

**Review of
Lamplimat Pattana School,
Buriram Province
Thailand**



**By
The Faculty of Education**

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA, AUSTRALIA

July – October 2006



Key Findings of Review

The Review of Lamplimat Pattana School (LPMP) was conducted for the School Board by an international team of consultants under the auspices of the Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania, Australia between July and October 2006. As a comparison, the Review Team analyzed two local government schools in Buriram Province during this same period. The Review Team came up with a very positive conclusion, of which four key findings are summarized below.

- LPMP is a world-class school, with a high quality of education comparable to privately-run international schools, as opposed to local government-run schools.
- Students were found to be creative, happy, confident and excited to learn – clearly benefiting from both the active participation and genuine interest in the welfare of the children by both teachers and the parents alike.
- The operating costs of LPMP per student per year were found to be slightly higher than those of the local government-run schools, but were still only a fraction of the cost (4-40%) of comparable bilingual and international schools.
- The curriculum and methodologies of LPMP, which not only meet but exceed the criteria for a good education set forth in the Education Act of 1999, should serve as a model for the government-run educational system throughout the Kingdom of Thailand.

Selected Quotes from Review

Characteristics/Approach of School

- "Key success factors include the strong, visionary leadership of the Headmaster, engagement of the parents, strategic recruitment and the professional learning program for all staff, small classes, the high time - commitment and professionalism of the young, energetic and dedicated teachers, a growing outreach program (1,000 visitors in 2005-6) and excellent school facilities - the buildings and green, clean, environment." (4)

- "The evidence provided by this report clearly indicates that learning is at the heart of the school. The well-led, highly professional team of teachers, administration and support staff is constantly seeking the best possible ways to enhance student learning." (43)

- "The school offers an innovative curriculum which effectively combines subject and discipline based elements (Mathematics, Science, English, Thai language) with an integrated approach (the projects)." (38)

- "This school encourages students to become more and more active learners as well as supporting the students to be more disciplined learners. Students are the centre of the learning process which focuses on their learning development rather than achievement." (29)

- "This school enables its staff to have involvement in school decision-making. Through meetings, staff can have their say in their work. This leads to the development of the school as a learning organization." (28)

- "The school has worked to engage effectively with parents, involving them in decision-making through the parent committee and representation on the School Board and in teaching and learning through open access to the library and internet and assisting in class project work." (26)

- "LPMP is in every way a 'community of learners'". (23)

Selected Quotes from Review (cont.)

Achievements of School

- "There is no doubt that this is a world-class school." (43)

- "It is evident that the school is achieving its aims of an innovative curriculum." (20)

- "...[I]t can be seen that LPMP is able to provide an excellent education at a similar cost to that provided in the government schools... and is not dissimilar to that provided in typical international schools which are far more expensive." (23)

- "Children were observed to be happy, confident, thinking, creative, questioning, emotionally and socially competent and enjoying learning." (4)

- "The LPMP curriculum is able to satisfy requirements of the national curriculum in the areas that are tested against the national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy and yet develop its own strong direction to support the goals of developing the students' thinking skills and becoming self managed learners." (19)

- "There is potential ... for LPMP to provide a model which could impact positively on the development of educational policy and practice more broadly in Thailand." (5)

- "[A] highly successful model of rural schooling which can now be leveraged to impact much more broadly on the reform of basic education throughout Thailand." (27)

**Key findings of General Education Quality Assessment of
Lamplimat Pattana School**
Assessed by the Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment

Assessment Items	Pre-school		Primary School	
	Average Score	Certified Score	Average Score	Certified Score
Students:				
- Morals, ethics and social values	3.69	Excellent	3.64	Excellent
- Physical and mental health	3.72	Excellent	3.71	Excellent
- Art, music and sports appreciation	3.82	Excellent	3.58	Excellent
- Analytical skills, initiation and vision	3.22	Good	3.20	Good
- Knowledge and skills corresponding with school curriculum	3.62	Excellent	3.76	Excellent
- Ability to search for knowledge, potential for self-learning and continued development	3.55	Excellent	3.67	Excellent
- Ability to work as a team and collaborate with others	3.50	Excellent	3.54	Excellent
Teachers:				
- Number of teachers, their qualifications, knowledge and skills, are appropriate and complimentary to their work duties/responsibilities	3.90	Excellent	3.90	Excellent
- Curriculum and teaching methodologies are effective and child-centered	3.50	Excellent	3.50	Excellent
Management:				
- Leadership and management skills	4.00	Excellent	3.95	Excellent
- Systematic management style and structure enabling goal achievement	3.93	Excellent	3.93	Excellent
- Approach and activities are based on child-centre philosophy	4.00	Excellent	4.00	Excellent
- Curriculum, locality and use of teaching aids suitably meets student's needs	3.80	Excellent	3.80	Excellent
- Relationship building and collaboration with local communities in educational development	3.84	Excellent	3.84	Excellent

Note: The scores range form 0 – 4. Criteria for measurement are as follows:

Poor	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
0 – 1.74	1.75 – 2.59	2.6 – 3.49	3.50 – 4

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Glossary of Terms

BWL	Brain Wave Learning
FGD	Focus Group Discussion(s)
LPMP	Lamplimat Pattana School
MoE	Ministry of Education
ONESQA	Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment
P4	Primary Four Class (equivalent to Grade 4 in Australia or Junior Four in the UK)
PDA	Population & Community Development Association
UTas	University of Tasmania

Executive Summary

The Review of Lamplaimat Pattana School was conducted for the School Board by an international team of consultants under the auspices of the Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania, between July and October 2006.

The following questions formed the Terms of Reference.

1. What outcomes is the school aiming to achieve?
2. What is the school achieving?
3. Why did the school achieve or not achieve the desired outcomes?
4. How effectively does the school manage its resources to support the achievement of its desired outcomes?
5. What can the school do in the future to continue to improve?

Additional questions concerning the school's management, governance and potential role in informing educational policy in Thailand were also addressed.

The Review was conducted in three phases: (1) Survey data collection, June – July, (2) Site visit by review team, October 1st to October 5th, and (3) Analysis and report writing, October – November. A mix of quantitative and qualitative methodologies was employed within an overall inquiry-based approach.

LPMP was established in 2001 by the PDA with funding from the James Clark Foundation. It provides free schooling to ordinary children from the rural area of Buriram in Eastern Thailand. The school aims to provide 'education for complete human development'. The vision is for 'a school where the pupils are happy and can fulfil their potential, which is adapted to its local environment and current technology, and which develops the complete individual instilling individual morality, preserving community traditions and promoting good citizenship.'

The Review found that the school is successfully achieving the outcomes which flow from the mission and vision statement. In particular, a high level of congruence between intended and observed practices was noted. This includes, for example, the innovative use of Low Brain Wave learning across the school. A very positive school climate was evident; the school runs as a family-style, learning community with strong professional collegiality among the staff. Successful learning outcomes are demonstrated by the school's internal assessments and the national testing program. Children were observed to be happy, confident, thinking, creative, questioning, emotionally and socially competent and enjoying learning.

Key success factors include the strong, visionary leadership of the Headmaster, engagement of the parents, strategic recruitment and the professional learning program for all staff, small classes, the high time-commitment and professionalism of the young, energetic and dedicated teachers, a growing outreach program (1,000 visitors in 2005-6) and excellent school facilities – the buildings and green, clean, environment.

The Review Team found that LPMP is a well-managed and effectively governed school. There is potential for further development of the outreach program and for LPMP to provide a model which could impact positively on the development of educational policy and practice more broadly in Thailand. A number of concrete suggestions are offered for consideration in the final section of the report, described as 'food for thought'.

In summary, the Review concludes that LPMP is an excellent school, which is achieving and exceeding its stated objectives. It compares favourably with international schools and benchmarks of international best practice drawn from the effective schools literature.



1. Background to the Review

1.1 Introduction

Learning for everyone is at heart of school improvement. Successful, effective schools look at themselves as professional learning communities and they continually seek ways to improve the learning outcomes of their students

Lamplaimat Pattana School (LPMP) was founded by Mr. Mechai Viravaidhaya, Chairman of the Population and Community Development of Association (PDA), who had the objective to establish a school which would teach rural pupils all the necessary skills for becoming a good person. Mr. Mechai shared his ideas with James Clark, an English businessman, who heads the James Clark Charitable Trust fund. On August 8, 2001, Mr. Mechai and James Clark agreed to manage the establishment of the school.

The school opened on May 16, 2003. Within the first year, Kindergarten One and Two and Primary School Grade One classes were established. Each class had 30 pupils and 2 teachers. It was intended that every year the school would add a grade until primary school grade six. By the time of the review in October 2006 the school had Kindergarten (One and Two), Primary One, Two, Three and four – and an enrolled population of 174 students.

The Board of LPMP recognised the value of the school review process as a means to obtain an indication of the school's performance against the objectives set for the school at the time of its foundation and also as a means of contributing to school improvement. Consequently, in January 2006, Mr Greg Cairnduff of the Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania (Utas) was commissioned to form a small international team to conduct the review.

The relationship between Utas and LPMP began in 2004 when the Headmaster of LPMP Mr Wichian Chaiyabang was hosted by Utas for a study tour of Tasmanian schools. The connection between the school and the Faculty of Education at Utas has developed in subsequent years. Five staff members from LPMP have visited the Faculty to study and



visit schools; pre-service teachers from the Faculty have visited LPMP to see the curriculum in action – and several have completed their internship at the school.

