



Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

# PRESS RELEASE

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**EMBARGOED TILL 19 APRIL 2012, 1.00PM**

## **190 SCHOOLS NOW OFFER NICHE OF EXCELLENCE TO ENRICH STUDENTS' EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE**

1. Nine primary schools and eight secondary schools have been awarded the Programme for School-Based Excellence and Niche Programme status respectively this year. Ms Sim Ann, Senior Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education and Minister of Law made the announcement today at a visit to Changkat Primary School, which has been awarded the Programme for School-Based Excellence in Basketball.

2. Of these 17 schools, two primary schools and two secondary schools are recognised for their second niche area of excellence. This brings the total number of schools with areas of excellence to 190<sup>1</sup> and the range of programmes offered to 87. The niche domains span across sports, uniformed groups, aesthetics, information and communications technology (ICT), character education, and environment education.

3. The Programme for School-Based excellence and Niche Programmes were introduced in 2005 to help schools to develop their strengths and niche areas. This is to encourage the schools to offer a diverse range of programmes to provide students with more opportunities to grow in different areas of excellence, and enrich their educational experience. Through their niche programmes, schools also develop in their students various skills such as teamwork, communication and creativity.

4. Taking into account the schools that have been awarded the Programme for School-Based Excellence and Niche Programme status this year, there are now 83 primary schools with the Programme for School-Based Excellence, and 50 secondary schools that are Niche Programme schools<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The 190 schools include Specialised Independent Schools, Specialised Schools, Independent Schools, Autonomous Schools and Junior Colleges.

<sup>2</sup> The other 57 schools, out of a total of 190 schools offering Niches of Excellence, are Specialised Independent Schools, Specialised Schools, Independent Schools, Autonomous Schools and Junior Colleges.

5. These schools receive additional funding support to further raise the quality and reach of their school-based programmes in the different niche areas. An initial developmental grant of up to \$150,000 over three years will be provided to the schools to build up one to two niches. A recurrent grant of up to \$50,000 per niche per year will also be given for schools to sustain and maintain their niches after the first three years.

## **PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOL-BASED EXCELLENCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS 2012**

6. The Programme for School-Based Excellence scheme enables the schools to develop different areas of excellence and provide more opportunities for our students. Students with particular strengths or interests will therefore be able to make more informed decisions about their choice of schools together with their parents. The school will also benefit from developing a strong identity and school culture so that students can build a sense of camaraderie and affinity with the school.

7. Applications are evaluated based on the strength of the niche, sustainability, the educational value of the programme, the reach of the programme in the school, and the involvement of stakeholders in the programme.

8. The nine primary schools that have been awarded the Programme for School-Based Excellence status in 2012 are:

<b>S/N</b>	<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>NICHE</b>
1.	Anglo-Chinese School (Junior)*	Creative Thinkers
2.	Catholic High School (Primary)	Volleyball
3.	Changkat Primary School	Basketball
4.	Edgefield Primary School	Dancesport
5.	Fengshan Primary School	Netball
6.	Hong Wen School*	Wushu
7.	Peiyong Primary School	Uniformed Groups
8.	St. Anthony's Primary School	Visual Arts
9.	Yangzheng Primary School	Uniformed Groups

\* This is the school's second niche area of excellence.

## **NICHE PROGRAMME SCHOOLS FOR 2012**

9. The Niche Programme supports mainstream secondary schools with good development programmes in their niches. These schools can admit up to 5% of their Secondary One intake on a discretionary basis through the Direct School Admissions exercise. This enables a more diverse range of student achievement and talents to be recognised.

10. Applications are evaluated based on the strength of the niche, sustainability, the educational value and the reach of the programme. The eight secondary schools that have been awarded the Niche Programme status in 2012 are:

S/N	SCHOOL	NICHE
1.	Canberra Secondary School	Digital Media
2.	Naval Base Secondary School	Visual Arts
3.	New Town Secondary School	Uniformed Groups
4.	Queenstown Secondary School	Uniformed Groups
5.	St. Andrew's Secondary School*	Band
6.	Teck Whye Secondary School	Hockey
7.	Unity Secondary School*	Uniformed Groups
8.	Woodgrove Secondary School	Environmental Education

\* This is the school's second niche area of excellence.

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