To broaden exposure to the sound of music our School participated in the 5th World Choir Games in Graz, Austria in the summer of 2008. The choir comprising forty-two DGS girls, accompanied by Mrs. Stella Lau, Headmistress of our School, gathered at Hong Kong International Airport on 7th July to embark on a memorable and eventful trip to Austria for the international choral event.

We stayed in Vienna for one day before moving on to Graz, the host city. At the Festive Opening Ceremony in Stadthalle, an integrated performance which featured a variety of musical forms was staged which kicked off the series of competitions. In the three days that followed, we had intensive rehearsals with Mr. Ronnie Cheng, our conductor. Despite feeling exhausted after each rehearsal, we all felt immense satisfaction that came at the end of each day from knowing that we have been part of a wonderful musical collaboration. Moreover, we felt that we achieved more than we had expected as we deepened our understanding of the four unique pieces, namely, ‘Adoramus’, ‘Rise Up, My Love, My Fair One’, ‘Spring Rain in the Southern Country’ and a very challenging contemporary composition called ‘Spinning Flax’.

The DGS DBS entourage in Graz

Senior Choir ready for take-off!

Conductor Ronnie Cheng giving advice with choir members
On 12 July we headed for the University of Graz for our competition, entitled Category 2, Youth Choirs of Equal Voices. On the same day, a group of singers comprising 14 girls and 14 boys from Diocesan Boys’ School also competed in the open category of Musica Sacra (Category 17) at Mariahilferkirche. That same evening, the Diocesan Choirs held a Gala Concert together with an Israeli Choir. Indeed choristers from both teams were fascinated by each other’s spectacular performances.

Results were announced on 13 July. Our choir was awarded a silver medal for attaining 77.38 points in Category 2, while the mixed choir captured a gold medal in Category 17 with a score of 88.38 (second only to the Stellenbosch University Choir from South Africa). We were delighted to receive the international judges’ acknowledgements, we realized that the experience itself was already a valuable reward. We left the Concert of Champions and the Closing Ceremony that evening, entranced by the brilliant musical performances by singing groups from various countries.

We visited Salzburg and Munich over the next two days before returning to Hong Kong. The 9-day trip was truly an enlightening and eye-opening experience which our girls treasured dearly. Not only did we gain insights into the world of music, we gained new friendships and bonding within the Diocesan Family and beyond that last a lifetime.
The Elderly Academy Percussion Programme

The elderly – what is your impression of them?

Perhaps for most of us, we view the elderly as people who are just plain old. Some might have negative impressions of old people as being less competent, more forgetful, and more stubborn; and assume that they would not be able to learn anything. Hence, we often conclude that they are not as capable as youngsters. However, our misguided impression of the elderly were totally dispelled after we took part in the percussion programme of the Elderly Academy held at School this summer.

The programme lasted from 25th to 29th August. During this relatively short period of time, we were given the chance to coach a group of elderly people in playing a variety of percussion instruments. First of all, we began with the basics – such as the way to hold a drumstick correctly. At first, we were all very worried that the elderly would have difficulty in grasping the techniques and the rhythm of the music. We were also reminded that they might not have good eyesight. Before the class, we rearranged the piece and simplified the scores to circles of different colors – using red to indicate a pause, blue to indicate start of play and green to indicate sustaining a sound.

It turned out that we had greatly underestimated their ability. Even though the majority of the group had never had any instrumental lessons before, they could sight-read the whole piece within the first lesson! The pace of their learning was exceptionally quick and we were very delighted to be able to enlighten them with more details of music, such as the dynamics of the piece. On the last day of the course when there was a performance session where they all played the piece “A Man of Determination” impressively.
Introduction to OLE and new clubs under OLE

Other Learning Experience
In line with the upcoming NSS reform put forward by the Hong Kong Education Bureau, our school has introduced a new system to complement learning in the academic sphere called Other Learning Experiences or OLE. This system replaces the original extra-curricular activities system (ECA), adding many new elements to the previous format. To provide readers with more information on OLE, we interviewed Mr. S. K. Lam, the OLE master.

