

EXTERNAL SCHOOL EVALUATION

Report

Portuguese School of Macau

MACAU SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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2012

Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science
(*Inspeção-Geral da Educação e Ciência – IGEC*)

1 – INTRODUCTION

The creation of the Portuguese School of Macau, formalized in the Order of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Education ([Despacho Conjunto n.º 79/97](#), 30th May), took place under singular historical and political circumstances, resulting from the change of Macau's status, that in 1999 was a Chinese territory under Portuguese administration and afterwards became the Special Administrative Region of Macau, transferred to Chinese administration.

In order to ensure the permanence and continuity of the Portuguese language and culture in the territory after the devolution of the sovereignty to the People's Republic of China, as well as to provide the necessary operating conditions of the Portuguese School of Macau, the Portuguese government established as its legal titular entity the Foundation of the Portuguese School of Macau ([Decreto-Lei n.º 89-B/98](#), 9th April), which is a public utility institution of private law, that agglutinates specific and complementary competencies, of educational, financial and institutional order. Combined with the legal responsibilities of the State, the majority stake of the Ministry of Education and Science in the Foundation's Administration Council guarantees the primacy of national purposes in the school's development plan.

The Portuguese School of Macau distinguishes itself from other public and private schools in the Special Administrative Region of Macau. Public schools are Chinese and private schools differ according to the language used to teach all subjects that may be Chinese, English (international schools included) and Portuguese, as it is the case of the Portuguese School of Macau and of the *D. José da Costa Nunes Kindergarten*, which is managed by the Association for Promoting Macanese Instruction. The curricula taught in the school follow national guidelines of study plans for basic and secondary education, but it also integrates the flexibility and adaptations allowed by law ([Portaria n.º 940/2009](#), 20th August).

The distinctiveness of the Portuguese School of Macau also proceeds from the fact that it is the only school where students from basic and secondary education are required to achieve external assessment, such as educational progress national tests and national examinations, the same implemented in Portugal.

In the specific context where the school pursues its mission, along with the educational and cultural dimensions, emerge the political and economical dimensions, due to the strategic interest of the People's Republic of China in establishing trade relations with Portuguese speaking countries, using the Special Administrative Region of Macau as platform between the East and West.

Another Ministerial Order ([Despacho n.º 7433/2012](#), 30th May) determined an intervention in the Foundation of the Portuguese School of Macau, accomplished by the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science. This intervention served two main goals, allowing, on the one hand, to evaluate the school in order to maintain the excellent level of the education provided there and, on the other hand, to audit the administrative and finance sections of the Foundation and of the School.

At the same time, this Act permitted the elaboration of a reasoned opinion on the legal framework of the Foundation, as well as regarding legal aspects related to the possible relocation of the school facilities. As it is a source of uncertainty and of some constraints, this issue has been the subject of negotiations and debate among the educational community and the board of direction and management, and the consensus on the effectiveness of the relocation is arising, as long as it provides the necessary conditions concerning the adequacy of facilities and funding, that enable the prosecution of the school mission.

Therefore, in regard specifically to the external evaluation, it is noteworthy the Act ([Lei n.º 31/2002](#), 20th December) that endorsed the assessment system of schools, covering from pre-school to secondary education, and defined the guidelines for self-evaluation and external evaluation.

In this context, an assessment program was developed, since 2006, focusing in public schools (pre-school education, basic and secondary education), and the first cycle was accomplished in June 2011.

The Portuguese Inspectorate of Education was given the task of continuing the external evaluation of schools program, following the framework proposed for the new cycle by the working group appointed for this purpose ([Despacho n.º 4150/2011](#), 4th March).

Thus, based on the framework applied and on the experimentation performed in twelve single schools and school clusters, the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science is currently developing this activity assigned as its legal competency ([Decreto Regulamentar n.º 15/2012](#), 27th January).

Given the exceptionality of the intervention and the particular characteristics of the Portuguese School of Macau, as previously stated, some adjustments were made to the framework implemented by the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science, within the program of the external evaluation of schools.

These changes concern the full agenda and the methodology used by the evaluation team due to the formation of the interviewees groups (administration council, educational community assembly and representatives of the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau), to the inclusion of classroom observation during the morning of the second day and to the realization of two sessions (the first one planned for the direction board and the second one open to the educational community) providing feedback information, by the end of the fourth day.

Regarding classroom observation it is important to highlight that it was carried out using a grid adapted from the one used by the inspectorate of education from Lower Saxony (Germany), and it was brought to the notice of the school, so that teachers can make use of it in the future. The sample consisted of eighteen periods of 45', distinct classes of all cycles and grades, as well as of subjects from the different curricular departments. The collected data were treated by the evaluation team and the main conclusions presented in the last day, in articulation with other feedback.

This report expresses the main findings of the external evaluation of the Portuguese School of Macau, led by the evaluation team, following the visit that took place from 4 to 7 December 2012. The conclusions are the result of an analysis of the school's fundamental documents, especially the ones focused on its self-evaluation, indicators of students' success, the responses of community to satisfaction questionnaires, conducting interviews and classroom observation.

It is expected that the external evaluation process encourages and consolidates the school's self-evaluation practices, resulting in an improvement opportunity for the school, making this document a tool for reflection and debate. In fact, by identifying the strengths and improvement areas, this report is intended to contribute to the construction or enhancement of action plans that provide the progress and development of the school.