1.2 The Review Team

The Review Team was made up of the following personnel:

- Mr Greg Cairnduff, Program Director, Bachelor of Teaching, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania, Australia
- Dr Meechai Iemjinda, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, Silpakorn University, Nakorn Pathom, Thailand (PhD UTas)
- Ms. Sopantini, International Education Consultant, Laras International, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Education, University of Tasmania
- Dr Mark Heyward, International Education Consultant, Laras International (PhD UTas)



Greg



Meechai



Sopan



Mark

1.3 Review Period

The review was conducted during the period July to October 2006. Quantitative and survey data was collected in July and August and on the site visit by the Review Team was conducted between Sunday October 1st and Friday October 6th 2006.

1.4 Terms of Reference

The School Board commissioned this review in order to address the following key issues:

1. The School Board would like to know how the school has developed, particularly in the areas of:
 - The learners
 - The teachers

- School administration and management
 - Impact on the local community.
2. The school wishes to see the review conducted in a way which shows (1) what is succeeding, (2) what is not succeeding and (3) how to bring about improvements.
 3. The school hopes to get out of the review a brief report covering every issue important within the school community.

1.5 Key Questions

The review was designed around an inquiry-based approach, and sought to answer the following key questions:

1. What outcomes is the school aiming to achieve?
2. What is the school achieving?
3. Why did the school achieve or not achieve the desired outcomes?
4. How effectively does the school manage its resources to support the achievement of its desired outcomes?
5. What can the school do in the future to continue to improve?

In addition, the following supplementary questions were addressed:

1. How effective and appropriate is the school's governance, including leadership, decision-making, relationship with the PDA, other schools in the area and the wider community of Buriram province?
2. What is unique about this school?
3. What can be learned by the Ministry of Education and other schools from the curriculum and pedagogical practices of Lamplaimat Pattana School

1.6 The Audience for this Report

The primary audience for this report is the Board and community of LPMP. It may also be relevant to the PDA as it seeks to expand its work in education at the national and community level. Local and national government authorities and educational researchers may be interested in the report but access to the report is at the discretion of the Board of LPMP.

2. The Process

Consistent with the philosophy of the school and with good practice in school appraisal, the Review was conducted in an open, transparent and participative way. In responding to the Terms of Reference, and particularly to the key questions posed, the Team collected and analysed a wide range of data, both quantitative and qualitative. This section describes what data sets were collected, how these were collected, how they were analysed and how conclusions were drawn and verified.

Data collected prior to the site visit included two surveys: (1) a Professional Satisfaction Survey completed by all staff in three groups – teachers, administration, and support staff, and (2) a School Culture Survey completed by all staff. The Team also requested and received information about the school's history, vision, mission, achievement, resources and students. This data included the school's complete report to the national education standard authority (ONESQA), results of internal assessments and external testing for national standards, and the current annual school plan. Most of this was independently translated into English.

Over a five-day site visit, conducted in the first week of October 2006, the Team collected extensive observational data (including notes and photographs), data from Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with key stakeholder groups (the Headmaster, foundation teaching staff, new teachers, administration team, support staff, parents, and children – in four groups), and notes on interviews with individuals and pairs. Children's work was examined along with teacher and student portfolios, timetables, assessments, teacher planning, curriculum documents, publicity materials, displays and classroom materials.

This large body of data was 'reduced' in order to highlight key themes. Data reduction was achieved in two ways: (1) quantitative data was converted into percentages and displayed in graphical form (see Appendix Three and Four), and (2) quantitative data was entered into matrices. Focus Group Discussions all used the same approach of eliciting responses to the question how do you feel about the school? Which aspects make you feel 'cold', 'cool', 'warm' and 'hot'? (See Appendix One) Reduced data were then analysed using a 'Stake matrix' which is explained in the Findings section of the report (Stake: 1967).

The Review Team, all associated with the University of Tasmania, provided a balance of international and Thai experience, relevant academic and research expertise and well-grounded, relevant practitioner experience. In qualitative research such as this, the key instrument for data collection, reduction and analysis is the researcher him- or herself (Miles and Huberman: 1994). This is the human element. Conclusions were made by drawing on this experience in research, international schooling, and education in Thailand, and also by acknowledging the professional, interpersonal and emotional responses of the Team to the experience of LPMP.

One must also acknowledge the methodological weaknesses in a study such as this. Two such weaknesses should be noted: (1) time constraints, and (2) language and cultural distance. The Review was conducted in the 'real and messy' world of schools and classrooms (Schon: 1983). Although a great deal of data were collected prior to the site visit and further analysis was conducted in the months following, the visit itself was brief and enabled only a snapshot of LPMP. This weakness was offset through the approach to validating impressions and findings described below.

Cross-cultural evaluation is a risky endeavour. The risk of misinterpretation and misunderstanding is ever present. In order to reduce this risk, the Review drew on the language and cultural resources within the Team, the school and Utas, to enable an effective intercultural and bilingual approach. Impressions were routinely cross-checked with Dr Meechai Iemjinda, the team's Thai member, and informants for accuracy from a cultural and linguistic perspective.

In order to verify the results; to ensure the reliability of data collected and the validity of findings, the technique of 'triangulation' was employed. Data were collected from a range of sources enabling triangulation of sources. For example, Focus Group Discussions were conducted with groups representing all key stakeholders, so that comments and perceptions could be compared between groups and individuals. Data collection techniques were also triangulated. Thus, for example, data collected from surveys and school documents, were verified by reference to focus group discussions and observations. Comparative data were collected through visits to two local government schools; one regarded as a successful school, a centre for a cluster of local schools, and the other regarded as a 'struggling' school.



Mr James Clark



Mr Mechai Viravaidhaya

Preliminary findings and conclusions were also verified by reference to key informants. The first iteration of the Stake Matrix was presented to the professional staff in a meeting prior to the Team's departure. Key findings were also presented separately to the Headmaster, and to Mr Mechai Viravaidya, Chairman, and Parijana Sornjiti, Vice President of PDA, and James Clark in Bangkok. Responses enabled the Team to test the findings against the lived experience of these key players. Some minor changes were then incorporated into the final version of the matrix and into the findings presented in this report.

3. What is an Effective School?

3.1 What does the research tell us?

This section examines the literature on school-effectiveness together with assessments of local schools, both of which provide a set of external benchmarks for the Review.

The extensive body of research on effective schools and school improvement, combined with the Team members' respective national and international experiences and perspectives, gave the Team an evidence base with which to examine the school. The Stake data matrix used to collate much of the qualitative data includes a summary of internationally recognised best practice. This helped to form a research-based set of benchmarks for the performance of the school.

Among the many features of effective schools identified in the research, one stands out as in particularly strong evidence at LPMP. The research is consistent in suggesting that achievement is highest in schools which operate as 'learning communities'; where teachers plan and dialogue together. The reviewers found that the staff of LPMP work in this way, and because of this there is a thriving learning community at LPMP.

Numerous research studies indicate a largely common set of features that exist in schools deemed to be "effective". Among these common features are:

- strong leadership which focuses on the curriculum;
- clear goals;
- high expectations of students and staff;
- an emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning;
- a supportive school environment;
- a culture of monitoring and evaluation;
- parental involvement and support.

(Hayes, Mills, Christie and Lingard: 2006)

In addition to this list of effectiveness factors identified in developed countries the following factors have been identified for developing nation contexts:

- adequate material resources;
- quality of teachers, teacher training and upgrading
- pedagogical support;
- the health of students
- student attendance
- the health and welfare of teachers / teacher attendance

Further research by Fullan (1982, 1993, 1997, 2001), Hargreaves (1994, 1997, 2003), Stoll and Fink (1996) develops a qualitative approach to research which is smaller in scale than some of the earlier effective schools research. This research addresses the complexities of day to day activities in schools and does not attempt to establish links between measurable inputs, school-level factors and student outcomes.

Hargreaves and Fink in their work on sustainable leadership (2006) delineate seven principles of sustainable leadership. Their fifth principle is *Diversity - Sustainable leadership promotes diversity*: It avoids standardization of policy, curriculum, assessment, and staff development and training in teaching and learning. It fosters and learns from diversity and creates cohesion and networking among its richly varying components. This school promotes diversity in many ways.

The points that Hargreaves and Fullan make about organisational effectiveness are relevant to schools as much as to any other organisation. They are relevant to LPMP.

They find that effective organizations are characterized by:

- A framework of common and enduring values, goals and purposes
- Possession and development of variability or diversity in skills, talents and identities
- Processes that promote interaction and cross-pollination of ideas and influences across this variability
- Permeability to outside influences
- Emergence of new ideas, structures, and processes as diverse elements interconnect and new ones intrude from the outside
- Flexibility and adaptability in response to environmental change
- Resilience in the face of and in response to threats and adversity

(Hargreaves and Fink: 2006)

These characteristics are all evident at LPMP.

3.2 How does LPMP compare?

Research has confirmed that practices within schools may have considerable effect on student learning outcomes but the same research confirms the overwhelming influence of social context on learning outcomes. One of the interesting features of the LPMP experience is that the school serves the same community and enrolls children from the same socio-economic backgrounds as other local government schools in the area – including the two which were visited by the Review Team.

The differences between the two government schools visited (for the Review called School A and B), and between these schools and LPMP, were quite evident to the reviewers. The table below illustrates how the reviewers judged the two local schools together with LPMP against the criteria drawn from the effective schools literature discussed above.

Table 1 – Features of Effective Schools – Lamplimat Review

Features of effective schools	School A	School B	LPMP
Strong leadership which focuses on the curriculum;	Yes	No	Yes
Clear goals;	Yes	No	Yes
High expectations of students and staff;	Yes	No	Yes
An emphasis on the quality of teaching and learning;	Yes *	No	Yes
A supportive school environment;	Yes	Yes	Yes
Parental involvement and support;	Yes	No	Yes
A culture of monitoring and evaluation;	No	No	Yes
Quality of teachers, teacher training and upgrading	No	No	Yes
Adequate material resources;	No	No	Yes
Pedagogical support;	No	No	Yes
The health of students	Nutrition program	?	Nutrition program
Student attendance	?	?	Very good
Health and welfare of teachers **	?	?	Very good
Teacher attendance	?	?	Very good

* Note that the focus in this school appeared to be on a very traditional curriculum and approach to teaching and learning.

