

# Inspection Report

La Salle College

Address of School : 18, La Salle Road,  
Kowloon City, Kowloon  
Inspection Period : 10 to 18 April 2002



Quality Assurance Division  
Education Department

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**Education Department  
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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 School mission

*The school states its mission as follows:*

- Faithful to the spirit of our Founder, St. John Baptist De La Salle, La Salle College is committed to providing high quality human education for the whole person infused with Christian values.
- In our caring community, we value each boy as a child of God with an eternal destiny. We pay special attention to those less gifted and disadvantaged.
- Together with the family and the civic community, we seek to empower our students to realize their full potential and to be open and generous in the service of others.
- We commit ourselves to this mission in the Lasallian Spirit of Faith, Zeal and Association.

Mission Characteristics

- In our educational mission to the young, Lasallian schools should be characterized by
  - respect for each student as a unique person;
  - a healthy community spirit among the administration, staff and students;
  - quality education;
  - a Christian spirit;
  - openness to all, the poor, the rich, the neglected;
  - dedicated teachers who see their roles more as a vocation than a job;
  - a knowledge and love of St. John Baptist De La Salle.

*(Annual School Plan 2001-02)*

## 1.2 Basic information about the school

- This is a subsidized whole-day secondary grammar school for boys. The school is sponsored by The Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers). The school opened its door to the first students in December 1931 and went into full swing in 1932. It celebrated its 70th Anniversary in the current year.
- The school building stands seven storeys high with four blocks surrounding two quadrangles. The school houses 43 classrooms, 4

general purpose rooms, 12 special purpose rooms, 2 lecture theatres, 1 auditorium, 1 library and study room, 8 science laboratories, 1 language laboratory, 3 computer classrooms and 1 Multi-media Learning Centre. All rooms are centrally air-conditioned and have double-glazed windows.

- The school is equipped with athletic facilities. These include an Olympic size swimming pool, a 400-metre all weather track, a standard sized astro-turf football pitch, a large modern gymnasium, 2 squash courts, 2 tennis courts, 2 basketball courts, an outdoor volleyball court, as well as a physical fitness centre.
- The school adopts English as the medium of instruction except for Chinese-related subjects.
- The timetable follows a six-day cycle. At S1-3, Music, Art and Design and Design and Technology are offered up to S2 while Putonghua is offered up to S3. At S3, Science is replaced by Physics, Chemistry and Biology. At S4-7, classes are streamed into Arts, Social Science and Science streams and subjects like Information Technology, Commerce, Principles of Accounts are offered. Religious Studies and Physical Education are required subjects up to S7 while French is offered as an alternative to Chinese Language.
- In the current school year (2001-2002), there are 43 classes with 1750 students. Details are as follows:

Level	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	Total
No of Classes	7	7	7	7	7	4	4	43
Total Enrolment	312	309	305	284	267	146	127	1750

- With 82 members on the teaching staff (including the Principal, 2 teachers employed under the Enhanced Native-Speaking English Teacher Scheme, a librarian, an IT Coordinator and 6 teachers for remedial teaching, counselling and extra-curricular activities), the teacher-student ratio is 1:21.3. There are also 29 members on the non-teaching staff (comprising 4 laboratory technicians, 7 clerical staff, 16 janitors, 2 teaching assistants). There is support from a social worker who is normally at school for 4 days a week.

### 1.3 Inspection methodology

- The inspection took place from 10 to 18 April 2002. Thirteen inspectors, together with a lay member, conducted various activities to gather information about the school.

*Before the actual inspection, the team:*

- scrutinized documents provided by the school and relevant information available from various sections of the Education Department;
- paid a preparatory visit to the school on 13 March 2002 to present and clarify issues regarding the quality assurance inspection framework and processes;
- held a meeting with parents in the afternoon of 9 March 2002 to solicit their views on the school. The meeting, to which all parents were invited, was attended by 180 parents; and
- issued pre-inspection questionnaires to all members of the teaching and non-teaching staff as well as a random sample of 164 parents and students to collect more views. The response rates were 48%, 69%, 82% and 82% respectively.

*During the inspection:*

- 69 lessons taught by 58 teachers were observed. These lessons were from S1 to S4 and S6. The following subjects under 8 Key Learning Areas were inspected:

<b>KLA</b>	<b>Chi. Lang Ed.</b>	<b>Eng. Lang. Ed.</b>	<b>Maths Ed.</b>	<b>P.S.H. Ed.</b>	<b>Sci. Ed.</b>	<b>Tech. Ed.</b>	<b>Arts Ed.</b>	<b>P.E.</b>
<b>Subjects Inspected</b>	Chinese Language, Chinese Language & Culture.	English Language, Use of English.	Mathematics, Pure Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Mathematics and Statistics.	EPA, Economics.	Physics, Biology, Science.	Design and Technology, Computer Literacy, Computer Studies, Computer Applications.	Art and Design.	Physical Education.

- In addition, a total of 9 lessons (covering an additional 8 teachers) in Religious Studies, French, Commerce, Putonghua and History were also observed to get a general impression of how the subjects were taught, and these lessons were not covered in this report.
- Formal and informal meetings were also conducted. Interviews and discussions were held with the senior management (namely, members of the School Management Committee, the Principal, Vice-Principals, members of the School Executive Committee), students, parents, teachers, laboratory technicians, the librarian, the school social worker, clerical staff and janitors.
- Sample of students' work and examination papers were scrutinized; and
- Students' activities were observed.

