosphere by grouping students with different abilities into learning circles, where they learn together and strive for progress. According to interviews with supporting teachers, group learning not only helps students with special learning needs, but also enables students with higher abilities to grow, truly supporting the development of students with different abilities. For example, during a review lesson, teachers review a learning focus with students, and then divide them into groups to set up questions to answer between groups. Under this mode, students with higher abilities can design questions based on the review focus, while students with weaker abilities can also participate in discussion and thinking together. In addition, students with different abilities also establish their own review patterns. For example, when it comes to recognizing words, students share their recognition skills with each other,

such as highlighting keywords and reviewing methods. Students share their experiences without distinction between strong and weak abilities, establishing an inclusive relationship, and achieving peer support effects of learning together, mutual assistance, and mutual growth.

#### Creating an inclusive environment outside classroom

The school supports the collaboration between the school support team and counseling team to implement the "mentorship program". Different teachers serve as mentors to take care of students with SEN. The teachers meet regularly with their assigned students to understand their problems and needs, listen to their concerns and needs, and provide appropriate care, guidance, and encouragement. The principal hopes that the mentorship program can help students learn to love themselves and others, solve problems, self-manage, and set positive goals for themselves. Even during school closures, mentors will reach out to their students and their families through phone calls, letters, and even small gifts, to express their care and love. Additionally, the school has established the "Love Ambassador" program, in which primary school students with SEN are guided with their homework and revision during morning and afternoon reading sessions on Tuesdays and Fridays by higher-grade students. The learning support team has also set up a "reading buddy program" to encourage students with SEN to read extracurricular books and enhance their reading interests and abilities.

#### **6.2.3.6 Good Exemplars of implementing integrated education**

##### Initiating "Mentoring Scheme" to support students with SEN

In an interview, the SENCO stated that the purpose of setting up the "Mentoring Scheme" was not only to strengthen the care and support for students with SEN but also to establish mutual trust between teachers and these students. The SENCO shared their experience that gaining the trust of students with SEN and their parents would lead to the parents' agreement with the school's support, and the students would be more compliant with the support and arrangements. Therefore, under the "Mentoring Scheme", the SENCO would be responsible for pairing teachers with students. Firstly, the SENCO would talk to the students with SEN to understand their daily learning and living difficulties, such as difficulty in keeping up with progress in General Studies subject, and then match a General Studies subject teacher as their mentor. The mentor not only regularly meets with the students to understand their overall situation but also tries to provide appropriate learning and growth support to enhance the students' sense of belonging to the school. The SENCO reflected that the program was satisfactory, the program would become one of the school's recurrent supports each year with the support of the principal. (SENCO interview)

##### Promoting in-school community practice through collaborative lesson planning and observation

In terms of teaching, the school advocates WSA to improve the teaching skills for supporting students with special learning needs. In the interview, the SENCO believes that the Tier 1 classroom support is the most important and should not overly focus on the Tier 2 and Tier 3 support. Therefore, the learning support team works with the EP to further promote the Tier 1 support. The school holds workshops led by the EP to teach classroom support strategies and skills to improve teachers' professional knowledge in teaching, which can be applied not only to students with special learning needs but also to regular students, thereby improving the overall quality of teaching. Then, through collaborative lesson planning and lesson observation arrangements, teachers have the opportunity to practice after absorbing theoretical knowledge. The curriculum development leader and EP also provide feedback after observing lessons to establish continuous professional development and improve the quality of teaching. In future, the school intends to apply differentiated instruction to

course accommodation to design suitable course content for students in high, medium, and low abilities to improve together, rather than just focusing on "Catering for Learner Differences".

#### Strengthening collaboration with professionals to support students with special education needs

Speech therapists regularly assess and provide individual or group therapy for students with speech and language impairment. They also conduct lectures for teachers on how to enhance students' language and thinking abilities. Due to the suspension of classes, therapy sessions and lectures for students and parents were conducted online. Additionally, EP regularly supports students, parents, and teachers at school by conducting assessments and referrals for students suspected of having special learning needs. They also meet with parents and teachers to discuss strategies for supporting students to support students in need more comprehensively. EP also held a "Crisis Management" workshop for teachers and conducted a crisis management exercise for all school staff to familiarize them with the school's crisis management procedures and enhance their ability to handle different crises. (SENCO Interview)

#### A mature differentiated instruction system

Under the leadership of the learning support team and curriculum development team, differentiated teaching has been well applied to daily teaching, coursework accommodations, and assessment accommodations. In terms of daily teaching, the school adjusts the teaching progress and the teacher in charge of the small class can adjust the teaching content according to the students' abilities. For example, in the Chinese subject, regular students have one lesson for vocabulary teaching, while small class teaching is increased to two lessons. In terms of teaching methods, teachers design teaching activities that are suitable for students' abilities and interests according to the special learning needs of students and allow students to learn according to their abilities. For example, in small class teaching of Chinese subject, teachers focus on enhancing students' interest in words, using methods such as guessing word meaning from pictures, association, and visualizing words, to encourage students to think and explore the strokes and structures of words, and provide opportunities for practice to build students' long-term memory of words. The small group learning model during revision lessons can also support the learning needs of different students. Teachers assign different tasks to students with different abilities to allow both students with stronger and weaker abilities to participate and gain from the activities. Students can also share their learning experiences with each other to promote peer support for learning.

In terms of homework, different subjects have tiered assignments, and students are encouraged to submit homework in different or creative formats, such as oral presentations or project files. In addition to adjusting homework formats, the type of homework also varies according to students' abilities. The school selects various types of homework based on students' learning levels, such as replacing supplementary worksheets by school-based worksheets, designing school-based reading comprehension exercises, and designing writing worksheets based on students' abilities. The school provides space and flexibility for teachers to adjust teaching content, formats, and assignments in response to students' learning abilities and situations, so that students with special learning needs can receive appropriate learning support.

#### **6.2.3.7 Challenges in implementing integrated education in school**

##### Negative perception of support measures by parents

The school has a series of different activities and measures in place to implement IE, but sometimes encounters opposition from parents. Sometimes, parents may have heard of courses that can help

students with special learning needs outside school, and will request the school to follow suit to help their children. Alternatively, some parents may oppose certain measures or requirements from the school, believing that they are not helpful for their children, which sometimes requires the Special Educational Needs Coordinator to spend a lot of time explaining the process. (Principal interview)

#### Heavy workload of teachers affecting support input and effectiveness

The principal believes that more training is better and hopes to enhance teachers' professional abilities, even training them to have a stronger sensitivity and to detect students with special learning needs earlier. However, the principal also believes that the teachers' space is very important. The principal pointed out that the current education sector focuses too much on students' mental health issues but overlooks the mental health issues and heavy workload of teachers. Teachers face busy class schedules on one hand and the need to adapt to the new normal teaching mode under the pandemic on the other hand. If too much training is still insisted on at this time, the burden on teachers will only increase. (Principal interview)

#### The impact on implementation and effectiveness due to changes in support models during class suspension in epidemic

The EDB advocates for a school-based support model to support students with special learning needs. Therefore, schools need to explore and improve from attempts to establish an appropriate school-based support model over time. In interviews with social workers, it can be seen that schools are committed to experimenting and making changes in their support methods. After continuous trials and obtaining sufficient information, they have established various types of small group support classes, including online support classes. However, due to the pandemic, the number of students in online support classes had to be reduced by half, greatly reducing the effectiveness of support. During the implementation of various support classes, schools also constantly improve their methods through experimentation. Ideas conceived in the previous semester were not implemented in the next semester. Administrative work often cannot be perfected, and there is room for improvement in the allocation of teachers and students. Therefore, it can be seen that it takes a semester or a school year for the schools to provide support during class suspension in epidemic, from conception, implementation, to review. As a result, progress and support often differ greatly from the original plan.

#### The government needs to strengthen professional and policy support beyond "Learning Support Grant"

In terms of human resources support, school uses resources to hire support teachers and other staff to handle student support work. Therefore, schools need to use 70% of the grant to hire capable support teachers, and the remaining grant can be used to purchase external services or courses. Even with limited grant, schools also need to worry about whether they can hire staff and purchase services with the same amount of money every year. There is a certain level of concern about the stability of grant, staff, and services. Since the three are closely interrelated, if the number of students with special learning needs in schools decreases, the grant received will be reduced, affecting the arrangement of staff and services. The principal also stated that if there is a reduction in grant, schools can only reduce the number of small group courses to allow support teachers to continue to work. The principal also reflected that the EDB provides LSG to schools for school-based support development. However, the increase of grant has not helped to maintain the quality and stability of relevant staff and services. Schools need to allocate resources from other sources every year, and the most affected are students with special learning needs.

In addition, currently teachers do not have sufficient training on students' mental health, which may result in a lack of sensitivity to identify early students with mental health problems. Sometimes, it may only be discovered when the situation has deteriorated or in the event of an emergency. The SENCO believes that the support in this area may not be sufficient and suggests that professionals be regularly sent to the school to have a preliminary understanding of the students' situation, and that professional judgments can quickly be made to determine the student's condition, followed by prompt action taken accordingly. (SENCO interview)

## **6.2.4 School D**

### **6.2.4.1 School Background**

School D is a subsidized full-day Primary school in Kowloon. The school adopts WSA to promote IE, with EP to provide professional assessments to identify students with special learning needs at an early stage. LSG and Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant are utilized to provide learning support, counseling groups, teaching and assessment accommodations, group training, speech therapy services, and IEP for students with special learning needs. In addition, the school collaborates with external organizations to co-organize programs such as "Autism Support Network", "Reading and Writing Group," and "Attention and Self-Discipline Executive Function Group" to support students with various special learning needs.

In the 2020/21 school year, School D had a total of 142 students with SEN, all of whom had been officially confirmed, including 81 students with more than one SEN category. Among them, the number of students with SpLI was the largest, reaching 107, followed by students with SLD, with 71 students. There were also 37 students with ADHD and 18 with ASD. At that time, there were no students with PD or VI, and the number of students in other SEN categories was between 3 and 5.

### **6.2.4.2 Management and Organization**

#### **Team**

The total number of teachers in the school is 48, of which 59% have received relevant training in special education.

The student support team consists of a SENCO, SENSTs, EPs, speech therapists, school social worker, and subject heads for Chinese, English, and mathematics subjects, as well as an IE assistant, with a total of 11 members.

#### **Duties and Support Measures**

- In December of each year, the school arranges the Primary 1 subject teachers to conduct early identification questionnaire assessment for students whose learning performance is slightly lower through daily observation, followed by a consultation conference with the school's EP, school social worker, and subject teachers to identify students with significant learning difficulties and provide support as early as possible. The school's EP also provides talks to teachers and parents to support their needs in raising and nurturing children.
- The school offers group classes in Chinese or English subjects for Primary 2 to 4 using a pull-out model to provide small group teaching and improve the performance of students who are slightly behind. In addition, the school offers after-school tutoring classes to help students who are significantly lagging behind in their academic performance.

- In addition, the school collaborates with external organizations to co-organize "Reading and Writing Fun" groups to support students with dyslexia, and holds "Attention and Executive Function" groups to specifically support students with ADHD.
- Regarding support for students with autism, the school participated in the "Whole School Approach to Providing Tiered Support for Students with ASD" organized by the EDB's Special Education Division to write individual learning plans for autistic children and support their learning needs.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in the 2020/21 school year, most classes were conducted online. The school used Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant to arrange assessments and specialized therapy for students with speech and language impairment. Speech therapists collaborated with teachers to provide expression training for Primary 3 students by preparing classes with teachers and arranged therapy service periods for parents to observe. The school also organized "Storytelling with Children" parent workshops to provide parents with strategies to assist their children in reading and engage in interactive reading sharing activities.
- The school has recently created a new position of SENCO, responsible for handling the three-tier support for students and coordinating the deployment and liaison with professional support staff. The school also seeks to reduce the workload of the SENCO to allow them more time to handle student support and related administrative work, including arranging the work of internal and external support personnel, setting up support group schedules, work schedules and plans.
- The school also communicates frequently with parents to help them better understand what SEN are and the progress of individual cases, especially for parents of Primary 1 students. The school also pays attention to the transition from kindergarten to primary school, promptly making case referrals based on the student's situation, and adjusting the curriculum and setting up adaptation classes for Primary 1 students to solve learning difficulties and help them adapt.

### **Overall Support Policies and Strategies of the School**

In response to the school's development focus from 2014-2017 and 2017-2020, the school has formulated different support strategies and plans for IE development. Starting in 2014, the school established learning groups and developed a school-based curriculum handbook to implement more effective homework policies to cater for different learning needs. The school also provided pull-out classes for students with special learning needs in Chinese language subject. With positive results of initial support, the school further expanded the student growth support services in its three-year school development plan from 2017-2020. Through a well-coordinated mechanism, the school catered for the needs of students, formulated policies and measures to support student growth, and provided corresponding activities and support services. Teachers could nominate and refer students for school-based psychological and speech therapy professional evaluation through professional observation. For students identified as having special learning needs, the school provided support through group pull-out counseling sessions and arranged adjustment for tests, homework, and dictations. The adjustment of the core curriculum in the supplementary classes was implemented to cater for the actual abilities and needs of students with SEN and to reflect the arrangement of differentiated instruction. Progress and results were regularly reviewed to ensure optimal effectiveness.

In the latest three-year school development plan for 2020/23, the school will first study the "Hong Kong Comprehensive Assessment Report for Preschool Children" and the "Comprehensive Child Development Report" of individual primary one students through the Special Education Information Management System of the EDB. Based on the principle of "identification after support", the learning support team will continue to observe the performance of relevant students, fill in the "Summary of Transition Support for Primary One Student" form, and finally execute it jointly with the class teacher

and subject teacher, and hand a copy to the parents to keep them informed of the student's support status in school. The school will conduct early identification of students in the first term of Primary 1, and make reference to the opinions of subject teachers and parents to develop support plans for students and set up support groups as soon as possible. If the student has already been identified in the kindergarten report or has been found to have relevant problems in the group activities, the school will hold a case meeting with the subject teachers before the school year, so that the teachers can grasp the specific situation and teaching strategies to support the student's learning. In addition to inviting the subject teachers and class teachers of Primary 1 to fill in "Early Identification of Primary One Pupils with Learning Difficulties" for the students, the EP and subject teachers will also hold consultation meetings to identify the various needs of students' growth and support early.

During the epidemic period, face-to-face classes were changed to online classes, and the school responded to the situation to help students adapt to the change in learning mode. In terms of classroom mode, the school will distribute learning materials to students in advance, so that they can have relevant teaching materials and notes during online classes. Parents can also use the materials to assist their children in keeping up with their learning progress at home. The learning materials are also specially designed by teachers to meet the requirements of online teaching, so that students can adapt and improve their learning effectiveness at the same time. For example, in the subject of mathematics, the school will use teaching aids to help students learn multiplication at home, including multiplication tables and ten-frame charts, so that students and parents can continue to consolidate what they have learned at home.

### **Whole School Approach**

The school is dedicated to building an inclusive culture through WSA to support students with SEN. By reallocating resources, appropriate and diversified support services are provided to students to enhance their learning effectiveness and help them integrate into school life. Led by the SENCO, the student support team implements support work among all teachers and professionals in the school, including early identification of students, development of support methods, and implementation of support measures, to create a supportive atmosphere of mutual participation and improve students' situations together. The school also values home-school cooperation and establishes regular communication mechanisms to discuss strategies for supporting students with parents through different channels.

In terms of identifying students, the school updates student information annually and records it in the "Student Support Lists for Special Educational Needs" to help teachers understand the individual needs of different students. At the same time, the school also identifies students who need support as early as possible and uses different resources and methods to enhance the learning effectiveness of students with special learning needs. The school also places special emphasis on the transition from kindergarten to primary school, enabling new Primary 1 students to receive appropriate support as early as possible, especially for students who have reported special learning needs in the kindergarten stage, so that students can have proper "transition" after advancing to Primary 1. The school will also identify Primary 1 students who need support in the first term and collect relevant opinions and data from subject teachers, parents, and other stakeholders as reference for developing support methods. At the same time, relevant students will be given priority to join the support team, so that students who need support can receive timely support while waiting for relevant reports.

In terms of professional support, the school values the suggestions of professional staff at school, and teachers also adopt the same approach to support students, allowing them to practise and apply more in their daily lives to improve their abilities. Take speech therapy as an example, since students can meet with speech therapists only a few times, teachers also strive to assist and make up for related deficiencies. Teachers will also understand and formulate ways to support students through collaborative lesson planning, such as using prompt cards to encourage students to express themselves,

and setting up thematic teaching, using role-playing activities as expression skill training in the form of games and interaction. In terms of class allocation of students, EPs will explain the characteristics of students with SEN, and the school will also accept the opinions of the EP. The SENCO will also understand and coordinate the specific difficulties and needs of teachers and students to allocate classes so as to reduce conflicts in the classroom.

In terms of teacher training, the school also sets up various types of experience sharing and lectures for teachers to participate in order to enhance their professional knowledge of students with special learning needs. For example, the school will give the SENCO the opportunity to share his/her work and support measures with other teachers to help teachers understand the ways and purposes of support, so as to cooperate and promote WSA. The SENCO also increases teachers' awareness of the current school support methods through regular meetings of all teachers, such as introducing the curriculum formulated to meet individual learning needs, explaining the purpose, method, and role of teaching assistants in class support, etc., so that teachers can make good use of existing resources. The learning support team also helps teachers build confidence through successful experience sharing and continuing education of the three-tier support curriculum, so as to effectively teach and support students with SEN in the classroom and improve their acceptance of such students.

### **6.2.4.3 Learning and Teaching**

#### **Class allocation**

The school divides students into different classes according to their abilities, and both regular and students with SEN are expected to master the basic knowledge and skills taught. Moreover, the school cultivates and develops their different common abilities through various learning activities according to each student's abilities and interests.

The principal pointed out that widening the gap between the learning abilities of students with SEN and regular students would weaken their motivation to learn. Therefore, the school has been trying to implement stratified grouping in the past two years. In addition to the small-class teaching strategy for regular students, students with the weakest learning abilities will be separated from the large class and taught in small groups of only 3-5 people by a dedicated teacher. For example, for students with dyslexia, the school arranges a pull-out class to teach them basic skills such as reading and writing, recognizing characters so that they can master basic learning skills. Then, they are taught reading skills in sequence, starting from characters, words, sentences, paragraphs, and essays. Based on the experience gained so far, students have made significant progress. In the small-group learning environment, teaching is completely tailored to each student's learning level and ability. Only with differentiated instruction teaching and assignments students can keep up with the teaching progress. It not only enhances the confidence of students with SEN but also helps teachers better cater for their learning diversity.

#### **Collaborative teaching**

In terms of teaching arrangements, the school has three SEN teachers and one teaching assistant who specializes in supporting students with SEN for small-class teaching and in-class support work. This allows students with special learning needs to receive support in their daily lessons and also helps to alleviate the pressure on subject teachers. In interviews, the school considers the role of teaching assistants to be very important, especially when unexpected events occur in class, such as students losing control of their emotions or behavioral problems, which teachers may not be able to handle alone. For long-term development, the school also plans to arrange for teaching assistants to collaborate in classroom teaching, jointly develop teaching strategies, and continue to effectively support students' learning.

In terms of teaching methods, the school also advocates for creating an atmosphere for students to learn collaboratively. The group learning model in general classes is not only beneficial for addressing the diverse learning needs of students with SEN, but also for other students' learning. The class will be divided into three groups based on learning ability, with the weakest group learning basic skills after class, and the middle group being grouped in class to help them break down the learning content within their learning ability. This model allows students with different abilities to benefit from learning and the benefits are not limited to academic performance, but also to personal growth and social skills. The school also uses diversified teaching methods, allowing students at different levels to participate and engage in the classroom. For example, during online learning, teachers use activities such as role-playing and character reaction dialogue to allow students to understand content and character emotions by taking on character roles at home, and also to promote peer collaboration and interaction while learning.

### School-based curriculum tailoring and accommodation

Since the academic year 2017/18, the school has been implementing core curriculum tailoring and accommodation in relevant subjects for students with special learning needs in Chinese, English, and Mathematics subjects in Primary 4 or 6. In terms of curriculum, the learning support team and curriculum development team work together to arrange subject teachers to jointly develop accommodation content. Taking Mathematics as an example, the learning support team coordinates with subject teachers to first understand the teaching content of the subject, and then discuss small-step teaching methods, such as using pictures to explain mathematical steps, exploring how to make it easier for students to understand bar graphs, etc., so that teachers have specific and feasible instructions to make changes or cuts to the curriculum. At the same time, the school has specially designed observation forms for subject teachers, and feedback is given by the curriculum leader and SENCO after observations to help teachers better understand the characteristics of small group learning and differentiated instruction, and also to encourage teachers to pay more attention to classroom teaching that caters for the diverse learning needs of students.

### Differentiated instruction mode

In terms of coursework, differentiated worksheets are designed for each subject and grade to cater for the individual differences of students with special learning needs. The school also provides its own differentiated coursework, allowing students to complete corresponding homework according to their own learning abilities. Students are divided into high, medium, and low levels based on the degree of difficulty, represented by the sun, moon, and stars, respectively, to avoid comparison or negative emotions among students. The three levels of coursework also have different hints for answer, enabling students to complete the same questions with prompt assistance. The school also provides counseling classes to assist students with low academic achievement, to reduce the pressure of homework or learning. Teachers will use the school-based differentiated coursework with teaching methods. If they find that students have not grasped a particular part, they will think about how to help students in teaching, and also review and revise the content of the coursework, so that "learning, teaching, and assessment" are closely linked and complement each other.

In terms of homework, the school will develop corresponding completion methods according to students' learning abilities. The school will provide answer tools according to the situation, such as using larger notebooks to complete copying homework, and using different colored pens to mark strokes, making it easier for students to understand the structure of words. In terms of writing tools, the school will provide the pencil grip or triangle pens and even allow students to use colored pens to write, so that students can complete their homework in a way that suits their needs.

The school will also conduct a "Learning Achievement Measurement" for students with special learning needs in June every year, to review students' learning status and arrange support and accommodation measures for the next academic year. This effectively develops the school-based support strategies and evaluation effectiveness, and flexibly adjusts the content and accommodation strategies of the school-based curriculum. In the school's latest three-year development plan, it has been expanded to Primary 3 to benefit more students.

#### **6.2.4.4 Home-School Co-operation and Professional Therapeutic Intervention**

##### **Strengthening parents' knowledge of children's learning and further education**

Most of the parents in the school come from grassroots backgrounds, and many students' parents need to work outside home. The school will hold lectures and activities on how to care for students with special learning needs to enhance parents' awareness and skills in supporting these students. Through activities, the school will help parents from cross-boundary and newly arrived families to better understand the school's background, Hong Kong's education system, learning methods, etc., so that parents can make the best choices for their children with comprehensive information. At the same time, the school is committed to building good relationship and cooperation with parents, establishing trust and mutual assistance through close communication, so that parents can feel the school's support and help for their children's learning needs, as well as their own mental health needs.

##### **Home-school cooperation and communication**

The school promotes home-school cooperation in WSA, and all teachers work together to establish good, trusting relationships with parents. All teachers assist in collecting data and contacting parents, so that teachers can also maintain close communication with parents, such as through class teachers' phone calls. The learning support team will also continue to explain to parents the current support measures and their effectiveness, so that parents can have channels to continuously provide feedback, and through two-way communication to coordinate and formulate support methods that are more suitable for students. The school will also distribute questionnaires to parents to understand their needs, expand support scope, and establish an open and proactive support relationship.

##### **Establishing parent support network**

The school also provides various parent and child activities and invites parents with special learning needs to form a support network to regularly share and exchange the difficulties of caring for children with special learning needs. In order to enable more parents to participate in activities, the school carefully schedules the time of the activities on Thursday mornings, providing space for parents to have regular development. The activities include informative talks, stretching yoga classes, etc., taking care of the development of students while also taking into account the physical and mental development of parents. In addition, the school collaborates with external organizations or teachers in response to development needs and has close cooperation with EPs to organize different professional lectures for parents, in order to strengthen home=school cooperation and parenting skills. The school social worker stated in the interview that continued cooperation with organizations can help establish mutual trust with parents, making the school or organization a source of support for parents. When parents encounter difficulties, they will also actively seek help, relieve their stress, and provide timely and appropriate support.

### Strengthening support for students with individualized education plans

For individual students with special learning needs, the school also sets up IEPs for them. Especially for students with ID, the school will establish different stages of learning plans until graduation, and the amount of support provided continues to increase. At the same time, the school also provides in-school training by the learning support team to help more teachers understand various support methods and the implementation of IEPs. This includes explaining to teachers how to support students with ID or ASD, and sharing teaching materials created for students in the school, so that teachers can understand the situation and feasibility of support methods, and are encouraged to flexibly use existing resources, adjust or add new elements to support other students with similar needs.

In addition, the cooperation of stakeholders in school can be seen in the support of IEPs. The school organizes regular meetings with teachers, parents, social workers, and EPs to establish appropriate support methods for students' learning, emotions, behavior, and other aspects. This ensures that the support measures are tailored to the students' needs and have a certain degree of feasibility. The school also arranges a responsible teacher for each IEP, usually with the subject teacher or class teacher as the lead to monitor the progress of the plan's support, and continuously reviews with all stakeholders throughout the academic year to adjust the support strategy according to the student's development.

### Professional therapy enhances students' communication skills

In order to improve the communication skills of students with special learning needs, speech therapy services are provided to students so that they can continue to use them in their daily lives after receiving professional training. In each academic year, the school also arranges for students to undergo speech assessments, so that speech therapists can assess their situation and provide appropriate support. During the academic year, if there are transfer students or students who need support as observed by teachers, the school will also arrange for assessment to ensure that students receive the corresponding support. After the assessment, students who in need will receive speech therapy services provided by speech therapists. The school will also continue to monitor the students' progress, such as understanding their pronunciation problems and therapy methods, developing daily support methods. and the school provides them with tools such as vocabulary cards and training in conversation and interaction assisted by teachers, so that they can utilize them in their daily lives.

### **6.2.4.5 Promoting Inclusive School**

#### Creating an inclusive environment in classroom

The SENCO expressed that peer support has been a focus of the student support team in recent years as there are more students with SEN in schools. Subject teachers in each class appoint students who have better subject grades as "Subject Angels" to assist and accompany students with SEN in the same class. The assistance is not only limited to homework support, but also includes emotional and social support. In summary, the SENCO is pleased that students who act as "Subject Angels" are very willing to play their role. On the one hand, they may be hindered by the friendly relationship with their peers, but on the other hand, they enjoy the satisfaction of being able to help others. The parents of the "Subject Angels" are also very happy to have their children take on such roles and believe that it can cultivate their willingness to help others.

#### Creating an inclusive environment outside classroom

The school is committed to promoting a good and harmonious learning atmosphere at school. Since the 2016/17 academic year, the school has attached great importance to building a harmonious

campus environment after participating in the "Primary School Peer Mediator" training program. Through daily training, the school hopes that senior primary school students can learn about conflicts, mediation, emotions, mediation steps and skills, and how to apply them in daily life, cultivating their spirit of respect and caring for others and promoting tolerance among peers, especially with regard to disturbing behavior that students with SEN may cause. In order to provide effective learning opportunities for students, the school was opened during the epidemic period for students in need and allowed teachers and staff to assist and manage online learning which alleviated the pressure on parents and students studying at home. According to the latest survey of stakeholders, regardless of parents, teachers or students, the scores for the various items in the "My Perception of the School Atmosphere" survey were between 3.8-4.0, indicating that all stakeholders agree that the school atmosphere is harmonious, teachers care about students, and parents are willing to continue sending their children to school.