Q: What is the rationale behind OLE? How did such an idea come about?
A: To complement the subjects of NSS (New Senior Secondary Curriculum), the OLE system was developed by the EDB (Education Bureau) as one of the three components of the NSS to provide learning experiences outside the classroom to students. Five areas of OLE; namely Moral and Civic Education, Community Service, Career-related Experiences, Aesthetic Development and Physical Development are covered by the vast range of activities offered by the school throughout the year. Acting as a supplement to the curriculum, the five target areas, which are projected from the traditional Chinese virtues「德、智、體、群、美」, enables the OLE system to foster all-around development of students, and allow students to gain experiences through which they could acquire various skills, whilst at the same time, discover and develop their potentials.

Q: How is the OLE system implemented at school?
A: An OLE team comprising nine teachers is set up this year to coordinate and prepare for the launching of the newly introduced system. Our first job was to develop an OLE curriculum for SS1 (Senior Secondary One) to SS3 students based upon the concepts of OLE as laid down by the EDB. With the combined efforts of several departments and teams, the OLE system began to take shape. Students may have the misconception that OLE means ECA (Extra-curricular Activities) lessons, but in fact it encompasses a much larger variety of activities, ranging from PE lessons to the OLE sharing day. The switch from the previous system, where clubs have most of their general meetings held during lunchtime, to the current ECA lessons which take place after lunch is a significant feature of OLE. This helps to provide better time management by putting OLE formally into the curriculum timetable. The essence of ECAs is left unscathed. The OLE allows students to enter fields according to their own interests, and provides a higher degree of flexibility and diversity in the events they participate in. In the first year, a total of 27 clubs would hold three general meetings in the first term, and four in the second and third terms.

Apart from OLE lessons, OLE are also offered outside lesson time to cover the five areas of OLE. For instance, religious knowledge lessons, talks on national education and citizenship and the OLE sharing day cover moral and civic education. Participation in community services would be more standardized to offer students equal opportunities to serve the community; careers talks, CEO visits and on-site job experiences cover career-related experiences; PE lessons and the Inter-house Athletics Meet cover physical development; whereas visual art lessons, drama and music activities are for aesthetic development.

The school realizes her responsibility to ensure that students take part in all five areas of activities, so that the whole-person development of students can be achieved, coinciding with the ultimate goal of the NSS.

Q: In your opinion, what advantages does the OLE system offer?
A: In the previous ECA system, all general meetings were held during lunchtime. This not only shortens the time for students to have their meals, but also limits students’ participation, as two or more clubs might hold their general meetings or teams might have their trainings during lunch. The new OLE system can help to alleviate the problem. All clubs now hold their general meetings during the ECA lesson; students can then choose clubs that they are most interested in to join, without clashing with other trainings. In addition, as students can only be a core member in one club in the OLE system, more students can join in the administration of clubs, and take up leadership posts.

13 new clubs and teams are brought in this year under the newly implemented OLE system, offering a full spectrum of activities for students to broaden their horizons and suit different interests. In this issue the Bowling Team and the Bridge Club are featured:
**Bowling Team**
The purpose of establishing this team is to promote the sport of bowling to the whole school, and to provide a chance for students who are interested in the sport to learn and participate in inter-school bowling competitions. The team currently consists of 17 members.

The bowling team has training sessions every Tuesdays after school from 4:30p.m. to 6:00p.m. Training sessions are held at Mei Foo Bowling World. In these training sessions, the coach typically spends half an hour briefing members about theoretical knowledge, and the rest of the time on practical training. Team members are required to do repetitive steps and refine their postures on an empty lane till they reach perfection. Only until the coach is fully satisfied are members then allowed to actually bowl with pins.

The bowling team hopes that more and more skilled bowlers will be discovered and trained, and more experiences gained through their participation in competitions.