## 2. Management and Organisation of the School

### 2.1 Leadership

- The Principal, serving as the supervisor of the school as well, was effective in creating an environment conducive to continuous school development to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Fully aware of the traditions of the school and opportunities that were opened by the current education reforms, he had exercised professional judgement and demonstrated effective managerial skills in breaking new grounds for the benefit of the students. Within his two-year principalship, he had succeeded in re-organising former teams and panels to streamline and delineate roles and functions of the staff, creating new teams to expand on developmental strategy and opportunities, identifying clear goals for development and setting standards of performance expected of the staff and students. In the process of change, he emphasized shared Lasallian principles and vision - faith, zeal, commitment - among all major stakeholders to enforce unity in spirit and valued staff views to gain consensus and mutual trust. His vision to lead the school towards higher goals was respected by the students and staff alike.
- The School Management Committee (SMC), comprising appropriate representatives from the stakeholders of the school, worked well as a team to direct the school in times of change. The SMC as a whole was proud of the school tradition, yet aware of issues confronting them (for example that of succession) and the need for change and development. They were dedicated to uphold their shared vision on all-round development of the students and were sensitive to opportunities for school development expounded in the current reform. The SMC was well informed of the school matters and exercised proper judgement on the course and strategy for change. Building on the strong link maintained by the Principal (who served as the chairman of the SMC as well), the SMC directed and supported the School Executive Committee (SEC) well in the implementation of policies.
- The SEC, comprising the Principal, the two Vice-principals, senior teachers and an elected teacher-representative, attended to the implementation of school policies. Led by the Principal, the SEC devised clear goals and appropriate strategies for implementation. Conscious effort was made in building up trust and understanding and the teachers were well consulted to ensure that the rationale for policies and strategies adopted was explained. Teachers' participation in policy-decision was fostered and most teachers felt empowered.
- The Vice-principals of the school were both past students and had served the school for a number of years. They were loyal to the school and respected the traditions of the school. They were well aware of the demands placed on them in the wave of education reforms and were

ready to respond to change. In order for the roles of the Vice-principals to be strengthened, the Vice-principals should enhance their functions and skills in co-ordinating planning and implementation of school policies discharged by teams and units under their charge. A more active role in leadership could also be fostered through delegated authority, proactive participation in leadership and mutual discussion and sharing.

- The middle managers had received relevant training in their area of expertise and were experienced. Some of them even displayed effective skills in management. Within some panels, there were plenty of informal discussions and collaboration was sustained through joint effort in planning and peer observation. Systematic planning and review was, however, still at an infant stage in most. Leadership of middle managers should be strengthened to ensure effective implementation of school policies, for example, to have appropriate delegated authority, to serve as the bridge in giving meaning to policies adopted and to conduct systematic evaluation.

## **2.2 Planning and administration**

- The school mission statement was clearly reflected in all relevant school documents (handbooks for teachers, students and parents, school prospectus and profile, annual school report, school magazine etc.). All staff, parents and students were familiarised with the school values of ‘zeal, faith and community’. The school goals were in alignment with the current education aims and the philosophy that every individual should be enabled to pursue all-round education through life-long learning had been the kernel of the school education.
- School-based management was well maintained in the school. The school was sponsored by the ‘The Brothers of the Christian Schools (De La Salle Brothers)’. It was governed and directed by the SMC comprising the Principal (who was also the supervisor), three Christian Brothers, three senior teaching staff members, an Old Boys’ Association representative, a Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) representative and a La Salle Foundation representative. The composition enabled participation of all major stakeholders in the formulation of school policy and in sustaining continuity in the advocacy of values and beliefs at the school level.
- At the operation level, the school was led by the SEC that was responsible for the implementation of policies directed by the SMC. Views of the teachers on school policies were sought and responded to with the presence of an elected teacher representative at the SEC. This ensured transparency in the policy decision process and fostered communication between the management and the teachers.
- The school structure was newly re-organised and it provided the framework for more effective organisation of tasks for school development. With the creation of the School Administration, the Pastoral

Council and the Academic Council, the Principal and the two Vice-principals were each discharged with responsibilities in the Administrative, Pastoral and Academic domain. The lines of control and delineation of roles and functions of various teams and panels were made clearer. Further clarification of functions of teams under the three arms, however, would be beneficial to streamline tasks and responsibilities. New teams (for example the Action Research Team) had been formed to identify developmental opportunities while functions of teams and panels in the Academic domain were reinforced to address curriculum initiatives expounded in the current reform. There were teams discharged with maintenance functions. Traditions and procedures inherited, however, could be further refined in support of school development and improvement.

- Planning at the school level was making progress. In the past three years, the school had devised clear targets (annual concern), in consultation with teachers, for whole-school development and annual reports on achievements were produced. These targets were set in the light of current reform measures, the school mission and the needs of the students (for example IT - information technology in learning and teaching, religious education and use of English as the medium of instruction). Whole-school developmental planning co-ordinated by the School Administration, the Pastoral and the Academic Councils was, however, limited at the present stage and should be strengthened. At the team and panel level, yearly developmental plans were required and amongst the Pastoral teams, themes were drawn up to better co-ordinate the formulation of plans. Most of the development plans, however, did not align with the school targets and themes. Neither was planning fully made use of for enhancement of effectiveness of teams and panels. Systematic planning and review at the school and team/panel level should be fostered to sustain continuous development and improvement. More collaboration within and across teams and panels should be encouraged in the process to ensure a co-ordinated whole-school approach in development and improvement.
- School policies were well defined and documented. There were clear guidelines and procedures on all aspects of school operation. Relevant materials on the current reform were made available for teachers' reference. Roles and responsibilities of panel heads and teachers were clearly stated in the teachers' handbook and staff conduct was emphasised. Clearer roles and duties for various post-holders could be drawn up in order that their functions could be made explicit.
- General administration of the school was good. Records were systematically kept and filed and they were made accessible to teachers, for example, school circular. Data on students were attended to through the School Administration and Management System (SAMS) with regular updating. Records on students' participation in Extra-curricular Activities (ECA) and teachers' participation in staff development programme could be built up to support a more comprehensive data-base for school reference. Proper attention was given to contingency measures

with all rules and procedures governing safety clearly written. The school also made good use of IT in informing the public about its developments.