It is noteworthy the attitude of commitment and mobilization of the school, as well as the excellent cooperation shown by the people who interacted with the team during the preparation and the evaluation process.

EVALUATION SCALE

Rating levels of the three domains

EXCELLENT – The action of the school has produced a consistent impact and far above the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories. The strengths predominate in all of the fields under analysis as a result of consolidated, widespread and effective organizational practices. The school is distinguished by exemplary practices in relevant fields.

VERY GOOD – The action of the school has produced a consistent impact and above the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories. The strengths predominate in all of the fields under analysis as a result of widespread and effective organizational practices.

GOOD – The action of the school has produced an impact in line with the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories. The school has a majority of strengths in the fields under analysis as a result of effective organizational practices.

FAIR – The action of the school has produced an impact below the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories. The improvement actions show little consistency in the course of time and involve limited areas of the school.

POOR – The action of the school has produced an impact far below the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories. The weaknesses overlap with the strengths in most of the fields under analysis. The school does not reveal a cohesive, positive and consistent practice.

The School report produced under the **External Evaluation of Schools** in 2012-2013 is available in [IGEC's website](#).

2 – CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Portuguese School of Macau, located in Macau Special Administrative Region (People's Republic of China), was officially opened in the school year 1998-1999 and, since then, provides education and disseminates the Portuguese language and culture in the territory continuing the work developed by the prestigious schools that preceded it, the *Primary Official School Pedro Nolasco da Silva*, the *Primary and Secondary School Infante D. Henrique* and the *Commercial School Pedro Nolasco*. It is located in an area of great economic development and integrates the School Network of Macau Education System, operating as a non-profit private school with license granted by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (*Direção de Serviços de Educação e Juventude - DSEJ*), from Macau Special Administrative Region.

In the school year 2012-2013, the school population totals 485 students, 343 attending basic education (1st cycle - 6 classes; 2nd cycle – 4 classes; 3rd cycle – 6 classes) and 142 in secondary education (there is a flexible management of classes at this level of education, depending on the subjects that allow the joining of students enrolled on different courses). The school also provides courses on Portuguese language, as a foreign language, to 161 students.

The school has a Portuguese pedagogical and cultural matrix and it excels at flexibility and openness to different matrices that prepare the students for multilingualism, facilitating the continuation of studies in the Portuguese education system and abroad, as well as their integration into the local environment. The percentage of students born in Portugal is 22%, in Macau is 65%, and other nationalities (a total of 18 different ones) represents 13% of the students attending the school.

There are 53 teachers working in the school, one of them part-time, and in 54% of the cases their professional experience is up to 10 years. Non-teaching staff, a total of 28 workers, includes one psychologist, one expert advisor (part-time), five visiting tutors (in the areas of promotion of reading, laboratories, computer science, nursing and extracurricular activities), ancillary staff (seven perform administrative tasks and 18 are caretakers and cleaners). Among the 28 non-teaching staff, only one has more than 35 years of professional experience and the others below 10 years.

In the school year 2012-2013, the values of the context variables of the school are overall favourable. The average number of years of the academic qualifications of mothers and fathers is high, when compared with the reference group. Regarding the average age of students, in the three cycles of basic and secondary education, the values are closer to the median.

3- EVALUATION BY DOMAIN

Considering the fields of analysis of the three domains, in the reference framework of the external evaluation, and based on the interviews, on the documental and statistical analysis performed, and on classroom observation, the evaluation team makes the following findings:

3.1 – OUTCOMES

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

It should be noted that, using the statistical model, applied to schools in Portugal to calculate the expected value in context, the educational outcomes in 2011-2012 are globally well above the expected values of schools with a similar context and far above the median when compared with schools of the

same reference group (*cluster*), despite the enormous distance and contextual particularities that separate the school from the national reality.

In basic education the results are, globally, far above and above the expected values for schools with a similar context and far above and above the median for schools of the same reference group. The results of external assessment in mathematics and Portuguese language in the 1st cycle are close the median when compared to schools of the same reference group, which shows some possibility of improvement. However, with regard to the Portuguese language, at this level of education, it is noteworthy that it is learned in a multilingual context and provides grounds for learning all the other subjects, with such a high success.

The results of 6th grade in the external assessment in Portuguese language and mathematics, in the school year 2011-2012, show that more than half of the students received ratings corresponding to levels four and five.

In secondary education, it is noteworthy, as very positive, the work done with the students of the 12th grade, with regard to completion rates as well as to external assessment in Portuguese and history, showing results far above the expected values for schools with a similar context. The same did not happen in the external assessment in mathematics, achieving results above the median for schools of the same reference group.

In the school year 2011-2012, in terms of quality of success, 75% of the students from the 5th to the 11th grade progressed with full success in all subjects.

In addition to the curriculum oriented to the pursuit of further studies, the school has offered vocational training to integrate students in the local labour market, according to one of the action lines of its development plan. Thus, vocational education and training were provided by the school until 2011-2012, it was suspended in 2012-2013, in order to reflect and decide more appropriate vocational fields according to community expectations. In the last three years, the success of these courses was 100%, and only one student left school, for reasons related to his professional situation.