#### **6.2.4.6 Good Exemplars of implementing integrated education**

Close collaboration between different stakeholders to achieve whole school approach effect

The school regularly holds meetings with EPs, social workers, subject teachers, and parents to jointly develop and implement methods to support students. The school will follow up on cases of students with SEN, including early identification, organizing consultation meetings, arranging meetings with school EP, consulting subject teachers' opinions, observing students' learning situations, etc., in order to obtain relatively accurate assessment results for students. The SENCO will also provide counseling to students with SEN individually to gain a deeper understanding of their thoughts and problems, and then explain and share the handling methods with teachers to support students' learning and enhance teachers' acceptance of students with SEN.

In addition, the school is also committed to organizing and promoting exchanges between teachers, sharing teaching experiences and insights, establishing an interactive culture, and promoting WSA. For example, at the beginning of each academic year, the student support team provides student information to teachers to help them better understand the situation and needs of different students and share skills for interacting with them. The school also encourages teachers to participate in training related to IE, such as basic courses for caring for students with different learning needs, to enhance teachers' professional knowledge in handling students with special learning needs, so that teachers can confidently handle classroom situations, especially new teachers. As SEN support teachers have also received designated training courses on IE, and they will also share some of the functions of the SENCO thus supporting other teachers in coordination and other areas.

Student support team and SENCO fully utilize their leadership roles

The student support team arranges "Student Support Classification Meetings" every September and at the end of each semester, where the EPs, school social workers, and speech therapists discuss the different support needs of students with SEN and their observations throughout the year. This helps subject teachers have a better understanding of student growth and learning outcomes and provide appropriate support in their daily teaching. The SENCO submits individual support reports and records of students with SEN to relevant subject teachers, enabling them to provide appropriate accommodation for those students and invites subject teachers to submit annual learning progress reports for students with SEN at the end of the academic term. After organizing and analyzing the data, the SENCO is responsible for transferring relevant data to the subject teachers' in the next academic year as reminders. At the same time, the student support team adjusts their support strategies in the curriculum, classroom learning, homework, dictations, and exams for each student with special learning needs and provides feedback at the end of the semester. The team also reviews the support

strategies for each student at the end of every semester and refers them to counseling team or relevant organizations as needed for further support by student counselors.

Establishing an in-school professional support mechanism to promote the operation of three-tier support model

The school systematically identifies students' various needs in growth support and improves the overall referral mechanism. Before the start of classes in August each year, the learning support team will offer bridging courses for incoming Primary 1 students, which not only helps them to experience campus life but also provides an opportunity for teachers to evaluate the new students' various situations. The learning support team promotes appropriate support by teachers via WSA through well-established coordination, cooperation, and monitoring. For students with SEN, small groups are set up, such as reading and writing groups or attention groups, to enhance their learning abilities. In regular classes, the school also arranges teaching assistants to take care of students with SEN, enabling subject teachers to focus on teaching and allowing students with SEN to learn more effectively and keep pace with the class. The school also encourages peer support, making use of each student's strengths to establish a school atmosphere of mutual learning and allowing students with different abilities to have opportunities to serve and perform, such as appointing students with better academic performance in each subject as "subject angels" to provide learning and emotional assistance to students with SEN. This project is also supported by other students and parents.

To provide appropriate support for students with special learning needs, the school has also established a systematic mechanism for professional therapy. Within the school, EP conducts assessments and observes students' situations, as well as identifies the scope of support needed, such as autism and ADHD. EP also uses scales and classroom observations to further understand students' learning needs and makes referrals when necessary. In the interview, it was noted that some students were referred to youth medical centers, enabling them to access professional support services within the community. At the same time, within the school, speech therapy services are also provided, using a pull-out approach to offer speech therapy to students during class time and expand the scope of services for students.

Strengthening support for students with special educational needs through pull-out teaching

There are many students with SEN in the school. The school adopts a three-tier framework to pull-out individual students for counseling. In particular, the pull-out teaching for the Tier 3 can help individual students rebuild their basic academic knowledge, such as word and vocabulary recognition. School social worker also believes that in the Tier 2 framework, the school provides diverse activities to train students' attention through the assistance of external organizations, as well as different training classes such as reading and writing groups. The school social worker believes that different measures can help students with special learning needs strengthen different aspects of their abilities. Not only can it improve the teaching effectiveness, but it also allows some ADHD or dyslexic students to relieve academic pressure through alternative pathways.

#### **6.2.4.7 Challenges in implementing integrated education in school**

Limitations of school facilities and class time

For the support of students with special learning needs, the school needs to set up different support groups or pull-out classrooms. However, the limited space in the school building has prevented them from arranging more training and activities for students with SEN. For example, the school does not have enough space to set up a sensory integration room, which limits opportunities for students with SEN to exercise their muscles. Additionally, due to limitations in class time and venue, the school

may not be able to offer more support through group classes. Especially during the pandemic, online classes restricted the opening of some groups, such as the Lego-based group; the art therapy group and music therapy group were not able to operate due to limited time and space. This is a limitation of hardware resources.

#### Lack of consensus among stakeholders on integrated education, leading to weakened support effectiveness

The principal stated that effective assistance to students with special learning needs requires cooperation by different stakeholders. However, each family's situation is different, and teachers and parents need to adjust their expectations for students with special learning needs to avoid excessive demands on them. For example, most students with special learning needs require more time to digest information, so the school and parents should not have too high expectations for their grades and should even make reasonable demands based on individual student situations. Additionally, many parents have not received training on SEN, which indirectly relies on the school's support. Even if the school provides some materials for parents to help their children complete their homework, some parents may not be able to complete the tasks, and some may even refuse to let their children receive special education training because they are not familiar with it. This may result in parents completely entrusting their children's education to the school, which may not achieve the desired learning outcomes. The school and teachers have not adjusted their teaching strategies to respond to the current situation, and with the increasing number of students with special learning needs, the school and teachers still focus on traditional teaching methods that prioritize grades, which narrows the support options available to teachers, students and parents, and weakens the effectiveness of IE support.

#### Insufficient human resources

In terms of manpower of teacher, the principal believes that many students with special learning needs require additional assistance from the SENCO, but the SENCO often needs to juggle administrative work, so the actual time for support is limited. Both the principal and the school psychologist believe that there is a shortage of manpower to care for students with special learning needs. Although some schools have on-site social workers to support students, once a serious incident occurs, the school may need to hire additional teaching assistants to take care of the children full-time. Considering the limited school budget, it is difficult for the school to hire experienced staff to care for students. If teaching assistants are frequently rotated, it may be difficult for students to establish a sense of security and engage in school life. In terms of external support, the limited number of visits by the on-site school psychologist may not provide timely support or referrals for students, and scheduling an appointment with a regular doctor may also take a long time, increasing the sense of powerlessness among the school, students, and parents.

#### Teachers' workload affects support effectiveness

In implementing IE, the school first integrates students in class arrangements, including allocating classes evenly to allow students with special learning needs to learn together with regular students. However, due to the large number of students in each class, teachers may find it difficult to simultaneously address the learning needs of students with SEN and other students. When teachers try their best to provide support but still cannot achieve effectiveness, they may feel frustrated. Under the WSA for support, effective support depends on the trust established with students, especially for students with mental health needs. However, the heavy workload of school teachers and the limited time spent with students only in class make it difficult to effectively care for students' needs beyond learning, and may also lead to less than ideal teacher-student relationships.

## **6.2.5 School E**

### **6.2.5.1 School Background**

School E is a subsidized secondary school in Kowloon. It implements IE through WSA, which includes setting up a learning support team, cross-subjects collaboration, partnering with families of students with special learning needs, and peer guidance programs to support students with special learning needs.

In the 2020/21 school year, School E had a total of 48 students with SEN, with 3 students have not yet officially confirmed with SEN. The number of students with SLD was the largest, with 29 students, followed by 17 students with ADHD, and 9 students with SpLI. The school did not have any students with PD or VI, and the number of students with other types of SEN was around 2-3 for each type.

### **6.2.5.2 Management and Organization**

#### **Team**

The total number of teachers in the school is 49, of which 54% have received relevant training in special education.

The student support team consists of a SENCO, SENSTs, guidance teachers, student counselors, school social workers, and IE assistants, with a total of 9 people.

#### **Duties and Support Measures**

- In terms of school facilities, the school provides facilities for students with special learning needs, including ramps, accessible elevators, and accessible washrooms.
- To better support the needs of students, the school works with the learning support team to assist teachers, parents, and students in building a respectful, inclusive, and supportive school community.
- The learning support team also works with other subject teams to support students in need, providing individual counseling and assistance to students with learning difficulties, emotional problems, physical disabilities, and other special learning needs to help them adapt to school life. In addition, the learning support team works with other teachers to design different modes of teaching activities through curriculum accommodation to take care of students with special learning needs.
- The student support team is also responsible for coordinating homework tutorial classes, arranging senior secondary student retreats and make-up classes.
- The learning support team provides different support programs to implement IE, including speech therapy services, "peer guidance" program, cross-curricular activities (integrated juggling class, self-exploration art group, and dried flower group for students with SEN), career planning for senior form students with SEN, dyslexia support group day, concern group for repeaters with SEN, "One-page Profile," STEM X Model Racing Team, and social skills group, etc.
- The learning support team and career planning team organized the SEN Career Planning Support Program in the 2021/22 school year to assist students in Form 4 to 6 with SEN to develop their

career development direction, help students understand their interests and establish suitable career plans early, and put them into practice.

## **Overall Support Policies and Strategies of the School**

The school places great emphasis on the professional training of teachers, regularly provides information related to counseling and encourages and provides opportunities for teachers to attend training courses, seminars, workshops, etc., to strengthen teachers' understanding of students' growth needs, emotional development, and master communication skills with parents and students. At the same time, the school is committed to providing students with various learning opportunities, aiming to enhance their thinking, creativity, communication, problem-solving abilities, and apply them in daily life. The teacher professional development team and information technology team hold teacher training workshops for teachers, using information technology to facilitate learning, promote students' active learning, and provide immediate feedback to promote the development of e-learning in the school.

Teachers said in the interview that the school's in-house training is very practical and provides practical examples to illustrate strategies of differentiated instruction for teachers' reference. As a SEN teacher, they can also assist other teachers in applying differentiated instruction and provide support for teaching materials or other areas. However, in the past two years, due to the long suspension of classes caused by the pandemic, there have been relatively fewer in-house training sessions on differentiated instruction strategies. (Teacher interview)

To strengthen support for the overall teaching staff, the school hired SEN support teachers to support the implementation of IE and deepen the school culture of integration. Support teachers are not only responsible for supporting and handling student learning and growth matters like ordinary teaching assistants, but also need to undertake teaching work and other duties related to supporting students with SEN in different ways, such as small group teaching, promoting home-school cooperation, managing data for students with SEN, managing and integrating data for different students with SEN, early identification and support, arranging speech therapy services, and arranging purchase of external services, etc. (SENCO and teacher interviews).

Regarding support for non-Chinese speaking students, the school has two non-Chinese speaking students. By learning together with their peers and benefiting from an immersed Chinese language environment, students can cope with mainstream Chinese classes. The school only needs to set the same learning goals and teaching strategies for them as for Chinese-speaking students, which can help them learn Chinese systematically.

The school also has a peer counseling program aimed at equipping potential students with self-awareness and building their self-confidence. The school hopes to use this support program as a starting point to provide the first layer of care and support to students in need, and to enhance the atmosphere of friendship and integration. Looking ahead to the coming year, the school will strengthen mental health education, introducing empathy, care, and responsibility as values. The existing peer counseling program will be integrated with other counseling activities and jointly coordinated by the learning support team and the counseling team to strengthen the school's positive behavior culture, appreciate and reward positive behavior.

## **Whole School Approach**

### **Whole School Approach in Integrated Education**

The school upholds the idea of WSA to assist teachers, parents, and students in building a respectful, inclusive, and supportive school together. If students with special learning needs are willing to

participate in activities inside and outside the school, such as morning assemblies and competitions, and if teachers have the time to attend, they will personally support the students (Principal interview). At the same time, the school provides individual counseling and assistance to students with special learning needs, such as learning difficulties, emotional problems, and physical disabilities, to help them adapt to school life, keep up with the curriculum, and build good peer relationship.

#### Expanding the level of integration

The school's educational philosophy advocates a culture of universal love and believes in the education principle that "everyone can be taught". Through practical actions, as long as there are sufficient and appropriate learning opportunities, the school will arrange and provide space for students to develop their potential. Teachers not only grasp this culture but also encourage students to participate actively in extracurricular activities, step out of the classroom, and face society (Principal interview).

For students with special learning needs, the school provides different levels of support. The subject teachers, support teachers, and teaching assistants continuously provide feedback on curriculum and behavior management while striving to develop the students' potential and meeting their special needs (Principal, SENCO and support teacher interviews). During exams, accommodations are provided for test and in time to prevent students from experiencing too much pressure (Social worker interview).

The school makes full use of various resources, and the four social workers from the counseling team and learning support team work together to support students' special learning needs and whole-person development. They use their professional knowledge to arrange activities for parent-teacher association and counseling team, as well as handling individual cases of students from both groups. Furthermore, social workers collaborate with the learning support team and EP to assess students with special learning needs, such as exam accommodation, and help the teachers in counseling team and all teachers construct a school culture of love, care, and comprehensive student care (social worker interview).

At the same time, the student support team cooperates with other administrative departments to assist students in career planning and plan their path after graduation. Social workers and other administrative department heads also observe the needs of students and suggest purchasing appropriate services for their needs to the SENCO (social worker interview). During the pandemic which students and teachers are not able to meet at school, to take care of students' psychological needs, the school social workers use various social media platforms to communicate closely with the students online, allowing students to participate in activities without being confined to traditional counseling models. The school's counseling staff can also understand the learning and emotional needs of some students who cannot attend face-to-face classes through this platform (social worker interview).

### **6.2.5.3 Learning and Teaching**

#### Class allocation

In terms of class allocation, the school uses a pull-out approach to provide suitable learning support to different students. The number of students in pull-out classes is relatively small when compared with regular classes, with about 10 students, and the teacher-student ratio is lower. This arrangement helps to implement differentiated instruction. The SENCO stated in the interview that differentiated instruction can enhance students' learning participation, improve learning effectiveness, and continuously understand their learning needs and progress. However, differentiated instruction can

easily cause others to perceive unequal distribution of teaching resources, and teaching resources tailored for students' learning styles may not be suitable for other ordinary students.

### Establishment of School-Based Curriculum Tailoring

Starting in the 2019/20 academic year, the school began to develop school-based curriculum tailoring, assessment and teaching methods to improve the effectiveness of catering to the diverse learning needs of students, with an aim to enhancing student learning performance and teacher professional abilities, as well as promoting teaching effectiveness. In response to the goals of the school-based curriculum tailoring, teaching focuses were developed for each learning domain subject, and plans were implemented for whole-school collaborative lesson planning and lesson observation. In addition, all classes are scheduled for a "multidisciplinary learning session" at the end of each school day, including homework assistance, enrichment course support, and extracurricular activities or talks, to provide novel learning experiences for students and enhance curriculum flexibility.

On the other hand, subject teachers will provide learning accommodations according to the needs of students with special learning needs, with the expert report being considered. This includes homework accommodation, test and exam accommodation or exemption, etc. The school also allows teachers in small group teaching teams to re-plan the curriculum according to students' abilities and needs, and adjust the teaching content according to the students' learning progress to meet their needs. At the same time, the support teachers in small group teaching teams will try to use visual strategies to teach students and enhance their attention and interest in the subject (Support teacher interview).

Support teachers pointed out that, under the leadership of subject heads and with their rich teaching experience, they can effectively improve the tailored teaching materials and content to meet the levels of students with SEN. Support teachers believe that differentiated instruction requires internal cooperation and support from subject teams to clearly identify whether the materials can accommodate students' diverse learning needs. Therefore, the leadership of the subject team is an important criterion for implementing differentiated instruction. In terms of daily teaching, the school advocates teachers to use encouraging methods or diversified teaching strategies to enhance students' learning motivation. When preparing for lessons or making teaching materials, support teachers will seek advice from subject heads. Support teachers believe that the suggestions of subject heads are very useful because they can obtain more feedback on teaching and making teaching materials from experienced teachers (support teacher interview).

### Individual Education Plan

The school currently adopts a dual-track mode to support IEP, and the SENCO, together with SEN support teachers, handles all Tier 3 support students. In addition to holding regular case meetings, the school also meets with all professional support personnel, including EP, social workers, student counselors, and parents, and regularly contacts with parents to understand the progress of their children's learning and overall situation. However, support teachers reflected that, due to the specialized knowledge, they cannot accommodate all subjects and thus rely on the assistance of other teachers to achieve more significant outcomes (Support teacher interview). A support teacher shared an experience of exchanging ideas with a General Studies subject head. The subject head demonstrated the actual operating process of converting speech to text when teaching students with SEN, which helped her better support her students (Support teacher interview).

#### **6.2.5.4 Home-School Co-operation and Professional Therapeutic Intervention**

The school values the relationship with parents

The school values the cooperation with parents and believes that home-school cooperation can help establish a shared vision to cultivate students. Considering that most parents are from grassroots backgrounds, the school also puts a lot of effort into parent education. In addition to organizing various types of lectures and workshops, parents are also encouraged to enhance their own skills and knowledge during their leisure time, and to use what they have learned to support their children with SEN. Social workers pointed out that due to their grassroots backgrounds, many parents may lack understanding of special learning needs. Some even worry and resist when their children are diagnosed with special learning needs, as they fear that their children will be labeled as having MI. This stigmatization ultimately leads them to resist the school's counseling and related support arrangements. (Social worker interview)

Changes in parents

After years of continuous efforts by teachers, social workers, and EP in the school, most parents have begun to accept students with special learning needs and understand their needs. In recent years, parents' awareness of students with special learning needs has increased, and labeling of them has reduced. At the same time, they also understand that students have special needs and can seek support from the school and professionals. At the same time, in order to comply with the direction of IE, the efforts and spirit of the school's teaching staff to provide equal education have deepened, and the school's reputation among parents in the community has been enhanced, promoting and investing in the development of IE. (Principal and SENCO interviews)

Roles of social workers and support during class suspension

During the epidemic, as students and teachers could not meet at campus, school social workers utilized different social media platforms to conduct live online communication with students to cater to their psychological needs. This allowed students to participate in activities without being confined to traditional counseling modes. At the same time, school counselors and other professional support personnel were able to understand the learning and emotional needs of some students who were unable to attend face-to-face classes. On the other hand, social workers pointed out that their affiliated social welfare organizations also provided emergency financial assistance to students with SEN who with family difficulties during the class suspension period. They also communicated more with parents, trying their best to help them cope with the adaptation problems caused by the epidemic and to solve other family issues. (Social worker interview)

Support teachers mentioned that the support of social workers was significantly helpful in their work. On one hand, they would mainly support the learning of students with SEN, while on the other hand, the mental and physical health of students during class suspension was mainly taken care of by social workers. This division of labor was considered a good cross-professional cooperation because it allowed teachers to focus on the overall learning situation of students, while social workers could focus on students' growth and health. Moreover, with the comprehensive support of the SENCO, the effect was even more ideal. Under the cross-professional cooperation mode, if there were any changes in the students' situation, such as a student becoming easily tired due to trying new medication, the teacher's teaching could be adjusted accordingly through communication with the social worker. However, the support teacher mentioned that if there were another long period of class suspension, it would bring another challenge to the support as regaining motivation for learning is not easy for students with SEN. (Support teacher interview)

### **6.2.5.5 Promoting Inclusive Campus**

#### Creating an inclusive environment in classrooms

Students with SEN stated during interview that they may not be willing to express their opinions in a large classroom setting due to peer pressure and environmental stress. However, when they attend small group classes, such as a small-sized class with only five students with similar learning abilities, they feel less anxious about their environment and have more opportunities to interact with both their teachers and classmates. (Support teacher and student interviews)

#### Creating an inclusive environment outside classroom

Outside regular class hours, teachers invite students with special learning needs to participate in extracurricular competitions with other students to give them opportunities to communicate and cooperate with others. (Principal interview) During the pandemic, social workers also organize online music concerts and online groups on social media platforms for students to communicate and connect with others outside classroom, to help them overcome emotional distress brought by the pandemic. The school also implements a peer counseling program to enable students to recognize different emotional states. Through various practices, such as community care actions and inclusive experience day camps, communication opportunities among students were enhanced and at the same time, the practices served the community with love and created a caring campus atmosphere. (Interview with social worker)

#### Resources provided by the school

The school utilizes IE resources to hire one student counselor and two teaching assistants, and integrates the resources of the counseling team to jointly hire four social workers to support students with SEN and those who are weaker in academic performance. On the other hand, the school also hires a SEN support teacher in response to school-based needs, and combines LSG, school-based educational psychological counseling services, comprehensive student guidance service grant, and strengthened school-based speech therapy services to effectively integrate resources and expand school-based IE.

### **6.2.5.6 Good exemplars of implementing integrated education**

#### SENCO as a middle management leader

The SENCO also serves as an Assistant Principal in the school, which facilitates coordination work. As the person responsible for coordinating matters related to students with special learning needs, the SENCO often needs to work with different administrative groups, including maintaining records of students with special learning needs, procuring support services for these students, providing individual counseling, designing school activities, and tailoring courses. The SENCO pointed out in the interview that relying solely on the title of SENCO may not necessarily result in effective coordination with other groups. However, serving in a management position in the school allows for greater flexibility in resource utilization. For example, four social workers can be shared among the learning support team and the counseling team to support students with special learning needs, which requires the use of the authority granted by the Assistant Principal position. The school also established a curriculum development leader position, which allowed the initiation of school-based tailored courses. This demonstrates that effective coordination and cooperation depend on further empowering the SENCO. (SENCO interview)

### Small group teaching through pull-out approach

Small group teaching by pull-out approach is provided by support teachers for students with special learning needs. Because the teacher-student ratio is lower in a pull-out class than in a regular class, support teachers can focus more on and effectively support students' needs, enhancing their ability to learn in diverse ways. Support teachers have completed professional training courses on IE, which helps them provide professional care for students with special needs and alleviate the problem of learning differences in the class, easing the teaching pressure of other teachers. Support teachers assist different teachers in using different visual strategies and tailoring teaching materials, such as using different colors in explanatory materials and selecting carefully chosen pictures, which have a great effect on teaching. Differentiated instruction not only enhances student's learning participation, but also improves learning effectiveness and continues to understand their learning needs and progress.

### Building partnerships with parents for early identification of students' needs

The school will establish partnerships with families of students with special learning needs. Through different types of parent seminars and explanations by social worker, parents can understand their children's needs during their leisure time. It also encourages parents to work with teachers to set learning and growth goals for their children. In addition, when students enter Form 1, parents will be invited to fill a questionnaire to help the school observe and understand their child's learning situation. The school will also learn about the learning situation of students with SEN from the primary schools they attended, in order to identify different students' needs early and involve EP and professional support personnel for accommodation. (Principal interview)

### Promoting inter-team cooperation through a shared vision

The SENCO shared a successful experience of inter-team cooperation. By coincidence the life education team intended to establish personal profiles for all students to understand life, the SENCO decided to design an integrated student profile by collaboration between the learning support team, the life education team and the career planning team. The SENCO stated that the personal profile helped them summarize their reflections on life and the real world, and also helped them prepare for the "Joint University Programmes Admissions System" requirements to record their "Student Learning Profile" and "Other Experiences and Achievements in Competitions / Activities" data, according to the feedback from students. In addition, the learning support team also worked with the counseling team to integrate various types of counseling activities to enhance mental health education. The Peer Guidance Program not only provides timely care and support for students with SEN, but also offers different activities to help them understand different emotional states. It also strengthens communication and interaction among peers and promotes peer support.

### **6.2.5.7 Challenges in implementing integrated education in school**

#### SENCO holds too many positions

As the SENCO needs to hold positions of subject teacher and assistant principal, his teaching hours exceed the EDB's guidelines. Due to the limit on the ratio of classes, the SENCO can only teach one subject. Despite the EDB allowing some flexibility in light of the shortage of teachers, it is difficult to balance the work required by three different roles in reality, making the SENCO feel overwhelmed (Principal interview). The SENCO stated that due to their heavy workload in holding positions of SENCO, subject teacher, and assistant principal, the support of the members of the learning support

team is crucial. Moreover, as the school has over 10 students receiving Tier 3 support, he is like a "super class teacher".

The original responsibility of SEN Support Teachers was to take care of students with special learning needs, write IEPs for them, and assist the SENCO in handling related student affairs. However, other teachers in the school may not understand the role of support teachers and may think that their responsibilities are just an idle job. Therefore, they may assign other unrelated tasks to support teachers, which also adds to their extra workload. (Support teacher interview)

Teachers are unable to enroll in special education courses

If teachers who support students with special learning needs want to improve their knowledge in related areas, they can participate in seminars and courses organized by the EDB or universities. However, due to limited course availability, many teachers who want to enroll in related courses are unable to do so because of intense competition for limited places. Teachers may not be able to provide more professional and quality teaching to relevant students if they are unable to take relevant courses. (SENCO interview)

As the Tier 1 support involves improving classroom efficiency and involves a wide range of teachers, the limited number of teachers who have received special education training has a significant limitation on the school's effectiveness and support outcomes. Even if teachers are willing to take care of the learning diversity of every student with SEN in the classroom, the limited class time and teachers' insufficient skills also weaken the overall effectiveness.

The grassroots background of parents weakens the effectiveness of home-school cooperation

As schools mainly admit new arrival students to Hong Kong, the family backgrounds tend to be more complicated. Most parents come from grassroots backgrounds and some selectively hide the individual information about students with special learning needs. Because they lack in-depth understanding of IE, they have been resisting to the school's arrangements of professional support, putting considerable pressure on the school's support. Even though the school holds many seminars and parent groups to help parents better understand the situations and needs of students with special learning needs, the attendance rate is low as parents are busy with work (Social worker interview). This not only makes it difficult for the school and teachers to support and address the real learning needs of students, but also affects their growth and development. (Principal and SENCO interviews)

The current resource depository for teaching materials in the market cannot effectively assist school in implementing tailored curriculum

The SENCO pointed out that they lack the capability although they intend to implement tailored curriculum. This is because most current teaching resource depository are only suitable for primary schools, and there is a lack of teaching resource depository suitable for secondary schools. As a result, they often have to rely on the school's curriculum development leader to provide assistance for different subjects. However, as the curriculum development leader's specialized training may not be applicable to all subjects, subject teachers need more time to design tailored courses, and the effectiveness is not very ideal.

## **6.2.6 School F**

### **6.2.6.1 School Background**

School F is a government-subsidized co-educational secondary school in the New Territories. The school adopts a WSA to IE, with the aim of providing personalized teaching and emphasizing the balanced development of students in five areas.

In the 2020/21 school year, there were 117 students with SEN in School F, and there were still 24 students who had not yet been formally identified with SEN. The largest number of students with SEN were those with SLD, accounting for 89, followed by 16 students with ADHD, and 4 students with ASD. At that time, there were no students with HI, emotional and behavioral problems, VI, or communication problems. Each of the other types of students with SEN had only one student.

### **6.2.6.2 Management and Organization**

#### **Team**

The total number of teachers in the school is 49, of whom more than 60% have received training in "Teacher Professional Development on Catering for Students with Special Educational Needs" in basic, advanced, and/or thematic courses. Nineteen teachers have completed the basic course, nine have completed the advanced course, and five have completed the thematic course. In addition, three teachers have completed the basic and/or advanced "Professional Development Programme for Mental Health". Teachers use a three-tier support model, combined with school-based teaching and assessment strategies, to provide diversified teaching activities and enhanced learning support for students with persistent learning difficulties.