### **2.3 Staff management**

- The Principal provided effective professional leadership in the management of staff. He was well versed with the curriculum reform and commanded good knowledge of the quality of learning and teaching in the school. While pressure was exerted with proper standards set on performance and monitoring practices, the Principal was considerate and sensitive to the need to support teachers. Staff welfare and development was valued and the Principal took special care to meet staff regularly on an individual basis. Emphasis was also placed on rejuvenating the values of a Lasallian teacher - being dedicated and committed - to reinforce the mission of teaching.
- Strong support in the building of team spirit amongst teachers was rendered by the teachers' representatives who worked hard to achieve this goal. Amongst some panels where there was marked collaboration encouraged by their leaders, team spirit was high and the team could turn threats to opportunities when confronting change. The two councils led by the Vice-principals were seen to be proper organisations in managing changes and more collaborative measures initiated by the Vice-principals would be beneficial.
- The staff was in general satisfied with the deployment of both teaching and non-teaching duties. Most deployment regarding non-teaching duties worked on a voluntary basis with teachers' preference solicited through questionnaires at the beginning of the year. Election to the post also prevailed. Appointment to the post of co-ordinators, however, was negotiated between the management and the teachers and careful consideration was made in terms of teachers' expertise and experience. In order that staff capacity in the delivery of required tasks (for example tasks related to support of students) be progressively enhanced and that they could take an active role in participation, a more strategic deployment mechanism and procedure would be beneficial. Moreover, in order to sustain the momentum and scope of change, delegated authority to various levels of management could be enforced. Management training for these leaders would be necessary to scale up school-based management.
- A harmonious relationship was maintained between the teaching and the non-teaching staff. The school secretaries supported the management well and responded favourably to changes required of them, for example, calculation of teachers' salary. Measures had also been taken by the clerical staff to escalate support for the teaching staff. The laboratory technicians were helpful and carried out their respective duties satisfactorily. They were proactive in communicating with teachers to render effective support. The janitor staff was hardworking and was

generally happy to work in the school.

- The school had attached importance to staff development and continuous learning was encouraged. A critical mass that was far-sighted, committed and proactive had been built up. These teachers had made possible the implementation of reform programmes in their respective areas. At the school level, staff views on training needs were collected to plan for staff development programmes while at the team and panel level, staff participation in seminars and workshops was encouraged. Appropriate strategies had been taken to manage staff apprehension in the introduction of the appraisal system and consultancy service was bought to enhance the staff's understanding of the rationale behind performance appraisal. All new staff was given a comprehensive induction programme and mentors were assigned to render assistance. To further support the staff in meeting new requirements inherent in the current reform programme, the school could devise planning to enhance management skills of middle managers and foster school-based collaboration within and across teams and panels to equip teachers better in delivering their professional duties. There was also the need to maintain a data-base on teachers' training to support human resource management.
- The staff appraisal system had been introduced and the staff was positive about the need for performance management. This was achieved through effective strategy taken in launching the policy. Staff was led to see the value of the system as both making teachers accountable for their performance and offering them opportunities for self-enhancement. The system was made transparent and teachers participated actively in the formulation of appraisal procedures, mechanisms and tools. This bolstered ownership and support from the teachers and fostered the need for accountability in the school. Enhancement in the quality of learning and teaching would be forthcoming when the notion of monitoring for quality was instated.

## **2.4 Financial management**

- Although the Financial Committee had only a short history in the school, a sound management system with clear procedures had been developed. The school's overall performance in financial management was good.
- Sufficient training on financial management was provided for the staff with the help of the Bursar, who was an appointed teacher. The staff in general had learnt to work out the budgets in accordance with the needs of the teams and panels. This measure had developed the skill in programme budgeting amongst teachers and helped ensure that funding was well deployed to enhance the quality of learning programmes.
- Besides funding from the government, the school received good financial support from its stakeholders - La Salle Foundation, PTA and Old Boys' Association. The school had also established clear guidelines in preparation and approval of the school budget and priority was given to

bids of additional funds for student activities.

- In monitoring the school budget, including the Capacity Enhancement Grant (CEG), the school adopted the Financial Management Programme (FMP) of the SAM system. Records were well kept and updated regularly. With adequate participation of the Financial Committee and heads of teams and panels, mechanisms and procedures in monitoring income and expenditures had improved. For further development, the school could build in an evaluation mechanism to ensure that the budgets set were focused on the developmental priorities of the respective teams and panels.

## **2.5 Resources and accommodation**

- The school had an excellent physical environment. In addition to a total of 43 classrooms and ample different special rooms, the school also had an Olympic sized swimming pool, a 400-metre all weather track, a standard sized football pitch, a gymnasium, two lecture theatres, an auditorium and several courts for various ball games. Teachers and students were very satisfied with the facilities available in the school. Although the school campus was large and well equipped with an extensive range of facilities, the school was kept clean and tidy.
- The school had a good provision of Information Technology (IT) to support teaching. There were a Multimedia Learning Centre, three Computer Rooms and a Language Laboratory. Some of the computers were open for students to use after school. All classrooms had been installed with projectors, and the school provided every teacher a notebook computer. This facilitated a rapid rise in the use of IT in learning and teaching. School LAN had been set up and extended to different parts of the school. The school Intranet provided a platform for teachers and students to share teaching resources and to communicate, but the sharing and communication practices could still be extended to various teams and panels. Many students were IT elites and they ran training programmes for other students and even parents, maintained the School Web Page and provided good support to the school's IT development.
- The La Salle Foundation, Old Boys' Association and PTA provided strong financial backing for the development of the school. The school also captured community resources by inviting external professionals to give speeches, and obtained funding from the Quality Education Fund (QEF) to provide students with more exposure and training in music. The QEF also financially supported the school through the project 'The Glorious Dome', in which computing techniques were used to simulate the old La Salle College campus so that the students could visually tour around the old campus. This could enhance their awareness of the school heritage and culture and enforce their sense of belonging to the school.
- There was sufficient funding for panel heads and the librarian to purchase

reference books and other teaching resources. The school also had a practice where the librarian could help purchase books for panel heads upon receiving their book lists. However, the variety and quantity of the books were inadequate. Some books were worn-out or out-dated. Although there were library lessons for the junior forms students, there was still a lack of library activities to nurture a reading culture among students. There were also limited reading schemes, especially those jointly organised with the subject panels, to cultivate in students a habit of using the library as a resource centre. The library should collaborate more with the subject panels so that the library resources could be fully utilized.

