

First Direct Subsidy School authorized to offer IB Diploma

(Press Release 30th Apr 2010)

On 22 April Creative Secondary School (CSS) became the first government-subsidised Hong Kong school authorized to offer the IB Diploma. The programme will commence in the 2010 – 2011 school year with the school's first cohort of Form 5 students. This is a landmark achievement for the school which operates under the Direct Subsidy Scheme (DSS), as well as a notable event for Hong Kong.

In February 2009, just over two years after the school was opened, CSS became an IB World School when its Middle Years Programme was authorized by the IBO. This earlier success, followed by a period of intensive staff professional development and thorough preparation involving the whole school community, paved the way for the IB Diploma authorization this month.

Over the past year, the school's IB Diploma authorization process was very capably led by its IB Diploma Coordinator Dr. Robert Sunderland and Curriculum Director Mr. Bryan Johns, both highly experienced IB school leaders before coming to Hong Kong to join CSS. The school now has a strong and culturally diverse staff team prepared to deliver the programme next year. The IB Diploma will run alongside the new Hong Kong Diploma, with students choosing the diploma that best suits their needs.

The school principal Cheung Siu Ming explains why the school offers both the IB Diploma and the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE):

“Many state education systems across the world welcome the presence of the IB programmes (PYP, MYP and DP) within their schools. Hong Kong is but the latest to join this world trend.”

“The IB Diploma is the world's premier international qualification welcomed by top universities all over the world. However, at CSS we fully embrace the IB's mission to make its diploma programme accessible to a diverse range of students, not just an academic elite.

The school believes that the two diplomas we offer complement each other very well. Both diplomas progressively address the aspirations of young people in an increasingly globalised world. Each diploma offers distinctive pathways to higher education, so that students can follow the most suitable programme to match their specific ambitions. CSS's curriculum provision is a positive example of the benefits of the Hong Kong Government's Direct Subsidy Scheme for schools.”

The IB Diploma authorization team visited CSS during March 2010. Their recommendation that CSS should be authorized to offer the IB Diploma was endorsed by the IB Director General's office in Geneva in April 2010.

In the authorization report, the school received 28 commendations for its preparatory work, including:

- “encouraging learning that fosters responsible citizenship and international-mindedness”

- “encouraging student learning that strengthens the student’s own cultural identity”
- “providing a safe, secure and stimulating environment based on understanding and respect”
- “building an understanding of, and support for, the programme throughout the school community. Interviews with students and parents confirmed the strong level of support for the programme and confidence in the teaching staff”
- “providing a balance and range of subjects as well as an appropriate student schedule that provides for student access to the full diploma. The student response has been very positive and the school is commencing with a large DP cohort”
- “making learning expectations and integral assessment strategies clear to students and parents
- “supporting students in learning how to reflect on their experiences and make more informed, independent choices”

For more information about the International Baccalaureate please visit its website on www.ibo.org; the weblink for CSS is <http://www.ibo.org/school/003069/>. For more information about this press release please contact Kiki Cheung on 2336 0233 or kiki.cheung@css.edu.hk