The school supports students through the student support team and the SENCO, who lead a professional support team consisting of two SENSTs, one school-based EP, one school-based speech therapist, three student counselors, and seven subject resource teachers. They lead all school staff to help students develop multiple intelligences and care for their growth needs, enable students with different aspirations and abilities to connect to multiple paths through various aspects of accommodations and support strategies. The team consists of 15 members.

#### **Duties and Support Measures**

The school uses the "strong, weak, opportunity, and threat" analysis. In terms of the "opportunity" regarding the government's new resource allocation in the area of special education needs, the school has obtained additional professional positions such as the SENCO and the SEN Support Teacher to lead student support groups and assist the school in planning, coordinating, and promoting the WSA of IE. This further strengthens the culture of integration and improves the effectiveness of supporting students with SEN. Following the principle of "individual calculation, overall use," the school combines "basic" and additional resources or programs such as the "Student Mental Health Support Scheme", "multi-disciplinary platforms" and "Career Bridge Program". Through sincere cooperation between parents and the school, they work together to solve students' learning or adaptation difficulties and establish a campus culture of integration.

#### **Overall Support Policies and Strategies of the School**

In terms of teacher professional development, the school established a standing mechanism to participate in the EDB's school-based support program and the professional development exchange of the sponsoring body to improve teaching and enhance student learning outcomes. In addition to encouraging different teachers to enroll in courses offered by external organizations, the school also holds workshops for all teachers at campus. However, facing the changing social conditions such as

social movements, pandemics, etc., teachers may encounter students who need mental health support. Teachers may not have a comprehensive understanding in this area and need professional advice to provide more appropriate support for students' emotional needs.

## **Whole School Approach**

### Whole School Approach in Integrated Education

In the interview, the principal emphasized that the school's ultimate goal in supporting students with special learning needs is to enable them to perform as well as their peers without requiring additional support measures indefinitely. Therefore, the school is committed to providing opportunities and environment for both staff and students to participate in the implementation of various measures to support students with special learning needs, promoting integration through a caring school atmosphere.

The school has its own EP and speech therapist who regularly assess and train students. The EP also provides regular feedback to the school on how to improve the school's policies on IE, including methods for homework and exam accommodations, as well as jointly developing a student support list to clarify the use of resources. The school also has a school social worker who provides a variety of services, including case management, group activities, and counseling services. Counseling services are not only available to students but also to parents and teachers.

### Expanding integration levels

The school adopts a guidance and discipline model via WSA that strengthens the guidance and discipline work and care of class teachers under a dual class teacher system. Teachers are encouraged to show more love and care for students, discover their strengths and potential, and use affirming methods to encourage students to develop their strengths. Class teachers at all grades conduct home visits to enhance communication between the school and parents, allowing parents to better understand their children's performance at school. The school will design a more effective data recording system to support class teachers, such as records of accumulated absences, lateness with their reasons, accumulated records of rewards and punishments with their reasons, records of not submitting homework, notices, and parent signatures, etc., and their reasons. Based on the relevant data records, further understanding or reminders for students can be made to prevent problems from occurring or worsening. Guidelines and rules for "class management" are also established for class teachers to reference and follow.

To support the work of class teachers, the school has implemented a system of form manager to enhance student management and communication between the school and class teachers. The form manager can enhance the consistency of class teachers' work, enabling the school to more effectively support their work. In addition, invited teachers and heads of professional groups routinely share their experiences in managing classes during the morning class teacher period, which is beneficial for sharing and transfer of professional knowledge.

In order to enhance parents' understanding and awareness of IE, the SENCO explains the school's support for students with special learning needs and the duties of the SENCO to parents through parent-teacher association meetings. This allows parents to understand the school's integration policy, the concept of WSA, and also to obtain more relevant information. Through simple and easy means, both general parents and parents of students with SEN can learn more about the support strategies and channels for seeking help, supporting parents and further promoting the WSA.

### **6.2.6.3 Learning and Teaching**

#### Class allocation

The school adopts an even allocation so that teachers will face students with diverse learning needs. Through accumulated experience, teachers can preliminarily identify students' learning needs by observing their behavior and using an "evaluation after support" model to provide support strategies for suspected cases. Meanwhile, they also understand whether the students' learning needs stem from their abilities or their family background and learning motivation. Once the subject teacher preliminarily identifies any needs, the support team will follow up and provide professional evaluations. This procedure enables front-line teachers to preliminarily identify students and facilitates timely support and referrals. Therefore, the school allocates its students in Form 1 to 3 evenly according to their ability, which better caters for learning differences and facilitates the use of the "strong helping the weak" small-group learning strategy, thereby reducing the label effect.

#### Differentiated curriculum accommodations

To provide diversified curricula for students with different interests and aspirations, the school offers two applied learning courses in senior secondary education: Fashion Image Design, and Film and Transmedia. Students can learn related fundamental theories and concepts, develop entry-level skills, occupational-related abilities, and common abilities to explore their career aspirations and lifelong learning directions through these courses. Moreover, in Chinese and Mathematics subjects, the school attempts to provide students with systematic and diversified feedback after exams, such as written reports, strengths and weaknesses analysis, and grade descriptions, to help students rethink and improve after evaluations. Teachers can also use these indicators to analyze students' learning differences in-depth and revise their teaching, thus implementing the "assessment for learning" approach.

#### Collaborative teaching and small group teaching

With the increase of government resources and social attention, students and teachers are more accepting of students with special learning needs. Due to the implementation of IE, the number of students with special learning needs in each class has increased compared to before. Students and society have also reduced resistance and at the same time improved the self-esteem and self-identity of students with special learning needs. Teachers at the school also reported in the interview that students in class can get along well and learn in a friendly environment. (Teacher interview)

The school applies two types of support in collaborative teaching through support teachers: one is to work together with the teachers in the classroom, and the other is to group students with slightly lower abilities for small group teaching. Teachers also agree in the interview that collaborative teaching can effectively address the learning needs of some students and help them master the key learning points of the class. However, there may not be enough manpower to provide support for every lesson, and resources have to be allocated according to the school's arrangement.

### **6.2.6.4 Home-School Co-operation and Professional Therapeutic Intervention**

#### Parent education

Most of the students' families of the school's students come from grassroots backgrounds, and parents do not have much time to participate in their children's learning affairs, and the motivation to participate in workshops and other activities is also low. Teachers mainly communicate and exchange with parents through phone calls, and there are very few opportunities for parent education. Therefore,

the school holds different types of lectures or workshops to allow parents to learn positive thinking and appreciate students' characteristics from the activities, understand the characteristics of different social and business leaders, and learn to explore the areas of students' potential. In terms of parent support, the school regularly communicates with parents, including parent day and parent meetings, etc., and uses phone and network to understand the needs of parents and the learning and behavior of students at home.

#### **6.2.6.5 Promoting Inclusive Campus**

##### Creating an inclusive environment in classroom

The school's teachers flexibly use the personal characteristics of each student to enable them to unleash their potential in class. The seating arrangement also assigns students with different personalities to sit together, with an aim to taking care of each other while growing together, so that all students in the class can get along well. For example, non-Chinese speaking students have higher English proficiency than local students, which can complement each other and create a learning atmosphere together.

##### Creating an inclusive environment outside classroom

The school uses a thematic approach to design a whole school reward scheme, integrating existing whole school and class activities, to cultivate positive values of students' holistic development, gratitude, positive optimism, and to build a caring and harmonious campus. At the same time, the "Big Brothers and Sisters" program is also held, including training for senior students, lunchtime and after-school homework tutoring, etc., to help new and transfer students adapt to school life, and also to enhance the analytical and thinking abilities of junior secondary school students and strengthen their learning confidence. Through peer care and support, the cohesion and sense of belonging of students from low-income families are strengthened, and peer guidance support is provided for students with special learning needs.

#### **6.2.6.6 Good exemplars of implementing integrated education**

##### Provision of resource teachers for collaborative teaching

In terms of classroom support, the school is committed to meeting the needs of students with different abilities. To cater for students with special learning needs, the school has established resource teachers in four subjects: Chinese and English Languages, Mathematics, and Integrated Humanities. The resource teachers develop differentiated instruction strategies in the curriculum, including tiered assignments and diversified learning assessments. For students with higher learning abilities, the school also provides appropriate advanced learning opportunities to maximize their potential. The school offers different programs for gifted students, including "the Elite Learning Program" for Form 3 students, the "Enrichment Program" for senior secondary students, and the "Soaring High Program" for Form 4 to 6 students.

The school also participates in various external programs, including the Quality Education Fund, and the School-based Curriculum Development Support Services for Secondary Schools of EDB. These programs bring in external professionals to assist in enhancing learning activities at the school. The school also uses the relevant resources to hire SEN support teachers to provide personalized Chinese language learning programs for non-Chinese speaking students. Through classroom or small-group teaching, the school improves the Chinese language proficiency of non-Chinese speaking students. Additionally, the school organizes diversified learning activities, such as community walks, to

motivate non-Chinese speaking students to use Chinese language in the community and enhance their motivation in learning Chinese language.

#### Promoting action research and differentiated instruction through collaborative lesson planning

The principal emphasizes that supporting students with special learning needs is not only the responsibility of the SENCO and the SEN Support Teachers, but also the responsibility of teachers of every subject (Principal interview). Therefore, the school has established resource teachers in each subject area to serve as bridges, developing support strategies that can be aligned with the development of each subject. With the support of the principal, the SENCO leads different subject teachers in conducting action research to review and improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning support for students with SEN. In addition to inviting tertiary institutions to provide support for action research, the school has also established a community of practice for differentiated instruction within the school, in order to promote teachers' gaining and feedback on practical experience related to differentiated instruction from their own teaching experiences.

Moreover, through collaborative lesson planning meetings led by the student support team, teachers of different subjects work together to develop teaching techniques and methods to support students, providing teachers with clear concepts and understanding of the direction of support, and establishing a sustainable direction for professional development, promoting mutual learning among teachers and promoting professional development. Resource teachers are also arranged with high mobility, allowing different teachers to have the opportunity to participate in supporting roles in their own subject areas, avoiding the restriction of teachers' development, and promoting the participation of all teachers in the school.

#### Promoting inclusive education through life-wide learning approach

The school focuses on guiding students with special learning needs towards positive career paths. Through regular communication with class teachers at all grades, the school identifies and classifies students who require care and collaborates with other administrative departments to provide relevant extracurricular activities or workshops. At the same time, through government-funded programs and non-profit organizations' career planning services, group-based career activities are conducted to cultivate positive life paths suitable for these students.

The school provides a variety of inter-disciplinary activities covering academic, sports, social service, and art categories. The activities are balanced in terms of categories and diversified in forms, including field trips and site visits. These activities are in line with the school-based curriculum and promote comprehensive learning, allowing students to develop multiple intelligences and broaden their life experiences.

#### Creating an inclusive campus with parents and students

According to the school social worker in the interview, involving parents requires long-term effort to help them understand the support methods provided by the school, while also building trust with parents to establish a cooperative relationship. (Social worker interview)

After long-term effort, some parents of students with special learning needs in the school are now willing to participate in school events and even join the parent-teacher association to understand the school's support policies and methods, and to understand the current situation of supporting their children in school. At the same time, the school also provides appropriate advice to parents through regular meetings or discussions to allow them to understand what support to provide in the current

situation. To integrate the cultural differences among the families of students from different family backgrounds, including local students, mainland Chinese students, and non-Chinese speaking students, the school organizes various types of parent-child activities, such as making hometown cuisine. Through these activities, parents from different backgrounds can get to know and communicate with each other, and better understand local and school cultures.

The school also actively promotes the "Big Brothers and Sisters" program, which encourages senior students to provide support on learning, abilities, and living of junior form students via homework tutoring and other services. This program helps to enhance the care for students with SEN and peer support, and creates an integrated atmosphere.

Arranging teachers to experience the difficulties of students with special learning needs

The school's support team, together with EP, conducted various workshops for all teachers. In addition to understanding the support strategies, the school also emphasizes teachers' experience and feelings towards students with special learning needs. For example, through fragmented articles and texts, teachers are asked to complete reading comprehension questions within a limited time to simulate the difficulties that students with dyslexia may face during exams. They also use videos to simulate the difficulties that students with VI may encounter in their daily learning, and use food to help teachers experience the speech difficulties that students with speech disorders may face when speaking. These experiences allow teachers to truly experience the situations and difficulties faced by students with special learning needs, with the aim to changing teachers' perceptions of their students and eliminating the bias that "poor performance is due to a lack of effort".

#### **6.2.6.7 Challenges in implementing integrated education in school**

Increasing challenges in catering for student' diverse learning needs

Due to the diversity of students, including those from different family backgrounds, schools face different challenges in determining their learning needs. For example, when facing new arrival or South Asian students, schools or teachers need to understand their learning needs from daily learning, but may not be able to identify whether the cause is due to special learning needs, language, or adaptation to the situation in Hong Kong, etc. These external factors are not covered in the current identification scales, so schools need more time to observe or evaluate to identify the students' real needs and provide relevant support.

Insufficient visits from professional support personnel

The school has a school-based EP to assess or train students with special learning needs. But due to the limited service hours of the EP, the immediate effectiveness of the service is affected. The school EP mentioned in the interview that most of the service time needs to prioritize to complete various assessments for students, and only a small amount of time can be spent with students and the entire teaching staff. It results in requiring the SENCO to effectively coordinate and implement the recommended support methods, thereby counting on the SENCO for the effectiveness of IE and adding to his/her responsibilities and pressure.

Differences in understanding and consensus on integrated education among various parties

IE has been implemented for many years, but there are still certain differences in understanding among stakeholders, which can lead to contradictions in practice. The principal also stated in the

interview that a common understanding and sufficient discussion, as well as a shared vision, are necessary to maximize its benefits. (Principal interview)

At the school level, taking non-Chinese-speaking students as an example, the ideal goal for them in regular schools is to learn Chinese and be able to use it as proficient as local students. However, under the policy of IE, schools need to support students' learning needs and adjust their curriculum accordingly, which makes it difficult for them to adjust the course arrangement and related support. In terms of educators, teachers' understanding of IE will also directly affect the effectiveness of various measures. EP indicated in the interview that while teachers generally understand the characteristics of students with special learning needs or have a certain understanding of IE, some teachers still have prejudices against such students in practical support (EP interview). For example, students with ADHD may be regarded as naughty, while students with dyslexia may be viewed as lazy. These established ideas are also difficult to be changed in a short period of time and also affect the effectiveness of implementing IE.

There are also differences in concepts between schools and parents regarding students with special learning needs. From the parents' perspective, they expect the school to maintain the accommodation and support so that their children can learn and take exams under more equal conditions. However, from the school's perspective, they consider the long-term development of the students and expect them to gradually reduce their support and integrate with society. However, the differences between the two sides and the lack of consensus on the overall direction of supporting students with special learning needs in society or among stakeholders hinder the development and progress of IE.

## **6.2.7 School G**

### **6.2.7.1 School Background**

School G is a subsidized secondary school in Hong Kong Island. Its mission is to provide a joyful and holistic education with equal emphasis on six key aspects. The school adopts WSA to IE, aiming to establish a culture of inclusion and support for students with SEN. By utilizing LSG, hiring dedicated guidance teachers and teaching assistants, and collaborating with different professional teams, the school provides diverse support services for students with special learning needs.

In the 2020/21 academic year, School G had a total of 67 students with SEN, with 2 students still awaiting formal confirmation. Among them, the largest group (32) were students with ADHD, followed by 26 students with ASD. The school did not have any VI or ID students at the time, and the numbers of other students with SEN in different categories were all around 1-2.

### **6.2.7.2 Management and Organization**

#### **Team**

The school has an approved establishment of 55 teaching positions, with approximately 30% of them received relevant training in special education.

The student support team was established in the 2012/2013 school year, comprising 10 members including the SENCO, SENSTs, IE assistants, guidance teachers, school social worker, EP, and clinical psychologist.

## **Duties and Support Measures**

- Procures on-campus services from clinical psychologists to provide psychotherapy services to students who have emotional and behavioral problems.
- Procures "occupational therapy" services to provide individual training for students with writing disabilities.
- Procures "speech therapy" services to improve students' oral speaking abilities and skills and to improve social communication.
- Provides "attention" and "execution function" training, teaching students with ADHD to improve self-management and other learning skills.
- Organizes "career planning" courses for students to explore their life paths.
- Holds parent seminars and workshops to help parents understand their children's unique growth needs.
- Organizes various potential development courses and activities, such as art creation classes, drama therapy training, board game groups, animal-assisted therapy groups, latte art seminars, etc.
- The student support team holds regular meetings to set appropriate support plans for students with SEN. Each grade has a coordinating director to provide immediate support for students with SEN in that grade. The student support team also regularly communicates with parents to exchange information about student learning situations and discuss support measures, such as providing learning or testing accommodations.
- At the end of each semester, the student support team reviews on-campus measures or off-campus support to ensure that they can meet the school's development goals and effectively promote IE.

## **Overall Support Policies and Strategies of the School**

According to interviewed guidance teachers, the principal highly values the professional training of teachers on IE, and encourages and provides opportunities for teachers to participate in external training courses, seminars, and workshops to enhance their understanding of IE and communication skills with parents and students (Guidance teachers interview). Therefore, the school tries to arrange teacher visits to observe other schools' IE practices every year to attract feedback from other schools' experiences and improve the school's practices and shortcomings. The SENCO reflected that participating in training and visits can help to promote peer acceptance and accommodation of students with SEN, as teachers can further understand the characteristics of students with different SEN and realize that some of their behaviors are beyond their control. (SENCO interview)

The latest three-year development plan review report of the school indicated that under the leadership of the SENCO, the attention of different administrative groups to IE has increased, and they tend to actively support students with SEN from the three aspects of academic, emotional, and mental needs. Under the WSA, the participation rate of activities related to inclusive school has increased. General students and students with SEN can get along well and cooperate harmoniously in academic and daily social interactions to promote an integrated school environment.

The SENCO believes that parental participation is an indispensable factor in promoting IE. Therefore, the school specifically organizes a series of talks and activities for all parents. In recent two years, the learning support team and counseling team received frequent requests for help from parents during

the school closure period due to the pandemic as conflicts with their children with SEN increased. Therefore, the school specially promoted positive support from all parents. The SENCO hopes that this will extend the integrated environment from the school to students' families, and through strengthened communication with social workers, to ease their tense relationship. (SENCO interview)

## **Whole School Approach**

### **Whole School Approach in Integrated Education**

The school is committed to the concept of WSA in order to build a respectful, inclusive, and supportive inclusive school together with teachers, parents, and students. Therefore, students with special learning needs attend classes together with general students. In addition, the learning support team encourages teachers to participate more in student activities in person. Through contacts outside classroom, it is expected that they can have a further understanding of students with SEN, maintain harmony and a good relationship.

The review report of the learning support team indicated that the long-term goal of school-based IE is to cultivate all students to make the school their second home and provide them with a happy and comfortable learning environment. Teachers can design more activities or increase daily interaction opportunities to allow students with special learning needs and general students to learn from each other and complement each other's strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, it can train students with special learning needs social skills and communication abilities, and on the other hand, it also allows general students to understand the needs of students with special learning needs. (Support teacher interviews)

### **Expanding the level of integration**

In response to the sounded alarm regarding students' mental health several years ago, and the observed worsening of this situation during the pandemic, the school began to strengthen its mental health support for students from non-formal curriculum in 2020. The school's annual report showed that the learning support team and life education team worked together to encourage students to participate in the "Animal Assisted Therapy and Life Education for Primary and Secondary Schools" program, hoping to promote the value of life and the importance of relationships with others. The learning support team also works with EPs and social workers to hold regular activities and talks on mental health for students, thereby strengthening their awareness of their emotional health status, cultivating positive values, and improving their stress management. EPs and social workers also strengthen individual counseling support to intervene and support students when emotional problems arise, helping them overcome difficulties in their lives, families, or study. The school also collaborates with alumni who are clinical or educational psychologists to conduct research to help students with ADHD improve their behaviour.

### **6.2.7.3 Teaching and Learning**

#### **"Intervention before assessment" support model**

The school adopts the average class allocation method. Each teacher evenly faces students with different learning needs. Since most teachers have rich teaching experience, they can identify the needs of students with SEN preliminarily and understand their situations through observation of student behavior. They use an "intervention before assessment" model to provide support strategies for suspected cases. At the same time, they also understand that students' learning needs may be due to a lack of ability, family background, or learning motivation. After initial identification by subject

teachers, the case will be handed over to the support team for expert evaluation if necessary. This process can identify students early and help them receive appropriate support and referrals (EP interview).

#### Differentiated instruction strategies

According to the support teacher, their teaching methods has changed after completing the course for students with special learning needs. In terms of teaching support strategies, they provide very clear instructions in teaching, such as visual cues for students and using audio and video as teaching materials. They also increase the fun of the class and provide more teaching activities for students to participate. Even during the pandemic, teachers also use different online programs, such as Kahoot and Quizlet, to interact with students (Support teacher interview).

The support teacher further pointed out that students with ADHD find it difficult to concentrate in boring classrooms. Therefore, in addition to using more teaching activities and adjusting the level of difficulty of the curriculum, they also try to teach through games. Experience showed that learning through games can improve the academic performance and classroom participation of students with SEN. If we give more praise and encouragement to students with SEN, it can also be helpful to them (Support teacher interview).

However, the SENCO stated that under the fluctuations of the pandemic, students needed to maintain their daily attendance in physical and online classes. Even if teachers were willing to cater for the needs of each student with SEN in different classes, the limited class time and the impact on the progress of the curriculum may not be able to benefit students from special teaching strategies and activities. Moreover, online classes may affect the participation and concentration of students with SEN, and teachers needed to spend more time to pay attention to individual students' learning progress. Teachers had to raise question frequently in order to know students' progress and provide appropriate feedback and appropriate support after class (Support teacher interview).

#### **6.2.7.4 Home-school co-operation and Professional Therapeutic Intervention**

##### Strengthening the foundation of trust between home and school

In summarizing their experience, the SENCO pointed out that the reasons for students experiencing difficulties are mostly related to their families. Due to receiving excessive information about special learning needs by individual parents, they may question the teacher's teaching or handling approach. Therefore, the SENCO lets these parents know that the school's goal is always to prioritize the students' interests, and hopes that parents can understand and appreciate the school teacher's help. At the same time, the SENCO also maintains regular communication with parents through instant messaging software to strengthen the foundation of trust between home and school. When parents gradually understand that the school's intentions are to sincerely assist their children, their trust in the school will naturally increase. (SENCO interview)

##### Changes in parental perspectives

As the school's students have outstanding performance, parents usually emphasize their children's grades. Regardless of whether the students have special learning needs, parents hope that their children will be able to enter university in the future. However, parents may not fully understand their children's learning situation and appropriate development direction. With the support and persuasion of the SENCO and support personnel, parents gradually accept their child's characteristics and agree to the support provided by the school. When students encounter situations requiring support, parents will even notify the school immediately for assistance. (SENCO and SEN support teacher interviews)

## Interdisciplinary professional collaboration

To meet the school's needs, the school actively seeks clinical support services outside school to support the holistic development of students. In addition to hiring occupational therapists to assist students with life adaptation difficulties, the school also employs clinical psychologists and EPs to work together to strengthen students' and parents' personal counseling services. However, the EP pointed out in interview that, due to their need to prioritize to assess individual cases, and with a considerable number of cases, the frequency of counseling may be affected (EP interview). The clinical psychologist also reflected that counseling must be combined with parental education to improve the overall effect, because parents may not fully understand the evaluation content and may put pressure on the school regarding the evaluation results, bringing intangible pressure to the school. (Clinical psychologist interview)

The school has two stationing school social workers who are on campus for four days a week. They plan and coordinate developmental and preventative activities and seminars for parents and students. They also work closely with the SENCO, with the social workers primarily responsible for interacting with students and the coordinator responsible for interacting with parents. They exchange information to assist in counseling cases. Sometimes, because clinical and educational psychologists only visit the school once every two weeks, the social workers report to them to keep them informed of the progress of counseling cases. In addition, the social workers use quiz games to attract students during activity preparation, which helps students become more involved and focused on learning. (Social worker interview)

### **6.2.7.5 Promoting inclusive Campus**

#### Creating an inclusive environment in classroom

When students are in large classes at school, they may not be inactive in expressing their own opinions. When students have attention or behavior problems, teaching assistants gently remind individual students in the classroom, which helps them understand how their behavior affects other students. Due to the severity of the epidemic, students need to continue their studies in online courses, which reduces the disturbances by personal behavior compared to face-to-face classes. When students encounter familiar problems or areas of expertise, they have the confidence to express their opinions and actively supplement related knowledge, allowing students with slightly lower learning abilities to learn from their experience, thus increasing opportunities for two-way communication. (Guidance teacher interviews)

#### Creating an inclusive environment outside classroom

For students with SEN, the school will allow them to participate in social skills training classes to improve their personal social skills and abilities. In addition to providing psychological counseling to students to promote personal growth, the school also strives to promote awareness and understanding of mental health among students and to promote a caring campus culture through various activities. The counseling team also implements a continuous mental health promotion and education program aimed at eliminating discrimination against people in need of mental health support in different ways. The counseling team also held different programs for junior secondary school students, such as the mental health booth activity for the whole Secondary three, which allowed students to understand the concept of mental health and accept individual differences (Guidance teacher interviews). In addition, social workers also cooperate with the counseling team to

introduce mental health issues in the form of an aeroplane chess game, allowing students to learn about IE in interactive activities (Social worker interviews).

#### Resources provided by the school

In addition to using government funding to purchase speech therapy services and occupational therapy to support for students in need, the school allows students to systematically learn various skills such as language communication, social skills, writing skills, and independent adaptation to daily life. In order to effectively and systematically carry out the student counseling work, the school's learning support team collaborates with the counseling team and clinical psychologists to handle the counseling for related students. (SENCO interview)

The SENCO specifically shared that the school has purchased clinical psychological counseling services outside school, which provides personal counseling and treatment for students with SEN and their parents to solve their learning, social, or emotional stress management problems. Since the school has tried to invite alumni to provide clinical counseling services for students with SEN and their parents voluntarily and achieved significant results, the school has specially allocated additional resources to purchase clinical psychological counseling services in order to strengthen the understanding of support strategies and techniques among school staff and parents, and improve the support services and effectiveness of IE in the school. (SENCO interview)

#### **6.2.7.6 Good exemplars of implementing integrated education**

##### Provision of on-campus clinical psychological counseling services

The school's summarized by the observations in recent years and found out that mental health would be a major concern for students' personal growth in the future. Therefore, the school has deliberately arranged additional resources to hire clinical psychological counseling services. Clinical psychologists believe that with the school's forward-looking planning and the SENCO's belief that clinical psychological counseling services can benefit teachers, students, and parents, clinical psychological counseling services can be provided continuously in the school. Combining the personal enthusiasm of the SENCO and the school's shared beliefs, the school places special emphasis on the mental health status of different stakeholders in the school (Clinical Psychologist Interview).

##### Provision of interdisciplinary professional support services

The SENCO stated that since students with SEN often require personalized support, the school has specially promoted interdisciplinary support services. The school expects to provide comprehensive support for IE through various professionals, such as occupational therapists, counselors, speech therapists, clinical psychologists, and EPs. In the long run, if the learning support team can promote teachers to strengthen cooperation with professional support personnel and provide tailored support plans for each student with SEN, it will bring more ideal results for the development of IE in the school (SENCO interview).

##### Promoting mental health education through non-formal curriculum

The learning support team and the counseling team collaborate to provide various mental health education opportunities through moral education classes or extracurricular activities. For example, for junior form students, they start with introducing the concept of mental health to deepen students' understanding before implementing school-wide activities to establish the concept of emotional

health. For high form students, they further strengthen students' awareness of their own and others' mental health through career counseling or regular counseling, enabling them to identify possible mental problems of oneself and among peers and seek help as soon as possible.

