

750 more students at Pokfulam international school

By IRIS LEE

A NEW international school to be built in Pokfulam will provide 750 additional places for secondary students to meet the increasing demand for international school places and to attempt to reverse the brain drain.

The new facility, which will be opened by September 1993, will employ about 50 teaching staff and follow that of the English system of education, although the adding of a

Chinese language on an optional basis is being considered.

The plan is part of the Government's scheme to attract both families that have emigrated back to the territory and overseas professionals to work in Hongkong.

The English Schools Foundation (ESF) is also considering the need to provide additional primary places but no definite plans have been made.

The Chief Executive and Secre-

tary of the ESF, Mr Maurice Millard, said expansion plans of multinational companies in Hongkong may be hampered if the chronic shortage of places in international schools was not improved.

He added that chambers of commerce in Hongkong had expressed strong concern at the shortage of places, particularly at primary level, and the ESF was working closely with them to identify where further schools were necessary.

"International schools are essential for Hongkong if its multinational companies are to continue to be viable. Business people from other countries will only come to Hongkong if they are assured of an education in the medium of their own country.

"The schools are also essential if we are to attract returnees to Hongkong who may have lost the ability to cope with education in the Chinese medium as a result of having lived abroad for some time and of

having been educated during that time in English-speaking schools," said Mr Millard.

There are four ESF secondary schools, providing for about 3,600 children and 13 other international secondary schools in the territory.

At the primary level, there are nine ESF schools providing for 4,200 children and 19 other international schools.

At present, enrolment at all ESF schools is only at 85 per cent of the

capacity because of the uneven distribution of students.

"The secondary schools on the Island are overcrowded and some ESF schools are a little less full than others. In planning schools it is difficult to allocate them precisely where the need is at any given time. Some un-used capacity is also necessary because Government regulations require ESF to keep places available for late arrivals," said Mr Millard.