- The school had provided teachers and students with guidelines and talk on copyright and other legal matters to enhance awareness in this aspect. There were also clear guidelines and smooth practices on the booking of rooms and facilities. An On-line Public Access Catalogue was available for teachers and students to search for books on the computers but so far, the service had not been fully utilized.

## **2.6 Self-evaluation**

- The school was well aware of the current educational trends and the notion of self-evaluation was promoted through the staff appraisal system. However, there was at present still an absence of systematic self-evaluation, requiring clear mechanisms, procedures and tools, both at the school level and team/panel level.
- At the school level, the school devised annual targets (concern) in consultation with teachers. Developmental planning in addressing to the school targets rested with the school management and various teams and panels. At present, developmental planning at the school level was limited and amongst most teams and panels, the school targets had not been made explicit in the developmental plans. Neither were developmental elements incorporated into the plans and most of them were found routine in nature. There was in general also the lack of well-defined evaluation criteria and mechanisms.
- The school at present produced annual reports outlining academic results of the students in public examinations, external prizes and awards attained by the students, important school events and activities of various teams. Major concerns of the school in that particular year and the following year were also identified. More could be done with these annual reports to make them useful material to inform the school about the effectiveness of planned programmes and direction for development. There was as yet no requirement on annual reports to be compiled by teams and panels. Current review conducted by most teams and panels was not comprehensive enough to provide an in-depth evaluation of their work. The method of evaluation adopted by the panels was mainly on the analysis of the examination papers and students' results. More work could be done with information on students' performance to reflect on planning for more effective learning and teaching.

- The school should adopt systematic self-evaluation in order to support school development and improvement in the new era. Understanding of the value of school self-evaluation and the need for collaboration in planning and formulation of evaluation criteria, tools and procedures to implement self-evaluation should be fostered. The strategy for self-evaluation, beginning first with planning (including the formulation of long-term and short-term targets) and leading up to the use of reports on evaluation to inform continuous planning for development, needed to be strengthened in that the goal of school development and improvement could be achieved.

## 3. Learning and Teaching of the School

### 3.1 Curriculum

- The mission of the school is committed to providing high quality human and spiritual education for each student and the school seeks to empower the students to realize their full potential and to be open and generous in the service of others.
- The school had recently established a well-defined curriculum management framework. The Academic Council consisted of members from the Academic Teams (including the Curriculum, Assessment, Placement, Enhancement and Resources teams) and representatives from the subject panels of the Key Learning Areas. It was expected that the framework could foster a better coordination in the planning and implementation of programmes related to curriculum development, such as the use of project learning and IT in the learning and teaching in alignment with the school targets.
- The school had formulated clear and comprehensive guidelines that covered a wide range of areas on curriculum management to ensure uniformity and consistency throughout the school.
- The school's formal curriculum, together with the various organised activities, formed a balanced curriculum to develop students' potential in all areas. The school provided ample opportunities for the students to acquire various learning experiences including life experiences and those related to intellectual and spiritual development, physical and aesthetic development and contribution to community services, thus complementing the formal curriculum.
- As Art and Design and Music were offered up to S2, the provision of aesthetic education for students at the senior level needed strengthening in the long run. Besides, better planning, coordination and evaluation of cross-curricular issues on moral, civic, sex and environmental education was required to ensure the effectiveness of these programmes.
- The overall coordination, monitoring and evaluation of programmes that cater for learner diversity needed strengthening. There were some programmes for the academically gifted students that were organised by the subject panels on their own incentive. Split class teaching was arranged for Chinese, English and Mathematics at S1 and S2 classes so that students were provided with more individual attention. There were also other programmes, such as the Bridging Programmes at S1 and S3 and the 'Small Teacher' scheme that was offered to help students develop their self-confidence in study and to stretch their abilities. In order to further enhance the effectiveness of these programmes, the Academic Council should systematically evaluate these programmes and devise or

modify strategies to better cater for the learning needs of students.

- The school had made commendable efforts to provide sufficient resources, especially on the provision of IT facilities to facilitate learning and teaching. However, the use of library resources in the school as an attempt to promote a reading culture and to help develop students' self-learning skills should be enhanced through more collaborative planning of the library and the subject panels.
- Some of the panels had fostered good collaborative culture and professional sharing among team members. In order to bring about more effective curriculum planning and implementation, the Academic Council should encourage and facilitate all teams and panels to further develop their collaborative culture and professional sharing among teachers to enhance the learning of students.
- In the past three years, all the panels had prepared yearly developmental plans. The contents of most, however, were routine in nature. The Academic Council and Academic teams had yet to formulate their development plans. In order to better collate the effort of teams and panels to address the school targets (for example to provide more opportunities in the use of English across curriculum) and to enforce the development of subject skills and concepts, systematic planning and review should be strengthened. The work of the Academic Council in co-ordinating planning and review of teams and panels was required to sustain continuous development and improvement.

