

New specialised school set to accept applicants

School of Science and Technology will open in 2010 with 200 students

By JALEELAH ABU BAKER

SINGAPORE'S fourth specialised independent school will begin accepting applicants in May.

The school will be run at a temporary site along Clementi Avenue 6 when it

opens next year.

The School of Science and Technology (SST) will take in 200 students via the Direct School Admissions scheme, which will run until August.

It will hold an open house at the former Clementi North Primary School along Clementi Avenue 6 on May 23 and 25 for interested students and parents.

Students admitted to it will undergo a four-year programme leading to the O levels.

They will each take up to two applied subjects on top of seven to eight regular

O-level subjects.

The applied subjects are: media studies, design studies, fundamentals of electronics, environmental science and technology, and biotechnology.

The SST will move to a permanent site at the junction of Clementi Road and Commonwealth Avenue West in January 2011.

The school aims to nurture students with inventive minds and entrepreneurial skills.

Its principal, Mr Chua Chor Heat, 42, the former head of Ngee Ann Secondary

School, said: "We are looking at students who have the academic ability to cope with a rigorous curriculum, and also those who have the inclination and aptitude for applied learning."

Students will be chosen based on their achievements or performance in camps, not their results in the Primary School Leaving Examination.

To allow closer interaction with teachers, class sizes will be small: between 20 and 25 students each.

The school's board, comprising leading entrepreneurs, technopreneurs and academics, reflects its focus.

It is led by Nanyang Technological University president Su Goming, and includes Mr Indrajit Singh, chief executive officer (CEO) of Infiniti Solutions, an established company in Singapore's semiconductor industry; and Mr Tang Kin Fui, Sembcorp Industries' group president and CEO.

Said Mr Singh: "We have industry and working experience. So the role of the board is to inject ideas that will be trans-

lated into the school's curriculum. We will be working closely with the school on this."

Dr Su emphasised that students in the new school would be taught skills that would take them beyond just building businesses.

The best years for teaching such skills are when students are in their teens, he added.

"These students are at the golden age to be developed. They are still asking questions, and don't know there's a certain way of doing this and doing that. They can think out of the box," said Dr Su.

The setting up of the SST, announced in Parliament last year, comes after three similar efforts aimed at paying special attention to students who display talent in different areas.

The first, the Singapore Sports School, opened in 2004. It was followed by the NUS High School of Mathematics and Science in 2005, and the School of the Arts last year.

jaleelah@spg.com.sg