

ENHANCED CURRICULUM AT ASSUMPTION PATHWAY SCHOOL

1. From January 2009, Assumption Vocational Institute (AVI) will be transformed into Assumption Pathway School (APS) and run an enhanced programme for students who have failed the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) once or more.
2. AVI has been serving the community since 1938, starting out as the St Joseph's Trade School. It was renamed as Assumption Vocational Institute in 1994 and is managed by the St Gabriel's Foundation. As the only remaining Vocational Training Centre, AVI currently takes in students who have failed the PSLE three times as well as students who have prematurely left secondary school. Students need to be at least 14 years old to enrol into AVI, which currently offers a two-year vocational training programme for about 190 students¹.
3. In 2009, APS will have the capacity for 300 students, including the current students at AVI. When the refurbishment is completed in early 2011, APS expects to have the capacity for 700 students.

Application

4. Students who prematurely leave secondary schools will be admitted based on vacancies and suitability. The application period is from 3 Nov – 25 Nov 08. Applications by students who have failed the PSLE once will be considered based on the recommendations of their primary school principals. These applications will be accepted after the release of the PSLE results in 2008.

Enhanced Curriculum

5. APS has designed a new three to four-year programme to address the needs and abilities of students who fail PSLE once or more. APS will focus on providing students with the skills, confidence and learning abilities for them to progress in their education and careers and contribute to society. It will aim to prepare as many of its students as possible to progress to Institute of Technical Education (ITE), which offers Nitec and Higher Nitec courses for post-secondary students.
6. Students who failed PSLE once will be typically offered a 4-year programme and those who attempted twice or thrice will be typically offered a 3-year programme. Mainstream school leavers could offer a 3-year, 2-year or 1-year programme as shown in the progression chart below (Fig 1).

¹ Students who leave secondary school prematurely enrol into a one-year programme at AVI.