#### Emphasis on parent education

In terms of home-school cooperation, the SENCO aims to enhance parents' understanding of their children's SEN. The school invites external experts to hold parent talks and the SENCO also has regular individual meetings with parents to provide relevant knowledge, including recommended support strategies for students with special learning needs. The SENCO emphasizes that IE should not only focus on counseling students but also supporting parents. Hence, the school encourages parents to share their experiences and establish a learning community for parents with children with SEN. (SENCO interview)

#### **6.2.7.7 Challenges in implementing integrated education in school**

##### Still a room for improvement in whole-school approach practice

The principal stated in the interview that other teachers in the school have insufficient understanding and awareness of the concept of IE or inclusion. They believe that IE should be solely the responsibility of the learning support team, and lack awareness of the need for WSA. Individual teachers are more resistant to IE and teaching students with SEN. (Principal interview)

The SENCO believes that every teacher in the school should complete basic training on IE in order to achieve the goal of WSA (SENCO interview). Observations from EPs showed that some teachers in the school have a stricter teaching style and lack acceptance and tolerance towards students with SEN. Due to the heavy workload of teachers, there are also difficulties in organizing workshops for them, and the level of participation is not always high (Clinical psychologist interview). The clinical psychologist hopes that the school can arrange regular consultation time for teachers and hold seminars to discuss individual cases of students with different special learning needs in order to improve the effectiveness of their support.

##### Functions and burdens of the SENCO are overloaded

The SENCO is responsible for leading the learning support team and providing individual support to all students with special learning needs. Although there are SEN support teachers who are responsible for some individual cases, they also have to balance teaching and other administrative work, which indirectly does not reduce the workload of the SENCO and even requires additional time to support students and parents. In addition, she must meet the continuing education hour requirements for her role, making it difficult to balance her work and personal life. If students with SEN encounter emergency situations, the school will transfer the crisis management team's responsibilities to the SENCO, making her responsibilities even heavier.

On the other hand, the SENCO reflected that her peers do not understand and are not clear about the responsibilities of the SENCO. Each teacher has their own set of education methods, and there is a lack of cooperation and sharing culture among the teaching staff. If the learning support team wants to invite other teachers to promote cross-team cooperation, they can only look for teachers with similar teaching visions, opinions or who are willing to try new methods. Moreover, the school does not currently have a central policy coordination to encourage cooperation among teachers, making it difficult to promote cooperation among them. The SENCO hopes that in the future, class teachers can play a more active and important role in supporting and understanding students with special learning

needs because class teachers can clearly understand and grasp the practical situation of implementation of IE in their classes (SENCO interview). The SENCO also pointed out that negative emotions may arise when dealing with students with special learning needs, which may affect her mental and psychological well-being. Before taking on this position, the SENCO did not receive professional training. The SENCO is also afraid of being overly biased towards students with special learning needs and thinks that she may not handle some situations properly and may be overly accommodating to students. (SENCO interview)

Students with special learning needs have varying degrees of disabilities and a lack of empathy among peers

There are different types of students with special learning needs in classrooms. Even if a student is diagnosed with a particular disability, the degree of disability among students of the same type is not the same, making it difficult for teachers to provide accommodations and support different types of students with special learning needs in the same classroom. If schools arrange students with different needs to study in the same classroom, teachers will find it difficult to take care of them properly (Principal Interview). At the same time, because some behaviors of students with special learning needs may affect others, junior secondary students who have not fully understood IE or special learning needs may feel that these classmates are troublesome and disruptive during class when some students with special learning needs have abnormal behaviors. In severe cases, bullying may occur. (Social worker Interview)

Parents' understanding of special learning needs might have to be improved

The reason why parents choose to enroll their children in the school is that the school's traditional performance is good. Therefore, parents may not acknowledge that their children are with special learning needs when their children can enroll in ordinary schools, and they may ask teachers to treat their children as general students. The behavior and performance of their children will also improve as they grow up. Some parents of students with special learning needs not only resist accepting their own children as students with special learning needs. They may also blame their children, and even themselves. (Principal Interview)

## **6.2.8 School H**

### **6.2.8.1 School Background**

School H is a subsidized secondary school in Kowloon. Its educational philosophy is to provide holistic education and nurture students to become mature, unique and self-confident individuals. The school supports students with SEN through WSA.

In the 2020/21 academic year, School H had 29 students with SEN, and one student was not yet officially confirmed with SEN. The majority (14) of students with SEN had MI, followed by 5 students with ADHD. The school did not have any students with VI, ID, or SpLI, and had only one to three students in other SEN categories.

## **6.2.8.2 Management and Organization**

### **Team**

The approved number of teaching positions at School H is 63, and the total number of teachers is 68, with 34% of them received relevant training in special education.

The student support team was established in the 2019/20 academic year, consisting of the vice principal, EPs, SENCO, guidance teachers, student counselors, school social workers and IE assistants, with a total of 10 members.

### **Duties and Support Measures**

- The student support team holds regular meetings to establish appropriate support plans for students with SEN. The support team and class teachers communicate regularly to discuss the students' learning progress and support measures, such as providing learning or assessment accommodations.
- The student support team assists subject teachers in supporting students with SEN effectively taking into account the students' different abilities and needs and handles all administrative support work on their behalf.
- The school facilities for supporting students with SEN include accessible lifts and toilets.
- The school participates in the "Student Mental Health Support Scheme" organized by the EDB and relevant policy bureaus and departments to improve students' mental health through cross-sector collaboration.
- The principal stated that the SENCO plays a crucial role in promoting WSA in IE because he/she is more aware of the practical needs of frontline teachers and the situation of students with SEN. The SENCO closely monitors students' situations and the impact of support measures, and adjusts them at appropriate times.
- The role of the guidance teachers has shifted to focus more on the needs and changes of students with SEN since joining the student support team. In particular, by increasing numbers of contact and conversation with students outside of class, they can better understand their needs and difficulties and provide appropriate guidance.
- As the number of students experiencing emotional problems increases, the school also holds a mindfulness support program. Invited students participate in mindfulness groups led by teachers and social workers for 15-30 minutes at a time to help calm their emotions. Teachers and social workers can also try to understand the students' recent situations and hidden anxieties, such as homework, exams, or other life pressures. The groups aim to help students relieve stress and improve their emotions in a more relaxed manner.

### **Overall Support Policies and Strategies of the School**

The school actively encourages teachers to participate in the EDB's specialized training courses on "Catering for Diverse Learning Needs" and "Professional Development Programme for Mental Health". It also holds teacher talks in appropriate time to enhance their professional knowledge. The school also flexibly uses LSG to hire additional staff and purchase professional services to support students with SEN.

In the face of students with various types of special learning needs, teachers need to cater for different learning needs and handle different behavioral problems in the classroom, such as how to enhance students' attention in class and how to deal with order problems. These are the difficulties that teachers need to face under IE. In terms of teaching strategies and ways to handle behavioral problems, the school also needs to provide professional training for teachers through various types of talks and

workshops. With the increasing number of mental health support cases, the principal and teachers expressed in interviews that they need to strengthen training to learn more methods for dealing with emotional problems. At the same time, the principal emphasized that the mental health of teachers is very important. Professional development activities will be arranged to enable teachers to learn how to take care of their own mental health needs in order to provide healthy physical and mental support to students. (Principal interview)

On the other hand, the school establishes professional learning communities and arrange teachers who participate in external studies to share their learning experience and encourage them to apply it to daily support strategies. At the same time, the school expects to promote a culture of class preparation for supporting IE with the learning support team as the main coordinating group. The principal believes that communication and sharing among teachers are essential to improve their skills in supporting students with SEN, as it will make them feel that they are not alone. In the long run, the school will incorporate IE into a key point of the future professional development, expecting further support effectiveness in the future. (Principal interview)

In the school development plan for the 2021/22 academic year, the school stated that supporting IE also relies on teachers with good mental health. Therefore, the school will also strengthen the cultivation of teachers' well-being, improve teachers' teaching abilities and knowledge of students with SEN, including establishing a culture of inclusive at school and strengthening the inter-disciplinary support framework for students with SEN. At the same time, in view of the increasingly serious emotional health issues of students, the school specifically proposed the creation of a positive and healthy campus in the school development plan, and put "healthy school" as an issue of concern in the development of the school. The principal stated in the interview that such development needs to be gradual, starting with the establishment of a student health group, and then trying to work with other administrative groups. It is hoped that the school can ultimately bring healthy and happy campus life and environment for students and teachers, and establish a healthy and inclusive campus.

## **Whole School Approach**

### Whole School Approach to Integrated Education

By adopting WSA, the school is committed to providing various forms of support to students with SEN. Through resource allocation, the school provides students with appropriate and diversified support services, such as hiring additional social workers and career guidance counselors to enhance their learning effectiveness and assist them in integrating into school life. The work of supporting students is not limited to the learning support team, the SENCO works with the counseling team and career planning team to address the needs of different cases.

### Expanding the level of integration

In addition to supporting students' learning needs, the school has also been supporting their emotional needs in recent years, especially in helping them deal with stress in study. In addition to the school social worker, the school has also hired student counselors to work with the social worker to improve students' mental health. Through organizing various student activities for all students, the school can identify students in need of support during the activities, establish mutual trust with them, and provide channels for students to seek help when needed.

The school also employs career planning counselors to assist students in setting personal goals and enhancing their learning motivation. In particular, for students with special learning needs, some may feel discouraged about their academic performance. The school uses a career planning approach

through the counselor to understand the students' thoughts and needs, and encourages them to make more favorable choices for their career.

#### Whole school support

The school is committed to developing an inclusive culture for early identification and recognition of each student in need and for early prevention to address the needs of each student. Each teacher also pays more attention to the behavior and psychological changes of students, striving to provide support before stress and emotions reach a critical point to prevent tragedies. For cases that require support, whether it is for students with special learning needs or mental health needs, the school will prepare support summaries for students to inform teachers about their situation and support methods in the classroom.

### **6.2.8.3 Learning and Teaching**

#### Class allocation

The school mainly arranges classes evenly based on academic results, including students with special learning needs, and will provide appropriate accommodations for homework and exams. The school will also make minor adjustments to class allocation and assignments of teachers based on student's personality and behavior. For example, for a student with ADHD who tends to be impulsive, the school will arrange a class teacher who is more patient and tolerant. For students who need peer support, the school will also arrange for them to be in the same class as their friends.

Guidance teachers reported in the interview that they use different strategies to help students learn in class. These strategies not only help students with special learning needs, but also have a consolidating effect on students with higher abilities, making learning more effective for students with different abilities. (Teachers interview)

#### Individual Education Plan

The SENCO stated in the interview that when the learning support team selects students for IEP support, they provide flexibility in class placement, and different people monitor the progress and effectiveness of the plan regularly. However, the SENCO also pointed out that other teachers may not be aware of the reasons why students receiving the Tier 3 support require accommodation support. It is necessary to ensure that all teachers understand the situation of every student with SEN to avoid unnecessary misunderstandings. At the same time, the roles of each teacher must be clearly explained with transparency to ensure that all teachers understand the entire support process and the staff involved, reducing doubts from other teachers. (SENCO interview)

Guidance teachers expressed that the students who receive Tier 3 support tend to be skeptical as their personal development are mostly affected by various factors. Therefore, they would first establish trust with the students, letting them know who is responsible for their case, and then gradually understand the students' situation and develop suitable support strategies. The teachers added that once trust is established, it will be easier to intervene when the student encounters problems. They will also feel that the teacher's support is not labeling them as problematic students, but purely out of care, which will be more beneficial and relevant to the student's needs for future support. (Teacher Interview)

#### **6.2.8.4 Parent-school collaboration and Professional Therapeutic Intervention**

##### Support parents of Form 1 students

The school mainly communicates via their active participation and provides further assistance. During admission at Form One, the school invites parents to provide information on students' special learning needs as initial identification. On Parent Day, the school also understands the support that parents expect the school to provide to further assist the enrolled students. Some parents of students with special learning needs, such as HI, speech impairment, autism, etc., also proactively inform the school about their children's situation so that the school can provide effective support.

##### Establishing collaboration and partnership between parents and the school

The school also strengthens parents' awareness of supporting students through parent education and provides opportunities for parents to interact and establish mutual assistance relationships. The school holds different types of parent education, including talks related to study and support. In response to the increasing concern on students' emotional health in recent years, more parent workshops and sharing sessions on emotional health of adolescent have been held. The school provides a platform for parents to share and establish mutual assistance circles, and teachers intervene and provide further support at appropriate times.

The school also establishes a cooperative relationship with parents through the parent-teacher association (PTA) and promotes it to general parents. The school uses PTA members as the core parents and encourages other parents to participate in activities and expand the support circle through their strength and sharing. Before holding parent education talks, the school understands the topics that parents are interested in or need support through questionnaires, such as parent-child communication and positive discipline, and then holds diverse educational activities to increase parents' participation and make the parent activities more effective. Through the activities, teachers can understand the current needs and difficulties of parents and establish support groups for parents in need.

##### Changes in parents

With more resources provided for students with special learning needs, parents' acceptance of IE has increased. In the past, some parents of students with special learning needs would worry about the labeling effect of the school and would not dare to ask the school for support. However, parents are now willing to accept their children's needs and accept the school's support, which enables students to receive further counseling or assessment early, helping to improve their situation.

##### Cross-disciplinary professional collaboration

The school actively collaborates with different professional support personnel to provide specialized services for students with SEN. In response to the increasing number of students with mental health issues in the school, the school not only participates in the "Student Mental Health Support Scheme", but also receives support from sponsoring body to seek help from clinical psychologists for students in need to provide early intervention. Teachers interviewed pointed out that after meeting with clinical psychologists for several times, students were more willing to talk about their difficulties and feelings, which was helpful for adjusting the support afterwards. Members of the student support team can also free up time and space to effectively expand the overall support. (Teacher interview)

The SENCO stated in the interview that the school's overall support concept is that support levels should be adjusted according to students' changes. Therefore, the student support team regularly discusses support strategies for each student with EPs. With the agreement of the EPs, it is hoped that students with SEN will not have to rely on the help from learning support team for a long time, and they can make decisions for their personal growth and future independently. (SENCO interview)

#### **6.2.8.5 Promoting inclusive Campus**

##### Creating an inclusive environment in classroom

The school is committed to promoting a culture of care and providing equal learning opportunities to every student in classroom, and students are encouraged to establish relationships and learning circles through collaboration. Teachers will encourage students with higher abilities to support students with slightly lower abilities and lower learning motivation by identifying their abilities. As the school strengthens the promotion of mental health needs, it aims to establish an inclusive learning atmosphere. Some students with special learning needs are also willing to proactively mention their emotional conditions to other students, and even ask other students to remind them more, and other students are quite tolerant and willing to help.

##### Creating an inclusive environment outside classroom

The school has set up a "Big Brothers and Sisters" program for junior form students to allow senior form students to provide academic and psychological support for junior form students. Some senior form students establish a peer support culture through activities and conversations, so that students have more channels to get help. Senior form students who encounter students who need support will also inform relevant teachers for their intervention. The interviewed guidance teachers pointed out that care from peers can make up for the shortcomings that school support may not be able to take into account. Especially during the school suspension, it is very helpful for students with poorer emotional well-being and can allow them to re-engage in school life. (Teacher interview)

##### Resources provided by the school

The school uses IE resources to hire SEN guidance teachers and two school social workers. At the same time, there is also an EP who provides assessment and consultation services for students. EP not only meets with students regularly and provide appropriate advices to school teachers, but also involves in providing suggestions to improve the school's support policies aligning with the school culture, and establishes cross-professional cooperative relationships.

#### **6.2.8.6 Good Exemplars in implementing integrated education**

##### Leadership role taken on by a less experienced teacher

The principal stated that because the SENCO needs to lead activities related to IE, takes a coordination role in cross-sector collaboration and support, connects various groups within the school to provide support to students through collaboration, while also promotes policy development within the school, including teacher professional training, participation in external programs, etc. To accomplish these, a less experienced teacher was specially assigned as the SENCO, with the hope of introducing innovative ideas to make student support more comprehensive and complete.

##### Personalized teaching support strategies that cater for different students

Teachers use various teaching strategies in class to support students' learning needs. Faced with students with dyslexia or slightly lower abilities, teachers break down the learning process and goals in steps, making it easier for students to understand the content. At the same time, they use different teaching activities and tiered worksheets to make the classroom more diverse and enhance students' learning motivation. For non-Chinese-speaking students, the school sets up small group teaching and after-school learning groups. In two to three Chinese classes every cycle week, students are pulled out into small groups. Teachers focus on consolidating students' some key learning points, making it easier for them to understand the content.

#### Promoting holistic development of students with special learning needs

In order to identify students' needs early, the school holds a meeting at the end of each semester with the principal, vice principal, SENCO, discipline mistress, class teachers, and subject teachers. They discuss students' changes in conduct, behavior and learning attitudes observed by teachers during the whole semester. This helps the SENCO to identify the growth and development of students who are under support.

In the past, emotional problems of students were mainly addressed by parents' seeking help from the school. However, in recent years, the school has taken preventive measures throughout entire school education, including helping students understand their emotions and recognize their reactions to different pressures. This allows students to observe their own state of mind and seek appropriate help. The discipline team and support team have also set up small groups for students with specific special learning needs to help them understand their emotions. To relieve study pressure on students, the school provides diverse opportunities for students to develop their potential beyond studying. The school offers different learning activities, such as art therapy and board games, to help students build personal interests and improve their behavior and attitudes in a relaxed manner. Furthermore, the school has set up service teams and held various service experience activities for students to gain insights and reflections, such as designing water activities for disabilities and caring for primary school students and the elderly. The goal is to help students understand that study is only part of life and reduce the psychological pressure brought about by study. The school has also launched the "Big Brothers and Sisters" program for senior form students to provide immediate learning and psychological support to junior form students. If senior form students encounter students who require further support, they will refer them to teachers for further assistance. This program is beneficial for identifying students' needs early and provides assistance for students' emotional health.

#### Hiring school-based career counselors to promote inter-professional cooperation

The principal emphasized in the interview that WSA is not just about the participation by the whole school, but that everyone has a role in helping students and promoting policy implementation. Therefore, in addition to participating in the "Student Mental Health Support Scheme", the school is also committed to inviting psychiatrists, social workers, or EPs to provide talks on campus, so that teachers can have a better understanding of supporting individual cases and strengthen their skills in handling mental health issues. By enhancing teachers' awareness, it can also increase their acceptance of students with SEN. (Principal interview)

The school also assists students in setting personal goals and regaining learning motivation through career counselors. In particular, for students with special learning needs, some may feel discouraged by their academic performance. Therefore, the school hopes that career counselors can cooperate with other professional support personnel to provide advice and assistance for students' career development together.

### **6.2.8.7 Challenges in implementing integrated education in school**

The government's policy direction on integrated education is relatively vague

Currently, the IE policy is mostly implemented through a school-based model, with the EDB providing resources for schools to implement. The principal expressed in the interview that he/she hopes the EDB could provide clearer goals so that schools and society can have a unified goal when implementing IE, such as the level of support for students with special learning needs, in order to make more effective use of resources. (Principal interview)

Needs improvement in awareness of integrated education among teaching staff

While all teaching staff have a proper awareness and understanding of the concept of IE, there are still deviations in practice. For example, some teachers may question about decisions on accommodations for students with special learning needs, reflecting the need to change in attitude when implementing the IE policy. Under the model of WSA, the student support team and counseling team take the lead in providing support. Relevant meetings need to be held with all teaching staff to discuss the identification and supporting of students. However, some teaching staff still see their role as supportive and are not too enthusiastic in carrying out the support measures. In addition, the duties of SEN support teachers bring huge work pressure to teachers, making it difficult to attract them to take up the role.

Insufficient visits of professional support personnel

Currently, the number of visits by EDB's EPs do not fully meets the needs of students. The school's EPs can only visit the school for a maximum of two days per month. During visits, they have to meet with students and conduct various assessments to evaluate their needs of students from a professional perspective. However, the assessments are complex and cover areas such as intelligence, behavior, and reading and writing difficulties, etc., which may not be comprehensively understood through just a few interviews. Moreover, the assessment methods also make students feel wary, weakening the effectiveness of support. (EP interview)

Parents' attitudes are still inactive

Some parents of students with SEN may not seek help from the school in a timely manner, resulting in delayed support. Some parents are reluctant to let the school know about their child's mental health status and only seek advice from professionals such as psychiatrists and social workers outside school, which makes the school need time to observe changes in the student's behavior to determine their needs, delaying the support.

## **6.3 Summary of Case Studies**

### **6.3.1 Good Exemplars of Integrated Education Implementation in Primary Schools**

Referring to Table 6.2, primary schools mainly use small class teaching and reduce the number of students in each class to support students through pull-out classes. As the schools receive additional resources to hire SEN support teachers, pull-out classes are led by SEN support teachers who provide more in-depth support for students with special learning needs. The support teachers in School D have completed professional training courses on IE and will assist different teachers in using various

visual strategies and tailor-making teaching materials, such as explaining materials by different colors and carefully selected pictures, which all have great effects on teaching.

The schools cooperate with parents through explaining to parents of children with SEN to reduce their doubts and wariness. All schools hold various types of parent talks to enhance parents' awareness of supporting their children's learning needs, establish partnering relationships, and encourage parents to understand students' needs in their spare time, and encourage parents and teachers to jointly establish students' learning and growth goals. School A and School D even invite parents to observe classes and participate in parent-child activities to improve parents' perception of the school and enable teachers to observe their interaction with their children with SEN, further grasping the family background and situation of students with SEN and providing the most appropriate support.

Among them, some schools will cooperate with communities and professional organizations to adopt diversified support models to provide comprehensive support. Through outsourcing different professional support services, specialized support services and intervention therapies are provided for different types of students with SEN to improve their social skills and help them adapt to school life and learning environment. For example, School B has implemented the "One School, One Social Worker" policy since the 2019/20 academic year to strengthen the content of social work counseling services and support and supervision for school social workers. They also use the "Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant" to outsource school-based speech therapy services, arrange speech therapists to provide on-site services, and promote and implement them among students, parents, and school.

Schools that use cooperative teaching will also reduce the number of teacher classes to allow teachers more space for teaching exchanges and preparing lessons together. To implement differentiated instruction, the teaching plan for students with SEN will be personalized as much as possible teaching support will be implemented based on their strengths, and their learning progress will be closely followed to make appropriate adjustments. For example, the small group support teachers of School A also serve as members of the student support team, facilitating the provision of teaching opinions and making the student support work in different areas more effective. At the same time, different support schedules are formulated and notified to all teaching staff at the beginning of the semester, so that all teachers can understand the implementation schedule and the purposes of various support measures. These promote the participation of all teachers and ensure the smooth introduction and implementation of support.

The schools also actively promote peer support to foster an inclusive school culture where students can help and learn from each other. Peer support culture helps students with SEN to receive assistance in learning, abilities, and social skills from their peers, while also cultivating a helpful and accepting mindset in other students. For example, School A promotes student support for students with SEN via "Guidance Ambassadors". To avoid labeling effects, the category of students with SEN is not mentioned when pairing students. Only some characteristics are described to facilitate the provision of help by other students. School D also reported that its "Subject Angels" program is welcomed by other students and parents. In helping students with SEN, other students can also gain a sense of fulfillment, while students with SEN can receive learning and emotional support. In small group learning in class, School C's teachers assign different tasks to students with different abilities and invite them to share their learning experiences, allowing students with SEN to have opportunities to learn from and with other students, promoting a culture of peer support and empowering students.

**Table 6.2 Good Exemplars of Implementing Integrated Education in Primary Schools**

Good Exemplar	School A	School B	School C	School D
Administrative Leadership to Support the Implementation of IE	☑	☑	☑	☑
Collaboration and Planning under WSA	☑	☑	☑	☑

Arranging designated teachers to provide mentoring support with SEN case matching		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Collaborative Teaching and Small Group Teaching	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Student-centered and Strength-based Assessment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Strategies for Promoting Adaptation of Students with SEN and Disabilities to Mainstream Curriculum and Learning Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Differentiated Instruction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Facilitating Teacher Professional Development and Exchange and Enhancing teachers' understanding towards students with SEN			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Collaboration between Families, Schools, and Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Three-Tier Support Model	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Professional Support Services and Transition Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Empowerment and Peer Support for Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous Planning for IE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### 6.3.2 Challenges in Promoting Integrated Education in Primary Schools

According to Table 6.3, primary schools still face many difficulties in promoting IE. Under the WSA, some teachers still hold biases against students with SEN, such as some teachers in School B view them as difficult to teach, and cannot handle their behavioural problems appropriately. While teachers in School D have tried their best to support students with SEN, they still find it difficult to see results and feel frustrated. All teachers express greater stress in the teaching process for students with SEN. For example, School A has experienced a rapid increase in the number of students with SEN in recent years, and teachers feel a great deal of pressure. School C also pointed out that participating in related training has increased their workload.

Currently, the curriculum of primary schools in Hong Kong is very demanding, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic where online teaching has been less effective than face-to-face teaching. Many schools have been unable to provide good services and support for students with special learning needs due to limited class time. School D reported that some group classes could not be held due to time and venue constraints. The online teaching limits the small group support during the pandemic. The online support classes offered by School C have been limited to half of the normal group size due to the pandemic, which clearly weakened the effectiveness of support.

In terms of professional support resources, primary schools generally reported a shortage of professional support resources. Schools A, B, and D pointed out that there were not enough visits from professional support personnel, which affected the progress of student treatment and the timing for early support. The instability of manpower caused by the reduction of relevant subsidies also made it difficult for teachers to effectively alleviate their workload. School A also reported that the administrative arrangements and course content of some organizations in the community did not necessarily meet the needs of the school, which increased the administrative burden.

As for home-school cooperation, although parents are gradually changing their attitudes towards IE, many still have insufficient understanding of it or limited knowledge of support methods, resulting in a weak link in home support. Parent education needs to be strengthened. For example, Schools A and B reported that some parents still refused to accept support for their children with SEN, and some parents used blaming as the parenting approach to deal with their children's behavioral problems. School D reported that the parents were unable to effectively assist students with SEN in their learning

because they had not received relevant training. They relied entirely on school support, resulting in a lack of home support for students with SEN.

**Table 6.3 Challenges of Implementing Integrated Education in Primary Schools**

Challenge	School A	School B	School C	School D
SENCO workloads are overwhelming				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stakeholders hold different attitudes and attention to students with SEN (students with SEN/Parents/Staff members)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Collaboration between staff member is not effective	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate human resources (Staff member/ teaching assistants) in school			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The increase of numbers of students with SEN and huge disparities among students with SEN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lack of multiple assessment practices				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate resources and variation in quality of professional support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insufficient Parental Education and Understanding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Weak Family Supports		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate government resource and training and ambiguity in IE policy			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pandemic/online teaching affecting support effects			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### 6.3.3. Good Exemplars of Integrated Education Implementation in Secondary Schools

According to Table 6.4, due to the lack of small class teaching in secondary schools, it is difficult for teachers to support students with SEN in classes with a larger number of students. Therefore, the school provides support through cooperative teaching and small-class teaching in the form of a pull-out class model. In addition to teachers being able to answer the difficulties of students with SEN in a teacher-to-student ratio of approximately one-to-four or one-to-five in the pull-out class, teachers can also observe their other situations through support during the pull-out class, so that the learning support team can provide more comprehensive support.