The PISA (*Programme for International Student Assessment*) 2009 results place the school above the OECD (*Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development*) average in key subject areas (reading, mathematics and sciences). These results are superior to those of Portugal and Macau, with values that are up between 24 and 73 points and reveal especially high literacy in mathematics and sciences.

School dropout is nonexistent. The secondary education abandonment in the last two years corresponds to the school leaving of two students.

The school has developed a systematic analysis of internal and external assessment results, namely in different meetings involving the direction board, the community assembly, the coordination councils, and this has allowed to identify the factors that influence the processes of teaching and learning and, therefore, the success of the students.

The stability and pedagogical continuity of the teaching staff, early diagnosis of students' learning difficulties, the pedagogical relationship associated with a good cooperation with parents and guardians are the main determining factors of success identified by the school. Therefore, it has developed exemplary practices in areas that have produced significant and lasting changes in the improvement of students learning and their academic achievement.

SOCIAL OUTCOMES

Education for citizenship, valorisation of the human dimension of work and life are structural and transversal areas of knowledge that have guided, intentionally and systematically, the educational activities throughout the school, in conjunction with the Portuguese language mastery. Thereby, the skills developed by the students in the area of personal and social education are intrinsic to the curriculum, produce consistent impact in their learning and reflect in their results.

All curricular and extra-curricular activities are intended to foster cooperative and peer learning, stimulating good relationships and the pleasure of attending school through participation and social interaction, which allows students to make many friends at school. Examples include their participation in the *Festival of Lusophony*, in the *World Cup* football tournament, in Hong Kong, in the celebrations of the *Centenary of the Portuguese Republic* and of the *Tenth Anniversary of Macau Special Administrative Region*, in the *Day of Blood Collection* and in the *Youth Parliament*. Therefore, students' participation in sport, cultural and civic events reinforces the presence and fosters the positive image of the Portuguese School of Macau in the surrounding community.

Students' assumption of responsibilities is a very prized area, it is visible in diversified and motivating actions that allowed, for example, both their participation in the contest *Digit@l Filmmakers*, in 2010-2011, with various works that ensured the attribution of two honourable mentions, and also on the radio program *Boys on the Radio*.

Students are organized in assemblies of delegates and commission of graduates, in the 2nd and 3rd cycles and secondary education. The assembly of delegates elects two students from the secondary education to represent them and participate in the meetings of the community assembly.

The participation in awareness campaigns regarding the defence of human rights, as well as in activities for the underprivileged and in solidarity actions has been intentionally used to promote co-responsibility. Examples include hampers with clothes, food and toys, arranged by pupils in the 1st cycle and given to social institutions, and the *Fair of Used Books* meant to relieve family expenses on acquisition of textbooks.

The promotion of healthy lifestyles has involved, for example, students and parents in the project *Healthy Cafeteria*, in order to improve school food in this space. However, the critical sense and the identification with the school lead students to feel that their participation can be further extended, in particular through the assemblies of delegates, in stimulating activities within the health and environmental education, which are very important for their integral formation.

The low number of occurrences of a disciplinary nature is the result of an immediate action to solve problems, the repeated dissemination of norms of coexistence in school spaces and also the adoption of effective actions that discourage inappropriate behaviour. During the last three years, only seven incidents had occurred involving students from the 3rd cycle, with the application of disciplinary sanctions and, simultaneously, integration measures such as apologizing and performing maintenance services in the school spaces.

The monitoring of students' school trajectory after completing their studies at the Portuguese School of Macau is a reality and aims at knowing their academic success in higher education, to reflect on and enhance the school's practices. Thus, in the school year 2011-2012, the students that achieved the 12th grade acceded to higher education in different parts of the world: 46% in Portugal, 18% in Macau, 18% in Beijing and 18% in seven European countries.

COMMUNITY RECOGNITION

The educational community recognizes the quality of the school work, which is reflected in the high level of satisfaction of students, staff and parents, expressed by the prevalence of the agreement options in the responses to the questionnaires.

The school is completely accepted within the Macanese society and has continued the good relations between Portugal and China, lasting for four hundred years and characterized mainly by peace and friendship. The three schools that originated it have embraced almost all of those who accomplished in Macau their Portuguese schooling, for more than a century.

It is worth mentioning the excellent relations with the Macau Special Administrative Region as evidenced by the acknowledgment and appreciation from the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (*Direção de Serviços de Educação e Juventude - DSEJ*), duly demonstrated by different supports, particularly regarding school facilities, educational resources and pedagogical projects, such as *Language Learning, Promotion of Happy and Effective Student Learning* and *Promotion of Knowledge of China and Chinese Language*.

The curriculum emphasizes the discovery of the environment in the 1st cycle, languages, history and geography of Portugal and Macau, with particular focus on the contents relating to local and regional realities that contribute to continuing the intercultural legacy of Macau, taking into account experiences of people from different parts of the world, especially from Portugal and China.

Similarly, the course of Portuguese as a foreign language, created in 2006 by the proposal and funded by the Macau Special Administrative Region, for secondary education students from Chinese and English Macanese schools, is in line with the aims of the central government of the People's Republic of China and it is another important contribution of the school for the community that allows simultaneously the dissemination of Portuguese language and culture. It is noteworthy that the number of students attending this course has tripled, from 2007-2008 to 2012-2013.

