

Speech by CE at Ying Wa College Bicentenary gala dinner (English only) (with photos)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the Ying Wa College Bicentenary gala dinner today (December 2):

Reverend Lee (The Senior Missionary of London Missionary Society in Hong Kong, Reverend Lee Ching Chee), Reverend So (Chairman of School Management Committee, Reverend So Shing Yit), President Tsang (President of Ying Wa College Old Boys' Association, Mr Tsang Chiu Kwan), Principal Cheng (Principal of Ying Wa College, Mr Allan Cheng), teachers, students, alumni, ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening. I'm delighted to be here, to have this welcome opportunity to congratulate Ying Wa College on its bicentennial.

Actually before reading Ying Wa College's history, I did not understand why we could have a school in Hong Kong that would be celebrating its bicentennial. Founded in 1818 in Malacca, and rooted to Hong Kong since 1843 – just one year after Hong Kong's colonial beginnings – Ying Wa College is the oldest extant school in Hong Kong. To have survived – and thrived – for 200 years is in itself a rare achievement, in Hong Kong or anywhere else in the world. Such longevity made me curious as to what else came to life 200 years ago and is still very much with us today.

I am glad that the Government plays a part in the celebration of this significant milestone. The Hong Kong History Museum is staging an exhibition on the college, which will run until December 5. Hongkong Post also released a stamp sheetlet on the theme of "The Bicentenary of Ying Wa College" with associated philatelic products last month.

Like Hong Kong, Ying Wa College is a melding of East and West. In fact, "Ying Wa" is a translation of "Anglo-Chinese". And throughout its long history, the school has concentrated on English and Chinese literature and language, together with the Christian faith.

In October this year, when I visited Ying Wa Primary School, adjacent to Ying Wa College which was actually my second visit to the school in recent years, I toured the new campus annex, which is shared by the two schools. I came away impressed by the clear and compelling devotion to all-round development. Beyond the concentration on English-Chinese skills, there is a welcome emphasis on sports and sportsmanship, information technology and art, music and cultural appreciation, and innovation.

Indeed, last Sunday I was delighted to invite the award-winning Ying Wa Primary School Symphonic Band to perform in the Government House during the

open day. The weather might not be perfect on that day, and it did not stop the Band from turning in an impressive performance, which I and the other members of the public thoroughly enjoyed. With such amazing talent, it is no surprise that Ying Wa College is blessed with an illustrious orchestra, a band, a Chinese orchestra and a choir – and they have frequently performed in Hong Kong and all over the world.

In ensuring that its students are given a holistic education, Ying Wa College, its management and teachers, are equipping students with the skills, and sensibilities, to succeed in today's global economy.

My Government believes that our youth are Hong Kong's most valuable assets. That's why, since taking office, I have injected a total of \$8.3 billion into our annual operating expenditure on education. Education is our number one spender, accounting for \$84.6 billion in our 2018-19 Budget, or nearly 21 per cent of our annual recurrent expenditure. The funds will boost the quality of education in many areas. They include in particular a new recurrent Life-wide Learning Grant, starting in the next school year. This Grant will support schools in life-wide learning by organising more out-of-classroom experiential activities in a variety of curriculum areas, and they need not be confined to academic subjects. Physical and aesthetic development and values education can also benefit from the new Grant. I'm sure it will prove popular with holistic-centred schools such as Ying Wa College, encouraging students to become self-directed learners.

Once again, my congratulations to the school management committee, the principal and teachers for your dedicated efforts in bringing quality education to the students of Ying Wa College. I wish Ying Wa College continuing success and many more centenaries. As for the students, whatever it is you choose to do, I'm confident you will reward Hong Kong and yourselves with "steadfast faith, beneficent deeds".

Thank you very much.