The key to the success of implementing WSA is the support of the principal. On the one hand, the SENCO will be empowered to effectively lead, coordinate and organize all work. In addition, the school will support teachers to participate in more training related to IE and provide relevant school-based training opportunities. The secondary schools are committed to promoting cross-team cooperation, and the SENCO will coordinate different administrative groups, such as the counseling group, career planning group, or extracurricular activity group, to provide support for the holistic development of all students with SEN. For example, the learning support team, life education group, and career planning group in the School E cooperate under the coordination of the SENCO to establish a comprehensive personal profile for students, which helps them rethink on their life and the real world, while recording their learning and growth processes to prepare for the future. School F is also actively promoting cooperation between teachers and other administrative groups to provide diverse extracurricular activities or workshops for students with SEN based on their characteristics and different learning needs. School G also hopes to strengthen cooperation between teachers and professional support personnel to provide IEP for each student with SEN.

When promoting IE, secondary schools also actively promote the practice of differentiated instruction, providing diversified designs and accommodations in homework, curriculum, and classroom settings

to meet the learning needs of different students. For example, School F has already targeted the Tier 1 support for enhancing teaching and learning by conducting action research led by the SENCO to review and improve the teaching and learning effectiveness of supporting students with SEN. The results of the action research will be shared with different subject teams to invite feedback, gradually forming a community of practice for differentiated instruction within the school. Moreover, action research will also promote collaborative class preparation among subject teachers to set up and coordinate the mode of support for students, and establish resource teachers in different subjects to develop differentiated instruction within each subject. The school E also has a curriculum development leader to further support the design of school-based tailored curriculum. Teachers in School H also provide different teaching activities and support targeting students' different individual needs in the classroom to enhance students' learning motivation and solve their learning difficulties.

In terms of home-school cooperation, secondary schools also strive to establish good relationships and trust with parents, explain support strategies to them, and encourage them to actively participate in support activities for students with SEN to improve their effectiveness. For example, School E has established a partnership with parents of students with SEN to organize different types of activities to understand their children's needs. School G also values parent education, including organizing talks, regular meetings, and establishing learning communities for parents of children with SEN to share relevant knowledge and strategies and encourage experience sharing.

Secondary schools also promote an inclusive atmosphere by encouraging senior form students to provide learning, living, and emotional support to junior form students with SEN through relevant support programs. For example, School E has a peer guidance program, which not only supports the needs of students with SEN but also helps other students build confidence, while also promotes positive behavior at school. Both School F and School H have "Big Brothers and Sisters" programs to help students with SEN adapt to school life. Senior students provide assistance in study to students with SEN through tutoring sessions and providing emotional support. When encountering students in need of further support, they will also report it to teachers for early intervention by professionals.

**Table 6.4 Good Exemplars of Implementing Integrated Education in Primary Schools**

Good Exemplar	School E	School F	School G	School H
Administrative Leadership Supporting the Implementation of IE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Collaboration and Planning under WSA	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Collaborative Teaching and Small Group Teaching	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Strategies for Promoting Adaptation of Students with SEN and Disabilities to Mainstream Curriculum and Learning Environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Differentiated Instruction	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Developing multiple intelligences of students with SEN		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Facilitating Teacher Professional Development and Enhancing teachers' understanding of students with SEN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Collaboration between Families, Schools, and Communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Three-Tier Support Model	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Professional Support Services and Transition Management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Empowerment and Peer Support for Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Continuous Planning for IE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Promoting Mental Health Education Through Non-formal curriculum			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

### **6.3.4 Challenges in Promoting Integrated Education in Secondary Schools**

Referring to Table 6.5, most secondary school teachers have a certain understanding and awareness of IE and the characteristics of students with SEN, and have also taken relevant courses. However, there are still deviations in actual practice, and teachers' established ideas are still difficult to change. For example, some teachers in the School F still view students with ADHD as misbehaving. School H also indicated that some teachers would question the related measures or not actively participate in support. School G also reflected that teachers' relevant knowledge still needs to be deepened, there is still a lack of awareness of WSA, and individual teachers' attitudes and teaching methods towards students with SEN also need to be improved. It is worth mentioning that School E also reported that many teachers were unable to continue their professional development by taking relevant courses due to limited study quotas.

In terms of professional support, both secondary and primary schools have similar situations, all reflecting the problem of insufficient visits from professional support personnel. School F's own EPs stated that although they are the school-based EPs, their service hours at the school are still limited, making it difficult to reserve longer time to meet with students and teachers, and the ultimate work still mainly falls on the SENCO. School G and School H also believe that the limited on-site service cannot help fully understand the students' needs, which weakens the effectiveness of support. School G's EPs also mentioned that there are too many cases, which in turn affects the frequency and quality of counseling. At the same time, School G's clinical psychologists also believe that teachers' participation in school-based workshops related to supporting students with SEN is not proactive, and sometimes parents may put pressure on the school because their children receive psychological counseling, indicating that parental education needs to be further strengthened.

In terms of home-school cooperation, some parents are still unwilling to communicate with the school about the situation of their children with SEN and resist to accept relevant support. There are also many parents who are too busy with work to participate in parent activities arranged by the school, which limits home-school cooperation and weakens the family support. School E also reported that some parents of students with SEN choose to selectively hide their children's situation, making it difficult for the school to provide support. School H also pointed out that some parents may not communicate with the school or seek assistance promptly regarding the situation of their children with SEN, resulting in students not receiving timely support. School F also reported that some parents and the school cannot reach a consensus on accommodations and support. The disagreements hinder the effective support for students.

In comparison, more SENCO in secondary schools expressed that their workload is too heavy. Although the introduction of SENCO effectively supports the implementation of IE, the SENCOs in secondary school generally reported that their workload is too heavy because most SENCO hold multiple positions, and most SEN-related work needs to be undertaken and coordinated by them. For example, the SENCO of School E pointed out that his/her teaching hours has exceeded the EDB's guideline and feels difficulty in balancing between different responsibilities. The SENCO of School G also reported that the relevant work of supporting students with SEN still needs to be mainly undertaken by him/her because teachers do not have enough understanding of the responsibilities of SENCO. The SENCO also indicated that it is difficult to promote cooperation among teachers. School H also states that this position has a huge workload pressure, and most teachers are unwilling to take on this role, indicating that there is still a reliance on SENCO to solely undertake the support of IE in secondary schools.

**Table 6.5 Challenges of Implementing Integrated Education in Secondary Schools**

Challenge	School E	School F	School G	School H
SENCO workloads are overwhelming	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Stakeholders hold different attitudes and attention to students with SEN ( students with SEN/Parents/Staff members)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Staff member collaboration is not effective		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Increase of numbers of students with SEN and huge disparities among students with SEN		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		
Inadequate resources and variation in quality of professional support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Insufficient Parental Education and Understanding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Weak Family Supports	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inadequate government resources and training and ambiguity in IE policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Peer lacks empathy			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Pandemic / online teaching affects effectiveness of support	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			

Based on the summary of case studies, all schools involved in the case studies were able to implement IE via WSA. The learning support team acted as the coordinating group to support teachers and other relevant stakeholders in the school to provide support for students with special learning needs. Support measures included small group teaching, after-school tutoring, IEPs, different attention and social groups, homework, curriculum and assessment accommodations, etc. Schools were also able to fully utilize government resources to purchase various professional support services to help students with special learning needs receive professional support beyond teaching and learning. No matter in primary or secondary schools, diversified support services were provided according to the local situation and the types of students with special learning needs. Individual schools, with the support of school management, were able to combine their educational philosophy and religion background to build an inclusive campus environment, cultivate an inclusive campus culture, and foster a harmonious atmosphere.

However, all schools reflected the inadequacy of professional support, especially the insufficient number of visits by professional support personnel. This situation hinders students from receiving early diagnosis, therapy, and support. Primary schools also reflected unstable manpower makes it difficult for professional support personnel to build trust with students. The lack of suitable support services may not meet the needs of the school. Some secondary schools also reported that due to the shortage of professional support, the workload of the SENCO increased. Currently, SENCO have generally expressed their excessive workload, and most of them need to assume multiple roles and responsibilities. They need to be in charge of most of the IE related work and there is still a limited WSA in practice. On the other hand, there are still prejudices against students with SEN among some teachers and staff in the schools. Some primary school teachers still regard students with SEN as unteachable. Although most secondary school teachers have basic knowledge of students with SEN, they are still deviations in the actual teaching process. Many teachers and staff use inappropriate methods and attitudes when dealing with behavioral problems of students, and fail to provide proactive support. Many teachers and staff also reported greater pressure when teaching students with SEN. Although they have tried their best to provide support, they still find it difficult to achieve results. Participating in relevant training also adds to their burden.

Overall, although schools provide platforms for home-school cooperation and organize various types of relevant activities for parents and parents' attitudes towards IE have gradually changed, there are still many challenges in family support. Most schools indicated that parents still have limited understanding on how to support their children with SEN and do not have time to participate in parent activities. Some parents are even unwilling to accept that their children have special learning needs, resist to the support provided by the school, and deal with their children's behavioral problems in inappropriate ways. At the same time, the epidemic made some schools switch to online courses or suspend classes. It resulted in exacerbating the tight situation of primary and secondary school courses. Limited class time and online platforms have posed difficulties for support work. Primary schools mainly reported that group classes are forced to reduce the number of participants or cancel due to time and venue constraints, while most secondary school teachers indicated that it is difficult to develop teaching strategies and activities that can meet the needs of different students. The online course mode also affects the concentration of students with SEN and the effectiveness of support.

## Chapter 7 Discussion and Recommendations

The implementation of IE requires cooperation from various aspects, such as school policies, implementation, and stakeholders, in order to achieve the maximum effectiveness of inclusion. In the formulation of school policies, schools need to adjust standards and goals in the school-based special learning needs curriculum, as well as strengthen support to enable students with special learning needs to learn under similar learning conditions. In terms of daily learning arrangements, schools should use small class teaching methods to assign students to suitable classes according to their needs, allowing teachers to adjust teaching methods to meet their needs. In terms of assessment arrangements, students with special learning needs have different abilities from ordinary students, and the assessment standards should not be the same. Instead, a customized assessment method should be developed to evaluate the abilities of students with special learning needs and establish a relatively fair learning environment.

In the implementation of integration measures, support for students with special learning needs should not only rely on the SENCOs, but also on assistance and support from different aspects, such as students, clinical professionals, teachers, social workers, etc. Within the school, schools should adopt different types of collaborations to strengthen teachers' and different administrative personnel's understanding of IE so that they can have a deeper understanding of the needs and characteristics of students with special learning needs, thereby strengthening the division of labour within the school and providing more different types of support for students with special learning needs. Peer support should also be promoted among students to establish a culture and atmosphere of inclusiveness and tolerance at campus. The school's resource also needs to be allocated in a more appropriate way to maximize the effectiveness of IE.

Home-school cooperation and parental education are still key elements in promoting IE. Schools should invest more resources in support to make the relationship between students, parents, and schools closer and enhance the quality of support. At the same time, whether students, teachers, or parents, they should be aware of the information related to mental health education so that they can identify early students who need support.

Therefore, based on the findings of this Study, the research team suggested policy recommendations under three domains: i.) Teaching and Learning, ii.) Support by Government Policy Measures, and iii.) Professional Support and Home-School Cooperation.

### **i.) Teaching and Learning**

The following 7 recommendations are applicable to primary and secondary schools.

#### Recommendations Require the Government to Increase Resources or Change Current Policies

#### **7.1 Establishing school-based SEN curriculum and assessment criteria in ordinary schools and creating a new position of “Curriculum Development Master/Mistress (Integrated Education)” (CDMIE)**

##### *Establishing school-based SEN curriculum and assessment criteria*

1. Currently, the curriculum design and arrangement in Hong Kong are highly centralized, and schools do not have much autonomy in designing their own curriculum. Even though students with SEN may receive curriculum accommodations in school, if these modifications are still based on the content of the regular school curriculum, and there are no customized curriculum

designed to tailor their ability gaps, it may not have much help in improving their learning outcomes, especially in the case of the highly intensive senior secondary curriculums. **Therefore, the research team recommends promoting ordinary schools to establish school-based SEN curriculum and assessment criteria based on the abilities and learning levels of students with SEN within the school.** By adjusting the curriculum through teaching, learning, and assessment, it can avoid the continued difficulty of students with SEN in catching up with mainstream curriculum in both primary and secondary schools, which will weaken their learning motivation and lead to feelings of frustration. As every ordinary school will also have its own school-based SEN curriculum and assessment standards to differentiate the curriculum and assessment content from ordinary students, it is believed that the labeling effect of school-based SEN curriculum and assessment will be reduced.

*Creating a new position of “Curriculum Development Master/Mistress (Integrated Education)” (CDMIE)*

2. The development of inclusive education in Singapore indicated the a special new post entitled Allied Educator (Learning and Behavioural Support) [AED(LBS)] as a specially-trained personnel can have a positive impact on supporting students with learning and behavioural needs. Hong Kong should also consider a new allied professional post to support IE development in schools. As the current workload of SENCOs is already overwhelming, it is necessary to set up **a new post titled “Curriculum Development Master/Mistress (Integrated Education)” (CDMIE) to provide significant support for designing and promoting school-based SEN curriculum and assessment criteria in ordinary schools.** This new position will not only shoulder all the responsibilities related to the design, teaching, and assessment of school-based SEN curricula and assessment criteria, but also assist schools in implementing differentiated instruction, setting tiered curricula and assessment content for students with SEN, and effectively collaborating with the SENCOs to support the "special learning needs" of students with SEN. After receiving the support of the "CDMIE" to share the workload in teaching, learning, and assessment, SENCOs will have more time and room for the support and coordination work for students' physical, mental, and spiritual growth, to drive the whole school's participation and innovation in support services, enhancing the overall quality of IE in schools. In the long run, if the government's curriculum policy can be more flexible, ordinary schools will have more room to support students with different characteristics (including students with SEN, gifted students, non-Chinese-speaking students, and non-academic gifted students), to accomplish win-win situation.

### Recommendations Require Optimizing Existing Policies and Measures

#### **7.2 Promoting diversified or alternative assessment methods other than paper-and-pen assessment, to reduce the impact of "one test determines life or death" at different stages**

*Promoting diversified or alternative assessment methods other than paper-and-pen assessment*

3. The current education system is relatively singular which makes the education industry incline to only cope with constant exams and assessments. This not only leads to a culture of "assessment first, learning second" in society and education sector, but also deepens the notion among parents that if their children perform slightly poorly in a certain exam or assessment, it will bring irreparable consequences to their future. Even though students with SEN can receive corresponding homework and assessment accommodations within the school, based on the fact that they still have to participate in different public assessments since primary school, including

TSA in Primary 3, the Internal Assessments (IAs) in Primary 5 and 6, TSA in Primary 6, Pre-S1 HKAT, TSA in Secondary 3, and the HKDSE in Secondary six, each student with SEN may still have to face at least three to four different stages of unified assessment on average. As the results of exams or assessments may affect their choices of further studies and schools, it brings enormous pressure to students. This competitive exam-oriented education system is also disadvantageous to students with SEN, especially those with specific learning difficulties and language barriers, as their language learning and ability are weaker than those of general students. Moreover, in all assessments, paper-and-pen assessment accounts for a higher proportion, and the results of other types of assessments are mostly regarded as additional reference materials. It forms a school's practice culture, which fails to effectively adjust the curriculum for students with SEN, resulting in the backward effect of exam/assessment domination (washback effect) in the whole education system. The principle of education equality is to provide necessary conditions for students with different characteristics to fully display their strengths. It is critical to provide appropriate curriculum accommodations and accommodations of exam content and assessment standards. Therefore, **the research team suggests promoting diversified or alternative assessment methods other than paper-and-pen assessment, to reduce the impact of "one test determines life or death" at different stages.** Ngan 2011(p.137) pointed out the concept of diversified assessment includes observation, portfolios, project-based learning, oral presentation, performances, presentations, experiments, and interviews. **Therefore, it is recommended that the assessment adopted in the public examinations can become more diverse in the future, the excessive use of paper-and-pen assessment to measure the learning outcomes of students with SEN can be avoided. Schools can be further encouraged to minimize the frequency of students with SEN participating in unified examinations or assessments and substitute them with alternative and diversified assessment strategies.** This is believed to accurately reflect the learning outcomes and growth performance of different students with SEN based on their ability and characteristics, especially those with special learning difficulties and language barriers.

*Comprehensive assessment of student abilities from multiple aspects in the admitting process at different learning stages*

4. As different stages of public assessment affect various stakeholders in the education field, not just students with SEN, the research team also suggests **reducing the impact of the "one test determines life or death" at different stages, including shifting the focus from paper-and-pen-based assessment results as the main admission criterion in the admission process from primary school to university. The system should fully consider different aspects, such as students' personal strengths, interview performance, whole-person development, etc. to comprehensively and accurately evaluate students' abilities.** It is hoped that by reducing the exposure of students with SEN to uniform exams or assessment opportunities and relieving the pressure of paper-and-pen-based assessment, their learning achievements can be reasonably evaluated based on their abilities, and their diverse qualities can be fully utilized. The government should also further explore students' diverse paths and empower students with SEN by continuous Life Planning Education which helps them understand themselves.

### **7.3 Strengthening support for SENCOs to reduce their workload**

*An increase in the number of school visits by educational psychologists (EP) and establishing a cross-professional community of practice for IE*

5. The survey results show that SENCOS generally feel satisfied with their self-assessed ability and is qualified to perform their duties. However, during interviews, they mentioned that they still face various difficulties in their work, including promoting IE with the participation of the entire school and working closely with professional support personnel in supporting students with SEN. However, the insufficient stationing days of EP in schools prevented them from regularly communicating with individual professional support staff, impeding their professional growth and learning opportunities. In light of this, the research team **suggests not only continuously increasing the stationing days of EP in schools, a cross-professional community of practice for IE should be established.** The members of this community should not only include SENCOS from special schools and ordinary schools but also include allied health professionals who support IE, such as occupational therapists, EPs, audiologists, counselors, social workers, clinical psychologists, and speech therapists, etc. The cross-professional practice community should regularly hold exchange meetings and seminars to allow the professional support personnel responsible for supporting IE to obtain the latest information and share their experiences, with an aim to grasping the firsthand situation of supporting students with SEN and the difficulties faced by all stakeholders. If necessary, SENCOS can also seek help from other members of the community to solve their difficulties as soon as possible.

*An increase in the number of visits by various professional support personnel to schools and districts*

6. The survey data reveal SENCOS and teachers bear high stress which requires appropriate support and attention. Therefore, the research team also recommends that **the government should arrange more opportunities for different professional support personnel to visit schools and districts to conduct school-based/district-based teacher/parent development activities.** Professional support personnel can share their expertise with different stakeholders and frontline personnel who take care of students with SEN on a daily basis through professional teacher workshops, parent talks and seminars, etc.

*Sharing more successful experiences and challenges in supporting students with SEN*

7. Given that the position of SENCO is a newly established post, it takes time to accumulate experiences. Therefore, increasing communication opportunities will further strengthen their knowledge in the SEN field, build up shared vision of IE in their schools, and create an inclusive learning environment. Sharing successful examples of IE, such as tracking successful cases and challenges encountered in supporting students with SEN, as well as allowing SENCOS and teachers to witness the achievements of their efforts is an empowerment for educators.

## **ii.) Support by Government Policy Measures**

The following 9 suggestions are applicable to both primary and secondary schools, although Suggestion 13 is more suitable for primary schools.

Recommendations Require the Government to Increase Resources or Change Current Policies

### **7.4. Enhancing the flexibility of current school resource utilization and establishing permanent positions for professional support personnel.**

*Enhancing the flexibility of current school resource utilization*

8. In recent years, the government has continuously introduced new policy measures to promote the sustained implementation of IE in ordinary schools and has allocated a large amount of

resources to support students with SEN. According to the latest document, the annual funding for IE has increased from approximately HKD\$1.5 billion to approximately HKD\$3.7 billion (Press Release of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, 2023). The survey results showed that stakeholders agreed on the effectiveness of the support policies. However, stakeholder interviews and school case studies analyses showed that the number of students with SEN continues to increase, and despite adequate financial resources provided, the current use and calculation methods of the LSG cannot meet the needs of different schools and still pose challenges to school support. In view of this, the research team **recommends enhancing the flexibility of current school resource utilization to help the effective use of resources by the schools and improve the effectiveness of supporting students with SEN.** The research team recommends that if some schools have too many students with SEN and their entitlements have reached the upper limit of LSG Threshold 3<sup>6</sup> additional allowances could be given in proportion to the number of remaining students after calculation. This not only helps increase the school's resources but also allows the school to utilize resources more flexibly to provide different support services for students with SEN, such as purchasing additional professional support services.

*Discretionary approval for schools reaching Threshold 2 or above of LSG to continue using some of the remaining funds*

9. When schools hire SENSTs, they need to deduct part of the LSG after the change of teaching posts. Undoubtedly, SENSTs are crucial to support the work of the SENCOS. However, for some schools with a large number of students with SEN, this arrangement inevitably affects their support services and planning. Therefore, the research team recommends that **the government could allow schools that reach Threshold 2<sup>7</sup> or above to continue using part of the remaining grant according to individual school contexts to ensure that the school can provide sustainable support.**

*Allowing schools that are currently unable to hire school-based speech therapists to temporarily use related funds to hire other professional support personnel*

10. In addition to using the LSG, schools currently mainly use the "Enhanced Speech Therapy Grant" to purchase school-based speech therapy services. Although the government has opened up school-based speech therapist positions in recent years and promoted "Enhanced school-based speech therapy services", some schools have not been able to hire school-based speech therapists due to the long-lasting shortage of speech therapists, resulting in ineffective resource utilization. **To this end, the research team suggests that a transition period should be set up so that those schools that are currently unable to employ school-based speech therapists can temporarily use the relevant funds to hire other professional support personnel** to meet

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<sup>6</sup> LSG reaching threshold 3: Should the total amount of LSG reach threshold 3, an amount equivalent to the annual salary at starting pay point of a basic rank graduate teacher will be deducted from the specified amount for threshold 2 for conversion into an additional regular post for basic rank graduate teacher in the establishment. On top of this, two more regular posts for basic rank graduate teacher in the establishment will be provided. Schools keep the remaining LSG. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the specific amounts for thresholds 3 is \$2,200,000, and will be adjusted according to the changes in the amounts for threshold 1 and 2 thereafter.

<sup>7</sup> LSG reaching threshold 2: Should the total amount of LSG reach threshold 2 but is below threshold 3, an amount equivalent to the annual salary at starting pay point of a basic rank graduate teacher will be deducted from the specified amount for threshold 2 for conversion into an additional regular post for basic rank graduate teacher in the establishment. On top of this, one more regular post for basic rank graduate teacher in the establishment will be provided. Schools keep the remaining LSG. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the specific amounts for threshold 2 is \$1,600,000, and will be adjusted according to the change in the Composite Consumer Price Index thereafter.

the immediate needs of schools until they have successfully employed school-based speech therapists.

#### *Setting up permanent posts for professional support personnel*

11. With reference to the establishment of the post of school-based speech therapist, the research team **recommends setting up permanent posts for professional support personnel so that schools can employ suitable professional personnel according to their school-based professional support needs**, such as counselors, occupational therapists, or other professionals. Establishing permanent posts not only helps to safeguard the employment opportunities for professional support personnel and maintain the stability of the professional support team but also attracts more professional support personnel to support schools and increase the human resources for supporting IE. In the long run, it is hoped that the Government can provide more resources for schools to hire appropriate support staff, including teaching assistants and administrative assistants for IE to share the administrative support and coordination work of the SENCOs.

### **7.5 Promoting small-class teaching in secondary schools and raise the teacher-to-class ratio in ordinary schools**

#### *The Government further promotes small-class teaching in secondary schools*

12. Although the government has been actively promoting small-class teaching in the last decade, the emphasis is still placed on primary schools and has not yet been extended to secondary schools. When small class teaching is implemented in some secondary schools, it will only be a school-based measure and not applicable to all secondary schools in Hong Kong. Some schools may still implement large class teaching. Frontline teachers may not be able to effectively support every student with SEN. To improve the situation, the research team recommends that **the government could further promote small-class teaching in secondary schools by reducing the number of students in each class in order to allow teachers more capacity to take care of each student with SEN.**

#### *Encouraging primary and secondary schools that meet the Threshold 2 or above of LSG to implement small-class teaching for supporting IE*

13. The Government has stated that it will review the threshold for operation per class, the criteria for operation of classes, and other related arrangements for Secondary 1 in 2025 and thereafter (Education Bureau, 2021b). The findings of the case studies demonstrated that small-class teaching is a necessary factor for the implementation of cooperative teaching. Therefore, the research team suggests **encouraging primary and secondary schools that meet the Threshold 2 or above of LSG to implement small-class teaching to support IE.** The maximum number of students per class should be reduced to 20, while at the same time increase the corresponding number of teachers. The teacher-to-class ratio of relevant schools should also be raised. The case studies also showed that small class teaching is particularly helpful in supporting students with multiple or with relatively severe SEN, so reducing the number of students per class will help improve the supportive effect. In the long run, the government can also consider **raising the teacher-to-class ratio in each ordinary school** by increasing the number of teachers to implement small-class teaching, making small class teaching one of the policy measures to support IE.

## Recommendations Require Optimizing Existing Policies and Measures

### **7.6 Improving teachers' understanding and skills on Disability Discrimination Ordinance, Codes of Practice, and integrated education, and strengthening university-school partnerships and promoting ongoing professional development**

#### *Increasing the number of in-service teacher training courses and training quotas related to IE*

14. Stakeholder interviews and case studies showed that even though the government continues to promote the professional development of teachers and provide different types of in-service teacher training on IE, survey data showed that there are still over 40% (45.2%) of teachers who have not completed the relevant courses, which has a certain impact on their professional growth and the ability to take care of students with SEN. The survey findings also revealed that teachers' understanding of DDO and Codes of Practice are relatively lower than principals and SENCOs. In this connection, the research team recommends **increasing the quotas of in-service teachers' training on IE and offering more IE training courses to increase teachers' understanding of DDO and Codes of Practice, as well as knowledge and skills required for supporting students with SEN**. The government can also consider funding schools to hire supply teachers as the incentives for schools to release teachers attending training courses.

#### *Strengthening university-school partnerships and promoting ongoing professional development*

15. The research team also suggests **strengthening university-school partnerships to enhance teachers' capabilities in providing professional support**. The government can strengthen the collaboration with universities to conduct action research with teachers via University-School Support programme and to facilitate teachers in reviewing their teaching effectiveness and seeking advice from university instructors to improve teachers' teaching effectiveness.

#### *Including IE as a compulsory course in pre-service teacher education*

16. Based on their fruitful experiences in Canada, a systematic professional development framework useful for facilitating the development of IE. Hence, the research team recommends **the pre-service teacher education in future should include IE as a compulsory course**, so that all teachers with teaching qualifications have a basic understanding and application strategies for IE before entering the profession to cope with the different challenges in frontline teaching environments. The survey data also reflected that not only SENCOs but also teachers are most confident in enabling students with SEN to catch up with other students in social interaction ability and emotional adaptability. Therefore, encouraging different teachers to participating in related training on IE can also help **eliminate teachers' traditional notion of elitism and avoid overemphasizing the improvement of academic abilities of students with SEN**. The Education Bureau can also collaborate with universities to design diverse teaching resources and materials for frontline teachers' reference and production of teaching materials that can meet their school-needs.

### **iii.) Professional Support and Home-school Cooperation**

The following 8 suggestions are applicable to both primary and secondary schools, although Suggestion 24 is more suitable for primary schools.