Therefore, the political and social visibility of the work, projects and activities developed, as the result of visiting speakers and dissemination through the Portuguese and Macanese media, has allowed the prominence of the Portuguese School of Macau as a unifying centre of the Portuguese community, promoting the conditions of success, monitoring the school trajectories of students and celebrating dates and commemorations alluding to national history and culture, for example, the *25th of April* and the *Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Communities*.

The Parents and Guardians Association is a partner for development in achieving the goals of the school, being interested in solving the problems and available to participate in activities, such as painting courses, theatre and guitar, and to organize seminars on different themes.

The school encourages the students' responsibility in their own training, as well as the commitment to strive for the excellence of learning, recognizing their successes notably through the *Mention of Excellence*, the exhibition of their works in a conspicuous place and the awarding of prizes, totalling sixteen, delivered at the annual ceremony and sponsored by various entities, in particular by the Macau Special Administrative Region. Examples include *Luís de Camões Award*, for the best student in Portuguese, and *Luís Gonzaga Gomes Award*, for students who present the best text on intercommunication between Eastern and Western cultures.

It is noteworthy the positive work on the integration of students that has led to the motivation and "*I like attending this school*", based on the recognition of human values and acceptance of difference, as illustrated in the school's newspaper and anthem and in the graduates travel, which are a landmark in the school trajectories of students.

The number of students in the school has declined naturally since 1999 with the return of sovereignty to the People's Republic of China. However, in 2010-2011 it shows signs of stabilizing this trend and in the last two years it is gradually increasing as the result of the quality that the school conveys, which is recognized by the local society. This quality focuses on student's learning through exemplary practices in relevant fields such as development for peace, human rights and interculturalism, in order to ensure the enhancement of educational outcomes.

The action of the school has produced a consistent impact and far above the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories. The strengths predominate in all of the fields under analysis as a result of consolidated, widespread and effective organizational practices. The school is distinguished by exemplary practices in relevant fields. Such foundations justify the **EXCELLENT** rating in the domain of **Outcomes**.

3.2 – EDUCATIONAL PROVISION

PLANNING AND ARTICULATION

Planning arises from clear and straightforward guidelines pursuing the aims of the school development plan, with emphasis on “the affirmation of Portugal and its history, its culture, its language and its positioning – past, present and future – in the world” along with “the civilization convergence and intersection between Europe and the East” and in the path of “promoting interculturalism”.

In line with these principles the school defines priority action lines, within the curricular and pedagogical scope, focusing particularly on the study of languages, the use of information and communication technologies and the preparation of students, especially to pursue further studies, but also to integrate the labour market. Consequently the annual plan gathers with obvious intention a set of activities that operationalize these strategic vectors, enriching the learning experiences of students and contextualizing the curriculum, such as the *Day of Portugal, Camões and the Portuguese Communities* celebrations, with a pilgrimage to *Camões Grotto*, the *Mandarin Day*, the *Walking around Old Macau* and the participation in *Macao English Speech Contest*.

The school teaches the national curriculum of basic and secondary education, but with the flexibility and adjustments provided in the law that enable the required curricular adaptation to students' profile and to the environment in which the school is located. Planning reflects the development of a specific curriculum that includes the teaching of Mandarin and English since the 1st cycle (*via* A and B), as well as history and geography of Portugal and Macau. Supporting textbooks, dictionaries and books were produced by the teaching staff for that purpose.

In fact, the contextualization of the curriculum, combining cultural and territorial Macanese specificities and the learning of Portuguese language and culture, is reflected in every structural document, basing the coherence and meaning of educational activities developed at the school. These actions are successful, benefiting from the multicultural and multilingual context that characterizes the school population. It also values the uniqueness of the school providing the study of Portuguese as students' first language and of more two foreign official languages, offering traineeships for linguistic skills improvement (in Portugal and China).

In addition to this excellent work of integrating curriculum guidelines and contextualization, there is the work developed in the different curricular departments, within the vertical curriculum articulation, respecting the progression of learning, with an impact on its improvement and sequentiality. This fact is reinforced by the pedagogical continuity that gives teachers the effective knowledge of national curricula throughout the cycles, as well as of students' school trajectories.

The “primacy of the person”, a value that tops the educational policy of the school in its development plan, determines, effectively, the knowledge and the monitoring very close to the individual, exceeding documentary formality and being consolidated on continuous contacts at school. In these informal meetings, held regularly and imbued with intentionality, teachers share information, analyze specific cases and agree on strategies to respond efficiently to the students’ needs. So, they go beyond what is included in the class curricular projects (basic education), conceived as tools to promote joint efforts and strategies for the horizontal management of the curriculum and resources.

The information on the educational background of students is consolidated throughout each school year during the students’ staying in the school, and it is shared and discussed by the teachers who plan their work based on a factual knowledge about students’ difficulties and interests, and they make use of this knowledge to mobilize solutions suitable for each case. Therefore, the work of teachers and class tutors is planned in combination with the school library, laboratories, information and communication technologies, study room, psychology service and with other aids and activities, always with a focus on academic success.