### **3.2 Teaching**

- Most of the teachers were professionally trained and were quite experienced. On the whole, teachers possessed satisfactory subject knowledge.
- Lessons observed were well prepared, systematic, and objectives were clear and the topics were well within the range of students' experiences and interests. The medium of instruction complied with the school's language policy and their use of English was effective. It was evident that the teachers could communicate well with the students; their explanations were found to be systematic and clear.
- Generally, the teachers were able to cultivate a good learning and harmonious atmosphere. Almost all the teachers observed had very pleasant teaching manners. They were sincere and enthusiastic in their attitude during their teaching in class, and some were also quite encouraging.
- Teachers also showed good awareness of IT and students were provided with updated information from both the Internet and the media. In over one third of the lessons observed, teachers were able to incorporate the use of IT in their lessons and some of these lessons even reflected

effective use of IT to facilitate student learning and promoting understanding of concepts.

- In about 40% of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was above average. Teachers were able to adopt good teaching strategies and skills like effective questioning techniques, an inquiry approach, by providing opportunities for students to ask question or express themselves, as well as fostering critical thinking. The teaching time was well managed and the teachers could make use of teaching resources.
- Most teachers also provided classroom tasks, which were readily and quickly completed by the students. However, in some of the lessons observed, they were mainly teacher-centred and student interaction was not adequate. The expectations of teachers towards their students were not high and the level of difficulty of some of the tasks did not match students' ability and interest, and therefore skills and creativity could not be properly developed. To further enhance their teaching effectiveness and to stretch the students further, teachers could provide more opportunities for classroom discussion and student interaction.
- Teachers also needed to cultivate interest and inspire creative thinking among students through the organisation of exploratory activities thus stretching them further. They should use higher order thinking questions to develop students' abilities to think critically, to analyse, inquire, solve problems as well as evaluate. Teacher-student interaction could be improved and there could also be more active encouragement of students. Appropriate requirements and feedback could also be given so that students were made aware of their strengths and areas for improvement.
- The school had made provisions for split class teaching at the junior level so that more individual attention could be paid to the academically less able students. However, in most of the lessons observed, no special measures were made for such needs. It was necessary for the school to rethink its measures for learner diversity, and special attention needed to be given to those students who were less competent. There was the need to plan and think of different strategies in their classroom teaching so that the less competent would not be felt left out.

### **3.3 Student learning**

- Students were attentive, bright, co-operative, responsive and self-motivated. They had very good and positive learning attitude. They employed a variety of learning strategies and skills to learn, like preparing well before lessons, showing keen interest in the class, actively taking down notes, clarifying doubts and concepts through active and critical questioning, learning through collaboration and participating in discussions and activities.

- The students were very conscientious in the completion of their assignments and their penmanship was neat. Most of their work was tidy, well-presented and reflected good use of IT skills. They also demonstrated critical thinking and good teamwork.
- Students were polite, well behaved and well disciplined in all the lessons observed. They also had high expectations and were most eager to ensure that the lessons ran smoothly, reminding those who were inattentive and shushing the more noisy ones. They were also obedient and willing to follow instructions dutifully even if they were not certain what the objectives of some of the activities were. They were also interested in practical work.
- Most of the students were able to use English confidently in the classroom and they also showed great affinity and skill in the use of IT. Senior and junior level students were observed to make good use of their language skills as well as IT skills in doing their project work and presentations.
- However, in some lessons observed, the students needed to develop a more active part in learning. They did not take much initiative and only completed tasks assigned to them. There was the need for them to develop more self-reflection, and be more self-directed in their learning. There could also be more interaction between the teachers and students and among the students themselves.
- Although some students had good practical habits, such as cleaning up tables and tidying up the apparatus after the experiments, the practical skills and awareness of safety measures of most students still needed improvement.
- There was also the need to enforce language across the curriculum. There should be more use of English in the school. It should be a means for learning, communication and social use.

### **3.4 Performance assessment**

- The whole-school assessment policy was clear, with objectives of assessment and practical guidelines elaborated for teachers' reference. All subject panels could observe the policies and continuous assessment was adopted in most subjects to monitor students' learning progress. In order to better address the school's policy and develop towards assessment for learning, there could be more discussion on assessment methods and the use of assessment information to support learning.
- Frequency of tests and examinations was appropriate. Most examination papers were properly set in terms of length and level of difficulty. Clear and detailed marking schemes were usually prepared. Nevertheless, it was necessary for some subjects to employ different methods to properly assess students' performance on the subject skills.

- There was in general an adequate quantity of assignment to strengthen students' learning but the variety of assignments should be broadened in order to stimulate students' thinking and develop students' learning skills. The quality of marking of assignments was on the whole satisfactory. However, more concrete and constructive feedback should be given to students so that they knew how to improve their learning. Project work was promoted in some subjects to develop students' collaboration and IT skills. Students were able to allocate workload clearly and demonstrated good teamwork in their project work. More guidelines on how to do project should be provided for students to enhance the effectiveness of project learning.
- Detailed post-examination evaluation was conducted across all subjects. Students' mark distribution and their performance in individual questions were analysed and their weaknesses and common mistakes were identified. Subject panels should make better use of this valuable information for curriculum planning and to formulate specific strategies to further improve the quality of learning and teaching. Information about students' performance collected through continuous assessment could also be utilized to promote students' learning.
- Students' report cards covered mainly their academic performance. There could be more elaboration on students' achievement in the non-academic areas.