## Recommendations Require the Government to Increase Resources or Change Current Policies

## **7.7 Strengthening parent-school collaboration and public and parent education, introducing cash allowance for parents of children with SEN, establishing an electronic system for children with SEN, and establishing a support network for schools, parents, and community support services**

### *Strengthening parent-school collaboration and public and parent education*

17. The questionnaire data indicated that parents are unable to support the needs of students with SEN after school due to their busy schedules and lack of the skills and knowledge to care for children with SEN. As a result, schools bear a significant burden in supporting students with SEN and their parents. In addition, frontline teachers opine that parents still resist seeking professional help or advice. Parents indicated in the interviews that they have difficulty in accessing information on supporting their children with SEN. The success of implementing IE depends on the cooperation and trust of parents. Since schools are the most accessible channels for parents of students with SEN to seek help, the research team recommends that **ordinary schools should actively promote home-school cooperation**, and the EDB should provide additional resources for schools to promote parent education, enhance parent's awareness of IE and support for student with SEN, and break through the traditional notion of over-focus on the academic performance of their children with SEN.

### *Educating the public to show more acceptance and inclusion of students with SEN*

18. The research team hopes that along with **conducting more publicity, promoting IE, and improving the transparency of support information, the government could educate the public to show more acceptance and inclusion of students with SEN**, and expand their pathway options for further education and career development, such as offering diversified pathways for further studies or vocational education. It is suggested to move away from emphasizing the success and failure of the HKDSE and promote Hong Kong as an inclusive society. According to the experience of Singapore, an inclusive society requires continuous social acceptance. Therefore, the research team recommends the government to consider setting a long-term policy direction to achieve inclusion in the community.

### *Introducing cash allowance for parents of children with SEN to obtain therapy and assessment services, and establishing an electronic system for children with SEN*

19. For students with a relatively severe SEN, it is essential to provide sufficient training for students and parents before schooling. However, parents from low-income families may not be able to afford the costly expenses of treatment and assessment services, as well as the participation in different group activities that ultimately delay the support for their children. Therefore, the research team recommends **the disbursement of cash allowances to parents of students with SEN** so that their children can receive corresponding treatment and assessment services. According to the experiences of UK, every student with SEN is supported by IEP. Thus, the research team recommends **an electronic system for children with SEN** so as to provide a comprehensive platform for their parents to track the school support progress and clinical treatment records of their children with SEN. The system also helps parents with SEN understand the information of different support services and activities available in the community, so they can choose the most suitable support services and group activities for their children.

*Establishing a support network for schools, parents, and community support services*

20. Based on the above content, the research team recommends further **establishing a support network for schools, parents, and community support services**. Schools can refer to the principle of early identification and early intervention to enable parents of children with SEN to understand the support services and related resources currently available in the community at the earliest possible time. This will enable parents of children with SEN to seek appropriate support not only from the school but also from different community services. Community services can be regarded as a support for students with SEN outside school. Grassroot families can continue to receive subsidy for professional therapy services at the appropriate time.

### **7.8 Strengthening mental health education through community support and increasing support from cross-team professional**

*Strengthening mental health education through community support and implementing a "one school, one psychiatric nurse" scheme in long term*

21. The SENCOs interviewed also reflected that the "Student Mental Health Support Scheme" is an effective cross-team professional support programme, which is of great help in supporting students with mental health needs, but it does not guarantee sustainable benefit for students. According to the government's estimation, about 210 schools (Education Bureau, 2021c) participated in the program in the 2021/22 school year, accounting for only over 20% of all primary and secondary schools, which indeed cannot meet the expected increasing service demand for students with mental illness. If the government could allocate more resources to increase the number of beneficiary schools, it would help schools provide more targeted support more effectively. Based on the current arrangements, the research team further suggests inviting **more social service agencies to join the program, increasing the frequency of visits by psychiatric nurses to provide regular support, and considering the long-term establishment of a "one school, one psychiatric nurse scheme" to cope with the impact on students' mental health after the epidemic given there are sufficient human resources of related professional support personnel.**

Recommendations Require Optimizing Existing Policies and Measures

### **7.9 Establishing a professional learning community of integrated education in ordinary schools, promoting diversified support models on Whole-School Approach and enhancing the professional competence of ordinary schools in supporting students with SEN and non-Chinese speaking students**

*Establishing a professional learning community of IE in ordinary schools*

22. The "School Partnership Scheme" of the EDB invites special schools to become special schools and resource centers to support students with SEN studying in ordinary schools through sharing of experiences and supporting skills, as well as the "Short-term Attachment Programme". Each resource center can provide a short-term attachment programme for up to five intellectually disabled students with severe adaptation difficulties in ordinary schools every year. The relevant students will be arranged to a suitable resource center for an attachment programme lasting from three to six months. The teachers at the resource center will provide training and consultation for the relevant teachers in the ordinary schools to enhance their professional support abilities,

so that they can better support the students who return to their original schools after completing the short-term attachment programme. With the implementation of IE for many years, ordinary schools have accumulated certain experiences and achievements. However, the survey findings showed that teachers still have reservations about their confidence in implementing IE independently, and more than half of SENCOs (58.5%) and teachers (57.1%) also feel pressurized in taking care of non-Chinese speaking students. It can be seen that when they have to deal with non-Chinese speaking students with SEN, the pressure they face will be greater. To this end, the research team recommends **establishing a professional learning community of IE in ordinary schools, for sharing experiences in supporting the learning and holistic development of non-Chinese speaking students, identifying schools with rich experience in implementing IE to become seed schools**, and combining the current professional network support from the EDB to promote professional exchanges and experience sharing among ordinary schools so as to enhance the professional competence of schools and teachers in taking care of students with SEN and non-Chinese speaking students.

#### *Establishing a support network for non-Chinese speaking students and their parents*

23. When nurturing seed schools, the government could consider enhancing their competence in supporting a specified type of students with SEN to enhance the effectiveness. Given that ordinary schools lack sufficient professional abilities to support students with all SEN categories, focusing only on supporting a particular category of students with SEN helps gradually improve the school's abilities to improve support effectiveness. Referring to the network of schools, parents, and community support services mentioned above, **supporting non-Chinese speaking students and their parents could also be included as part of the support content to improve the learning and adaptation effectiveness of non-Chinese speaking students in ordinary schools**. In case non-Chinese speaking students with SEN are identified, early identification and early intervention can also be provided.

#### *Incorporating values education and personal growth education to enhance students' awareness of mental health*

24. Currently, the EDB encourages schools to adopt a whole-school approach to promote students' mental health from three aspects: Universal Level, Selective Level, and Indicated Level to strengthen support for students with mental health needs. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, the Education Bureau continued to cooperate with schools to launch the "MentalHealth@school" one-stop student mental health information website to facilitate teachers, students, parents, and the public in choosing appropriate resources and strategies to care for students' mental health and help them integrate into campus life, and construct a caring campus in different means. However, survey data showed that SENCOs experience the greatest pressure when taking care of students with MI, and SENCO interviews also indicated that supporting students with MI is more complex and has a greater impact on overall support effectiveness. According to the latest figures, the number of students with MI is increasing continuously, which is a major challenge for schools (Education Commission, 2021c). Case studies result also indicated that promoting positive and healthy inclusive campus culture within schools can help establish a peer support atmosphere, allowing students to further understand the impact of mental health on their physical and mental development. Students with mental health problems can also identify their problems early, and schools can also discover these issues earlier through peer recognition. Therefore, **the research team recommends integrating values education in personal growth education of primary schools to cultivate students' positive thinking and resilience, and to permeate psychological and mental health**

**awareness into different subjects and school campus.** These measures not only avoid the stigmatization effect of mental health, but also allow students to recognize their emotions and mental status from a young age and seek help when necessary.

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\*For EDUHK researchers only  
 Questionnaire No: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Principal Questionnaire

#### “Study on Educating Students with Special Educational Needs at Ordinary Schools in Hong Kong” Commissioned by Equal Opportunities Commission

##### Principal questionnaire

Description: This questionnaire aims to conduct a survey on the current situation and general view in implementing integrated education by local schools. The questionnaire is conducted anonymously and the information and views collected will be consolidated and presented in an overall final report. The questionnaire will be destroyed after data analysis. Individual principals, SENCOs and teachers will not be identified in the report. If you do not wish to participate in this research project, please put X in the box at the upper left corner. Otherwise, it is presumed that you agree to participate in the research project. For enquiries, please contact Mr. Chun Wai Sun Derek, Research Assistant of this research project (Tel: 2948-6324 / Email: dwschun@eduhk.hk). Thank you for your participation. Should you agree to participate, please start to fill in the questionnaire.

#### A. Implementation of integrated education in your school

PQ1. Generally speaking, which factors would you consider for current student admissions ? (**You may tick more than one option**)

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic results and performances                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Students’ social and interaction skills                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Students’ emotional adaptability                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to the sufficiency of financial resources   | <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to the sufficiency of professional human resources | <input type="checkbox"/> To avoid violating “Disability Discrimination Ordinance” |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to the sufficiency of school infrastructure | <input type="checkbox"/> Practising the principle of equal educational opportunity  | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify: _____                            |

PQ2. What is the current class grouping arrangement for students with special educational needs (SEN) in your school? (**You may tick more than one option**)

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students with SEN will be arranged in regular class according to their ages  | <input type="checkbox"/> Students with SEN will be arranged to regular class according to ability  | <input type="checkbox"/> Students with SEN will be arranged in regular class according to their category of SEN. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students with SEN will be arranged into the segregated resource class for core subjects, and regular class for non-core subjects (according to age, ability, or type of SEN) | <input type="checkbox"/> Current Students with SEN will be arranged in segregated resource classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify: _____   |

PQ3. In what ways does your school use the Learning Support Grant provided by the government? **(You may tick more than one option)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiring full-time / part-time teaching staff  | <input type="checkbox"/> Hiring responsible support staff   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing external services   | <input type="checkbox"/> Purchasing reference materials, teaching aids and other teaching resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increasing resources for teachers' school-based training opportunities on integrated education | <input type="checkbox"/> Strengthening home-school cooperation                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing learning or inclusive cultural activities   | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify:<br>_____   |

PQ4. What services or measures does your school have to cater for the individual needs of students with SEN? **(You may tick more than one option)**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiring teacher assistant(s)                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Making special assessment arrangements (e.g. extra time, use of computer)                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Designing school-based curriculum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiring support teacher(s)                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Providing parent guidance   | <input type="checkbox"/> Class grouping based on ability   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Setting individual education plan                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Providing professional therapy/counseling to students with SEN (e.g., speech therapy, psychological counseling) | <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing small class teaching |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Providing additional tutoring in learning after school hours | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum/Assessment accommodation   | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify:<br>_____  |

PQ5. What are the considerations for student nurturing in your school? **(Please number three factors by indicating 1, 2 and 3. 1 is the first priority, and so on)**

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic results and performances | <input type="checkbox"/> Students' social and interaction skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Students' emotional adaptability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Others<br>_____                   |  |   |

PQ6. What difficulties are you facing in implementing integrated education? **(You may tick more than one option)**

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of manpower                | <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy related administrative workload              | <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient professional trainings for teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient teaching resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult in finding school-based support services | <input type="checkbox"/> Tight teaching schedule/Heavy teaching workload  |

- Lack of financial resources
- Difficult in finding appropriate professionals for support
- Insufficient understanding of integrated education among teachers
- Unclear content of the *Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education*
- Too many students with SEN
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

## **B. General understanding on inclusive education**

PQ7. To what extent do you agree to following descriptions?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	A child with SEN should be transferred to an integrated classroom and provide adequate supports	1	2	3	4
b.	Integrated education helps to create equal educational opportunities in schools	1	2	3	4
c.	It is important to let every student equally receive educational opportunities	1	2	3	4
d.	All children should be educated under integrated education environment	1	2	3	4
e.	Separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them	1	2	3	4
f.	Integrated education enables to achieve social inclusion	1	2	3	4
g.	Compared with traditional classes, children with SEN learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers	1	2	3	4
h.	The best result is achieved if each child with SEN is placed in an integrated classroom that best suits him/her	1	2	3	4
i.	Inclusive curriculum can provide the best learning outcome for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
j.	Education is a basic right that should be available to all children	1	2	3	4
k.	Integrated education will foster acceptance of differences among students	1	2	3	4
l.	All children are capable of learning in integrated education settings	1	2	3	4
m.	The students with SEN should be educated in mainstream classrooms as much as possible	1	2	3	4

**C. Categories of students with SEN and understandings of Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance**

PQ8. To what extent do you agree the following descriptions about “Disability Discrimination Ordinance” and “Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance”?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	I understand the content of “Disability Discrimination Ordinance”	1	2	3	4
b.	I understand the “Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance”	1	2	3	4

PQ9. Do you think the below are the categories of SEN defined by the Education Bureau?

		Yes	No	Not sure/Not clear
a.	Students with poorer academic performance	1	2	3
b.	Students with Specific Learning Difficulties	1	2	3
c.	Students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	1	2	3
d.	Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders	1	2	3
e.	Students with Speech and Language Impairment	1	2	3
f.	Students with Intellectual Disability	1	2	3
g.	Students with Hearing Impairment	1	2	3
h.	Students with Physical Disability	1	2	3
i.	Students with Visual Impairment	1	2	3
j.	Students with Mental Impairment	1	2	3
k.	Students with deviant behaviour	1	2	3
l.	Students with weak comprehension	1	2	3
j.	Non-Chinese speaking students	1	2	3

**D. Difficulties of implementing integrated education**

PQ10. To what extent do you agree Hong Kong encounters following challenges on implementing integrated education?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	There are insufficient resources to support integrated education development	1	2	3	4
b.	There is an inadequate para-professional staff available to support students with SEN (e.g., speech pathologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist)	1	2	3	4
c.	Schools do not have adequate special education instructional materials & teaching aids to support students with SEN	1	2	3	4

d.	Support measures from government on integrated education are insufficient	1	2	3	4
e.	Different organizations/tertiary institutions in the society have inadequate measures to support schools in implementing integrated education	1	2	3	4
f.	Schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement integrated education successfully	1	2	3	4
g.	It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in a classroom	1	2	3	4
h.	The inclusion of a student with SEN in my class makes me feel stressful	1	2	3	4
i.	There will be inadequate resources to implement Individual Education Plan	1	2	3	4
j.	The overall academic performance of the school will suffer	1	2	3	4
k.	Teacher performance will decline	1	2	3	4
l.	Schools are unable able to cope with students with SEN who do not have adequate self-care skills	1	2	3	4
m.	The workload will increase under integrated education	1	2	3	4
n.	Apart from teachers, other school staff members will be stressed with presence of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
o.	My school has difficulty in accommodating students with various types of SEN because of inadequate infrastructure (e.g. space for equipment, lack of equipment).	1	2	3	4
p.	Students with SEN will be rejected by students without SEN	1	2	3	4
q.	The academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected	1	2	3	4
r.	Parents of children without SEN may not like placing their children in the same classroom with students with SEN	1	2	3	4
s.	There are too many types of students with SEN, and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for integrated education.	1	2	3	4

### **E. Effectiveness of integrated education policy**

PQ11. To what extent do you think the integrated education policy and support measures by Government can help implement integrated education in your school?

		Completely not helpful	Not helpful	Helpful	Completely helpful
a.	To provide Special Educational Needs Coordinator posts	1	2	3	4

b.	To provide Special Educational Needs Support Teacher posts	1	2	3	4
c.	To strengthen intensive remedial teaching programme (applicable to primary schools)/ Sponsor a teacher to support academic low achievers (applicable to secondary schools) (Cancelled in the 2019/20 academic year)	1	2	3	4
d.	The “Learning Support Grant” (new funding mode since 2019/20)	1	2	3	4
e.	To create school-based speech therapist posts	1	2	3	4
f.	To provide additional resources to support non-Chinese speaking students with SEN	1	2	3	4
g.	To provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings	1	2	3	4
h.	To promote School-based Educational Psychology Services	1	2	3	4
i.	To publish the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	1	2	3	4
j.	Others (Please specify): _____	1	2	3	4

PQ12. In general, to what extent do you agree integrated education policy can achieve the following goals?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	To promote social inclusion	1	2	3	4
b.	To promote professionalization of integrated education	1	2	3	4
c.	To assist schools in implementing integrated education	1	2	3	4
d.	To improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools	1	2	3	4
e.	To ensure schools to build up cross-sectoral supports of integrated education network across schools, communities and parents	1	2	3	4
f.	To promote schools to nurture innovative attitudes to ensure providing flexible supports for every student	1	2	3	4
g.	To promote home-school cooperation and implement successfully	1	2	3	4
h.	To ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support integrated education development	1	2	3	4
i.	To enhance social acceptance of integrated education	1	2	3	4
j.	To lead and coordinate integrated education development	1	2	3	4

## **F. Current practices of integrated education in your school**

PQ13. To what extent do you agree that the following description is consistent with the current situation of integrated education in your school?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	The school's mission statement reflects an inclusive ethos	1	2	3	4
b.	The school's admissions policy facilitates the admission and participation at school of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
c.	The school staff cooperate actively to provide services to students with SEN	1	2	3	4
d.	The school adopts a whole-school approach to identify, provide for and review the educational requirements of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
e.	The school actively promotes parental involvement and facilitates contact between parents and teachers	1	2	3	4
f.	The school liaises with relevant external agencies regarding provision of services for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
g.	The school takes account of situation of students with SEN to set up school development	1	2	3	4
h.	The school's discipline policy / code of behaviour is suitably adjusted to take account of diversity in learning	1	2	3	4
i.	The school's learning and teaching policy takes account of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
j.	The school's assessment policy includes reference to students with SEN, including reasonable accommodations for examinations	1	2	3	4
k.	All staff are encouraged to participate in professional development in special education	1	2	3	4
l.	All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding students with SEN	1	2	3	4
m.	The school requires teaching staff and relevant professionals to keep close contacts to support students with SEN	1	2	3	4
n.	The school provides school-based programmes which suit the needs and interests of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
o.	The students with SEN can choose subjects according to their needs and interests	1	2	3	4
p.	Curriculum documents and teaching materials related to students with SEN are readily available to staff	1	2	3	4

q	Extracurricular activities that support learning are open to students with SEN	1	2	3	4
r	There is a direct link between the school plan and the learning and teaching programmes provided for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
s	Assessment outcomes of students with SEN are used to inform learning and teaching	1	2	3	4
t	The school sets up, implements and reviews educational plans for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
u.	The school offers an appropriate, safe and attractive environment for all students to create a sense of belonging and security	1	2	3	4
v.	All students can participate in teaching and learning activities that are appropriate to their levels and challenging	1	2	3	4
w.	All teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and methods that take account of student abilities, needs and interests.	1	2	3	4
x	Modes of assessment and feedback (including homework) are differentiated by teachers in relation to their students' ability	1	2	3	4
y	There are procedures to assess the actual performance of students with SEN to ensure their individual plans comply with their abilities	1	2	3	4

PQ14. To what extent do you feel satisfied with the current practices of integrated education in your school?

		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
a.	All staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students	1	2	3	4
b.	The school mainstream curriculum can be adjusted and/or expanded to cater for different needs	1	2	3	4
c.	Diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment are used to cater for students' diverse learning needs	1	2	3	4
d.	Learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organized	1	2	3	4
e.	Teachers work together and support each other, for example, for collaborative teaching	1	2	3	4
f.	Improving the learning environment for the benefit of all students	1	2	3	4

g.	Assessment methods are adjusted to facilitate students' demonstration of their learning outcomes	1	2	3	4
h	Differentiated learning have been adopted in the lessons	1	2	3	4
i	Students' differences are included in an integrated classroom	1	2	3	4
j	Individual Education Plan have been designed	1	2	3	4
k.	Home-school cooperation can be implemented to promote parental education	1	2	3	4

## **F. Demographic information**

PQ15. Type of school

- Primary School       Secondary School

PQ16. School Category

- Government school       Aided school       Caput School       Direct Subsidized school       Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

PQ17. Highest Educational Attainment

- Secondary       Certificate or Diploma       Degree       Master or above

PQ18. Qualifications in Special Education (**You may tick more than one option**)

- Professional Development Courses for Teachers (e.g. 30/60/90 hours Course in "Catering for Diverse Learning Needs")       Undergraduate Courses with Major or Minor in Special/Inclusive Education       Courses for Teachers of Children with Special Educational Need (TCSEN)       Never received any Special/Inclusive-related Education training
- PGDE in Special Education       Master of Education in Special Education       Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

PQ19. Experience as Principal:

- 1-5 years       6-10 years       11-15 years       16-20 years  
 21 years or above

PQ20. What is the current number of teachers with SEN teaching experience and qualifications about Special Education/Inclusive Education in the school?

Teachers with SEN teaching experience \_\_\_\_\_ people

Qualifications about Special Education/Inclusive Education \_\_\_\_\_ people

PQ21. What good outcomes of Integrated Education has your school achieved which can be shared with the stakeholders?

PQ22. What is your opinion on the current situation and the future development of Integrated Education?

**End~**



**\*For EDUHK researchers only**  
 Questionnaire No: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 2: SENCO Questionnaire**

**“Study on Educating Students with Special Educational Needs at Ordinary Schools in Hong Kong” Commissioned by Equal Opportunities Commission**

**SENCO questionnaire**

Description: This questionnaire aims to conduct a survey on the current situation and general view in implementing integrated education by local schools. The questionnaire is conducted anonymously and the information and views collected will be consolidated and presented in an overall final report. The questionnaire will be destroyed after data analysis. Individual principals, SENCOs and teachers will not be identified in the report. If you do not wish to participate in this research project, please put X in the box at the upper left corner. Otherwise, it is presumed that you agree to participate in the research project. For enquiries, please contact Mr. Chun Wai Sun Derek, Research Assistant of this research project (Tel: 2948-6324 / Email: dwschun@eduhk.hk). Thank you for your participation. Should you agree to participate, please start to fill in the questionnaire.

**A. Current Status of Integrated Education in your School**

SQ1. Which of the following areas are you most confident in making students with SEN to catch up with other students? **(Please number three aspects by indicating 1, 2 and 3. 1 is the most confident, and so on)**

- Academic results and performances
- Students’ social and interaction skills
- Students’ emotional adaptability
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

SQ2. What difficulties are you facing in implementing integrated education? **(You may tick more than one option)**

- Lack of manpower
- Heavy related administrative workload
- Insufficient professional trainings for teachers
- Insufficient teaching resources
- Difficult in finding school-based support services
- Tight teaching schedule/Heavy teaching workload
- Lack of financial resources
- Difficult in finding appropriate professionals for support
- Insufficient understanding of integrated education among teachers
- Unclear content of the *Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education*
- Too many students with SEN
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

SQ3. As far as you know, how do you or other teachers communicate, consult and support parents of students with SEN in school? **(You may tick more than one option)**

- Using telephone and other instant messaging channels (such as WhatsApp or WeChat)
- Parent courses / workshops
- Regular teacher-parent face-to-face contacts

- Regular contact between school social workers and parents
- Arranging professionals (such as educational psychologists or speech therapists) to meet with parents
- Organizing parent volunteers
- School intranet / distribution of notices
- Holding regular teacher-parent meeting
- Parent tea / evening gatherings
- Parent day meetings
- Introduction of resources about supporting students with SEN (such as online resources or community support services)
- Others\_\_\_\_\_

SQ4. To what extent do you agree you have encountered following difficulties when dealing with problems of children with SEN with their parents?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	You and parents have different learning expectations on children with SEN	1	2	3	4
b.	Parents resist to admit their children with SEN	1	2	3	4
c.	Parents resist to seek professional help or advices	1	2	3	4
d.	Parents are worried about their education level incapable to support their children with SEN in their family	1	2	3	4
e.	Parents are busy so they cannot support the needs of their children with SEN after school	1	2	3	4
f.	Parents are unclear what kind of professionals that they should ask for help or advices	1	2	3	4
g.	Parents lack the skills and knowledge to take care of children with SEN	1	2	3	4
h.	You do not have sufficient time to deal with the problems of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
i.	It is difficult for parents to gather the information about the support for children with SEN	1	2	3	4
j.	It is difficult for you to contact and engage with parents	1	2	3	4

SQ5. To what extent do you agree the following ways are effective to enhance the communication with the parents of students with SEN?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	School encourages parents of students with SEN to participate in courses/workshops to support their children	1	2	3	4
b.	School invites parents to attend case conferences according to the situation of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
c.	School introduces resources supporting students with SEN to parents (such as online resources or community support services)	1	2	3	4
d.	Teachers provides their private mobile phone numbers for easy contact with parents of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
e.	School strengthens collaboration with the parent-teacher association to support students with SEN	1	2	3	4

f.	School organizes parent volunteers to support students with SEN and their parents	1	2	3	4
g.	School holds regular tea / evening gatherings for parents of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
h.	School regularly holds parent days for face-to-face meetings with parents of students with SEN	1	2	3	4

### **B. General understanding on inclusive education**

SQ6. To what extent do you agree to following descriptions?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	A child with SEN should be transferred to an integrated classroom and provide adequate supports	1	2	3	4
b.	Inclusive education helps to create equal educational opportunities in schools	1	2	3	4
c.	It is important to let every student equally receive educational opportunities	1	2	3	4
d.	All children should be educated under integrated education environment	1	2	3	4
e.	Separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them	1	2	3	4
f.	Integrated education enables to achieve social inclusion	1	2	3	4
g.	Compared with traditional classes, children with SEN learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers	1	2	3	4
h.	The best result is achieved if each child with SEN is placed in an integrated classroom that best suits him/her	1	2	3	4
i.	Integrated curriculum can provide the best learning outcome for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
j.	Education is a basic right that should be available to all children	1	2	3	4
k.	Integrated education will foster acceptance of differences among students	1	2	3	4
l.	All children are capable of learning in integrated education settings	1	2	3	4
m.	The students with SEN should be educated in mainstream classrooms as much as possible	1	2	3	4

### **C. Categories of students with SEN and understandings of Code of Practice on Education under of Disability Discrimination Ordinance and challenges faced**

SQ7. To what extent do you agree the following descriptions about “Disability Discrimination Ordinance” and “Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance”?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	I understand the content of “Disability Discrimination Ordinance”.	1	2	3	4
b.	I understand the “Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance”.	1	2	3	4

SQ8. Please answer following 3 questions:

a.) Do you think the below are the categories of SEN defined by the Education Bureau (EDB)? b.) Are you dealing with these types of students now? c.) To what extent do you feel stressful to deal with these types of students?

		a.) Do you think the below are the categories of SEN defined by EDB			b.) Are you dealing with these types of students now ?			c.) To what extent do you feel stressful to deal with these types of students?			
		Yes	No	Not sure/Not clear	Yes	No	Do not have this type of students in school	Completely not stressful	Not stressful	A bit stressful	Very stressful
a.	Students with poorer academic performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b.	Students with Specific Learning Difficulties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c.	Students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d.	Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e.	Students with Speech and Language Impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
f.	Students with Intellectual Disability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
g.	Students with Hearing Impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
h.	Students with Physical Disability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
i.	Students with Visual Impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
j.	Students with Mental Impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
k.	Students with deviant behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
l.	Students with weak comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
m.	Non-Chinese speaking students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### **D. Difficulties of implementing integrated education**

SQ9. To what extent do you agree Hong Kong encounters following challenges on implementing integrated education?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	There are insufficient resources to support integrated education development	1	2	3	4
b.	There is an inadequate pre-professional staff available to support students with SEN (e.g., speech pathologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist)	1	2	3	4
c.	Schools do not have adequate special education instructional materials & teaching aids to support students with SEN	1	2	3	4
d.	Support measures from government on integrated education are insufficient	1	2	3	4
e.	Different organizations/tertiary institutions in the society have inadequate measures to support schools in implementing integrated education	1	2	3	4
f.	Schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement integrated education successfully	1	2	3	4
g.	It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in a classroom	1	2	3	4
h.	The inclusion of a student with SEN in my class makes me feel stressful	1	2	3	4
i.	There will be inadequate resources to implement Individual Education Plan	1	2	3	4
j.	The overall academic performance of the school will suffer	1	2	3	4
k.	Teacher performance will decline	1	2	3	4
l.	Schools are unable able to cope with students with SEN who do not have adequate self-care skills	1	2	3	4
m.	The workload will increase under integrated education	1	2	3	4
n.	Apart from teachers, other school staff members will be stressed	1	2	3	4
o.	My school has difficulty in accommodating students with various types of SEN because of inadequate infrastructure (e.g. space for equipment, lack of equipment)	1	2	3	4
p.	Students with SEN will be rejected by students without SEN	1	2	3	4
q.	The academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected	1	2	3	4
r.	Parents of children without SEN may not like placing their children in the same classroom with students with SEN	1	2	3	4
s.	There are too many types of students with SEN, and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for integrated education.	1	2	3	4

### **E. Effectiveness of integrated education policy**

SQ10. To what extent do you think the integrated education policy and support measures by Government can help implement integrated education in your school?