** Teachers at LPMP receive a salary only slightly more generous than standard government rates for teachers in local schools. They are also provided with basic accommodation and meals on-campus.

3.3 What does this mean for the Review?

It is evident that LPMP lines up well with the international research on what constitutes an effective school.

Regardless of the many external factors which influence school outcomes, it is possible for all schools to focus on learning and for schools to make a difference to students' learning outcomes. This is what is meant by the term 'effectiveness'.

When the Review Team looked at the features of effective schools as described by the research and applied these features to LPMP, it was easy to see each feature embedded in the culture and operation of the school. The data provides strong evidence that all aspects of the school align closely with the international research on the qualities of effective schools.

The comparisons with government schools visited strengthen this proposition. As indicated below, LPMP spends about the same amount per head on students as government schools, the children come from similar backgrounds, yet there is considerable variation in performance between the three schools.

LPMP's alignment in performance with international research indicates clearly that this is a very effective school.

4. The Findings

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the results of the review. The Terms of Reference posed a number of key questions which are answered here: What outcomes is the school aiming to achieve? What is the school achieving? Why did the school achieve or not achieve the desired outcomes? How effectively does the school manage its resources to support the achievement of its desired outcomes?

Answers to the following supplementary questions are also provided: How effective and appropriate is the school's governance, specifically the leadership, decision making, relationship with the PDA, and links to other schools in the area and the wider community of Buriram province? What is unique about this school? What can be learned by the Ministry of Education and other schools from the curriculum and pedagogical practices of LPMP?

The final question, What can the school do in the future to continue to improve? is answered in the recommendations section at the end of the report.

4.2 Stake's model of contingency and congruence

In order to first provide an overview of the findings of the Review, the Stake Matrix is provided below. Based on an adapted version of Robert Stake's model (1967), the themes which emerged from the research were categorised into five columns:

1. *Intents* (What is the school aiming to do and achieve?)
2. *Observations* (What is the school actually doing and achieving?)
3. *Benchmarks* (What do other schools do and achieve? What does the theory say?)
4. *Evaluation* (How do the columns match up? Does the school do what it says it will do? Is it achieving intended outcomes? And how does this compare with theory, best practice internationally, and local Thai schools?), and
5. *Recommendations* or 'Food for Thought' (What does this suggest that LPMP should do in the future?).

Robert Stake's (1967) approach to evaluation of educational programs offers a useful framework for evaluations of schools, curriculum and educational innovations. Stake's model suggests the analysis of programs in two dimensions: the first identifies antecedents, prior conditions that may relate to outcomes, transactions, the implementation of the program, and outcomes, the impact of the program on those involved. The second dimension compares intents and observations at each of the stages mentioned. This enables an evaluation of the program that separates, in Stake's terms, congruence from logical contingency. Congruence refers to the degree to which there is agreement between intents and observations. That is, does the design of the program match the 'reality' of what is observed at each stage?

Logical contingency refers to the relationship between the three time-ordered stages in the first dimension: antecedents, transactions and outcomes in the intents column. The question is: Is there logical contingency from a theoretical point of view, or, put another way, is the design and implementation of the program theoretically sound?



Data collection in the Review: Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted with senior staff, teachers, admin staff, support staff, parents and children

In order to reach a judgement about the design of the program in this way, Stake proposes a second matrix, the judgement matrix. Here, in two columns, the standards by which the program will be judged are made explicit, and the evaluation itself is made. The strength of Stake's model, and its value for this Review, is that it separates intents from observations, as well as judgements. For the purposes of the Review, a fifth column is added – Recommendations, called here 'Food for Thought', to enable the reviewers to make suggestions for improvement, based on the findings described in the other columns.

Table 2 - LPMP Review – Stake Matrix

Antecedent Conditions	What is intended?	What happens? (Observations)	Benchmarks (Theory, international best practice, local practice)	Evaluation	Recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rural children Substantial start-up funding An NGO seeking social change (PDA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To serve the poor communities and provide free education. To introduce novel approaches with regard to teaching method. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children randomly selected from families requesting admission 70% farming families Current James Clark Trust Fund funding to be phased out over 8 years Current cost is B40,000 per student (without initial capital investment in infrastructure) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Socio-economic background is a very significant determinant of educational outcomes Both pressure and support are required for improvement Comparative costs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government school: B23,000 (without staffing costs) Bilingual school: +/- B150,000 International sch +/-B500,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intents, observations and theory are well-aligned A very successful 'experiment' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to plan for a sustainable future Appoint an overall business development manager 	<p>'Food for thought'</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching & Learning 'Education for complete human development' 'A school where the pupils are happy and can fulfil their potential, which is adapted to its local environment and current technology' Innovative approach based on BWL, Steiner, neo-humanism Project learning Personal empowerment Thinking skills Competency to access knowledge (not content-based) Joyful learning Heart-based education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level of congruence between intended and observed practices Student-teacher ratio is very low (1-15 plus resource teachers) Very positive school climate – supportive relationships Most observed teaching & learning was uniform and whole-class or small-group based (apart from Student Learning Support program and clubs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brain-based learning approach is theoretically sound (but rarely practiced) Conductive learning environment is necessary for effective learning School and classroom climate has an important impact on learning and learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inquiry based curriculum Thinking skills Teaching for understanding Assessment of-for-as learning Individual and group inquiry-based learning Curriculum differentiated for individual ability and interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intents, observations, theory and international good practice are very well-aligned Practice of BWL is notable for congruence between theory, intents and practice Curriculum teaching & learning could be more differentiated and based on individual needs and interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects can be more open-ended, inquiry-based and encourage critical thinking skills Teacher development in teaching for understanding (asking the BIG questions) & develop questioning skills Work on differentiating the curriculum for individual needs and interests 	<p>Teaching & Learning</p>

Outcomes	Management & Governance	Management & Governance	Management & Governance	Management & Governance	Management & Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to develop '...the complete individual, installing individual morality, preserving community traditions and promoting good citizenship' 'Complete' human beings – IQ, EQ, PQ, SQ Improve the rural economy, environment, health and welfare Community empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participative management Parent engagement Quality resources (financial, human, physical, human & time) "build a good school" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong, visionary leadership Shared leadership / shared vision Parental engagement High time-commitment of staff Family-style, learning community – very strong collegiality Young, energetic, dedicated staff Rigorous selection and performance appraisal New staff do not yet feel integrated or equal status with foundation staff Strong professional learning program / teachers eager to learn Growing outreach program (1,000 visitors, sister schools etc) Nutritious lunch supplied Excellent buildings, equipment and natural environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What the theory tells us an excellent school needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership is critical Shared leadership Professional learning – school as a learning organisation / a community of learners Parent participation Good resources Physical and human resource contrasts with local schools Children cannot learn effectively when under-nourished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intents, observations, theory and international good practice are very well-aligned New teachers do not yet feel fully integrated into the school Need a long-term succession plan for school leadership Outreach program does not appear to be clearly stated in intended program/outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for maturing of teaching force – how to sustain the high-level of dedication and collegiality? Develop a mentoring program to integrate new teaching staff Plan for long-term succession in leadership— how to sustain the vision and drive? Develop outreach program systematically. Options include: training, camps, sister-schools, replicate in other provinces, adopt schools, publishing, film ... Plan for how to resource an outreach program and commercial enterprises whilst maintaining the 'core business' Work to influence national policy and teacher training. Options – links to universities, research, policy makers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary schools can only create the foundation for 'good citizens' – it also depends on further education & life experiences Good international schools typically have similar aims and similar outcomes Local rural schools have somewhat different aims and different outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observations and interactions indicate that the children are: Happy, confident, thinking, creative, questioning, emotionally and socially competent and love learning Basic skills are high (literacy and numeracy) Results against national standards are high (self-reporting and national testing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intention to create good citizens may be too ambitious for a primary school Intended and observed outcomes match – this is rather unusual and means that the 'experiment' has succeeded in just 3 years – this is highly significant Caution that the 'model school' approach may not work well for teachers and principals from less-well resourced schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open a secondary school Revisit and clarify the vision and mission of the school to include a growing outreach program – ensure it is well resourced Consider developing an outreach program which does not always rely on school visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intention to create good citizens may be too ambitious for a primary school Intended and observed outcomes match – this is rather unusual and means that the 'experiment' has succeeded in just 3 years – this is highly significant Caution that the 'model school' approach may not work well for teachers and principals from less-well resourced schools 	

4.3 What outcomes is the school aiming to achieve?

The Review examined several public and private statements of the school's vision, mission and objectives. In a leaflet introducing the school, the mission is stated as 'Education for complete human development'. The vision is stated as follows:

'A school where the pupils are happy and can fulfil their potential, which is adapted to its local environment and current technology, and which develops the complete individual instilling individual morality, preserving community traditions and promoting good citizenship.'

The school's strategic plan states that Mr Mechai Viravaidhaya, Chairman of the PDA, '...had the objective to establish a school which would teach rural pupils all the necessary skills for becoming a good person'. The Headmaster, Mr Wichian Chaiyabang reported that James Clark had asked him to 'go and establish a good school'. In meeting with PDA executives in Bangkok, the term 'pilot school' was used.

The strategic plan refers to the following goals for LPMP: (1) to serve the poor communities and provide free education, and (2) To introduce novel approaches with regard to teaching method. In discussions with Mr Wichian and teachers, more detail was provided regarding the 'novel approaches' referred to: Brain-Wave Learning (BWL), active learning, child-centred learning, a balanced curriculum that encourages development of intelligence (IQ), emotional and social competencies (EQ), the physical (PQ) and the spiritual dimension (SQ).