## 4. Support for Students and School Ethos

### 4.1 Pastoral care

#### 4.1.1 Discipline, Guidance and Counselling

- The overall performance of the school in pastoral care was average, but there were measures made for improvement. With the recent establishment of the Pastoral Council, coordination among various teams in charge of the provision of pastoral care had been strengthened. The overlapping of activities had also been minimized with the setting up of a year-round timetable and there was the creation of a Form Coordinators Team that aimed at helping to bring about a more caring school environment for students. The award and punishment system was reasonable. The new 'Good Student Award Scheme' helped to reinforce students with good conduct, diligence, service or performance in extra-curricular activities. To enhance the quality of pastoral service, a stronger collaboration within and across the Pastoral teams and systematic evaluation on the service provided were recommended in order that the mission and vision of the school on pastoral care could be fully achieved. Furthermore, the role and function of the Religious and Moral Education Commission (created two years ago to co-ordinate pastoral work) should be critically reviewed with the establishment of the Pastoral Council.
- The Discipline Committee worked well in improving student discipline. There were clear roles for the Committee's form coordinators and proper working procedures existed. The Committee also adopted a positive attitude in handling students who broke the school rules. While serious offences were carefully handled and punishment was acceptable to both students and parents, the school would always give students a chance to learn from their mistakes. In order that misbehaviour cases could be better handled and that appropriate preventive measures could be identified in tackling discipline issues, stronger co-ordination and collaboration between the Discipline and the Guidance Teams was required. Moreover, though the Discipline Committee shared their experiences on discipline matters on an annual basis, not all teachers fully understood their roles in discipline or followed the same principle and procedure towards students. A whole-school approach should be fostered.
- The fine tradition of the school prefects of the Discipline Board in playing an active role in enforcing the school discipline was commended. Executive members of the Discipline Board were able to recruit prefects, conduct training and render support to newer members. The prefects executed their duties in periodical uniform checking and patrolling independently and they took pride in their work.
- The school had a large Guidance Team composing of 15 members, the

majority of which, however, was heavily involved in various school duties. The Guidance Team had experience in organising some developmental guidance programmes such as peer relationship, manners and stress management. Preventive programmes, however, should be strengthened. Most of the guidance work had been led by the social worker who had continuously made significant contribution to the Team. In order to enhance the quality of guidance service, a smaller team with active members and streamlined workload was more desirable. Moreover, stronger and more effective teamwork should be fostered through collaboration and training on skills required in delivering different types of guidance work.

- With the help of students in the Publication Group, messages on guidance were sent periodically through the Newsletters. The ‘Small Teacher’ scheme had initiated senior students’ effort in supporting junior level students with academic needs, but more enrichment for these small teachers was needed to strengthen its effectiveness. To foster a whole-school approach to guidance, the school should build in class periods or floating assemblies. The Guidance Team should also support level teachers by providing guidelines, resources and training. The cultivation of a stronger teacher-student relationship, particularly at the junior level, could lead to easier identification of potential cases.

#### **4.1.2 Further studies and careers guidance**

- The provision of careers guidance to students was very good. The Careers Guidance Team was traditionally linked with the Guidance Team in administration and planning matters, but the Careers Mistress worked mostly on her own with members’ support in some of the programmes. The provision of information for local further studies was particularly effective. Easily accessible and updated information was provided in the Guidance Centre with the support of student helpers from the Library Group, who provided a cataloguing and loan service of these materials. A number of high quality talks or seminars were conducted, particularly for S3, S5 and S7 students on choice of subjects, careers and local universities. Good connection and sharing with old boys were built through programmes like the S6 Orientation Camp. A website with links to various educational organisations was recently built to help students search for information of overseas studies.
- The dedicated Careers Mistress had a heavy workload, as she was responsible for preparing all the transcripts or recommendation letters in support of students’ applications for further education as well as external scholarships and awards. Students had to present their own resume and ask different teachers to certify their qualifications when applying for such documents. To make the process more effective, the school should consider establishing a computerized system for storing students’ data, such as awards and scholarships or posts held, which could be linked to the issuing of transcripts or recommendation letters.

## **4.2 Personal, social and cultural development**

### **4.2.1 Extra-curricular activities (ECA)**

- The school had been successful in the provision of life-wide learning. ECA were well supported by the school in terms of direction, facilities, manpower and funding. The students were keen in organising school activities, joint school functions and participating in competitions. Students had ample opportunities to experience learning through doing. Through ECA, they learnt to be independent, self-motivated, confident and responsible. They gained significant awards in the inter-school competitions, sports in particular and some international competitions, such as World Indoor Cycling and International Mathematics Olympiad. These outstanding records sustained students to strive for excellence.
- Being well equipped with a range of facilities, the school provided a wide spectrum of ECA that complemented the formal curriculum. There were 58 clubs registered under the Student Association (SA). Other than these, there were religious groups, the Scouts Association, speech teams and 12 sports school teams that offered instruction at different levels. In the past few years, the school attempted to broaden the scope of ECA provided, for example a Cultural Promotion Team was set up to look into the promotion of aesthetic types of activities. The school had successfully applied for additional funding from the QEF to set up a number of musical instrumental classes. It was anticipated that the varied interests and needs of the students could be further addressed.
- The prevalent atmosphere of ECA was enthusiastic. Both parents and old boys strongly supported the school's ECA by providing generous funding and affording time to participate or lead activities. For example, in celebrating the 70th anniversary, students, old boys and parents organised a record-breaking event called 'the biggest hug', which was recorded in the Guinness World Record. Through processes as such, a strong sense of belonging and a spirit of unity were enforced.
- The SA played a vital role in leadership training in the school. It was elected through a democratic process and had functioned effectively with a well-defined structure and constitution. Managerial and leadership skills were developed amongst students in managing and developing functions of the SA. Apart from the President, each executive member headed a board or a committee, which included the Clubs Coordinating Board, Class Representative Board, Discipline Board and Publications Board. The SA organised functions on a whole-school basis, such as its Annual Christmas Ball. Student leaders of the clubs registered under the SA would usually hold different inter-class competitions or other activities. In the context of ECA, the Club Co-ordination Board of the SA had made significant contribution to the smooth implementation of activities. It helped in co-ordinating various types of activities and monitored implementation of activities as well.
- The school provided teachers and students with clear guidelines and procedures on matters relating to ECA. The SA and the clubs were

basically self-financed and students were given the liberty to organise and lead clubs on their initiative. The school teams, however, were directly responsible to the Principal. There was also the practice to employ part-time instructors and coaches to provide instrumental classes and sport training.