		Completely not helpful	Not helpful	Helpful	Completely helpful
a.	To provide Special Educational Needs Coordinator posts	1	2	3	4
b.	To provide Special Educational Needs Support Teacher posts	1	2	3	4
c.	To strengthen intensive remedial teaching programme (applicable to primary schools)/ Sponsor a teacher to support academic low achievers (applicable to secondary schools) (Cancelled in the 2019/20 academic year)	1	2	3	4
d.	The “Learning Support Grant” (new funding mode since 2019/20)	1	2	3	4
e.	To create school-based speech therapist posts	1	2	3	4
f.	To provide additional resources to support non-Chinese speaking students with SEN	1	2	3	4
g.	To provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings	1	2	3	4
h.	To promote School-based Educational Psychology Services	1	2	3	4
i.	To publish the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	1	2	3	4
j.	Others (Please specify): _____	1	2	3	4

SQ11. In general, to what extent do you agree integrated education policy can achieve the following goals?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	To promote social inclusion	1	2	3	4
b.	To promote professionalization of integrated education	1	2	3	4
c.	To assist schools to implement integrated education	1	2	3	4
d.	To improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools	1	2	3	4
e.	To ensure schools to build up cross-sectoral supports of integrated education network across schools, communities and parents	1	2	3	4
f.	To promote schools to nurture innovative attitudes to ensure providing flexible supports for every student	1	2	3	4
g.	To promote home-school cooperation and implement successfully	1	2	3	4
h.	To ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support integrated education development	1	2	3	4
i.	To enhance social acceptance of integrated education	1	2	3	4

j.	To lead and coordinate integrated education development	1	2	3	4
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### **F. Current practices of integrated education in your school**

SQ12. To what extent do you agree that the following description is consistent with the current situation of integrated education in your school?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	The school's mission statement reflects an inclusive ethos	1	2	3	4
b.	The school's admissions policy facilitates the admission and participation at school of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
c.	The school staff cooperate actively to provide services to students with SEN	1	2	3	4
d.	The school adopts a whole-school approach to identify, provide for and review the educational requirements of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
e.	The school actively promotes parental involvement and facilitates contact between parents and teachers	1	2	3	4
f.	The school liaises with relevant external agencies regarding provision of services for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
g.	The school takes account of situation of students with SEN to set up school development	1	2	3	4
h.	The school's discipline policy / code of behaviour is suitably adjusted to take account of diversity in learning	1	2	3	4
i.	The school's learning and teaching policy takes account of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
j.	The school's assessment policy includes reference to students with SEN, including reasonable accommodations for examinations	1	2	3	4
k.	All staff are encouraged to participate in professional development in special education	1	2	3	4
l.	All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding students with SEN	1	2	3	4
m.	The school requires teaching staff and relevant professionals to keep close contacts to support students with SEN	1	2	3	4
n.	The school provides school-based programmes which suit the needs and interests of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
o.	The students with SEN can choose subjects according to their needs and interests	1	2	3	4
p.	Curriculum documents and teaching materials related to students with SEN are readily available to staff	1	2	3	4
q.	Extracurricular activities that support learning are open to students with SEN	1	2	3	4
r.	There is a direct link between the school plan and the learning and teaching programmes provided for students with SEN	1	2	3	4

s	Assessment outcomes of students with SEN are used to inform learning and teaching	1	2	3	4
t	The school sets up, implements and reviews educational plans for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
u.	The school offers an appropriate, safe and attractive environment for all students to create a sense of belonging and security	1	2	3	4
v.	All students can participate in teaching and learning activities that are appropriate to their levels and challenging	1	2	3	4
w.	All teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and methods that take account of student abilities, needs and interests.	1	2	3	4
x	Modes of assessment and feedback (including homework) are differentiated by teachers in relation to their students' ability	1	2	3	4
y	There are procedures to assess the actual performance of students with SEN to ensure their individual plans comply with their abilities	1	2	3	4

SQ13. To what extent do you agree to following statements?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	I possess sufficient knowledge of special education	1	2	3	4
b.	I possess case management skills	1	2	3	4
c.	I possess good communication skills	1	2	3	4
d.	I possess coordination and collaboration skills to maintain the student support teams and other teams in the school	1	2	3	4
e.	I proactively care for and accept students with SEN	1	2	3	4
f.	I adhere to professional ethics and demonstrate dedication and attitude	1	2	3	4
g.	I can lead the structure, functions, and division of labor within the school's subject groups and teams	1	2	3	4
h	I can provide suggestions and guidance for diverse assessments to meet the learning needs of students with SEN, and use assessment results to formulate appropriate learning goals and design teaching activities	1	2	3	4
i	I can effectively utilize resources related to SEN within the school and the Hong Kong education system	1	2	3	4
j	I can design special education curricula, carry out curriculum accommodation or tailoring, and design teaching content for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
k	I am familiar with various teaching methods and strategies for different categories of students with SEN, such as the visual aids	1	2	3	4

	needed by students with autism in the learning process				
l	I understand the use of various technology-assisted or other assistive learning tools to promote the learning of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
m	I can assist students with SEN in developing their career planning abilities	1	2	3	4
n	I can guide and coordinate teachers in formulating, implementing, monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating Individual Education Plans in accordance with the whole-school approach	1	2	3	4
o	I can timely revise Individual Education Plans according to individual needs to promote and improve their implementation	1	2	3	4
p	I can conduct preliminary assessments of students with SEN and provide follow-up or referrals	1	2	3	4
q	I can provide emotional counseling and appropriate support to students with SEN	1	2	3	4
r	I can promote home-school cooperation and design learning activities to promote the growth of students after understanding the family background of different students				
s	I can regularly conduct school-based training related to 'promoting the learning of students with SEN' to enhance the professional development of the whole team	1	2	3	4
t	I understand the current status and trends in the development of the special education field	1	2	3	4
u.	I can plan and execute special education topics for professional development	1	2	3	4
v.	I can organize and utilize knowledge related to the characteristics and issues of various types of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
w.	I understand the content and application of Hong Kong's special education and rehabilitation policies, as well as other relevant regulations (such as the Disability Discrimination Ordinance, inclusive indicators, new funding models, and Whole School Approach)	1	2	3	4
x.	I can comprehend the content of professional training and apply it to promote the development of integrated education in the school	1	2	3	4
y.	I possess the knowledge and skills required to manage students with SEN	1	2	3	4

SQ14. To what extent do you feel satisfied with the current practices of integrated education in your school?

		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
--	--	-------------------	--------------	-----------	----------------

a.	All staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students	1	2	3	4
b.	The school mainstream curriculum can be adjusted and/or expanded to cater for different needs	1	2	3	4
c.	Diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment are used to cater for students' diverse learning needs	1	2	3	4
d.	Learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organized	1	2	3	4
e.	Teachers work together and support each other, for example, for collaborative teaching	1	2	3	4
f.	Improving the learning environment for the benefit of all students	1	2	3	4
g.	Assessment methods are adjusted to facilitate students' demonstration of their learning outcomes	1	2	3	4
h.	Differentiated learning have been adopted in the lessons	1	2	3	4
i.	Students' differences are included in an integrated classroom	1	2	3	4
j.	Individual Education Plan have been designed	1	2	3	4
k.	Home-school cooperation can be implemented to promote parental education	1	2	3	4

### **G. Demographic information**

SQ15. How many years of teaching experience do you have? (Including your previous and current serving school)?

--	--

SQ16. How many years have you been in charge of integrated education? (Including your previous and current serving school)?

--	--

SQ17. The approximate amount of time you spend on integrated education support per week:

- |                                      |                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1-5 hours   | <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 hours  | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 hours       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 20-24 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 25 hours or above |

SQ18. How many hours of teaching periods do you have per week? \_\_\_\_\_ hours

SQ19. Have you attended any training courses on integrated education? (**You may tick more than one option**)

Yes  No

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (30 hours) | <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Course on Catering for Diverse Needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic Course on Supporting Students |
|---|--|---|

- Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs
- Learning Needs (102 hours)
- Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN - Sensory, Communication and Physical Needs
- with SEN – Cognition and Learning Needs
- Professional Development Programme for Mental Health: Mental Health Promotion at Schools and Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs
- Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

SQ20. Please list the number of current school teachers who have participated in the following training courses:

- Basic Course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (30 hours)
- Advanced Course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (102 hours)
- Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs
- Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN - Sensory, Communication and Physical Needs
- Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN – Cognition and Learning Needs
- Professional Development Programme for Mental Health: Mental Health Promotion at Schools and Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs
- Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

SQ21a. If there are currently students with SEN studying in your school, please provide the number of students who have officially confirmed the following types of SEN? (Each student only needs to count once by their main SEN category)

SEN category	Number of students	Study Grade	
Students with Hearing Impairment		P/F.1 _____	P/F.4 _____
		P/F.2 _____	P/F.5 _____
		P/F.3 _____	P/F.6 _____
Students with Mental impairment		P/F.1 _____	P/F.4 _____
		P/F.2 _____	P/F.5 _____
		P/F.3 _____	P/F.6 _____
Students with Physical Disability		P/F.1 _____	P/F.4 _____
		P/F.2 _____	P/F.5 _____
		P/F.3 _____	P/F.6 _____
Students with Visual Impairment		P/F.1 _____	P/F.4 _____
		P/F.2 _____	P/F.5 _____
		P/F.3 _____	P/F.6 _____
Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders		P/F.1 _____	P/F.4 _____
		P/F.2 _____	P/F.5 _____
		P/F.3 _____	P/F.6 _____
Students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder		P/F.1 _____	P/F.4 _____
		P/F.2 _____	P/F.5 _____

		P/F.3_____	P/F.6_____
Students with Intellectual disability		P/F.1_____	P/F.4_____
		P/F.2_____	P/F.5_____
		P/F.3_____	P/F.6_____
Students with Speech and Language Impairment		P/F.1_____	P/F.4_____
		P/F.2_____	P/F.5_____
		P/F.3_____	P/F.6_____
Students with Specific Learning Difficulties		P/F.1_____	P/F.4_____
		P/F.2_____	P/F.5_____
		P/F.3_____	P/F.6_____

SQ21b. Number of students with SEN in the whole school: \_\_\_\_\_ persons

SQ22. In addition to the above students, how many students with SEN in your school have not yet been officially confirmed? \_\_\_\_\_ persons.

SQ23. How many approximate number of students with more than one SEN category?  
\_\_\_\_\_ persons

SQ24. What are your views about the future development of integrated education?

**End~**



**\*For EDUHK researchers only**

Questionnaire No: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3: Teacher Questionnaire

## “Study on Educating Students with Special Educational Needs at Ordinary Schools in Hong Kong” Commissioned by Equal Opportunities Commission

### Teacher questionnaire

Description: This questionnaire aims to conduct a survey on the current situation and general view in implementing integrated education by local schools. The questionnaire is conducted anonymously and the information and views collected will be consolidated and presented in an overall final report. The questionnaire will be destroyed after data analysis. Individual principals, SENCOs and teachers will not be identified in the report. If you do not wish to participate in this research project, please put X in the box at the upper left corner. Otherwise, it is presumed that you agree to participate in the research project. For enquiries, please contact Mr. Chun Wai Sun Derek, Research Assistant of this research project (Tel: 2948-6324 / Email: dwschun@eduhk.hk). Thank you for your participation. Should you agree to participate, please start to fill in the questionnaire.

### A. General understanding on inclusive education

TQ1. To what extent do you agree to following descriptions?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	A child with special educational needs (SEN) should be transferred to an integrated classroom and provide adequate supports	1	2	3	4
b.	Inclusive education helps to create equal educational opportunities in schools	1	2	3	4
c.	It is important to let every student equally receive educational opportunities	1	2	3	4
d.	All children should be educated under integrated education environment	1	2	3	4
e.	Separating students is not necessary to provide a quality education to them	1	2	3	4
f.	Integrated education enables to achieve social inclusion	1	2	3	4
g.	Compared with traditional classes, children with SEN learn best in their own special education classes where they have specially trained teachers	1	2	3	4
h.	The best result is achieved if each child with SEN is placed in an integrated classroom that best suits him/her.	1	2	3	4
i.	Inclusive curriculum can provide the best learning outcome for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
j.	Education is a basic right that should be available to all children	1	2	3	4
k.	Integrated education will foster acceptance of differences among students	1	2	3	4
l.	All children are capable of learning in integrated education settings.	1	2	3	4
m.	The students with SEN should be educated in mainstream classrooms as much as possible.	1	2	3	4

**B. Categories of students with SEN and understandings of Code of Practice on Education under Disability Discrimination Ordinance and challenges faced**

TQ2. To what extent do you agree the following descriptions about “Disability Discrimination Ordinance” and “Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance”?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	I understand the content of “Disability Discrimination Ordinance”.	1	2	3	4
b.	I understand the “Code of Practice on Education under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance”.	1	2	3	4

TQ3. Please answer following 3 questions:

a.) Do you think the below are the categories of SEN defined by the Education Bureau (EDB)? b.) Are you dealing with these types of students now? c.) To what extent do you feel stressful to deal with these types of students?

		a.) Do you think the below are the categories of SEN defined by EDB			b.) Are you dealing with these types of students now ?			c.) To what extent do you feel stressful to deal with these types of students?			
		Yes	No	Not sure/Not clear	Yes	No	Do not have this type of students in school	Completely not stressful	Not stressful	A bit stressful	Very stressful
a.	Students with poorer academic performance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b.	Students with Specific Learning Difficulties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c.	Students with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d.	Students with Autistic Spectrum Disorders	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
e.	Students with Speech and Language Impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
f.	Students with Intellectual Disability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
g.	Students with Hearing Impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
h.	Students with Physical Disability	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

i	Students with Visual Impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
j	Students with Mental Impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
k	Students with deviant behaviour	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
l	Students with weak comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
m	Non-Chinese speaking students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

### **C. Difficulties of implementing integrated education**

TQ4. What difficulties are you facing in implementing integrated education? **(You may tick more than one option)**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of manpower   | <input type="checkbox"/> Heavy related administrative workload                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient professional trainings for teachers                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient teaching resources  | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult in finding school-based support services         | <input type="checkbox"/> Tight teaching schedule/Heavy teaching workload                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lack of financial resources  | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult in finding appropriate professionals for support | <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient understanding of integrated education among teachers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unclear content of the <i>Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Too many students with SEN                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Others_____   |

TQ5. To what extent do you agree Hong Kong encounters following challenges on implementing integrated education?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	There are insufficient resources to support integrated education development	1	2	3	4
b.	There is an inadequate pre-professional staff available to support students with SEN (e.g., speech pathologist, physiotherapist, occupational therapist)	1	2	3	4
c.	Schools do not have adequate special education instructional materials & teaching aids to support students with SEN	1	2	3	4
d.	Support measures from government on integrated education are insufficient	1	2	3	4
e.	Different organizations/tertiary institutions in the society have inadequate measures to support schools in implementing integrated education	1	2	3	4
f.	Schools do not receive enough financial resources to implement integrated education successfully	1	2	3	4

g.	It will be difficult to give equal attention to all students in a classroom	1	2	3	4
h	The inclusion of a student with SEN in my class makes me feel stressful	1	2	3	4
i	There will be inadequate resources to implement Individual Education Plan	1	2	3	4
j	The overall academic performance of the school will suffer	1	2	3	4
k	Teacher performance will decline	1	2	3	4
l	Schools are unable able to cope with students with SEN who do not have adequate self-care skills	1	2	3	4
m.	The workload will increase under integrated education	1	2	3	4
n.	Apart from teachers, other school staff members will be stressed	1	2	3	4
o.	My school has difficulty in accommodating students with various types of SEN because of inadequate infrastructure (e.g. space for equipment, lack of equipment)	1	2	3	4
p.	Students with SEN will be rejected by students without SEN	1	2	3	4
q.	The academic achievement of students without SEN will be affected	1	2	3	4
r.	Parents of children without SEN may not like placing their children in the same classroom with students with SEN	1	2	3	4
s.	There are too many types of students with SEN, and their abilities vary greatly, so it is impossible to generalize whether they are suitable for integrated education.	1	2	3	4

#### **D. Effectiveness of integrated education policy**

TQ6. To what extent do you think the integrated education policy and support measures by Government can help implement integrated education in your school?

		Completely not helpful	Not helpful	Helpful	Completely helpful
a.	To provide Special Educational Needs Coordinator posts	1	2	3	4
b.	To provide Special Educational Needs Support Teacher posts	1	2	3	4
c.	To strengthen intensive remedial teaching programme (applicable to primary schools)/ Sponsor a teacher to support academic low achievers (applicable to secondary schools) (Cancelled in the 2019/20 academic year)	1	2	3	4
d.	The “Learning Support Grant” (new funding mode since 2019/20)	1	2	3	4
e.	To create school-based speech therapist posts	1	2	3	4
f.	To provide additional resources to support non-Chinese speaking students with SEN	1	2	3	4
g.	To provide systematic and sufficient teacher trainings	1	2	3	4

h	To promote School-based Educational Psychology Services	1	2	3	4
i	To publish the Operation Guide on the Whole School Approach to Integrated Education	1	2	3	4
j.	Others (Please specify): _____	1	2	3	4

TQ7. In general, to what extent do you agree integrated education policy can achieve the following goals?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	To promote social inclusion	1	2	3	4
b.	To promote professionalization of integrated education	1	2	3	4
c.	To assist schools to implement integrated education	1	2	3	4
d.	To improve students with SEN to receive sufficient support at schools	1	2	3	4
e.	To ensure schools to build up cross-sectoral supports of integrated education network across schools, communities and parents	1	2	3	4
f.	To promote schools to nurture innovative attitudes to ensure providing flexible supports for every student	1	2	3	4
g.	To promote home-school cooperation and implement successfully	1	2	3	4
h.	To ensure schools to reserve sufficient resources to support integrated education development	1	2	3	4
i.	To enhance social acceptance of integrated education	1	2	3	4
j.	To lead and coordinate integrated education development	1	2	3	4

### **E. Current practices of integrated education in your school**

TQ8. To what extent do you agree that the following description is consistent with the current situation of integrated education in your school?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	The school's mission statement reflects an inclusive ethos	1	2	3	4
b.	The school's admissions policy facilitates the admission and participation at school of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
c.	The school staff cooperate actively to provide services to students with SEN	1	2	3	4
d.	The school adopts a whole-school and approach to identify, provide for and review the educational requirements of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
e.	The school actively promotes parental involvement and facilitates contact between parents and teachers	1	2	3	4

f.	The school liaises with relevant external agencies regarding provision of services for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
g.	The school takes account of situation of students with SEN to set up school development plan	1	2	3	4
h	The school's discipline policy / code of behaviour is suitably adjusted to take account of diversity in learning	1	2	3	4
i	The school's learning and teaching policy takes account of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
j	The school's assessment policy includes reference to students with SEN, including reasonable accommodations for certificate examinations	1	2	3	4
k	All staff are encouraged to participate in professional development in special education	1	2	3	4
l	All staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities regarding students with SEN	1	2	3	4
m	The school requires teaching staff and relevant professionals to keep close contacts to support students with SEN	1	2	3	4
n	The school provides school-based programmes which suit the needs and interests of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
o	The students with SEN can choose subjects according to their needs and interests	1	2	3	4
p	Curriculum documents and teaching materials related to students with SEN are readily available to staff	1	2	3	4
q	Extracurricular activities that support learning are open to students with SEN	1	2	3	4
r	There is a direct link between the school plan and the learning and teaching programmes provided for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
s	Assessment outcomes of students with SEN are used to inform learning and teaching	1	2	3	4
t	The school sets up, implements and reviews educational plans for students with SEN	1	2	3	4
u.	The school offers an appropriate, safe and attractive environment for all students to create a sense of belonging and security	1	2	3	4
v.	All students can participate in teaching and learning activities that are appropriate to their levels and challenging	1	2	3	4
w.	All teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and methods that take account of student abilities, needs and interests	1	2	3	4
x	Modes of assessment and feedback (including homework) are differentiated by teachers in relation to their students' ability	1	2	3	4
y	There are procedures to assess the actual performance of students with SEN to ensure their individual plans comply with their abilities	1	2	3	4

TQ9. To what extent do you agree you are competent for followings?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	I can carry out my role in screening, identifying, assessing and supporting students with SEN in an integrated classroom	1	2	3	4
b.	I apply different curriculum content to meet the learning diversity of students with SEN in integrated classrooms	1	2	3	4
c.	I can manage an integrated classroom to ensure academic engagement of all learners	1	2	3	4
d.	I can collaborate with other stakeholders including peer teachers and parents to meet the diverse needs of learners in an integrated classroom	1	2	3	4
e.	I am familiar with the resources that students with SEN need for learning	1	2	3	4
f.	I have high expectations and aspirations for all learners	1	2	3	4
g.	I am comfortable with behaviour management in integrated classrooms	1	2	3	4
h.	I am able to change my teaching methods to accommodate learners with difficulties in learning	1	2	3	4
i.	I can use a variety of assessment strategies (e.g. portfolio assessment, modified tests, performance-based assessment, etc.)	1	2	3	4
j.	I can collaborate with other professionals (e.g., educational psychologists or speech therapists) in designing suitable educational plans for all students	1	2	3	4
k.	I can accurately gauge the progress of comprehension of curriculum by students with SEN	1	2	3	4
l.	I can work with the parents of students with SEN to support their children's learning needs	1	2	3	4
m.	I can provide parents of students with SEN with suitable learning strategies for supporting their children	1	2	3	4
n.	I can meet the learning expectations of parents of students with SEN for their children	1	2	3	4
o.	I can show the caring and acceptance of students with SEN to the parents for supporting their children's learning needs	1	2	3	4
p.	I can work with the parents of students with SEN to design individual education plans for their children	1	2	3	4
q.	I have good communication skills to explain the learning situation of their children to the parents of students with SEN	1	2	3	4

r.	I have professional counseling skills to relieve the emotional reactions and stress in supporting the children's learning of the parents of students with SEN	1	2	3	4
s.	I can have the knowledge and skills needed to manage students with SEN	1	2	3	4

TQ10. To what extent do you feel satisfied with the current practices of integrated education in your school?

		Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
a.	All staff of the school acknowledge the responsibility of establishing an inclusive environment to cater for the needs of all students	1	2	3	4
b.	The school mainstream curriculum can be adjusted and/or expanded to cater for different needs	1	2	3	4
c.	Diversified teaching techniques and assistive equipment are used to cater for students' diverse learning needs	1	2	3	4
d.	Learning groups, peer tutoring and circles of friends are strategically organized	1	2	3	4
e.	Teachers work together and support each other, for example, for collaborative teaching	1	2	3	4
f.	Improving the learning environment for the benefit of all students	1	2	3	4
g.	Assessment methods are adjusted to facilitate students' demonstration of their learning outcomes	1	2	3	4
h.	Differentiated learning have been adopted in the lessons	1	2	3	4
i.	Students' differences are included in an integrated classroom	1	2	3	4
j.	Individual Education Plan have been designed	1	2	3	4
k.	Home-school cooperation can be implemented to promote parental education	1	2	3	4

TQ11. Which of the following areas are you most confident in making students with SEN catch up with other students? **(Please number three aspects by indicating 1, 2 and 3. 1 is the most confident, and so on)**

- Academic results and performances     
 Students' social and interaction skills     
 Students' emotional adaptability  
 Others

TQ12. To what extent do you agree you have encountered following difficulties when dealing with problems of children with SEN with their parents?

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
a.	You and parents have different learning outcome expectations on children with SEN	1	2	3	4

b.	Parents resist to admit their children with SEN	1	2	3	4
c.	Parents resist to seek professional help or advices	1	2	3	4
d.	Parents are worried about their education level incapable to support their children with SEN in their family	1	2	3	4
e.	Parents are busy so they cannot support the needs of their children with SEN after school	1	2	3	4
f.	Parents are unclear what kind of professionals that they should ask for help or advices	1	2	3	4
g.	Parents lack the skills and knowledge to take care of children with SEN	1	2	3	4
h.	You do not have sufficient time to deal with the problems of student with SEN	1	2	3	4
i.	It is difficult for parents to gather the information about the support for children with SEN	1	2	3	4
j.	It is difficult for you to contact and engage with parents	1	2	3	4

## **F. Demographic information**

TQ13. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

(Including your previous and current serving school?)

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TQ14. Teaching subjects: \_\_\_\_\_

TQ15. Have you taken any roles in your school now? **(You may tick more than one option)**

- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class teacher                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Guidance & Counselling Committee    | <input type="checkbox"/> Discipline Committee  | <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum Development Committee |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Co-curricular Activities Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Moral and Civic Education Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Careers & Life Planning Committee / Further Study and Career Counselling Committee (Only applicable on Secondary Schools) | <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Education Committee   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Committee                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Others, please specify: _____       |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Arts Education Committee         |

TQ16. Classes of teaching: **(You may tick more than one option)**

- |   |   |                                  |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Primary School | <input type="checkbox"/> Secondary School |                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 1        | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 2          | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 4        | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 5          | <input type="checkbox"/> Grade 6 |

TQ17. In the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic year, how many students with SEN have you taught in the current and previous schools?

Students with Hearing Impairment	_____	Students with Visual Impairment	_____	Students with Intellectual disability	_____
Students with Mental impairment	_____	Students with Autistic spectrum disorders	_____	Students with Speech and language impairment	_____
Students with Physical disability	_____	Students with Attention Deficit / Hyperactivity Disorder	_____	Students with Specific learning difficulties	_____

TQ18. Have you attended any training courses on integrated education? **(You may tick more than one option)**

Yes  No

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Basic Course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (30 hours)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Course on Catering for Diverse Learning Needs (102 hours)                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN – Cognition and Learning Needs  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN - Behavioural, Emotional and Social Development Needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Thematic Course on Supporting Students with SEN - Sensory, Communication and Physical Needs | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Development Programme for Mental Health: Mental Health Promotion at Schools and Supporting Students with Mental Health Needs |
- Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

TQ19. What are your views about future development of integrated education?

**End~**

## **Appendix 4: Interview Guide of Principals**

### **Interview Guide of Principals**

#### **Background of implementing integrated education in schools**

1. Please briefly introduce the development process of implementing integrated education (IE) in your school, including: (a) the background and time of the beginning, (b) the difference in scale from the beginning to now.
2. In the past two to three years, there have been many new policies, measures, and supports for IE in Hong Kong. As a school management, do you think these new policies can help you and teachers create a more inclusive and non-discriminatory campus, support students with special educational needs (SEN) and their families more effectively? Please give examples.
3. In your personal observation, can these new policies be implemented in all ordinary schools and effectively promote the development of IE?
4. Regarding the current situation of your school, what are your opinions on the "three-tier support" model? What are the areas that can be improved?