**Bridge Club**
The Diocesan Girls’ School Bridge Club is newly established to promote Contract Bridge in the school. Contract Bridge is a trick-taking card game of skill and chance which requires cooperation. It is a mental sport played by four players, who form two partnerships. There are also inter-school competitions for Bridge.

The Bridge Club provides a platform for students to learn and experience this traditional and interesting card game. Through playing Bridge, students can further develop their logical thinking skills and enhance interpersonal relationships. Students are also encouraged to cooperate with one another during the game.
拔萃女書院「改革開放三十年專題研習」

活動簡介

國家自改革開放以來，在政治、社會、民生、經濟等各方面均有長足的發展，國家的影響力日形重要。香港回歸祖國後，與內地根脈相連。身處香港的學生，現可從不同途徑親身認識國家歷史、文化及各方面的最新發展，建立他們對國家的認同和情感。

今年適逢改革開放三十年，為讓學生把握這良好機遇，深入認識國家近年在各方面的發展，並且探索改革開放的前路，以及對內地、香港、以至國際社會的影響，本校安排全校學生參與「改革開放三十年專題研習計劃」，讓學生發展自主學習的能力和發揮創意，並關心國家的發展趨向，探討改革開放為內地社會帶來的變動、機遇和挑戰。

是次專題研習計劃共分兩個階段：第一階段是專題報告研習；第二階段為專題研習分享日。二零零八年七月至九月期間，全校學生以小組形式進行專題研習。中一至中四及部分中五、中六學生合共152組，每組由一位老師指導。初中同學研習的主題為「感受與見證」，讓學生探討改革開放為人們生活面貌帶來的變動；而高中同學則以「關注開來」為主題，探討國家自改革開放以來在不同範疇的發展，以及未來的趨向。學生根據個人的興趣及專長，於政治、社會、民生、經濟、科技、藝術、教育、文化、體育運動等不同範疇中選出專題研習的範圍，自行設定研習課題，並完成有關專題研習。

北京師範大學第二附屬中學師生向潘永華部長及劉校長介紹其專題研習。

劉校長致送感謝狀予潘永華部長。

同學們在課室內專心聆聽小組匯報。
為加深學生對國家改革開放三十年的認識，學校於二零零八年六月至十月期間，分別邀請了《香港日報》副總編輯馬仲賢先生及外交部駐港特派員公署發言人宋榮華先生蒞臨本校，就「改革開放·大國崛起」及「中國外交核心元素」兩課題作演講。此外，本校亦為學生安排「新一代人——鄭小平」專題展覽，以及播放香港電台《鏗鏘集》有關「改革開放三十年」的資料（包括「火龍內的聲音」、「走出珠海」等），讓學生對國家改革開放三十年的改變及影響有不同層面的認知。

校方於二零零八年十月三十一日舉辦「改革開放三十年專題研習」分享日，讓學生有機會向全校師生及家長展示數月以來的學習成果。學校很榮幸邀請到中央人民政府駐香港特別行政區聯絡辦公室教育科技部部長潘永華先生蒞臨本校作主禮嘉賓。同時我校亦得到內地各友校的鼎力支持，積極參與，就祖國改革開放三十年的成就作交流分享，彼此冀希學習。

學校亦推薦部分表現突出的專題研習隊伍參加由香港教育局與中國歷史博物館聯合舉辦的「改革開放三十年專題研習獎勵計劃」。本校的高中組隊伍及初中組隊伍作品「外商在中國」及「改革開放三十年以來中國電影選材與社會背景的關係」均被評判團選定為入圍作品，兩組參賽隊伍分別通過面試並獲得優等獎項，同學更獲邀參加南京、上海學習交流團（二零零八年十二月廿二日至廿六日舉行）。本校其餘參賽隊伍亦達到良好水平而獲得奬狀，進一步肯定同學努力的成果。

是次專題研習計劃已圓滿結束，希望同學將來繼續把握學習的良機，積極參與各項國情教育活動，為祖國的繁榮昌盛作出貢獻。