- While choices were given to students, ECA participation was not made a requirement. There was, therefore, marked variation in the number of activities organised and attendance rate amongst the various clubs. To bring ECA to further heights, the school could refine the present policy to make ECA an entitlement for all, develop a sound record system for students and promote systematic evaluation of the activities organised.

#### **4.2.2 Cross-curricular programmes**

- In the past two years, the school recognized the need to strengthen Moral Education. A Religious and Moral Education Commission was set up to draw the concerted effort of the Pastoral teams to plan towards the annual themes, namely ‘respect and responsibility’ for the past year and ‘learning, serving and caring’ for the current year. However, apart from ‘the thought of the week’ and the inclusion of the annual theme into the curriculum of the Religious Studies subject, there was no concrete plan in promoting the annual theme either from the Commission or from the related teams. The infusion of such a theme in Religious Studies depended very much on individual teachers whose performance varied significantly.
- Although there was a large number of staff in the Civic Education Team, programmes organised were limited. There was insufficient opportunity for students to share and discuss current civic issues and affairs related to the Motherland. For Sex Education, activities were only planned for S1, S4 and S6; all planned activities were organised by the school social worker and students acquired related information through these activities. Environmental Education was mostly promoted in the form of isolated activities organised in the school such as ‘a cleaner campus campaign’, or through participation in the garbage-recycling programme of the Environmental Conservancy Commission.
- On the whole, promotion of cross-curricular themes could be strengthened. To enhance the provision of cross-curricular programmes for students, a comprehensive programme with sufficient cross-curricular issues to meet varied needs of students at different developmental levels should be formulated. The combined efforts of all related teams under the Pastoral Council in formulating planned strategies, coordinating resources and evaluating effectiveness, should help towards this end.

## **4.3 Link with parents**

### **4.3.1 Home-school co-operation**

- Home-school co-operation was a significant strength of the school. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA), which was established in 1995, was an effective channel of communication between parents and the school and was well utilized. The school authority was supportive of the school-based management concept and the PTA chairman was now a member of the School Management Committee.
- With a number of dedicated and highly educated executive committee members in the PTA, a clear structure was formed with well-defined roles and functions for each sub-committee, which included Education, Publication and Curriculum Sub-committees. The PTA Homepage had also significantly enhanced communication among parents. Through joint efforts of teachers, parents and students, a great variety of activities including parents' gatherings by level, educational seminars for parents, and social functions, had been successfully conducted. The very positive PTA enriched the school's provision of services. With support from parent tutors, the Reading Club had promoted reading strategies with some junior level students and cultivated reading habits by awarding the Reading Club badge. Similarly, the S1 Bridging Programme supplemented the school's Newcomers' Day and provided a one week summer school to a majority of new students. This had significant impact on students' adjustment.
- Within the school also existed the Home-School Co-operation Team, which aimed at strengthening parental involvement in school matters. The chairman of the Home-School Co-operation Team had put much effort in cultivating a constructive relationship between teachers and parents through mass programmes, such as the Parent Also Appreciate Teachers' Drive and Prize Presentation Ceremony.

### **4.3.2 Parents' perception of the school**

- The majority of the parents understood the objectives of the school and was clear about the school's long traditions and strengths. Parents agreed that the school had provided a balanced curriculum and organised various activities to develop their boys' self-confidence and potentials in all areas. They were in favour of the pleasurable learning environment the school provided. Most of them believed in the philosophy of freedom advocated by the school and thought that their boys could learn from their mistakes and build up their confidence through all sorts of challenges. On the whole, they were pleased with the quality of education provided by the school and felt that their boys were proud of being a member of the school.

#### **4.4 Link with the community**

- The school had shown particular strength in the use of community resources to provide resources and a wide range of activities for students. The school had invited quite a number of organisations, such as Caritas, ICAC, and the Intellectual Property Department to support its activities. The school was also keen in supporting inter-school or territory-wide educational functions to provide learning opportunities for students.
- There was strong financial backup from the La Salle Foundation and donations from PTA. Old boys were heavily involved in school functions, offering sponsorship and prizes, as well as providing important services to the school by serving as resource persons. The long-established Old Boys' Association had also built up good links with its members both locally and overseas through its Newsletters and Internet. They were assets to the school as many of them provided a good helping hand to their younger generation.
- With regard to professional development, the school was closely linked to all the local and international educational institutes founded by St John Baptist De La Salle through the Pacific-Asian regional conferences and the Asia Pacific Lasallian Educators Congresses. A number of staff maintained good networks with various educational bodies, for instance, Careers Association, Grants School and Examination Committees and sharing with other schools was also frequent.

#### **4.5 School culture and climate**

- The school's outstanding student achievements in both academic and non-academic areas stood as living evidence of the importance attached to a tradition of striving towards excellence. All the stakeholders took pride in the school and its tradition had become a cohesive force for improvement and an inspiration for unity. The school had produced a succession of prominent leaders and this generated high expectations among the boys and their family. Thus there was a strong level of competitiveness in the school where expression of failure or the cry for support could be muffled.
- There was amity among the peers and a sense of brotherhood was prevalent. Team spirit amongst the students was high. Students were intelligent, self-motivated, responsible and mutually supportive. Junior students were lively and active, while senior students were willing to serve the school and were enthusiastic in organising extra-curricular activities and joint school functions. The senior students always looked upon their juniors as inheritors of a rich tradition and were always ready to guide and support them. Strong leadership was demonstrated by the seniors in this process.
- The school was a liberal society where everyone was given an opportunity to develop his interests and potentials. Systems existed but

they were not rigidly enforced and both teachers and students were, to a certain extent, free to pursue their goals. The liberal atmosphere had allowed talents to be tapped and innovations to be identified. The school also encouraged learning even among teachers. This had enabled professionalism to be enhanced and there arose amongst the teachers, a critical mass, whose contribution to the school development should not be overlooked. They were a group of teachers who had the vision and the spirit to move the school. While teachers in general were enthusiastic, the critical mass was the one that gave the support that the Principal needed in realizing his reform programmes. They were the Lasallian teachers the school desired.