#### **Status of implementing "whole-school approach" in integrated education in the school**

1. Under the "whole-school approach" (WSA), the support work for IE in the school is not solely undertaken by the SENCO, but all teachers and staff have the responsibility to support students with SEN in the school. Has your school implemented any policies or measures to promote the WSA?
2. How is the progress of the WSA in the school? If successful, what are the key factors? If there are obstacles, what are the reasons?
3. Can the student support team effectively develop the school's IE strategy and implement the related work, as well as effectively share the responsibility of SENCO work?
4. How does your school strengthen the ability of subject teachers to care for students with SEN? What are the challenges? If any, as a principal, how do you respond? Please give examples.
5. How is the support of teachers and colleagues in the school for SENCO work? Are there any specific examples?
6. Regarding the collaboration between SENCO and professionals (such as school-based educational psychologists, speech therapists, and school social workers) in your current school situation, what are the challenges? If any, as a principal, how do you respond? Please give examples.
7. What effective measures has the student support team implemented in integrating school resources to assist teachers?
8. How much do you think the WSA and the operational guidelines for IE help the school and teachers in promoting IE? If helpful, please give examples. If not, how can it be improved?

#### **Status of integrated education measures in schools**

1. Does your school use the "Caring for Students with Individual Differences - Inclusive Campus Indicators" as a tool for self-assessment and development? If yes, how effective is it? If no, why not?

2. Does your school's current admission policy and class allocation align with the concept of IE? Please give examples.
3. How does your school assist teachers in adjusting their attitudes and teaching methods towards students with SEN?
4. Early identification: (**only applicable to primary schools**) Does your school have special measures to encourage parents to observe their children's learning and behavior performance and proactively discuss any difficulties encountered and identify students with SEN at an early stage? Does your school encounter any special difficulties in evaluating and following up after early identification?
5. Parent-school cooperation: What are the difficulties in communicating and collaborating with parents in your school? What effective measures have been taken to overcome these challenges?
6. After implementing IE and setting up a SENCO, are there any changes in parent-school communication? Please provide specific examples. Has there been an increase in family care? How has it been increased?
7. Inclusion of students with SEN with other classmates: How do students without SEN view classmates with SEN? What measures has your school implemented to promote the inclusion of students with SEN with other classmates? Does your school have any successful experiences in promoting the acceptance and assistance of students without SEN towards classmates with SEN? How to promote the acceptance of students with SEN by parents of students without SEN?
8. Students with SEN and emotional or behavioral problems: Does your school have students with SEN and emotional or behavioral problems? How do you assist them in participating in classroom learning and coping with learning requirements? How to enhance their ability to deal with emotions and social interactions?
9. Non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN: What are your school's school-based strategies for supporting Chinese-speaking students with SEN and families/non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN and families? Did you encounter any challenges at early stage of implementation? If yes, how did your school respond?
10. Use of technology: Does your school use any computer software or devices to assist students with SEN, especially those with specific learning difficulties? Can you give examples of the assistance and effectiveness of computer software? If no, why not?
11. Professional support services in the community: Does your school currently use professional support services in the community? Why? If yes, what positive effects do you think these professional support services have on your school's implementation of IE? Overall, what are your opinions on these professional support services? Any improvement required?
12. Based on the current situation in your school, what resources and support do you think are effective in helping students with SEN learn effectively and achieve equal opportunity in education?
13. Based on the current situation in your school, what are the key factors to implement IE effectively?

### **Evaluation and Future Development of Integrated education**

1. What do you think are the most significant positive changes brought about by the addition of a SENCO for (i) students with SEN, (ii) parents of students with SEN, (iii) other teachers, and (iv) the school as a whole?

2. With the continuous increase in the number of students with SEN, what impact do you think it will have on (i) the future development of IE, (ii) support for students with SEN, and (iii) the work of SENCOs, other teachers, and related professionals?
3. What do you think is the main challenge facing IE in Hong Kong at present?
4. What are your opinions or suggestions for the future development of IE in Hong Kong?
5. How do you think the government can further assist teachers and schools in promoting IE?

#### **Support for Students with SEN During the Pandemic**

1. Which categories of students with SEN face particular difficulties with online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic? What special support do they need?
2. Is there a more urgent need for group support and individualized teaching support during the pandemic?
3. How does your school support the parents of students with SEN during the pandemic?

## **Appendix 5: Interview Guide of Special Educational Needs Coordinators**

### **Interview Guide of Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs)**

#### **Background**

1. When did you start serving as a SENCO?
2. Did you teach students with special educational needs (SEN) before becoming a SENCO?

#### **Number of Students with SEN**

1. What is the proportion and number of different types of students with SEN in the school?
2. How many students are in the Tier 2 and 3?

#### **"Whole-school Approach" Model**

1. Under the "whole-school approach" (WSA) model, the school's integrated education (IE) support work is not solely the responsibility of the coordinator, and all teaching staff have a responsibility to support students with SEN. Does your school have any policies or measures in place to promote the WSA model?
2. How is the school's WSA progressing? If it's going well, what are the key factors? If there are obstacles, what are the reasons?
3. Can the Student Support Team effectively develop the school's IE strategy and implement the relevant work, as well as effectively share the responsibilities of the SENCO?
4. How does your school strengthen subject teachers' ability to care for students with SEN? What challenges do they face? If any, how do you, as a SENCO, respond? Please provide examples.
5. In terms of your school's current situation, how is the collaboration between the SENCO and professionals such as the school-based educational psychologist, speech therapist, and school social worker? What challenges do they face? If any, how do you, as a SENCO, respond? Please provide examples.

#### **Early identification and counseling (applicable only to primary schools)**

1. Does your school have any special measures to encourage parents to observe their children's learning and behavioral performance, proactively discuss any difficulties their children may be facing with the school, and early identify students with SEN for new primary school students? Please provide an example.
2. Have you encountered any special difficulties in encouraging parents to notify the school their children have SEN when their children move up to the next grade?
3. Have you encountered any special difficulties in the assessment and follow-up work after early identification?

#### **Supporting student's learning**

1. Based on your experience as a SENCO, can the three-tier support model effectively support and meet the different learning needs of students? What are the reasons behind?
2. What challenges have you encountered in implementing the three-tier support model, and what methods have you used to overcome these difficulties?
3. Have you encountered any difficulties or challenges in determining the support level for students, and what methods have you used to overcome these difficulties?

4. Have you encountered any difficulties in developing and implementing individual learning plans? How helpful are these plans for students and parents? Please provide an example.
5. What are some effective strategies for curriculum adaptation and optimizing teaching?
6. What effective methods has your school adopted to provide opportunities for students to showcase their strengths and improve their weaknesses?

### **Assisting students with SEN with technology**

1. Does the school use any computer software or equipment to assist students with SEN, especially those with specific learning difficulties? Could you give an example of how computer software has been helpful and effective?
2. If the school does not use computer software to assist, what is the reason? (Is it due to insufficient resources? No channel to find the suitable software? Students with SEN in the school do not need this kind of assistance?)

### **Home-school cooperation**

1. What are the challenges in communicating and collaborating with parents? What effective measures have been taken to overcome these challenges?
2. Are there any changes in home-school communication after the implementation of IE and the establishment of a SENCO? Please give specific examples.
3. Has the level of family care increased? How has it increased?

### **Inclusive campus**

1. How to assist other teachers in adjusting their attitudes and teaching methods towards students with SEN?
2. How supportive are colleagues to SENCO's work? Are there any specific examples?
3. How do students without SEN view classmates with SEN? What measures has the school taken to promote the inclusion of students with SEN with other classmates?
4. Does the school have any successful experiences in promoting students without SEN to accept and help classmates with SEN?
5. How to promote parents of students without SEN to accept students with SEN?

### **Collaboration with counseling team and other professionals**

1. What are your opinions on the classification of students with SEN at present? In your opinion, what are the impacts on the development of IE when reclassifying mental illnesses as students with SEN?
2. As a SENCO, do you have sufficient training and professional knowledge, as well as time resources, to implement mental health education in school?
3. As a SENCO, do you think that using relevant professional support services in the community is helpful for promoting IE and supporting students with SEN? Please give examples. Overall, what are your opinions on these professional support services? What areas need improvement?

### **Students with SEN and emotional or behavioral issues**

1. Does the school have students with SEN and emotional or behavioral issues? How can you assist them in participating in classroom learning and coping with learning requirements? How can you help them handle their emotions and improve their social skills?
2. How can you assist other teachers in balancing the learning needs of students with SEN with emotional or behavioral issues and other students?

### **Non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN**

1. Does the school currently have non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN?
2. If yes, please share your experiences in supporting non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN and their families.
3. In your opinion, what are the differences between supporting Chinese-speaking students with SEN and families and non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN?

### **Changes brought about by the appointment of a SENCO**

1. What do you think are the most significant positive changes brought about by the appointment of a SENCO for (i) students with SEN, (ii) parents of students with SEN, (iii) other teachers, and (iv) the school as a whole?
2. What are your expectations of being a SENCO? Does the actual work of a SENCO meet your expectations?
3. Some teachers or parents expect the SENCO to provide a quick solution to students' problems. From your point of view, what expectations the principal, other teachers, and parents have of the SENCO? Do you think these expectations are realistic? How do you handle the gap between the expectations and the reality?
4. After becoming a SENCO, have your views on IE and students with SEN changed in any way?

### **Performance Evaluation**

1. In comparison with other schools, what do you think are the strengths and weaknesses of your school in the following areas? Please provide examples.
  - Teaching staff and other resources to support students with SEN (including learning and social skills)
  - Academic and non-academic performance of students with SEN
  - Equal educational opportunities for students with SEN
  - Creating an inclusive and non-discriminatory campus environment for students with SEN and other students
  - Collaboration between SENCO, other teachers, and relevant professionals
  - Support for parents of students with SEN (e.g. communication, information, parent-school cooperation)
2. In your opinion, what is the key factor for effectively implementing IE in your school?

### **Overall Comments and Future Development of Integrated education**

1. With the continuous increase of students with SEN, what are the impacts on (i) the future development of IE, (ii) support for students with SEN, and (iii) the work of SENCO?
2. What do you think are the main challenges of IE in Hong Kong at present?
3. What are your opinions or suggestions on the future development of IE in Hong Kong?
4. How do you think the government can further assist teachers and schools in promoting IE?

### **Support for Students with SEN During the Pandemic**

1. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, which categories of students with SEN face particular difficulties in online learning? What special support do they need?
2. Is the need for group support and individual support teaching more urgent during the pandemic?
3. How do you support the parents of students with SEN during the pandemic? What challenges do they face? As a SENCO, how do you respond? Please provide examples.

## **Appendix 6: Interview Guide of Parents of Students with Special Educational Needs**

### **Interview Guide of Parents of Students with Special Educational Needs (SEN)**

#### **Understanding of Students with SEN and Integrated education**

1. How do you understand integrated education (IE), including government policies, actual arrangements and measures within the school, school culture, etc.?
2. In your personal experience, do various stakeholders in society (including the government, ordinary schools, parents of students with SEN, other parents, students without SEN, etc.) have sufficient understanding and support for students with SEN and IE?

#### **Decision-making process for choosing a school**

3. Why did you choose to have your child attend this school? What were the factors you considered?
4. Did you encounter any difficulties in finding a suitable school? How did you overcome these difficulties?

#### **Evaluation of School's Integrated education and Other Support Services**

5. Is your child happy in school? What do you expect your child to gain from school? Have your expectations been met so far?
6. Do you have a clear and sufficient understanding of the school's IE policies and support measures?
7. Have you participated in parent-teacher associations or other home-school collaboration organizations? If yes, what role do you play in these organizations? Based on your personal experience and observation, how effective are these organizations in promoting IE culture and supporting SEN students? Please give examples.
8. What roles do you think you and other parents of students with SEN can play in the following areas? Based on your personal experience, have you encountered any difficulties? Please give examples.
  - Assisting students with SEN in effective learning and obtaining equal educational opportunities
  - Creating an inclusive and non-discriminatory campus environment
9. Do you think the current communication and exchange channels with the school (including school management, teachers, and parent-teacher associations) can effectively take care of and support your child? Have you encountered any difficulties?
10. Have you used any professional support services for students with SEN available in the community? If yes, what are your opinions on these services? What areas do you think need improvement?
11. What resources and support do you think are very important for meeting the needs of students with SEN (including effective learning, obtaining equal educational opportunities, and being in an inclusive and non-discriminatory campus environment)? Are the current relevant resources and support sufficient?
12. Based on the previous question, how do you evaluate the government, schools, and the community's approach to these two aspects? What areas need improvement?

**Support for students with SEN during the pandemic**

13. What difficulties did your child with SEN encounter during online learning in the COVID-19 pandemic?
14. How do you evaluate the support provided by the school for you and your child during the pandemic?

**Overall comments and future development of integrated education**

15. Overall, do you feel that the learning support and opportunities currently available to your child with SEN meet your expectations? Please give examples.
16. What are your opinions or suggestions regarding the future development of IE in Hong Kong?

## **Appendix 7: Interview Guide of Professional Support Personnel**

### **Interview Guide of Professional Support Personnel**

#### **Working Experiences in Integrated education (IE)**

1. Please briefly introduce your work experience related to IE.
2. Please briefly introduce your responsibilities and daily work at this school.
3. In the past two to three years, there have been many new IE policies, measures, and support introduced in Hong Kong. As a non-teaching professional, do you think these new policies can help you create a more inclusive and non-discriminatory campus, and support students with special educational needs (SEN) and their families more effectively than a few years ago? Please give examples.
4. In your observation, can these new policies be implemented in all ordinary schools and effectively promote the development of IE?

#### **The implementation of integrated education policy and the implementation of related support measures in the school**

5. Based on your observation, what attitudes do different stakeholders in this school (including school operators, management, all teachers, students, parents, and professionals) hold towards IE? Do they have a basic understanding of IE and students with SEN? Are they aware of the roles they need to play and the responsibilities they need to shoulder in successfully implementing IE?
6. "Whole-school approach" (WSA) model: Under the WSA model, the school's support for IE is not solely the responsibility of the SENCO. All teaching staff have a responsibility to support students with SEN in the school. Based on your knowledge, has your school implemented any policies or measures to promote the WSA model?
7. As for the current situation in this school, how is the collaboration between SENCO and related professionals (such as school-based educational psychologists, speech therapists, and school social workers)? What challenges do they face? If any, as a non-teaching professional, how do you respond? Please provide examples.
8. Early identification: (only applicable to primary schools) For primary school students who have just entered school, has this school implemented any special measures to encourage parents to observe their children's learning and behavioral performance, and to actively discuss any difficulties their children may encounter, in order to identify students with SEN early? Have you encountered any particular difficulties in the assessment and follow-up work after early identification?
9. Home-school cooperation: How do you evaluate the measures taken by this school to promote home-school cooperation in supporting students with SEN and their families? In your opinion, are there any challenges? If any, as a non-teaching professional, how do you respond? Please provide examples.
10. Inclusion of students with SEN with other students: Under the current situation in this school, how do students without SEN view classmates with SEN? Has this school implemented any measures to promote the integration of students with SEN with other students? Do you think this school has any successful experiences in promoting acceptance and assistance to classmates with SEN by students without SEN? How does this school promote acceptance of students with SEN by parents of students without SEN?

11. Students with emotional or behavioral problems: Does this school have any students with SEN and emotional or behavioral problems? How do you assist them in participating in classroom learning and meeting learning requirements? How do you enhance their abilities to handle emotions and social skills?
12. Non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN: From your point of view, are there any differences in supporting Chinese-speaking students with SEN and their families versus non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN and their families? Are there currently any non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN at this school? If yes, please share your experiences in supporting non-Chinese-speaking students with SEN and their families.
13. Application of technology: Does the school use any computer software or devices to assist students with SEN, especially those with specific learning difficulties? Can you provide examples of how computer software has been helpful and effective? If the school does not use computer software to assist, what is the reason?
14. Professional support services available in the community: (This question is only for social workers and educational psychologists) As non-teaching professionals, do you think using professional support services available in the community is helpful for promoting IE and supporting students with SEN? Please give examples to illustrate. Overall, what are your opinions on these professional support services? What areas need improvement?
15. Regarding the current situation at this school, what resources and support do you think are very important in assisting students with SEN to learn effectively and obtain equal educational opportunities? Are the relevant resources and support sufficient at present?
16. In comparison with other schools, what are the strengths and weaknesses of this school in the following areas? Please provide examples:
  - Teaching staff and other resources for supporting students with SEN (including learning and social abilities)
  - Performance of students with SEN in terms of grades and other aspects
  - Equal educational opportunities available for students with SEN
  - Creating an inclusive and non-discriminatory campus environment for students with SEN and other students
  - Collaboration between SENCO, other teachers, and related professionals
  - Support for parents of students with SEN (such as communication, information, and home-school cooperation)
17. In terms of the current situation at this school, what are the key factors for implementing IE effectively?
18. Overall, do you think the current implementation of IE and the learning support and opportunities available to students with SEN at this school are in line with the principles of IE? Please provide examples.

### **Overall comments and Future Development of Integrated education**

19. (Only asking social workers and educational psychologists) What are your opinions on the current classification of students with SEN? What are the impacts on the development of IE when reclassifying mental illnesses as SEN? Do you have enough training, professional knowledge, and time resources to implement mental health education in schools?
20. In your opinion, what are the main challenges of IE in Hong Kong currently?

21. What are your opinions or suggestions for the future development of IE in Hong Kong?

**Support for Students with SEN During the Pandemic**

22. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, which categories of students with SEN are facing particular difficulties in online learning? What special support do they need?
23. As a non-teaching professional, how do you support the parents of students with SEN during the pandemic?

## Appendix 8: Case Study Design Framework Checklist

List entries	At preliminary level	Partly achieved	Completely achieved
<b>1. Management and Organization</b>			
<b>1.1 Administrative Leadership Supporting the Implementation of Integrated Education (IE)</b>			
1. The school management regularly explains to teachers and the public about the school's philosophy and measures for IE and promotes the effective connection between IE and the school's educational philosophy, purpose, and goals in overall operation.			
2. Students with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities can participate in extracurricular activities together with other ordinary students.			
3. The school sets clear roles for its staff and expects every staff member to teach students in different levels and involve in the three-tier support.			
4. The student support team sets criteria when selecting external professional partners and holds regular meetings to acknowledge the efforts and achievements of participating members, as well as to exchange observations and evaluate the support effectiveness.			
5. The school provides availability for teachers to make co-planning lessons, discuss and review strategies and arrangements for supporting students with SEN and disabilities.			
6. Parents and the public can learn about the school's measures for promoting IE and supporting strategies and arrangements for students with SEN and disabilities through various channels.			
7. IE is one of the key focuses of teacher professional development, and a school-based framework for supporting the development of IE is established to continuously promote school-based practices.			
8. In the past two years, the school has provided professional training on IE for all school personnel to improve the effectiveness of IE.			
<b>1.2 Collaboration and Planning under Whole school approach</b>			
1. Professional support personnel regularly share with all teachers about the strengths, needs, and interests of all students with SEN and disabilities to deepen their understanding of IE.			
2. The student support team regularly assists teachers in identifying individual students' difficulties, such as areas of study, emotional, and personal growth, etc., with an effort to minimize referrals to special schools.			

List entries	At preliminary level	Partly achieved	Completely achieved
3. The supporting strategies and guidance provided by the student support team are practical and clear to assist teachers in supporting students with SEN and disabilities.			
4. The members of the student support team include the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), SEN Support Teachers, subject teachers from different disciplines, school management, and on-campus professional support personnel.			
5. When holding Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings, designated attendees include the student and their parents, the professional support personnel responsible for supporting the student, the SENCO, the class teacher, and relevant subject teachers.			
6. The members of the student support team and professional support personnel (especially educational psychologists and clinical psychologists) regularly hold meetings to discuss the current situation of students with SEN and disabilities and review overall support strategies.			
7. The student support team tries to use different creative strategies to promote the practice of IE, assisting teachers to support students with SEN and disabilities more effectively.			
<b>2. Learning and Teaching</b>			
<b>2.1 Collaborative Teaching and Small Group Teaching</b>			
1. The school extensively uses collaborative teaching (i.e., two or more teachers jointly instructing the same class of students).			
2. The school views collaborative teaching as an effective strategy for supporting IE.			
3. The school has a collaborative teaching team that weekly prepares class together, discuss the teaching arrangements and adjusts teaching details and progress.			
4. In the blended teaching approach (i.e., collaborative teaching and small group teaching), students spend most of their time in class with classmates of different levels and abilities.			
5. In the blended teaching approach, class arrangement is fluid and flexible. Students' class grouping is based on student performance and corresponding situated pedagogy, rather than if they are students with SEN or disabilities.			
<b>2.2 Student-centered and Strength-based Assessment</b>			
1. The school provides parents with comprehensive information, including assessment results and progress in daily academic performance of students with SEN and			

List entries	At preliminary level	Partly achieved	Completely achieved
disabilities.			
2. In addition to standardized paper-and-pencil assessments, the student support team also uses a student-centered and strength-based holistic assessment approach to bring out students' characteristics and strengths and reduce their anxiety.			
3. The school enquires and understands students' strengths and habits of adapting to new environments from parents, and adjusts support strategies and measures accordingly.			
4. Students with SEN and disabilities have opportunities to explore their strengths and talents, understand the impact of disabilities, and learn about the school's strategies and measures in supporting IE.			
5. The student support team uses students' strengths, talents, interests, and other assessment data (such as student achievements and extracurricular activity performance) to tailor the support and services provided.			
6. The school explains to students with IEP the reasons and procedures for setting IEP, and assist students in setting goals, deciding support modes and service types.			
<b>2.3 Strategies for Promoting Adaptation of Students with SEN and Disabilities to Mainstream Curriculum and Learning Environment</b>			
1. The school management regards effective teaching as the foundation for providing IE services.			
2. In every student's IEP, the priority is to arrange students with SEN and disabilities to learn in a general classroom environment and provide corresponding supports and assistances. The arrangement is supplemented with professional support services and auxiliary teaching materials outside of school to help them adapt to mainstream curriculum.			
3. Each member of the student support team is responsible for all students with SEN and disabilities, ensuring that students can benefit from the inclusive environment.			
4. Regardless of whether they are IEP students, teachers have a general understanding of each student's strengths and needs, and assist and support all students in realizing their potential.			
5. The school regularly provides high-quality professional training to staff to help students with different abilities learn under mainstream curriculum, interact with other students, and make progress in academic performance.			
6. The student support team assumes that all students have equal abilities and incorporates different elements into			

List entries	At preliminary level	Partly achieved	Completely achieved
mainstream curriculum/teaching environments to enable students with SEN and disabilities to catch up with the learning progress.			
<b>2.4 Differentiated Instruction</b>			
1. Teachers understand their responsibility to proactively implement differentiated instruction to accommodate students' complex learning diversity.			
2. Teachers collect student data from different sources to develop differentiated teaching strategies based on students' backgrounds, interests, strengths, and abilities.			
3. The teaching content and materials of different subjects are accommodated to allow students to choose different ways of learning.			
4. The curriculum content and assessment of different subjects are accommodated, and diverse and innovative methods are used to help students organize their learning ideas, concepts, procedures, and principles.			
5. Different subjects also attempt to use changes in the teaching environment to help students organize their learning ideas, concepts, procedures, and principles.			
<b>3. Professional Collaboration and Therapeutic Intervention</b>			
<b>3.1 Collaboration among Families, Schools, and Communities</b>			
1. Teachers and school management welcome parents to participate in discussions and decision-making processes related to students' growth and study.			
2. Regular communication channels and opportunities are provided to parents and teachers, so that parents can participate in IEP meetings and enquire about their children's overall condition.			
3. Parents of IEP students and their families can participate in all parent activities and parental volunteer activities arranged by schools.			
4. Parents, SENCO, students support team members, professional support personnel, and student exchange views on IEP content.			
5. Students support team keep the information of IEP students and their families in confidential and properly stored. Only authorized school staff can read the record and information of related students.			
6. When formulating IEP-related issues, the SENCO and students support team members will discuss the details of IEP implementation with parents based on the strengths, interests, and learning preferences of IEP students.			

List entries	At preliminary level	Partly achieved	Completely achieved
7. The school collaborates with different professional partners to broaden the community's resources and support service scope to meet the different needs of the school and students.			
8. The school will connect the families and relevant community resources of IEP students according to the support needs of parents to solve other difficulties they may face.			

### 3.2 Three-Tier Support Model

1. The school strives to minimize assessments for students with SEN and disabilities to avoid unnecessary referrals to special schools.			
2. All teachers are committed to providing high-quality and evidence-based instruction to establish inclusive classrooms.			
3. The school's three-tier support model successfully avoids labeling effects for students with SEN and disabilities, and provides appropriate support.			
4. The school has a comprehensive database to ensure that student learning and growth progress can be accurately and continuously monitored, and used to adjust overall support strategies.			
5. The school regularly reviews and evaluates the three-tier support model to ensure that the quality of IE can be maintained at a high level and effectively address any issues that students may face.			

### 3.3 Professional Support Services and Transition Management

1. Different professional support personnel communicate with each other and provide information about the strengths, needs, and support service plans of students with SEN and disabilities to student support team members, all teachers, and parents.			
2. The student support team works closely with professional support personnel to provide comprehensive support to students with SEN and disabilities during regular school days.			
3. School management can effectively support cooperation between regular teachers, students support team and professional support personnel to create an inclusive campus and learning environment.			
4. Professional support personnel share their experiences and skills in supporting individuals with SEN and disabilities with all teachers, students, and their parents through different activities and professional guidance.			

List entries	At preliminary level	Partly achieved	Completely achieved
5. The student support team has a clear planning process to help students with SEN and disabilities successfully transit to higher grades promotion, transfer to other schools, enroll in secondary schools, and with post-secondary arrangements, so as to enabling them to maximize their potential.			
6. The student support team assists students with SEN and disabilities in planning their future and achieving their goals based on their abilities, interests, and preferences.			
7. Referral management for students will combine different assessments and observations to identify their strengths, preferences, needs, and evaluate their learning abilities and levels at current stage, to provide them with the most appropriate support.			
<b>4. Promoting Inclusive Campus</b>			
<b>4.1 Empowerment and Peer Support for Students</b>			
1. The school's educational philosophy and mission clearly state the importance of promoting student autonomy in the learning process.			
2. The school states the importance of actively promoting positive social behavior and interaction among students.			
3. Regular teachers and professional support personnel work together to assist students with SEN and disabilities in receiving peer support within the school environment.			
4. Students with SEN and disabilities can learn the required skills to work effectively in cooperative learning groups and often learn and help other students in group activities.			
5. Every student can learn the required skills for peer support to support classmates and other students in the school and promote a culture of peer support at campus.			
<b>4.2 Continuous Planning for Integrated Education</b>			
1. The school is committed to promoting its achievements in IE and making them available to teachers, parents, students, and the public in different ways.			
2. The annual and development plan for IE of the school includes: a) summarizing and reviewing the elements that have helped sustain the successful implementation of IE; b) promoting the professional development of teachers in IE; and c) strengthening cooperation between families and professional community partners.			
3. The annual and development plan for IE of the school has a clear description and measurable evaluation of the measures to improve support within the school.			

<b>List entries</b>	<b>At preliminary level</b>	<b>Partly achieved</b>	<b>Completely achieved</b>
4. The annual and development plan for IE of the school includes innovative ideas and support strategies, and obtains sufficient human and financial resources from the school management to ensure that IE practices can be sustained and keep up with the times.			
5. The annual and development plan for IE is reviewed and amended each year based on the numbers and characteristics of students with SEN who need support in each class, and adjusts activities and implementation schedules as necessary to ensure that overall support can achieve the expected results.			