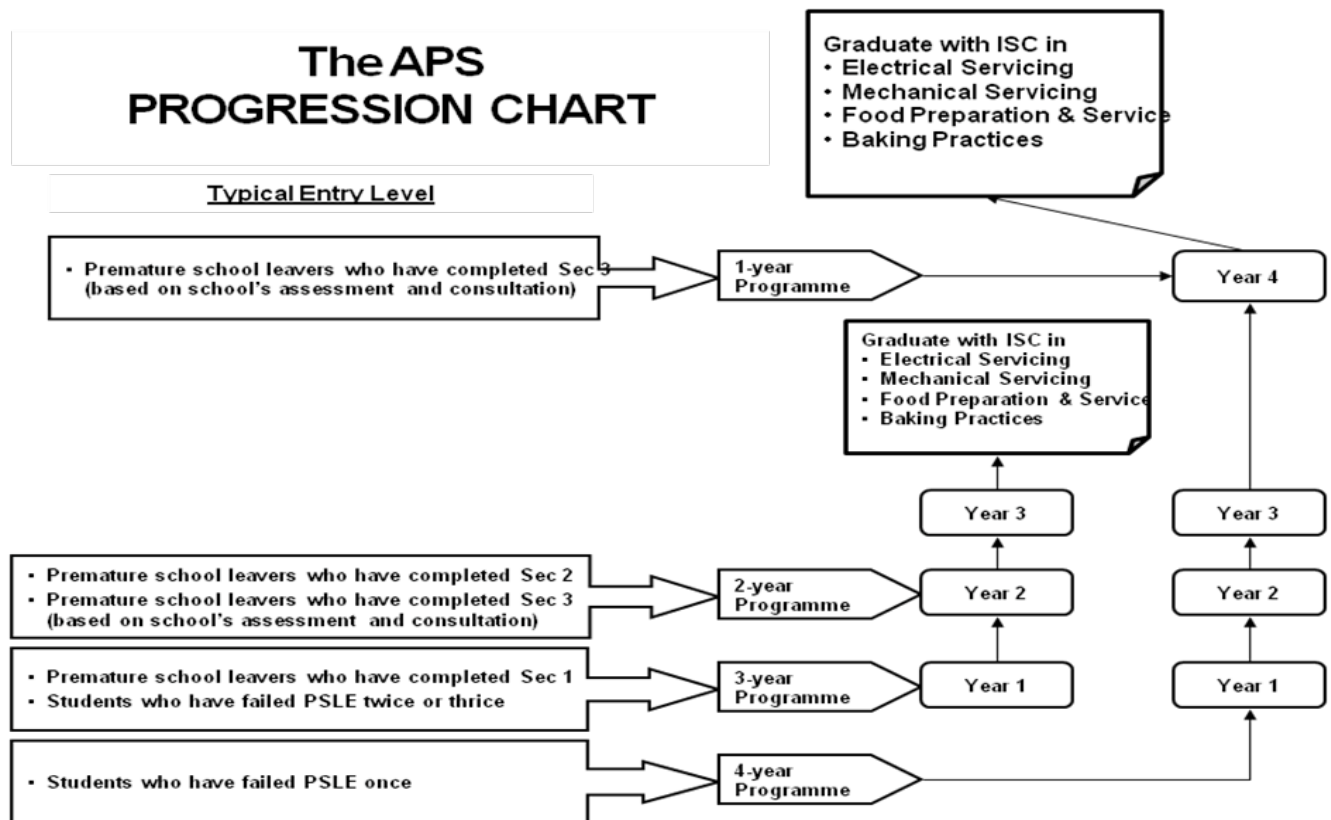


Fig 1

7. The key elements of the enhanced curriculum include:

a. Stronger Focus on Character Development.

Character development will take up a greater share of curriculum time. A focused programme called the Montfort Development Programme, will be introduced to emphasise service to the community, with exposure to sports, outdoor activities and the arts to help students build confidence and teamwork. Students will also be able to acquire life-skills through the experience of independent and communal living during a residential programme for two weeks a year.

b. Academic Foundation Programme to Level Up Students.

The enhanced programme will place greater emphasis on core competencies in English, Mathematics and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The school will adopt an experiential and hands-on approach to learning, which will also build on the experience and best practices of NorthLight School.

c. Improved Vocational Programme.

The school will have an improved vocational programme with strategic partnerships with leading companies in industry. This will provide students with work attachment opportunities and mentorship throughout their time in

the school. Depending on suitability and needs, students could specialise in more than one vocational area. This would provide students with more skills and choices for progression to ITE and for future employment. In addition to the current ITE Skills Certificate (ISC) courses in Electrical Servicing, Mechanical Servicing and Food Preparation & Service, APS will also introduce a new ISC course in Baking Practices.

8. Similar to the existing programme, graduates from APS will receive the ITE Skills Certificate. Graduates of APS can progress to further education at ITE, employment or apprenticeship at trade-based institutes.

School Staff

9. Mr Wee Tat Chuen, formerly Vice Principal of NorthLight School, will be appointed as the principal of APS with effect from Jan 09.

10. APS will have a good mix of MOE teachers and current AVI staff who share a passion for working with this group of students. The new school will also have school counsellors to provide support for the students. To date, APS has recruited 16 new staff. 10 teachers were seconded from MOE, while 4 administrative/counselling staff and 2 vocational teaching staff were recruited directly. In total, APS has 41 teaching staff currently.

11. The MOE-seconded teachers are trained and experienced teachers who were previously working in other schools. They are specialised in their respective areas, and will teach subjects like English, Mathematics, InfoComm Technology, etc. The vocational teaching staff are experienced and trained in their respective areas, with working experience in the relevant industries, e.g. hotel, restaurants. They will provide our students with first-hand practical training on the vocational skills like Baking Practices, Food Preparation etc.

12. As part of their professional development, these teachers will be sent for relevant in-service training courses as well as attachments to NorthLight School to understand and appreciate the profile of students and their learning styles better. APS teachers also went on school visits to learn about innovative learning strategies.

Location

13. APS will be located at AVI's current site. MOE will invest \$28 million to refurbish the site to meet the needs of the enhanced curriculum, including constructing new residential facilities for the character development programme.

14. For the interim period in 2009 and 2010, the school's residential programme will be held in MOE Labrador Adventure Centre. The MOE Labrador Adventure Centre was chosen as its facilities include rooms with beds and special rooms for various types of activities such as groupwork, recreation, etc.