

70pc of schools to use mother tongue

By STELLA LEE

ABOUT 70 per cent of Hong Kong's 392 secondary schools are expected to use Chinese as their teaching medium by 1998, with the Education Department stepping up efforts to encourage principals to make the switch.

While only 52 schools have opted to teach in Chinese under the new language policy starting at Form One this month, another 120

schools have indicated they will eventually switch to mother-tongue teaching.

Most of these would like to make the change by 1998.

The new language policy is aimed at letting students learn in the language most suitable to them and avoid the common but undesirable practice of using both Chinese and English in class.

While 59 per cent of this year's Form One students have shown they would

learn more effectively in Chinese, 223 schools have opted for English as the major teaching medium.

The Education Department will also launch a three-year monitoring programme this year aimed at another 150 schools that did not choose to teach in the language that suited their students' language ability.

Among these schools, about 120 were undecided on whether they would

make a switch to use Chinese while the rest said they were not interested in changing.

The monitoring programme will include tests on Chinese, English and mathematics and other language-related subjects such as history and geography.

If the results find that a school has made a wrong choice on teaching medium the department will advise them to change.