A number of teachers commented that one of the positive features of the school was the shared vision. And indeed, this is evident from the energy and enthusiasm displayed, from the dispersed leadership and from the consistency and ease with which the experienced staff articulate the educational goals and program of the school.

At the same time the school is clearly working on a mission to promote reforms in Thai schooling to a broader community. Last year (2005-6) the school received over 1,000 visitors. It conducts training programs and runs camps. The newly-established publishing company is set to publish educational reference books. Nowhere could the Team find a clear statement of the school's goals, vision and mission, which included this 'outreach' program.

In summary, key elements of the school's vision and mission (stated and implied) could be restated as follows:

1. Providing an excellent education to ordinary rural children – for free
 - a. educating the whole child, intellectual, social-emotional, physical, moral and spiritual
 - b. making the learning active, joyful, child-centred, and innovative - including Brain Wave Learning (BWL) approaches

2. Sustaining the activity of the school through an associated business enterprise, which also supports the development of the local economy
3. Using the successful experience of the school as a model to develop education more broadly in Thailand.

The Review focussed on the first of these – educating the children – but also considered the place of the other two aims.

4.4 What is the school achieving and why did the school achieve or not achieve the desired outcomes?

As outlined above, the school was set up by the PDA: (1) to serve the poor communities and provide free education and (2) to introduce novel approaches with regard to teaching method. The Review found extensive evidence that the school is achieving these goals.

The parent population of the school is about 70% farmers with relatively low income. The school is not charging fees, yet it is providing a very high quality progressive education. The fact that there are at least two applicants for every available place each year is an indication of community satisfaction with the education being provided by the school.

The Review Team was able to spend time with 20 parents. This group included parents representing a variety of social, economic and educational backgrounds. Among the group were a policeman, a government school teacher, a government school guidance officer, a municipal politician, a sales person, a lawyer, a housewife and four farmers - the most prevalent occupation represented. It may be inferred therefore, that the school is achieving its goal of serving the rural poor in Eastern Thailand.

Another goal of the school upon its establishment was that it would have an innovative educational program. The Review Team had the opportunity to closely examine the curriculum and the teachers' pedagogy in action over a four day period.

There is no doubt that the curriculum is a progressive one. It has been designed to meet the national curriculum and assessment requirements, as well to address the school's mission of helping the students to become thinking responsible citizens in the future. The underlying aims of the curriculum used at LPMP are to teach students how to access knowledge and how to think (at a range of levels). It is these aims and the associated pedagogical practice which differentiates the LPMP curriculum from the educational program that is provided by government schools.

The LPMP curriculum is able to satisfy requirements of the national curriculum in the areas that are tested against the national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy and yet develop its own strong direction to support the goals of developing the students' thinking skills and becoming self managed learners.

The inquiry and project-based elements of the curriculum are the principal vehicles for achieving these outcomes. The approach to enquiry based learning at LPMP comes from a variety of sources including Steiner, Montessori, neo-humanism and brain-based learning. This approach is supported by the research based evidence that came out of Project Zero at Harvard University.

Harvard Project Zero, a research group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, has investigated the development of learning processes in children, adults, and organizations for over 30 years. Project Zero is building on this research to help create communities of reflective, independent learners; to enhance deep understanding within disciplines; and to promote critical and creative thinking. (www.pz.edu)

The findings from Project Zero have been very influential in curriculum reform in many countries – Singapore is probably the nearest Asian country that has reformed its curriculum around the ideas from Project Zero. The research has influenced curriculum development in USA, the UK Canada and Australia.

It is evident that the school is achieving its aims of an innovative curriculum.

It is one thing to have a vision of a new curriculum paradigm, but another thing to actually implement such a curriculum. The implementation depends largely on the pedagogical practices of the teachers and the professional learning support they receive. There are many things about the teaching practices employed at LPMP which impressed the Review Team and also indicated the integration of an innovative curriculum with innovative teaching.

The first thing about the pedagogical practices which struck the reviewers was the professionalism of the teaching and administration staff. The reviewers were impressed by the obvious collegiality, work ethic and dedication of all staff. The rigorous staff selection and performance management processes are elements which underline the quality of this staff.

The Headmaster told the reviewers that, when given the responsibility to establish the new school, teachers were foremost on his mind. International research on school self management (Caldwell and Spinks: 1993, 1998) and effective school leadership (Mulford: 2003, 2006) emphasises the importance of staff selection, performance management and the provision of high quality professional learning for staff as critical to the success of a school.

The school is staffed by excellent teachers – all well qualified and energetic in their pursuit of excellence in teaching. A number (five, or 25 % of total teaching staff) are undertaking post-graduate studies at Masters level.

As the school expands, it adds new staff each year. Most of the new teachers come direct from teacher training institutions. Despite their lack of teaching experience, the selection

process assists in the choice of staff who have the “right fit” for this school. The “food for thought” section of the report suggests a stronger mentoring program for new staff and provides a rationale for this suggestion.

The low teacher-student ratio (1:15 in classes of 30 with two teachers) is another factor which contributes to the success of the curriculum. Each class has two teachers; providing a ratio of one teacher to fifteen students. This ratio is not matched by government schools in Buriram or any other province. In these schools, the teacher student ratio is considerably higher. In the government schools visited by the reviewers, the ratio in some classes was about 1:30. In private bi-lingual and international schools the ratio may sometimes be similar to that of LPMP. However, it must be remembered that these schools charge high fees and LPMP charges no fees.

The reviewers noted many positive elements about the way teachers work at LPMP. The collegiality, inquiry into practice, sharing of good practice, dedication to the school and the teaching profession, are among these elements. These factors are highly relevant to the achievement of the school’s goals.

It is in the enactment of the pedagogy that the reviewers found congruence with the school’s aims of innovation in teaching. The focus on Low Brain Wave learning is the most outstanding of these features. The implementation and embedding of this approach over the history of the school is remarkable. This is an achievement which endorses the reviewers’ belief that LPMP is a world-class school.

In addition to reviewing the curriculum, both *intended* in the form of stated policy and planning and *observed*, and in terms of ‘antecedent conditions’ and ‘transactions’ in the form of observed teaching and learning, the Review considered the ‘outcomes’ of the curriculum, that is, student learning. As well as observational data, the school provided outcomes data based on the school’s internal assessments and the national tests in literacy and numeracy and science (for Grade 3). The national test data shows that this cohort (Grade 3) of students gained an aggregated score of 53% in literacy (Thai language), 53% in numeracy (Maths), and 68% in Science.

In contrast to this, the two government schools visited by the reviewers were well below these figures with their scores being in the 30-40% range.

It should be noted that the Office of National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA) reports that two-thirds of public schools performed below the minimum standard of 50% on these tests. This report (The Nation, 23 August and 8th October 2006) indicates that the poorest performing schools are small primary schools in rural areas. Clearly LPMP is succeeding in its aims of educating children in the basic academic competencies of literacy, numeracy and science. It is possible that the Ministry of Education can learn something from LPMP in this matter.

LPMP’s internal data for the Basic Education Standards for Internal Quality Assurance required by the Office of the Basic Education Commission was provided in advance to

the review group. Performance against each of the 18 standards was very high – each one being 90% or above. The reviewers closely observed the behaviour of children in the school, conducted FGDs with children, and inspected a range of outcomes in the form of student work-books, displays and portfolios. Data collected in this way confirmed in broad terms the school's self-assessment data. The school is achieving a high level of success in relation to its objective of educating the whole child; intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual.

Effective schools always seek to improve their performance. By commissioning this review, the Board of LPMP clearly indicated its desire for feedback on the school's performance. The school actively seeks advice on areas where there might be changes to enhance this already high performing school. The 'Food for Thought' section of the report provides some advice on areas which might be improved by making changes in the way things are done.

The reviewers felt that the quantitative data and the qualitative data collected enabled them to say that the school is achieving the objectives set for it in 2001 by the PDA and the James Clark Charitable Trust.

4.5 How effectively does the school manage its resources to support the achievement of its desired outcomes?

LPMP is a well-resourced school. The school's primary source of funding, the James Clark Trust Fund will reportedly provide over B150,000,000 in total (approximately USD4,175,000 or 2,150,000 Pounds Stirling). The school has an excellent and well-appointed facility, comprised of well designed, constructed and maintained buildings which support the learning and management approach adopted, encouraging a sense of community. The facilities include nine classrooms interconnected in modules with shared spaces for joint activities, a library, a learning centre, spacious rooms for administration and enterprise, clean and well kept kitchens, toilet and showers rooms, a large open dining space, dormitories and utility rooms. These buildings are set in extensive grounds, with many trees which encourage birds, butterflies and insects, playing fields, a well-designed climbing frame and a school farm, which includes a duck farm, fish farm, mushroom farm, frog farm, vegetable garden and orchard.

The learning and administration resources include a well-maintained computer network with internet access, books, sport equipment and teaching aids. The human resource is also generous – with two teachers appointed to each class and a teacher-child ratio of 1:15 plus three non-class-based teachers who support the teachers with supervision, training and running classes in specialised subjects. The school recently appointed an additional 11 teachers for the current school year (2006). Notwithstanding this generous staffing ratio, the school reportedly spends approximately B40,000 per student per year – including staffing costs. This compares with B23,000 in local government schools (not

including staffing costs). The following table shows the comparison with both local government schools and elite bilingual and international city schools.

