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River Valley High finds a home

By Shuli Sudderuddin

After moving seven times since it first opened in 1956, River Valley High School has finally found a permanent home: a 7.6ha campus in Boon Lay Avenue.

The brand-new campus of the Integrated Programme school, which has about 2,500 students this year, cost \$79 million and had its ground-breaking ceremony in January 2008.

Integrated Programme students bypass the O levels for the A-level or International Baccalaureate examinations.

More than 3,000 students, guests, staff and alumni ushered in the new year at the new campus yesterday with Best Foot Forward, a 17km running and walking relay from the school's former holding campus in Malan Road off Alexandra Road to its new campus.

A holding campus is one in which schools are located temporarily while waiting to move to a permanent location.

Madam Ho Geok Choo, an MP for West Coast GRC who was the event's guest of honour, said the move to the new campus will enable the school to implement its Integrated Programme in full.

The school's new facilities include specialised science laboratories such as a mechatronics lab for physics, a performing arts centre with an 850-seat auditorium, and a 500-bed student hostel for local and international students as well as students from other schools.

Two hundred beds at the hostel have been taken up, with the majority going to international students.

Principal Koh Yong Chiah said the hostel will allow students to develop a global perspective when it hosts students from other countries, and will allow local students to interact with others from around the world.

He also talked about a five-year plan which is being drafted for the school.

Plans include turning physical education and co-curricular activities into character development programmes, using Mandarin to teach such character development programmes so as to improve bilingualism, and enhancing the school's relationship with parents.

Students were thrilled with the new school.

Tan Pei En, 17, who is in Year 6, has moved into the school hostel to experience life away from home.

'I wanted to get some new experiences and learn how to be independent,' she said.

'I'm also excited about interacting with international students.'

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