

800 more places for IP track next year

With that, about 4,000 Sec 1 students can take the Integrated Programme route

Jane Ng

There will be about another 800 places in the Integrated Programme (IP) next year when six schools take in their first batch of Secondary 1 students who will skip the O-level examinations.

This will make a total of 18 schools, with about 4,000 Secondary 1 students on the IP route.

These academically stronger students will proceed directly to either the A levels or International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma at the end of six years.

Five secondary schools are offering the scheme for the first time, and Temasek Junior College is expanding its four-year programme to six years.

Three of the five schools starting the programme next year are working together to offer it jointly. Stu-



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Rachel Koh (left), 11, and Meghan Poh (centre), 12, have been offered a place in MGS' Integrated Programme next year. Catherine Liew, 12, prefers to take the O levels.

dents from St Nicholas Girls' School, Singapore Chinese Girls' School (SCGS) and Catholic High School will spend their first four years in their respective schools before moving on to a new junior college for their A levels.

Similarly, Methodist Girls' School (MGS) will partner Anglo-Chinese School (Independent), which already has the programme. MGS girls will move on to ACS (I) for the IB diploma.

The fifth, St Joseph's Institution (SJI), will start a junior college section for its six-year programme and take in girls at JC level from next year.

All five schools will continue to offer the O levels to the rest of their students.

They have also made some offers for the Integrated Programme via the Direct School Admission (DSA) exercise. They can offer up to half their vacancies this way, based on applicants' achievements, ahead of the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) results.

The Integrated Programme was started in 2004 to allow the top 10 per cent of primary school leavers

to skip the O levels and spend more time on broader learning experiences like research attachments and field trips.

Although the IP intake is for Secondary 1, the schools typically include more students in subsequent years. They admit students to the programme through the DSA exercise as well as the usual post-PSLE process.

SJI vice-principal Malcolm Wong, 41, said the school has been preparing since 2006 for the Integrated Programme with its talent development electives and has sent teachers for IB workshops.

It is taking in 125 Secondary 1 boys for the IP track and 80 boys and girls at JC1 for the diploma programme.

St Nicholas Girls' and Catholic High will each take in about 170 IP students next year, and SCGS, about 120. MGS will start with 60 and Temasek JC, 150.

Among those keen on the IB route is Olivia Chew, 16, a Secondary 4 student from CHIJ Secondary (Toa Payoh).

She said: "As the pioneer batch, I hope we will be able to initiate a lot of programmes that will help to set the tone for the new IB programme and help the programme to turn out to be successful."

Meghan Poh, 12, from Raffles Girls' Primary, has DSA offers from three schools, including MGS. She said she applied to MGS because she likes the broad-based IB diploma programme.

But not everyone is keen on the Integrated Programme. MGS head prefect Catherine Liew, 12, is sticking to the O-level route.

"I'm a relatively cautious person and prefer a tried-and-tested route. My parents are supportive so it was an easy decision to make," said the older daughter of two doctors.

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ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

From left: Olivia Chew, Nathaniel Wong, Thaddeus Lim and Dilys Hoh, all 16, have been offered a JC1 place in SJI's International Baccalaureate programme next year.

THE NEW

These schools will admit Secondary 1 students for the Integrated Programme in January, making a total of 18 schools offering it.

CHIJ St Nicholas Girls' School, Singapore Chinese Girls' School and Catholic High School

They are collaborating to offer the programme and their students will proceed to a new junior college after four years.

St Nicholas principal Tan Wai Lan said the schools have a strong tradition of producing well-rounded students, visionary leaders and a strong alumni network.

PROGRAMMES: Six more schools to admit Sec 1 students

They will offer two unique programmes – a world-readiness programme to prepare students for the global world and a passion pursuit programme to nurture students' love for learning beyond the classroom.

Methodist Girls' School

MGS will partner fellow Methodist school Anglo-Chinese School (Independent), which already offers the Integrated Programme. MGS girls will do their International Baccalaureate diploma at ACS (Independent) in Years 5 and 6.

The MGS programme will have ethics and values infused in lessons while preparing the girls for a global economy.

The curriculum will have an inter-disciplinary approach and there will be a focus on developing the girls' research and problem-solving skills.

St Joseph's Institution

The Catholic boys' school will start the Integrated Programme at Secondary 1 and also have a junior college section which will take in girls. Students will do the International Baccalaureate.

Its six-year programme will start with laying a strong academic foundation at the lower levels and develop students' interests and talents at a higher level. It will continue to focus on character development.

Temasek Junior College

Temasek JC currently offers a four-year programme, from Secondary 3 to JC 2. From January, it will have a six-year programme and start taking in students from Sec 1.

Principal Susan Leong said the school will continue building on its programme which is known for in-

ter-disciplinary and experiential learning.

The school has sent its teachers for training to handle the educational, social and emotional development of younger students.

The other schools with the Integrated Programme are: ACS (Independent), Dunman High, Hwa Chong Institution, Nanyang Girls' High, NUS High School of Maths and Science, Raffles Girls' School, Raffles Institution, River Valley High, National JC, Victoria JC, Victoria School and Cedar Girls' Secondary.