Table 3 – Comparative Costs of Schooling

	Local school	Government	LPMP	Bilingual schools		International schools	
Approximate cost per student per year	B23,000		B40,000	B100,000 – 200,000		B500,000-1,000,000	
Note	Including costs	staffing	Not including costs	staffing	costs	Including costs	staffing

On this basis, LPMP can be seen to be managing its resources extremely well in order to achieve desired outcomes. If the figures are adjusted to include staffing costs in the government schools, it can be seen that LPMP is able to provide an excellent education at a similar cost to that provided in the government schools. As suggested elsewhere in this report, the standard of education provided in LPMP on a range of measures is far superior to that in local government schools and is not dissimilar to that provided in typical international schools which are far more expensive.

The key resource here is the teachers. Teachers at LPMP have been rigorously selected, using a five-step process, from a large pool of applicants. They also undergo a tough appraisal process – especially during the initial trial year. All teachers are young; most are single and female. For most it is their first teaching appointment. They live together on campus and routinely share ideas, teach and learn together in structured and unstructured ways. The level of professional commitment and collegiality is exceptionally high. Educational leadership and school-based professional development are embedded in the culture of the school. The program is deep and thorough. LPMP is in every way a ‘community of learners’.

The challenge which lies ahead for the school is how to maintain this culture of learning and professional commitment, as the school, and with it the teaching force, matures? Teachers will eventually get married and develop broader interests and responsibilities. New teachers will join the school and will not share the excitement and commitment that accompanies the experience of pioneering. Indeed there is already a sense that the recently appointed teachers are not yet fully integrated with the foundation staff.



A second major challenge facing the school is how to sustain its activity and commitment to providing free education into the future as financial support from the James Clark Trust Fund is steadily withdrawn. In the coming school year (2007-8), income from government will increase as LPMP establishes a governing foundation. At the same time, James

Clark plans to begin reducing the funding levels to encourage independence and sustainability. The table below spells out the financial implications (at current rates).

Table 4
Estimate of school income and expenses in Thai Baht projected over 10 years

Year	Contribution from James Clark TF	Contribution from Government	Total Income	Student numbers	Cost (@ B40,000 per child)	Balance
2006-2007	9,000,000	1,000,000	10,000,000	174	6,960,000	3,040,000
2007-2008	8,000,000	2,000,000	10,000,000	204	8,160,000	840,000
2008-2009	8,000,000	2,000,000	10,000,000	234	9,360,000	640,000
2009-2010	7,000,000	2,000,000	9,000,000	234	9,360,000	-360,000
2010-2011	6,000,000	2,000,000	8,000,000	234	9,360,000	-1,360,000
2011-2012	5,000,000	2,000,000	7,000,000	234	9,360,000	-2,360,000
2012-2013	4,000,000	2,000,000	6,000,000	234	9,360,000	-3,360,000
2013-2014	3,000,000	2,000,000	5,000,000	234	9,360,000	-4,360,000
2014-2015	0	2,000,000	2,000,000	234	9,360,000	-7,360,000
2015-2016	0	2,000,000	2,000,000	234	9,360,000	-7,360,000

Assumptions:

- Cost per student – estimate B40,000 per year.
- 2006: 174 students; 2007: 229 students; 2008-1015: 234 students
- No adjusting for inflation

As these figures demonstrate, the school will require a significant income as it grows and income from the Trust Fund declines. Plans are underway for a range of business enterprises to provide that income. These include a publishing company which is already commencing operation; a radio station, mini-market, health clinic and ongoing training program. Links to other NGOs are providing some income to support these businesses and, given the success of the school in its first three years, such funding seems likely to continue. However, it is imperative that the school produces a comprehensive business development plan and, further, that a business development manager be appointed to take on the task of managing and growing the business. Similarly it will be important that resources are provided for the management of outreach programs. Not to do so risks draining the resources of the school and diverting energy and attention away from the core business of teaching and learning.

4.6 How effective and appropriate is the school's governance?

In answering this question, the Review considered the aspects of leadership, decision-making, relationship with the PDA, and links to other schools in the area and the wider community of Buriram province.

The leadership of the founding Headmaster, Mr Wichian Chaiyabang, is a highly significant factor in the success of the school to date. Mr Chaiyabang's leadership is strong, values-based, visionary, strategic, educative and informed by theory and good practice. This is a recipe for school improvement, and closely aligns with prescriptions from the school effectiveness literature and research. Mr Chaiyabang's personal vision has transformed and completed the original vision of Mr Clark and Mr Mechai. James Clark said 'Go and establish a good school'. Wichian defined what that meant and in doing so has made the 'good school' an 'excellent school'.



Greg Cairnduff discusses school leadership with Wichian Chaiyabang, the Headmaster

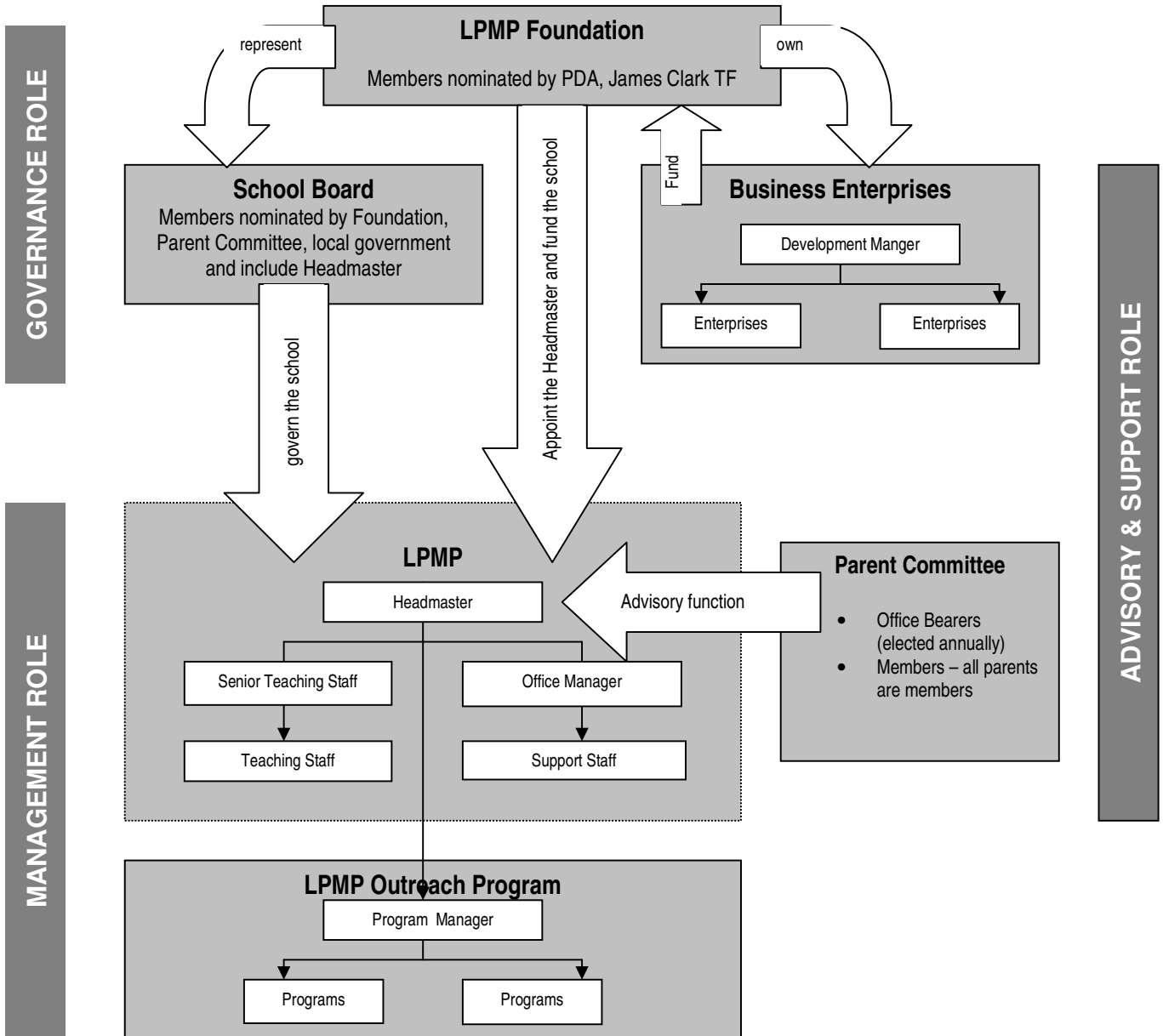
Beyond this, Mr Chaiyabang's leadership style is democratic, open, transparent and participative. Decision-making routinely involves key staff members. The use of brainstorming and mind-mapping in staff meetings to resolve issues, plan and make decisions is common. Wichian has deliberately shared responsibility, creating a culture of dispersed leadership which is empowering for individuals and powerful for the institution.

Notwithstanding this sharing of leadership and the successful building of staff competence and confidence in management, it will be important for the school to plan for leadership succession, against the time when ultimately the founding Headmaster leaves. Not to do so invites the risk of the school losing momentum and 'heart' when the time eventually comes for Mr Chaiyabang to move on. This succession plan should link to the plan for building longer-term sustainability within the school as it and its staff mature.

With the formation of a foundation to legally own and govern the school, along with the establishment of a business entity to generate funds for the school, the governance structure will look something like the following:

Figure 1

Governance & Management of LPMP – A Possible Scenario



The school has worked to engage effectively with parents, involving them in decision-making through the parent committee and representation on the School Board and in teaching and learning through open access to the library and internet and assisting in class project work. This program could be developed more to further build the sense of ownership and empowerment amongst parents and the wider community. Options to

consider include involving grandparents more actively as tutors and partners, along with other members of community as visiting guests for specific learning projects (e.g. local village council members could visit the school as part of a project on democracy), and more excursions into the community (e.g. an excursion to the courts to study justice could be appropriate for older grades 5-6).

