

An int'l curriculum with Singapore flavour on M'sian soil

Excelsior International School, managed by Raffles Campus, also has no restrictions on number of local students enrolled for international curriculum. By **MINDY TAN**

UNLIKE other international schools in Malaysia, Excelsior International School, which is managed by Raffles Campus, does not offer the national curriculum.

"From the onset, we have indicated to the authorities that our expertise lies in international education and as we have no knowledge nor experience in the national curriculum, we would only be prepared to offer the international curriculum," says Ng Boon Yew, chairman and chief executive officer of Raffles Campus.

What is also significant about Excelsior International School, which is located in Bandar Seri Alam, a part of the Eastern Corridor of Iskandar Malaysia, is that the school has no restrictions on the number of local students enrolled for the international curriculum.

"Many of the international schools in Johor offer both the national and international streams and, therefore, in our view, lack focus," notes Mr Ng.

Excelsior International School offers only the Cambridge University's International General Certificate for Secondary Education and the Interna-

tional Baccalaureate (IB) curricula, and these are infused with elements of the Singapore curriculum in mathematics and science.

"Our campus has been specifically designed from ground zero to provide for facilities that are required to effectively deliver our curriculum and the education philosophies which we embrace - to develop every student holistically in the three key pillars - academic, sports and arts," says Mr Ng.

To that end, the school, which has a built-up area of over 320,000 square feet, boasts a suite of facilities that include a full-sized soccer field and two swimming pools and tennis courts, as well as a range of advanced educational tools including advanced information technology (IT), science and multimedia laboratories, and specialist facilities for dance, drama, music, and art.

When this flagship campus opened in September last year, the total enrolment of 200 students comprised about 65 per cent Malaysians. The remaining 35 per cent were mainly British, American, European, Japanese, Singaporean, Australian and Korean students.

The campus in Malaysia is current-



Mr Ng: Says Raffles Campus aims to collaborate with parties with the passion and commitment to education for the longer term and who embrace social responsibility as a key element of their corporate philosophy and mission

ly the only school managed by Raffles Campus Singapore, but the group has extensive experience in managing schools around the world.

Raffles Campus opened and managed its first campus in Dubai in September 2006, along with four pre-schools, even before it opened its campus in Singapore in 2007.

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"By 2009 (even after the onslaught of the global financial crisis that swept across Dubai), we had an enrolment of about 2,000 students in Dubai and 250 students in Singapore," notes Mr Ng.

In 2010, the owner of the schools decided to dispose of its interest in the education business. Raffles Cam-

pus Foundation Limited, a Singapore-based not-for-profit organisation, then supported the management buyout of the operations in Singapore, which comprised the Singapore campus. The latter was opened in 2007.

The Singapore campus was disposed in June 2011, following the decision of Raffles Campus Foundation Limited to reposition Raffles Campus to focus in key developing countries in the Asian region.

Separately, Raffles Campus also assisted Gomer Education Foundation in the establishment of Raffles International School in India.

Raffles Campus plans to manage and operate another five campuses in the next eight to 10 years. While the focus will be in the Asian region, it's

not ruling out markets it has previous experience in, such as the Middle East.

"Because of our prior experience in the UAE (United Arab Emirates), we are currently in discussions with various parties who have approached us to return to the Middle East. This would also be an obvious destination for us in the light of our experience operating in that region," says Mr Ng.

"Essentially, our aim is to collaborate with parties with the passion and commitment to education for the longer term and who embrace social responsibility as a key element of their corporate philosophies and missions," he says.

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