

School Talk

English Alive!

Principal and teachers of Po Leung Kuk Castar Primary School (CASTAR) believe that making English classes more vivid, interesting and lively can stimulate students' interest in learning, improve their engagement in class, and enhance learning effectiveness. Therefore, they make great effort to foster a positive learning environment that allows each student to learn through different diversified activities so as to enrich their learning experience and maximise learning effectiveness. In this issue, we are glad to have the Principal and English Panel of CASTAR to share with us how they make English come alive!



School Profile

Po Leung Kuk Castar Primary School's mission is to educate students in the areas of moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic development. They encourage students to pursue knowledge and skills, develop their personal integrity, cultivate positive attitudes towards life and embrace different cultures. Teachers and students are using *Lighthouse for Hong Kong* coursebook series in their English lessons.

CASTAR education is not only about acquiring academic knowledge. We also focus on helping students build positive values and attitudes in life. Through diversified in-school or outside school learning activities, we expect students to further their knowledge and language skills in a nurturing environment. This will enable them to contribute to society in the near future.

— Ms Yip Lai Fong, Principal of Po Leung Kuk Castar Primary School



Light Up
Your Path to Better English



Educational Publishing House

“School Talk”

Interview School: Po Leung Kuk Castar Primary School

Interviewees: Ms Yip Lai Fong (Principal), Ms Catherine Hau (English Curriculum Leader),
Ms Sady Ma (English Panel Head) and Ms Wendy Lam (English Panel Head)

Special thanks to Po Leung Kuk Castar Primary School

Ms Sady Ma

Ms Wendy Lam

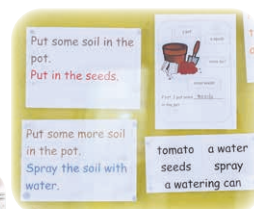
Ms Catherine Hau

Ms Yip Lai Fong

Talking with CASTAR's Principal and English Panel makes you feel that the school really puts a lot of effort in bringing in new and current elements to facilitate English learning in school. To keep the students engaged and interested, vivid and interesting teaching strategies are adopted throughout the whole learning process.

Teaching English language through tomato-planting programme

Ms Hau: This programme integrates values education into English teaching. Students learn the planting steps and related vocabulary in class, and follow teachers' instructions to plant the tomatoes in the school garden. They need to take care of their own plants and record the whole planting process. Each day, they have to talk to our school gardener in English and ask for his help to water their plants. In addition to vocabulary teaching, we also teach students to cherish the plants and love nature. We found some **moral and value elements** in *Lighthouse for Hong Kong*. They provided us with some ideas on how to design the values education tasks for students. Some of the topics that were shared and discussed with our students include 'Have you enhanced yourself today?' and 'Be a bucket filler', etc.



Adding fun elements to English lessons

Ms Ma: We always make English lessons more entertaining by adding role plays and drama elements. Last semester, we taught a unit about healthy eating. We asked each student to write down and draw their favourite food on their own 'eat well plate'. Then, we let each of them act like a dietitian to comment on their classmates' plates. They gave suggestions and advice to their classmates like 'You should eat more vegetables' or 'You should eat less junk food'. We even provided them with dietitians' gowns to wear and sheets to write the report. These kinds of lifelike situational learning activities gave students a deeper impression of the learning topics.

Ms Hau: We like using activities to help students build their vocabulary. For example, when teaching the 'Go green' topic for Primary 3 students, we used vocabulary from the textbook such as 'clean up', 'recycle', etc. Students created a song and repeatedly sang it together in class to aid them in memorising the learnt vocabulary.

Ms Ma: We appreciate that **a wider range of vocabulary** is introduced in *Lighthouse* such as 'podium', 'a pompom' and 'a cheerleader' in a unit about Sports Day. These words are **commonly used in foreign countries** but are **rarely found in local textbooks**.

Ms Hau: Rather than using traditional teaching methods whereby students are asked to listen and receive information in a passive way, we prefer to generate diversified input and provide students with multi-directional learning experiences in a lively way so as to drive students' motivation to learn. Writing tasks will be implemented to consolidate what students have learnt. We like the *Lighthouse Writing Booklet* because the **structures are concisely and precisely laid out for students to follow** in order to **accomplish the tasks in a systematic way**.





e-Learning to motivate students in the classroom

Ms Lam: One of our core focuses this year is e-Learning and we have designed various tasks for English classes to stimulate students' learning interest. The **graded animations** in **Lighthouse e-Textbook** cater for learner diversity whereby students can choose the level of the animated texts they want to read.

Our students are also excited when using the **Lighthouse AR (Augmented Reality) tool**. They can use their tablets to view the 3D models of the real world in the '**Light Up the World**' section. By viewing the models, the students can gain a better understanding of the concepts they are studying. Some other **extended global knowledge** can be gained through videos, photos, sounds and the 3D models. This tool can **widen students' global visions**.



Make use of the external resources to enrich students' learning experience

CASTAR's Principal and teachers are all courageous to introduce new elements to the school to enrich students' English learning experience. They grasp every opportunity to invite English-speaking tutors and guests to deliver English lessons. Students can immerse themselves in an authentic English-speaking environment and converse in English.

Ms Yip: We are happy that our students are all open-minded, eager to be involved in activities and confident in interacting in English.



Parade the Love of Reading

British author, Chris Haughton was invited to tell stories from his books to CASTAR students. They responded positively and actively asked questions.



Rugby Active English

New Zealand rugby coaches from Hong Kong Rugby Union came to deliver rugby lessons to CASTAR students.



Jane Goodall 'English for Environment' Education Programme — Disney Mapping Trip

CASTAR students conducted a mapping project at Hong Kong Disneyland this year. English-speaking officers from the Jane Goodall Institute Hong Kong guided them to learn more about the eco-environment of the community.



Study Tour — Cultural and Eco Tour in New Zealand

Through school visits and field study trips in New Zealand, CASTAR students expanded their global knowledge and vision.

The importance of teacher modelling

Ms Yip: I think teacher modelling is definitely an effective technique to motivate students and encourage active participation, just like our school's English singing competition, 'Castar's Got Talent!'. A session was especially arranged to let our teachers and students perform on stage. The atmosphere was lively, delightful and enjoyable as a result, which we desired to achieve. I was glad to have joined the performance!



A variety of resources to make English lessons more interesting

Graded Animations

- Simplified and extended animations help students at different levels gain a deeper understanding of the reading text
- Arouse interest and extend learning



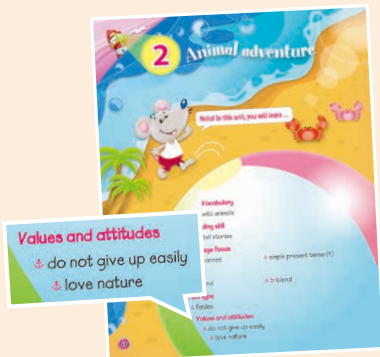
Augmented Reality (AR) Technology

- Extend global knowledge and widen global vision
- Students can use their tablets to view additional pre-loaded resources such as 3D models, videos, sounds and slideshows directly on top of the printed text of the 'Light Up the World' section



Strengthen Values Education

- Values and attitudes elements are included in each unit



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