There is also room to strengthen the school's community service program as part of the curriculum. Mr Mechai spoke to the Team of the 'joy of doing public good' and the notion that all the children at LPMP are on a scholarship and they should be given a sense of responsibility to return the favour through community service. A greater sense of community ownership of the school and integration of the school into the local community will support long-term sustainability as well as align with best practice/theory and supporting the curriculum for children. There is a related need for ongoing parent education and engagement to ensure that the vision is really shared and understood by all. Otherwise children will be torn between differing values at home and school.

The school's relationship with the PDA is mutually supportive and beneficial. The PDA provides vision, leadership, an extensive network and political weight, and a depth of experience in the broader fields of funding NGO activity, public-private alliances, and programs to develop health, economy and democracy in rural communities. LPMP provides PDA with a highly successful model of rural schooling which can now be leveraged to impact much more broadly on the reform of basic education throughout Thailand. The two organisations thus share common interests.

This relationship is expressed and managed primarily through the School Board. As outlined in Figure 1, the new structure will include a Foundation to legally own and operate the school. This will provide a second formal avenue for PDA to collaborate with the school.

Links to other schools in the area and the wider community of Buriram province exist formally through the participation of the local education office in the School Board and through routine communication with the government. In addition, LPMP is developing 'sister school' relationships with some local schools (e.g. Thantong Wittyacom). There is definitely room to build on these existing links to further support the reform and improvement of education for rural children. Some suggestions for how this could be managed are offered in the final section on recommendations.

4.7 What is unique about this school?

In setting out to answer this question, the Review Team identified six key aspects which mark LPMP as a unique school: school philosophy, school environment, school staff, curriculum and administrative management, and community involvement.

School Philosophy: This school was established to provide quality, free education for the poor in rural areas. From the perspective of a Thai educator, the goals set by the school

are very challenging for the normal Thai school because of the limitations of resources faced by schools in rural areas of the country. However, Lamplaimat Pattana School (LPMP) has proved that it is possible to achieve these goals.

School environment: One of the education missions promoted by the Ministry of Education is a good school environment. Since the education reform policy was officially implemented in 2002, the policy on school environment has focused on providing a clean, green and safe environment for students. Many schools, both government and private, cannot meet this requirement because of high numbers of students, and having limited land for the campus. In contrast, Lamplaimat Pattana School (LPMP) provides spaces for students within a green and clean environment. Furthermore, the school also places a high priority on students' safety within the school.

School staff: This school employs many staff with a fresh and energetic disposition. The staff - teaching, administration and support staff – all work hard to keep the school mission moving forward. Their donated time and effort for the school is remarkable. Team work among the staff is very obvious in this school.

Curriculum management: The school's innovative use of Low Brain Wave learning is outstanding. Focusing on students' learning, rather than teachers' teaching, this school has designed a unique curriculum. Being a good citizen is demonstrated in many activities in the curriculum which combines project-based learning and the curriculum areas in accordance with the national standards, namely English, Thai, Science and Mathematics.

Administrative management: This school enables its staff to have involvement in school decision-making. Through meetings, staff can have their say in their work. This leads to the development of the school as a learning organization. As a result, school members commit to and share the same goals to achieve the shared outcomes for the students.

Community involvement: This school is a good example of bringing parents and community together for school-based activities. Parents are expected to commit to being a part of their children's learning process from the beginning stage of enrolment at school to the leaving stage. From time to time, the school also brings parents into the school to be a part of the children's school based learning.

4.8 What can be learned by the Ministry of Education and other schools from the curriculum and pedagogical practices of Lamplaimat Pattana School (LPMP)?

LPMP has succeeded to a remarkable extent in implementing aspects of the 1999 Education Act which relate to reforms in curriculum and teaching practice. It has done this through the vision of its founders, through strong, visionary and participative leadership and through the inspired efforts of its teaching staff. The Ministry of

Education could learn much from LPMP about the factors which have contributed to this success. Some of the key factors are as follows.

Curriculum implementation: According to the Education Act of 1999, a learner-centred curriculum is regarded as a new way of learning. Since then, the Ministry of Education has implemented many programmes to bring about this innovation in schools. The change in curriculum to focusing on learning rather than teaching has been difficult for Thai teachers. LPMP is a good example of successful curriculum implementation which responds to the new concept of learning. Using Low Brain Wave learning, its students are well prepared for their learning. The curriculum is designed for students' integrated learning through a variety of learning methods such as project-based learning and learning by doing. In all of this the teacher acts a facilitator of learning. This is provides an excellent example to other schools.

Parents' role: The concept of bringing parents to be a part of the learning process is promoted to Thai schools according to the Education Act. Lamplimat Pattana School has shown practical examples to other schools on how to do this. When visiting this school, the reviewers found parent involvement in many school activities such as being volunteers in their child's class, reading books to students, and demonstrating farming rice in the school rice field.

Child Centred learning: According to the new concept of learning, a good learner will be an active, responsible and independent learner. This school encourages students to become more and more active learners as well as supporting the students to be more disciplined learners. Students are the centre of the learning process which focuses on their learning development rather than achievement. With their learning in groups, the students learn how to help each other in class to achieve their learning outcomes.

Teacher professional development: The teacher is a key factor in successful curriculum implementation. LPMP places a high priority on teacher professional development. The teachers express their positive response to the school by their attendance at seminars, workshops, school visits and in scholarships for further study both in-country and abroad. The school also regularly provides in-service training programmes for its staff to maintain their professional expertise. Furthermore, the school also provides workshops for outsiders to learn from their experience.

School facilities: The school's facilities are of a world class standard. The school buildings are designed to suit students' learning. The classrooms are not square, but hexagonal, which allows teachers to organize learning activities suitably. The school also provides enough learning resources for every student to learn independently. This indicates that the school spends a substantial part of its budget on resources and facilities for the children including an extensive library, good playgrounds and sports fields.

5. A Morning in the Primary Four Class

Perhaps the key question for this Review is: What is the school achieving and why did the school achieve or not achieve the desired outcomes? Especially, how this applies to teaching practice and student learning. This section answers the question through a mini-case study, telling the story of how the philosophy and vision of the school gets translated into curriculum and into practice in the classroom – and what this means for teachers and children.

As a result of class observations conducted on Day One of the site visit, the Team noted some common patterns: lively classes decorated with colourful displays of children work and teaching aids, excellent commitment of most teachers, high-level and meticulous planning by teachers, and strong collaboration between teachers - all of which are the ingredients of a real community of learners.

A more intensive observation was conducted on Day Three to verify these emerging patterns, to observe the interaction between children and teachers over a sustained period of time, and to observe how the thinking-skills philosophy underlying the schools pedagogical approach is enacted in the class. The Headmaster had earlier stated his concern about the development of thinking-skills in the school. The observation data is presented here in the form of a brief case-study. The story starts by introducing one of the class teachers, Saengchan Kalam. Teacher Saeng was chosen as a key respondent since she has good English and is one of the foundation teachers with some four years experience in LPMP. Observations and interviews were conducted by Sopantini.

5.1 Meet Saengchan Kalam

Saengchan Kalam is one of two class teachers responsible for Primary Four Class, and its thirty students, around two-thirds of whom come from poor farming families. This is her story.

In this school there are only two teachers whose parents are government employees, although they still farm their land too. The rest of us come from farming families. I come from a family of six and my mother and father are both farmers. They know a lot about how to grow rice, and are very proud to have me working as a teacher at Lamplaimat Pattana School.

In my first year at LPMP I did not know much about how to teach children of primary age because my study at university prepared me to be a secondary school teacher. I know that some other teachers that were hired at the same time as me may not have found their first year as difficult as I did, especially those who have experience and were educated to teach early childhood.

Now, in my fourth year of teaching I know myself better and find the job a lot easier. I learnt a lot from Mr. Wichian and what I learnt makes me understand myself and my work better. I understand my students and most of all I now believe that with clear vision we can solve every problem. There are many ways to solve every problem we have.

I always want to improve myself and my parents support me. I am completing my Masters Degree. Every Friday afternoon I drive to Khonkaen University and spend the whole day on Saturday and Sunday morning working on my study with other teachers who are doing the same program on campus. The university is about 120 km away from the school and by Sunday evening I will have arrived back and ready to teach the following morning. It is hard working full time as a teacher and doing study as well but I enjoy what I do and this makes me feel happy most of the time.

At the university, I share with eighteen other teachers what I do with my students in Lamplaimat Pattana School. At LPMP we do Low Brain Wave learning, teach Thinking Skills, use Multiple Intelligence in our teaching and Project-Based learning.

When we were first hired, we went to many study tours and we learnt Project-based learning when we visited Daroon Sikhalai school. We learnt a lot about it especially how to manage projects. This is different from when I learnt it from reading a text book at my undergraduate study. It is more integrated. Using project-based learning, the students are given the opportunity to participate and engaged in their own learning and they are proud of what they learn. Teachers are also learning to understand their students' rights.

Drama is a good way to find out students' thinking. When doing drama, the students have to think about the script, the acts, and presentation'. Mind map is a good technique too.

In our textile unit we use mind map to identify what we know and do not know about clothes.

In the last few weeks, our unit of learning is textiles. Teacher Kratin who is assigned to teach P4 with me is very good at it. We both work together but she handles most of the project. I teach them Maths and English but I also help Teacher Kratin in project.

How do I know that we teach thinking skills? Well - I know students use creative thinking skills by looking at their ways of presenting their product especially at the end of the unit when they have to present their project. At this time, usually on Friday, students in different groups present to the class their learning product. From their writing for example, teachers know students' creativity. Do they have attractive illustration on their writing? When I give them a worksheet, such as in today's English lesson, students are asked to write appropriate questions for which the answers have already been given. What do they do when they finished writing the questions? Do they illustrate the worksheet with creative pictures? From here the teacher knows how creative a student is.