The assessment of learning, duly integrated in teaching plans, is guided by criteria and set for each grade and subject, with particular attention to the performance standards and parameters to evaluate and its respective percentages. Teachers value the different types of assessment, including diagnostic and formative, as well as the use of diversified evaluation tools. Teachers’ meetings enable systematic and detailed analysis of the assessments made, giving rise to adjustments in planning so that difficulties are immediately solved with appropriate educational responses.

These particular circumstances of context and distance from the national reality, where the school fulfils its mission, reinforce the collaborative work among teachers with regard to lesson plans, to the sharing of teaching materials, to interdisciplinary activities and to scientific and methodological discussion. Several study visits are planned in the perspective of involving different subjects, and there is an actual use of autonomy to consolidate the pedagogical issues related to the school’s context, which is also reflected in publications such as *Building four Christmas stories*, *Half a proverb to the wise is enough*, and *Under the veil of time – Tales and legends of ancient China*.

The situations and examples listed above illustrate the ongoing analysis and reflection led by teachers on issues related to planning, showing clear principles and admitting flexible adjustments considered convenient, and it is reflected in the quality of the teaching provided by the school, with an evident impact on learning processes and on academic achievement.

TEACHING PRACTICES

The school excels in educational activities structured around the priorities that are clearly established, and it reveals to be incisive and effective in the immediate response to the difficulties emerging in the teaching and learning process. The Portuguese language is used to convey the curriculum of different areas / subjects and it is at the centre of these priorities. So there are different courses that initiate the intensive learning of the language (*Preparatory Year*), continue the learning process as a foreign language (Portuguese as second language) and reinforce or consolidate linguistic skills (in study rooms). The teaching of the *Portuguese Course for Foreigners*, namely for Chinese students, after the schedule of regular education classes, is another major front in the diffusion of national language and culture.

Similarly, the value of the school library as an interactive place for learning, contributes to the development of the students’ skills related to the Portuguese language mastery and it promotes, in a significant and effective way across all schooling grades, the articulation with other areas / subjects of the curriculum, with reflections on the improvement of learning.

It is also noteworthy the work done in the 1st cycle, where learning is systematically and strategically consolidated by strengthening the activities with the school library, in the laboratories and using the technological supports available in the school, along with the curricular development at this level of education. The analysis and reflection of teachers from all cycles of basic education and secondary education denote the enhancement and purposeful focus on the first schooling years; because they recognize that pupils at this level develop essential skills and potentiate the success of their learning in subsequent years.

With regard to the teaching of Mandarin as a foreign language, the school has sustained the systematic reflection on the difficulties diagnosed and on the measures to be implemented in order to promote outstanding levels of achievement, particularly in speaking. This is due to the huge differences between the Eastern and Western writing systems, and the lack of opportunities that enable the application of learning in daily communication situations.

Learning Mandarin is highly valued by the whole educational community; therefore, with the cooperation of the Translation Department of the Macau Polytechnic Institute, diligences have been intensified with the aim of adapting the teaching methods used, as well as of seeking new strategies for use in the classroom, in extracurricular activities and in real communication environments. However it was recognized that the signing of an agreement between Portugal and People's Republic of China could favour the recruitment, training and stability of Mandarin teachers, as well as it could enable the language certification by the school.

Methodological, didactical and pedagogical issues are an object of discussion among teachers who recognize its importance and adopt several teaching strategies in order to meet the students' needs and interests, motivating them to study the curricular subjects. Even so, in general, differentiation practices in the classroom may have higher expression, fostering the improvement of teaching and learning. In this context, teachers can benefit from the dissemination of good practices already developed in some cases, such as physical education and information and communication technologies, based on pedagogical differentiation, and its replication in other groups or departments is very important.

The educational activities of the school are guided by the principle of the curriculum approach in an interdisciplinary perspective, based on the work done in class councils and enhanced by the activities integrated in the annual plan. In fact, it is evident the strategic coordination of these actions in order to systematically reinforce the learning processes, namely in the diversity and scope of extra-curricular activities that involve more than half of the school population (264 students in 2011-2012), in conjunction with the annual plan. This contributes to enhance the success of students with positive effects on their integral formation and on curriculum contextualization. The extracurricular activities offered by the school (in areas such as dance, music, gymnastics, various sports, painting, chess, journalism and French), as well as the annual plan activities (for example *Festival of Lusophony*, the *Music Festival* and numerous *School Tournaments*), are coherently articulated and consolidate the priority lines that frame the curricular development at school.

Similarly, it should be noted as very positive the reinforcement of the experimental component, that is transversal to basic and secondary education, arising from the development of curriculum in the classroom and its enrichment with extra-curricular activities. This contributes to foster a positive attitude in regard to the scientific method and science learning. In this area of knowledge, there are widespread and consolidated practices, which are the result of teachers' reflection on the benefits arising from the contact of pupils, since their first year of schooling, with the laboratory environment and it is reflected on the success achieved in the corresponding areas / subjects. Study visits, for example to Macau Science Centre, provide an important complement to this branch of the curriculum.

