

Korean International School

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In 1994, the Springboard Project in conjunction with the Korean International School opened a primary class for children with special educational needs. Then in 2000 a second class was opened, providing for students from 11-15 years old. The Korean International School continues to be unique in Hong Kong in providing this kind of programme.

Provision:

Primary Class:

- Placement for 10 students supported by 1 teacher and 2 classroom assistants

Middle Class:

- Placement for 6 students supported by 1 teacher and 1 classroom assistant

Fees:

The Korean International School receives no support from the government for the Springboard Programme, so the additional costs have to be met by the parents. This makes Springboard more expensive than the mainstream programme and, therefore, out of reach for many parents.

The Springboard Programme provides specialised education for students aged 5 to 15 with mild to moderate learning disabilities. It is the aim of the programme to provide students with individualised programmes developing academic, social and independent skills within a mainstream school setting. The academic programme is based on the school curriculum and is supported by extensive additional resources.

It is the policy of the school to provide opportunities for inclusion and integration into mainstream classes on an individual basis.

In addition to the school based programme, each student has access to the Enrichment programme provided by the Springboard Project. These activities include 4 -7 day overnight camps, field trips, horse riding, life skills, youth group, individual and group speech therapy and music therapy.

As Springboard Coordinator I am responsible for:

- Meeting with parents interested in the programme
- Reviewing applications
- Conducting student interviews lasting 1-2 days according to each applicant's age
- Discussing applications with Principal
- Conducting a follow-up meeting with parents and make placement recommendations

However, I have also been called upon to:

- Respond to enquiries from all over the world
- Counsel parents who just need answers and someone willing to listen

The following areas continue to be a concern:

- Lack of coordinated SEN information for parents outside of Hong Kong
- Lack of coordinated SEN information for parents in Hong Kong
- Shortage of provision, particularly for those children who require a high level of support and those in secondary
- Shortage of placements for non-Chinese speakers in special education
- Lack of support and provision for children who are non-English speaking

The Way Forward:

- Centralized SEN information for parents and other professionals
- Funding to support those SEN students who are receiving their education in a mainstream setting
- More international schools to recognise that they also have a responsibility to the Special Needs community in Hong Kong