We always do brainstorming with other teachers. This is how we work in this school. At the beginning the headmaster gave us a lot of training on Multiple Intelligences, Low Brain Wave learning, and Thinking Skills. He knows a lot about many things and is a very knowledgeable man. We also work as a team where each individual contributes his/her expertise to develop the curriculum. Channarong who is a math teacher is a math coordinator. He coordinated the development of the math curriculum. I use many of the worksheets and the teaching aids that they developed. For her expertise in project-base learning, Teacher Kratin is the coordinator of project-based learning. Yim and I are responsible for the development of the English curriculum.



5.2 A morning in Primary Four Class

On the day of the Observation, Wednesday, the school day begins as it always does. After an early breakfast with her colleagues in the school canteen, Teacher Saeng is in the classroom soon after 7.00 preparing for the day. The children arrive in ones and twos after 7.30, many delivered from home by their parents on the back of a motorbike (something that concerns the teachers). They stroll in through the leafy playground, laughing and chatting like children in schools anywhere in the world. Bags are dropped and there is time for a little play before lessons.



Flag raising ceremony

The first activity is flag-raising. The whole school gathers every day at 8.00 for a flag-raising ceremony. Aside from raising the flag and singing national songs, a brief prayer is read before children file off to the classes in neat lines led by their teacher. Back in the classroom, the children form a large circle and settle down for a story and meditation (8.15 – 8.25). This is a special time each day – when the children slow down, the entire school becomes noticeably quiet and calm and, according to the Low Brain Wave theory, brain-wave patterns lengthen, creating a readiness for learning.

The physical appearance of the classroom differs little from a typical international or Australian classroom, except for the fact that most writing on the wall displays is in Thai. Some self-developed teaching aids used in English class, such as charts of the days and months, are written bilingually in Latin (English) and Thai script. The room is airy, spacious and has a lively look with a variety of children's work displayed on the wall. Children's movement and seating arrangements are typical of a good class where alternately children are seated on the carpet or sit in a desk facing each other in small groups of three to five. The classrooms are designed in modules clustered around shared space. All is beautifully appointed with polished timber floors and smart well-maintained toilets and washrooms.



Lunch time



Outdoor play



Music



Low Brain Wave Activity

As the class moves to the first academic lesson of the day, Maths (8.30-9.20), there is a distinct change in the level of noise and energy in the room. Notwithstanding this, overall the noise level remains moderate and children move and work quietly. The topic this morning is percentages. The class started with the teacher speaking in Thai giving some instructions. On the whiteboard the teacher has written several problem-solving exercises. This seems to consolidate the understanding of the concept. Next, the teacher asks the children to get their homework ready. Children stand up to get their homework book from their drawers. The noise level in the class increases mildly as each child stands up to show the teacher their homework. On-the-spot, one-by-one correction was done by the teacher. Children with work marked incorrect got busy making corrections. There are two teachers in the class, so one teacher helps monitor the children, whilst the other corrects the homework.



Learning together - English lesson

The English term 'sale' to mean 'discount' was used by the teacher in each of the problem-solving items in this math class. This is an evidence of the use of the integrated learning principle. This topic had been introduced before and the exercises that the children do this morning are intended to consolidate their understanding of the concept.

In the English lesson (scheduled for 9.30-10.20) the activity centres around learning how to ask questions using the terms 'where', 'what', 'who' and so on. To start with, using a 'hangman' game, the teacher reviewed the vocabulary that children learnt before. The children are very enthusiastically engaged in the activity, many of them with English books of different kinds on their laps. Sitting on the carpet, in five rows of up to six children, they busily search in their books for the letters that make up the word in the question. The game takes about ten minutes, after which the teacher

moved on to asking children to think about the correct questions to be asked for the six sentences she had written on the board. After this was finished, they were asked to sit at their desks in the same groups to complete a worksheet that the teacher has prepared.

After English, the children move onto Batik Making (10.30-12.00) and Thai Language for an hour per day. At lunch-break, (12.00) the children eat together in the open-air canteen, after first saying a communal prayer of thanksgiving, and then play freely in the shady playground. While the kindergarten children take a nap after lunch, along with other older children, the Primary Four group move on with a range of activities: (1) Art, Music and Drama (Tuesdays), Sport (Wednesdays), and School Club (Thursdays). In the afternoon the children are also given a drink of milk and a short break. On Monday and Friday, for one hour children go to what the school calls Learning Support classes to do different activities ranging from playing games to completing unfinished works. Finally, the day ends and the children head home with bags of homework at 4.00.



Milk time

Teacher Saeng usually works on at school until around 6.00 in the evening, reviewing the day and planning with her co-teacher. Once or twice a week all the teachers gather for staff-meetings, professional development, brainstorming and sharing sessions between 4.00 and 5.00 PM.

5.3 What does this mean for the Review?

Through the detailed observation and interview conducted for this mini-case study, we can verify a number of key points:

1. *The intended curriculum (stated in policy statements and teacher planning) is strongly consistent with the observed transactions – teaching and learning.* The school day provides a balance of activities designed to facilitate children's learning in the intellectual, physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions. This includes the Low Brain Wave activities at the start of the day. Active learning principles are used in most activities in the classes with visible interaction between children.
2. *The atmosphere or 'climate' within the classroom is very conducive to learning.* Children are active in the process of learning; they work at different times individually, in small groups, and in the whole class. The mood is quiet and purposeful, relaxed and fun, but serious. Maintaining a consciously low-level of noise from both teachers and student seems to be the norm in this school. This is particularly noticeable in the morning when the day always begins with fifteen minutes of meditation and story telling by the teacher. Transition from one activity to another also features a low-level of noise. This may be the positive

impact of the meditation. This class consists of about 30 ten to eleven year-olds capable of sitting quietly on the carpet for average of at least 25 minutes before being sent to do their work on the table. As they are moving to work on the table, the noise level is still relatively low.

3. *Relationships are very supportive.* The working relationship between the teachers is serious, collegial and supportive. The relationships between children and teachers – and with one another – are respectful, friendly and productive. There are a minimal number of misbehaving children. Other than children giggling out of what seems to be an enjoyment from the activities given to them, the class is full of children seemingly staying on task either on individual or group work that is assigned to them. One incident of an upset child serves as an example of how the Thai way of solving the problem in practice; while Teacher Saeng continued teaching, Teacher Kratin spoke softly to the child, who was upset with his friend, and the matter was resolved with little fuss. The child was soon back in the group looking happily satisfied. Positive relationships between teacher and students permeate every interaction.
4. The model of school ritual that begins the day with the flag-raising ceremony and the singing of national anthem forges nationalism and reinforces group identity. It was reported that any child who for any reason comes late will be asked to observe the flag raising ceremony as well, often times just by him or herself.

Some additional interesting patterns emerged through the Observation: (1) questioning techniques, (2) use of worksheets in group work, (3) time allocation for children's work.

Teacher Saeng uses two techniques to question children: (1) a question is asked by the teacher and one child is picked out of the group that raise their hands ready for an answer. Those that do not raise their hand do not get picked, and (2) without any hesitation, the teacher will say 'No, it is wrong' responding to an incorrect answer given by the child. As to the kind of questions that are asked by the teachers in these two classes observed, it is difficult to judge whether they are those that foster high order thinking. From the questioning techniques used in these classes, it is evident that a question is normally short-lived; because the first answer given is either correct or wrong and it is the teacher who always gives the judgment. This suggests that teachers would benefit from further professional development focussed on questioning techniques and relating these to levels of thinking (e.g. Dalton: 1990, Frangenheim: 2005, Pohl: 1997, Langher: 1993)

Group work is practiced. However, it was noticeable in the group work observed in the two classes that the same worksheet was given to all children in the group. When asked whether children get to do different things in the group, it was reported that in project-based learning, children do different activities.

When allocating children time to work on this particular worksheet, the teacher does not seem to be aware that many children were finished quickly. There does not seem to be an awareness of the need to provide individual children with more challenges. Children who

have finished either chatted with their friends or some were seen reading books. It is also noteworthy that the worksheets provided were the same for all children.

There is thus room for further professional development of teachers to develop a capacity to individualize the curriculum, providing work specific to the needs of individual children. In this way, more advanced children can move ahead to more challenging activities whilst slower learners can be given the support they require. More thought to developing skills in collaborative group work would also benefit the classes. In this way, children can learn how to support one another in activities for which there is a collective, rather than individual outcome. (e.g. Bennett & Rolheiser: 2001, Bennett, Rolheiser & Stevahn: 1991, Dalton: 1990)



A morning in Primary Four Class

6. Recommendations - Food for Thought

6.1 Introduction

This external evaluation of Lamplaimat Pattana School was not mandated by a government agency or other institutional authority. The school more than adequately fulfils its legal reporting obligations as required by the Thai Education Act. The review was commissioned by the School Board as part of the school's culture of improvement. The Board and the school community wanted to know from external, independent reviewers to what extent the school is achieving its stated goals and what can be done to bring about improvement.

It should be noted here that the mandatory type of school review as found in some educational systems usually focuses on student outcomes. In such cases, where schools are held publicly accountable for student outcomes, they are more or less forced to start improvement efforts. As there is a high level of autonomy in the way LPMP is run and as student achievement in the government-required areas is demonstrably high, there is no external pressure to improve.

Rather, the pressure to improve is internal and part of the school culture of seeking better ways of doing things. Furthermore the school is at a point in its development which will be a significant marker in its history. That marker is that in two years' time (2008) the first intake of students will graduate from *prathom 6* (Primary Six) and move on to their secondary school education in *matayom 1* (Junior Secondary One)

The Terms of Reference required the reviewers to look beyond student outcomes. In response to the TOR – what can the school do in future to continue to improve? The review team decided not to provide recommendations, as is usual in an activity such as this. The team took the view that it is better to respond to this TOR (what can the school do in future to continue to improve?) by providing the Board and the wider audience of this report with 'food for thought' about future improvement. In other words, the Review provides some suggestions for consideration by the Board and the school, rather than 'recommendations'. It is up to the school how it responds to this 'food for thought'.