- A school culture could not be nurtured without the support from the torchbearers of the past, the La Salle Foundation, the Old Boys' Association and the PTA. They served the school well in the pursuit of its educational goals and values with a common spirit, by providing expert advice on relevant school projects and funding worthy causes. The past students were devoted and played an active role in the running of school activities. Indeed they served as role models for their schoolmates.
- Both the teaching and non-teaching staff worked hard to live up to the expectation of the school community. Collaboration was evident in some panels and there was teamwork in moving the school towards higher standards of excellence. Mutual trust and understanding was fostered through the unfailing effort of the Principal and the teacher-representatives and the concept of a greater team was made evident in the 70th anniversary ceremony recently organised. While celebrating its achievements, the school however should critically examine ways and means of fostering stronger student-teacher relationship to enrich the school life and in supporting a more divergent culture and providing a more literary and aesthetic environment where students with potentials in this aspect could freely express their creativity.

## 5. Performance of the Students

### 5.1 Academic performance of the students

#### **The Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE)**

- In the past three years, students maintained a very high passing percentage in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). The percentages of students obtaining Grade 'A' to 'C', the percentages of students with five or more passes and the percentages of students with 14 or more points from the best six subjects were all significantly higher than the territory level. (Appendix 2).
- With regard to students' performance in individual subjects, both the percentages of students achieving Grades 'A' to 'C' and the passing percentages in all academic subjects were well above the territory level in the past three years. Furthermore, the percentages of students obtaining Grade 'A' in almost all subjects were consistently well above the territory level in the past three years (Appendix 3).

#### **The Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE)**

- In the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination (HKALE), the percentages of students obtaining Grades 'A' to 'C' and the passing percentages in both Advanced Level (A-Level) subjects and Advanced Supplementary Level (AS-Level) subjects were all higher than the territory level (Appendix 4).
- With regard to students' performance in individual subjects, both the percentages of students achieving Grades 'A' to 'C' and the passing percentages in almost all subjects were well above the territory level in the past three years. The percentages of students achieving Grade 'A' in Chinese Language & Culture, Use of English, Computer Studies, Chemistry, Physics, Economics and Principles of Accounts were consistently above the territory level in the past three years (Appendix 5).

### 5.2 Non-academic performance of students

- Students participated in a good variety of competitions outside the school and their performance was outstanding, especially in sports, mathematics and IT. (Please refer to Appendix 6 for a list of prizes and awards obtained in the past three years.)
- Students took part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school, especially those related to sports. They were responsible and eager to serve the school. Senior students possessed excellent leadership potential. They took up posts in ECA clubs voluntarily and they were able to take initiative to plan and organise ECA independently.

- Students were polite, well disciplined, cooperative and confident. They took pride in studying in the school. The average attendance and punctuality rates in the school years 1998/99, 1999/00 and 2000/01 were 98.7% and 99.8% respectively. The former was considered as good while the latter was excellent (Appendix 7).

## 6. Key Issues for Action

*As regards the school's overall performance (as stated in Parts 2, 3, 4 and 5), the key issues for action are summarised in the bullet points below. The school is responsible for drawing up an action plan within four months upon receipt of this report, showing what the school is going to do about the key issues identified. Due consideration should also be given in the action plan to the main findings as reported in Parts 2-5. ED officers will offer advice where appropriate.*

The school is a thriving school that has demonstrated a lot of strengths and vigor in meeting the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Propelled by a tradition of excellence and a strong sense of pride and ownership, the school has sustained quality in the education provided. Synergisation in pursuit of higher goals has been made possible under the effective leadership of its Principal and the school is ready to take greater strides in the enhancement of the quality of education. Nurtured in a free and liberal environment, both students and teachers have been given the opportunity to develop their potentials and there arose amongst the teachers a critical mass that has given staunch support to school development and improvement. Students are intelligent, self-motivated and responsible and their achievements in both academic and non-academic areas are celebrated and well acknowledged by the community. The majority of teachers displays enthusiasm in teaching and is confident in responding to change. The school is also well supported by its School Management Committee, Past Student Association, La Salle Foundation and the Parent-teacher Association in a common spirit to pursue its educational values and goals. The strategy for future development of the school is made succinct in the words of the school Principal,

‘What needs further is to set the rhythm and develop the skills required for change’

*Brother Thomas, the Principal, 12 April 2002*

As critical friends of the school, the QA inspectors consider the following essential elements to build into the agenda for change and set the direction for continuous school development and improvement:

### **Systematic planning and evaluation**

- To address whole-school concern in planning across teams and panels to give impetus to whole-school development;

- To address areas of concern identified at teams and panel level to inform about improvement measures and strategy required in enhancing the quality of learning and teaching;
- To develop systematic review mechanisms, procedures and tools at school and team/panel level for school self-evaluation on effectiveness of planned programmes.

**Catering for learner diversity in the pursuit of all-round development of students**

- To continue review on curriculum provision to ensure opportunities for aesthetic education and enhancement of moral, civic, sex and environmental education;
- To evaluate existing learning and teaching strategies in support of student diversified needs to enhance effectiveness;
- To enhance whole-school approach to discipline and guidance, and
- To foster the nurturing of a reading culture.