Regarding the learning support activities provided, the school distinguishes itself by the adequacy and effectiveness, mobilizing the necessary resources, particularly in study rooms, and using a range of methods and techniques to promote reflection about learning. Indeed it is very relevant the analysis

carried out during the teaching and learning process on the results achieved, combined with the explanation of the difficulties experienced by the students. This allows the adaptation and differentiation of strategies, which are reinforced when preparing for external evaluations (national final tests and examinations).

The teachers' sense of opportunity is evident in the promptness of their actions, because they identify early the students' needs and help them to overcome difficulties, but the combination of human and material resources has also been crucial so that the supporting strategies were appropriate. The support provided to pupils with learning difficulties and to those who show very high capacities has a very positive and strong impact on academic outcomes. Despite the lack of a special education teacher at school, the support provided for students with special needs allowed their full success in the last three years, with the involvement of the psychologist, teachers and families.

Alongside with learning support activities and with equal importance, there is a permanent incentive to improve performance, reflected in the acknowledgment of the students' success through honourable mentions and numerous awards, such as *Dr. Nascimento Leitão Award*, *Dr. Henrique de Senna Fernandes Revelation Award* and *Portugal House Award*, offered by the school, by local associations and by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau of the Macau Special Administrative Region. Likewise, exhibitions and performances by the *Theatre Club* and by the *Orff Music Group* give visibility and value students' learning in many areas of knowledge.

Well maintained school facilities also contribute to create study environments conducive to learning, such as the reading room, which won the Asia-Pacific Award for Cultural Heritage Conservation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the category "Innovation", because of its architectural design. An optimal use of educational resources and of time spent on learning substantiate another key for excellence in the school, considering that there is a systematic use of specific areas, such as school library, reading room, study rooms, information and communication technology rooms, laboratories, with the aim of diversifying the contexts of education and teaching, motivating and enriching student learning.

Classroom observation, integrated in this external evaluation and well received by professionals, has allowed systematizing the aspects that, overall, characterize the teaching practices at the school. It has been opportunely presented to the educational community. This way it was possible to observe, in the classroom, how the action of the school has produced a consistent impact in the improvement of student learning. Indeed, apart the inherent differences of schooling years and the areas / subjects targeted on the observations, teachers' performances were different depending on the strategies used and the interactions set off in each class. In common it is noted the appropriateness of the teaching practices observed, with clear intentions and aimed at helping students to learn.

Based on direct observation and not only from the deferred report of teachers' meetings, the awareness of how the teaching activity is performed potentiates a more reasoned reflection on the aspects that are susceptible of improvement. So, the logistics are already being prepared to help implementing the supervision of teaching practices in the classroom, as a training strategy for the professional development of teachers, and it will open new prospects for enhancing the excellent education provided by the school.

As pointed out about planning, also with regard to teaching practices, it stands the permanent reflection of teachers and the consequent adjustment of their actions, ensuring the active participation of students and parents and monitoring continuously the adequacy and viability of the measures implemented, with a very positive impact on the quality of learning and achievements.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Systematic analysis, by the school bodies and structures of pedagogical and educational coordination, covers the monitoring and the development of the curriculum, which is intrinsically connected to processes and outcomes of learning assessment, because these are the source of the indicators that underlie decision-making and the choice of improvement strategies. Thus, study rooms and learning support activities reinforce and consolidate a flexible curriculum development, providing educational responses that are differentiated and appropriate to the students' needs.

Teachers value particularly the diagnostic and formative assessment, because it is closely related to the regulation of learning, originating relevant information for teachers and students. This influences the teaching and learning processes, resulting, for example, on self and hetero-assessment of students, in order to involve them more actively in their own learning. It also leads to reflection and performance improvement through the “pedagogy using error analysis” and to carry out tasks that are based on a constructivist conception of learning, as it is the case of writing workshops.

On a broader level, it is noted the discussions held in departments on the overall results and on the assessment criteria, which are differently presented according to the school grade and area/ subject, in terms of standardized acquisition levels of skills or based in parameters and respective weights. However, there are common principles designed to meet the curriculum specificities (for example, speaking in language study, physical fitness in the case of physical education, and mastery of techniques and procedures in visual and technological education) and teachers use appropriate tools for different learning situations (observation grids, portfolios, written tests, among others).

Benchmarking results from the sharing of tools and from analyzing outcomes achieved internally as well as in external assessments. In this case it focuses on the educational progress national tests and national examinations, conducted in Portugal. In fact, teachers make all the diligences to prepare effectively their students for these moments and they seek to maintain the proximity between internal rates and the ones achieved in examinations, because the school is the only one participating in external assessments in Macau Special Administrative Region. This work is doubly successful because, on the one hand, it promotes the integral formation of students by including in the assessment criteria some parameters such as autonomy, respect for others and responsibility. On the other hand, it meets the requirements of preparation for the examination papers, which do not include those criteria, but where the students achieve excellent performance levels.

On a more specific level there is the work done in the class councils, a basic structure, critical to the success of the educational action in conjunction with other organizational structures. It is remarkable the class tutors' work, facilitating the integration of students and endeavouring to connect with their families, as well as the availability of other teachers to clarify doubts of parents and guardians within the specificities of the subjects they teach.

The reflections held in the class councils are attentive to assessments, case by case, and it bases decisions to implement differentiated learning activities, to overcome difficulties and to enhance the development of remarkable capacities. The results achieved by students with learning difficulties that receive additional help are very positive, and the success rates stand between 95% and 100%.