Food for thought – what is on the menu?

6.2 Resources - A Business Manager for LPMP?

Information about the school's activities in generating resources is contained in Section 4.5 of the report.

Considerable work has already gone into planning for independent resourcing of the school as the income from the James Clark Foundation reduces in annual increments and

finally finishes in 2014. Information about the school's activities in generating resources is contained in Section 4.5 of the report.

The work of planning for future resourcing of the school and winning resources is demanding. Currently, the main responsibility for this work is carried by the Headmaster. It is correct to say that in an autonomous school such as LPMP this is always going to be one of the main roles of the principal. However, the principal also has a critical role to play in the educational leadership of the school.

Food for thought:

The Board should consider the appointment of a full time Business Development Manager by March 2007. The appointee would seek new resources for the school and manage the operation of these resources in conjunction with the Headmaster.

6.3 Teaching & Learning

The school offers an innovative curriculum which effectively combines subject and discipline based elements (Mathematics, Science, English, Thai language) with an integrated approach (the projects)

The reviewers suggest that the project-based pedagogy could be improved so that the projects are more open-ended, inquiry-based, and place a greater emphasis on critical thinking skills.

Food for thought:

It is suggested that this enhancement could be achieved by teachers adopting the pedagogical approach of the *Teaching for Understanding Framework* as developed by Tina Blythe and Associates at Harvard University (1998). Such an approach could easily be taken up by the teaching staff. It would require comprehensive professional development on implementing and applying this methodology to the current units of work. This teacher development could be provided at no cost by Utas and could begin on site early in 2007.

6.4 Management & Governance

This is a well managed school. The reviewers found every aspect of management to be of high quality.

6.5 A maturing staff

Notwithstanding the high quality of management noted, the point will arrive where the school needs to consider some new strategies for managing the staff resource as the youthful staff members enter new stages in their lives. Inevitably, some will leave for a variety of personal and professional reasons. Consideration needs to be given to how to maintain the high level of dedication and collegiality which is such a strong feature of the school. For example, Senator Mechai suggests that the school may be able to provide housing in villages off-campus for married staff. This would certainly have a positive impact on outreach to the parents. It may also be possible to provide married quarters on the campus.

Food for thought:

The reviewers suggest that there are other ways to maintain the family-like staff culture and these should be explored by the staff and the Board when the time is appropriate.

6.6 Staff security of tenure

The Headmaster maintains a policy of transparency in providing information to the staff about the future resourcing and development of the school. This information-sharing keeps the staff well informed and should be maintained, as it is a strong feature of the team work evident as part of the school culture. One effect is that some staff members are concerned about the long-term financial viability of the school and feel uncertain about their long-term future in the school.

Food for thought:

The school should keep all teachers informed of progress in attaining the necessary level of resourcing.

6.7 Staff induction

To be a member of the staff during the establishment of a new school is a unique professional experience for any teacher. For the teachers who have travelled the journey of developing LPMP from its foundation to the present this is a very special experience as this is a very special school and they have had the opportunity to work with an outstanding educator, Mr Chaiyabang during the school's formative years. Their contribution to its formation has been significant. This experience will influence them for the rest of their professional lives.

As the school has expanded, new staff members have joined the team – they have been through the same rigorous selection process as the foundation staff. They are all academically well qualified. For most of them this is their first appointment. They cannot

have the experience of being foundation staff members but they will make an equal contribution to the school as do the foundation staff. The school needs to be mindful that although all staff-members are regarded as professional equals, new staff need special consideration in the form of a sensitively managed mentoring program as they become members of this special group of teachers.

Food for thought:

There is ‘food for thought’ here in the way new staff members are inducted into the teaching profession in general and into the professional culture of LPMP in particular. The Review Team would be prepared to provide suggestions as to how such a mentoring program could operate if the Board wishes to have such a plan.

6.8 Leadership succession

When the PDA and Mr James Clark selected Mr Chaiyabang to be the foundation Headmaster of LPMP they chose wisely. K. Wichian’s leadership of the school is outstanding.

School leadership is challenging and demanding. Although the departure of the foundation Headmaster is not imminent, The Board should begin to consider what will be done to replace the Headmaster when he eventually leaves the school. It is clearly recognised that Wichian has continued to develop and drive the vision of the school. The Board and the school community need to consider a succession plan so that the achievement of the vision will continue after the current Headmaster leaves.

One of the most significant events in the life of a school is a change in its leadership (Hargreaves: 2005). Wichian has taken steps to distribute many important leadership functions to senior staff – the review team observed this working well. This is an important step and is to be encouraged and expanded wherever possible.

Food for thought:

The Board should begin to consider what will be done to replace the Headmaster when he eventually leaves the school. The Board and the school community need to consider a succession plan so that the achievement of the vision will continue after the current Headmaster leaves.

6.9 Outreach Program

As the school’s reputation has spread – nationally and internationally - there has been an increasing number of visitors. Last year (2005-6) over 1000 visitors came to see the

school in action or to undertake professional development programs. These visits do not appear to be intrusive on classroom activities.

This extensive outreach program needs to be developed in a systematic way so that the program continues to address its core mission (education the children of Lamplimat) and to provide the valuable service it currently provides. Attention needs to be paid to the cost of the outreach program in terms of staff time and energy.

An expanded outreach program could include professional learning for teachers and other professionals, camps, sister-schools, adopting other schools, publishing (already underway), and the production of high quality professional development materials.

In order to influence government policy and to extend the ground-breaking work of the school it may be possible to build another school in another province.

Food for thought:

The reviewers suggest that the Board consider other strategies which might be used to influence national education policy such as forming links with local and national universities (a link already with Utas) for research and lobbying of policy makers

The development of the program could form part of the role of the Business Development Manager suggested above. This would include planning to resource an outreach program and commercial enterprises whilst maintaining the 'core business' of the school, so that the outreach program does not always rely on school visits.

6.10 School size

Despite the success of the school, the Review does not recommend that it be increased in size. One of the important factors in creating a positive school environment such as has been achieved in LPMP, is the size of the school. If, for example the projected enrolment of 234 students in a one-stream school with classes of 30 students, were to be doubled, making a two-stream school of 468, it would be very difficult to achieve the same positive climate and pattern of collegiality and family atmosphere.

Alternatives to consider are to 'adopt' other schools wishing to emulate the LPMP model or, as suggested above, to build a second school in another province.

Food for thought:

Do not increase the annual intake of the school beyond the present (2006) number.

6.11 A Secondary School?

The students who attend LPMP are receiving an education which is very different from the education received by their counterparts in government schools in the province. When they attend a regular government school there will be a significant period of adjustment to larger classes, fewer staff resources and a more teacher-centred approach in the classroom. This is not to say that they will not be nurtured by government school teachers or that they will not have the resilience to adjust to the different educational environment.

The reviewers' experience in other contexts suggests that, when students transfer from a school of a radically different type to a more standard school, this can be a very difficult period for the student and some do not adjust at all. An example is that of students transferring from a Steiner primary school to a regular government secondary school. The experience of Steiner schools is that it is better to build a secondary school for the students so their secondary school can go ahead in much the same way as their primary school

Food for thought:

The reviewers are aware that the PDA is considering the establishment of a secondary school and suggest that this is a very good idea. There will be many opportunities for close connection between the two schools including staff interaction and curriculum continuity.

6.12 School vision

The Review found a number of statements of vision and mission in different publications. These have developed as the school and its vision have evolved. Whilst, as noted, LPMP is clearly driven by a strong and unifying set of values and beliefs, it is now difficult to find a clear and simple statement of the schools vision. It would be useful as part of the school development planning process to first address this issue with all key stakeholders, creating a simple statement which captures all aspects of the schools vision (what it aims be) and mission (what it was established to do). This could include the addition of outreach programs and supporting enterprises as well as the core business of educating children in Lamplaimat.

Food for thought:

Although not clearly stated, it is obvious that an important part of the vision and mission is to firstly demonstrate that an alternative model of schooling can work for ordinary citizens in Thailand, and secondly to communicate that outcome and influence national policy and the broader development of Thai education.

7. Conclusion

In 2001, the Population and Community Development Association (PDA) established Lamplaimat Pattana School with the objective that it would be a school which would teach rural pupils all the necessary skills for becoming a good person. The Headmaster was given the task by the PDA and the James Clark Foundation to build a “good school”.

Five years on, LPMP is guided by the clear vision to provide an educational program which will help the students to become complete human beings.

The journey towards the achievement of the vision is being made possible by the curriculum and the pedagogy being founded on a new educational paradigm where the emphasis is on students learning how to access knowledge and pedagogy focused on developing students’ thinking. All of this is being achieved in an atmosphere of joyful learning.

The evidence provided by this report clearly indicates that learning is at the heart of the school. The well-led, highly professional team of teachers, administration and support staff is constantly seeking the best possible ways to enhance student learning.

The school will enter a new phase of its history in the next two years as its first intake of students complete their primary school education. The community will be watching their progress as they enter the next stage of their education and move towards taking their place in the community as adults.

This report provides “food for thought” for the school community as the school moves into a new stage of its development. The Board and other stakeholders may take up and act on some or all of the suggestions.

Whatever the educational future holds for the school, those responsible for its establishment and all who have contributed to its development have every right to feel proud of the school and what it is achieving for the community of Lamplaimat and Buriram – and more broadly for education in Thailand.

There is no doubt that this is a world-class school.

GJ Cairnduff
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Reviewers
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