

# Chapter 1: Background

The 21st century is characterised by the availability of abundant information, advanced technology, a rapidly changing society, greater convenience in daily lives, and keener international competition. In response to these changes, our Education Reform should aim at nurturing in the new generation characteristics and abilities capable of meeting the challenges of the new century. With this in mind, the EC embarked on an in-depth review of the education system in Hong Kong in 1998. The review, covering the curriculum, academic structure, admission system, school places allocation system and assessment mechanism at various stages of education, was completed in two years. Following extensive public consultation, the EC submitted to the Government a detailed report on the reform proposals for our education system in September 2000. In his Policy Address delivered in October the same year, the Chief Executive endorsed all the recommendations and announced a timetable for implementing the reform measures.

Quality and quantity are of equal importance in reforming the education system. Our reform measures therefore focus both on increasing post-secondary education opportunities and improving the quality of education. The objective is to provide students with a good learning environment and diversified learning. By so doing, all students will have the opportunity to attain proper and all-round development. Education Reform must be student-focussed. The aim of the reform is to develop the potential and personalities of students. This student-focused spirit underlines the education and curriculum reforms, improvement to the learning environment and enhancement of teachers training.

## Key Areas of the Education Reform

As the Education Reform covers a wide range of complex issues, it is necessary to clearly define the division of responsibilities and closely monitor the progress of each area in order to facilitate effective co-ordination of the reform efforts. Based on the blueprint for Education Reform, the EC has consolidated the reform efforts into seven key areas. They include curriculum reform, language education, support for schools, professional development, admission systems, assessment mechanisms and increase in post-secondary education opportunities.