Dropout and abandonment are not a problem at school and the alternatives available for continuing to study in higher education are huge. In this context, the teachers' intervention should focus on reinforcing and broadening the vocational guidance activities (seminars and study visits), particularly after completing the 9th grade, complementarily with the program developed by the psychologist.

Consistent with planning and teaching practices, and also with learning assessments, teachers guide their work by the analysis and reflection on the indicators available, internal and external, and make the adjustments that allow them to improve continuously the teaching and learning process, with a consistent and very positive impact on the results.

The action of the school has produced a consistent impact and far above the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories. The strengths predominate in all of the fields under analysis as a result of consolidated, widespread and effective organizational practices. The school is distinguished by exemplary practices in relevant fields. Such foundations justify the **EXCELLENT** rating in the domain of **Educational Provision**.

3.3 – LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

LEADERSHIP

The vision, strategy and planning set from the guidelines defined by the administration council of the Foundation of the Portuguese School of Macau, are established in the school development plan, which is a structural document for educational action. It is consistent and embodies the guiding principles, the values and the development lines that strategically contribute to accomplish the school mission.

The focus on the quality of teaching and on the organizational development of the school has guided the work of the top leadership, in order to ensure the improvement of academic achievement and making the school an intersecting centre of the Portuguese language and culture with other cultures.

The mission gives the school a unique singularity, as it ensures schooling comparable to that provided in any other school in the Portuguese educational system, although its development plan is carried out in a distinct context and under different historical, cultural and geographic circumstances.

The strong and charismatic leadership of the school head teacher, consensually valued, has contributed to consolidate the image of excellence of the Portuguese School of Macau, establishing its recognition within the local society and the educational community and undertaking the efforts to gather support from diplomacy and from the government of Macau Special Administrative Region. The openness, dialogue, support, exigency and rigor of the leadership has contributed to strengthening the collaborative work and promoted a good school ambience, fostering cooperation, debate and participation of intermediate leaders, including department coordinators and class tutors, in decision-making with regard to the excellence of educational provision.

It is noteworthy the promotion and support to language learning embodied in the protocols concluded with the Macau Polytechnic Institute, the Confucius Institute and the Portuguese Language Observatory, as well as the Portuguese language courses in the evenings, the summer courses for students from Chinese schools and the language improvement courses of Portuguese and Mandarin, in Portugal and Beijing, supported by the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau. However, the participation in international projects in consonance with the school's identity and mission can further enrich the learning experiences of students, as it happened with the correspondence by mail established between the students of the Portuguese School of Macau and the Portuguese School of Timor.

In order to anticipate the success conditions, the school interacts with the D. José da Costa Nunes Kindergarten, regarding the use of Portuguese as the first language and introducing early Mandarin learning. This coordination is also extended to five-year-old children visiting the school and to information about their pre-school trajectory, transmitted by the kindergarten teachers to the 1st cycle teachers.

Annually the school celebrates the *Open Day*, which has an extraordinary impact on the motivation and involvement of the entire educational community, fostering a sense of belonging and identity within the school, and being a unique opportunity to disseminate the Portuguese language and culture. Similarly, it is noted as very positive the openness and the proactivity in order to get sponsorship and publicize

the school projects in the Macanese community, principally through the local associations focused on education and culture.

It is remarkable the cult of memory at school as a unifying centre of the educational community, mobilizing quality and excellence, extolling the sense of belonging and identity within the school, through the use of uniform, school anthem and emblem, school newspaper and solemn moments of celebration.

It is noteworthy the teachers' commitment and dedication in accomplishing their functions, associated with good personal and professional interactions, resulting from a management that promotes values such as freedom, participation and affections.

The school is a privileged place for innovation in the search for quality, focusing on the development, as a way of achieving excellence in student learning and their academic achievement.

The move to a new building in a more suitable location offering better facilities has created high expectations for leaderships, in order to continue the quality education provided by the school, with an increasingly international focus, firming up the value of the Portuguese language in Macau and aiming to establish the link between East and West. In fact, the schooling of Chinese students using the Portuguese language is an example of how the school is a true centre of the Portuguese language and culture.

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

The school presents itself as an efficient organization on its multiple facets. So the criteria that frame the management and allocation of resources are in line with the principles that guide other educational activities, namely, the “primacy of the person”, “values”, “quality” and the “sense of duty”. The actual respect for these principles contributes to enhance the feeling of well-being and belonging of the educational community members.

The preparation of schedules observes a strict distribution of specific classrooms, and this, combined with the normal classroom where the information and communication technologies are available, allows a high use of the resources by all the student population. The teachers' pedagogical continuity is normally maintained in the cases where it is perceived as a suitable option regarding the students' interests. Similarly, there is openness and flexibility in managing time and classroom spaces, and supplemental lessons are provided to students, whenever such a need is diagnosed, in order to ensure the conditions for their successful learning.

The sense of responsibility is cultivated by raising the consciousness of the school community regarding the facilities maintenance and the conservation of resources, fostering the collective awareness that it is exhaustible. For this reason, the direction board and the school staff have to manage the protocol dynamics that ensure the funding of various activities and projects, which are fundamental for the recognized quality of the educational provision.

In this context it is worth noting the remarkable support of the government of Macau Special Administrative Region, through the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, providing financial, material and also human resources, that are very important for the prosecution of the school's mission. The hiring of visiting tutors to coordinate reading and extracurricular activities, as well as for the organization and management of laboratory and computing resources, illustrates clearly how important this support is to strengthen the priority lines of the educational action.

It is noteworthy that the lack of a special education teacher in the school can make the psychologist's work more difficult. Even though, in conjunction with other teachers and class tutors, the psychologist seeks to adapt to the maximum the responses to students with special education needs.

The teacher's assessment is not formally implemented at the school, but all the professionals are committed to their tasks and the renewal of the job contract is the sign of a good performance. In fact, the sense of community and belonging also reflects the cooperative work of teachers, concerning the development / adaptation of planning, definition of assessment criteria, implementation of activities and sharing materials, mitigating the effects of the distance from the national academic circles that the school teachers undergo.

Training needs are often a subject under discussion within teachers, because they recognize the benefits that the permanent scientific, methodological and pedagogical renewal can add to the execution of their duties. Such needs are partially filled with the use of the school's human capital, providing some internal training (regarding the use of the *Moodle* platform in the teaching and learning processes, and specialities /procedures for physical education) and with the participation in *WEB-based SemINARs* (English). The support of Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, by signing protocols involving Portuguese higher education institutions, has allowed teachers to obtain training in specific scientific and didactic areas (Portuguese, mathematics and experimental sciences).

Nevertheless, the excellence level aimed by the teachers requires a strategic and systematic planning of training, focused on their professional development needs, oriented to the effective scientific consolidation and to the renewal of teachers' methodological practices and taking into account the identity and mission of the school. For this purpose, in view of the celerity of the processes and costs containment, it seems convenient to use, as much as possible, the schools' human resources to promote the dissemination of knowledge in working context, benefiting from the existing protocols and supports. Likewise, the identification of good practices, already implemented in some subjects, with regard to the production and use of specific teaching materials, is another way of getting replication in other groups or departments.

The sense of belonging shared by the teachers can also be extended with the involvement of non-teaching staff in the school's development plan and providing training to these workers in areas related with their specific functions within the educational provision, in order to increase motivation and to enhance the conditions of human and professional interaction.

The school is well equipped with information technologies, but its use can be enhanced, both as learning and teaching tool as in making the communication between the members of the educational community faster and more efficient, particularly between class tutors and parents.

Overall, management is simultaneously rigorous, on the guiding principles, and flexible by admitting the necessary adjustments, which enhances the functioning of the organization and contributes decisively to improve learning conditions and to achieve excellent results.

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT

The school's self-evaluation project is based on its development plan, which is also a curricular project. Its development was founded on a work of reflection and analysis of past experiences of teaching Portuguese in Macau, as well as on the evaluation of physical resources, human capital, students and expectations of the educational community.

Self-evaluation is focused on the development plan's priority lines of action and on the execution of the activities in different areas such as management, curriculum, pedagogy, school-environment connection, educational psychology and school counselling. The coordination between the school bodies and the coherence between the different structuring documents has allowed identifying the key success factors. It also led to conceiving, developing and evaluating the improvement actions, with consequences in the teaching and learning process and, therefore, in the academic achievement.

There is a tension created by the fact that it is a successful school regarding outcomes because it sets the standards for excellence. This leads teachers to develop educational processes sustained in self-evaluation and self-management of curriculum, with special attention to cultural diversity. In fact, the practice of self-assessment is reflected in the annual accounts made by the departments and by the educational community assembly, as well as in the systematic reflections on the students' academic achievement, in view of adapting and improving educational responses.

The self-evaluation actions developed, for example in the study rooms, have produced useful information for the teaching and learning process, permitting to increase its efficiency in order to enhance learning support activities for students and with very positive consequences in academic achievement.

It is noteworthy the work done by the educational community assembly that, besides monitoring and evaluating the annual activity plan at the end of the school year, creates the opportunity for reflection and shared-responsibility aiming at continuous enhancement of all the school areas.

Therefore, the decision making that led to improvement and success is a result of school self-evaluation practices. However, formalizing the self-evaluation project, involving the whole school community, will give greater visibility to the production and implementation of enhancement plans and uphold the sustainability of progress.

These self-evaluation practices are part of a cycle for improvement, especially in the meetings of the different bodies of the school, and it is above all an important contribute for debating the quality of performance, in order to foster the enhancement of strategic processes (outputs, teaching and learning processes and inputs) and to redefine the goals. In fact, the school distinguishes itself by exemplary practices in relevant areas, as demonstrated by the excellent relation with the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau, by the political and social visibility of the school projects and activities, the celebration of dates and ephemerides related to national history and culture, the attribution of such a significant number of awards to students, the *Open Day*, the course of Portuguese as a foreign language and the implementation of the *Preparatory Year*.

Self-regulation by academic achievement and valuing the multicultural context, combined with the participation of the educational community, the strong leadership of the headmistress, and the school's commitment to excellence as a centre for Portuguese language and culture, are indicators of a growing sustainability and development.

The action of the school has produced a consistent impact and far above the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories. The strengths predominate in all of the fields under analysis as a result of consolidated, widespread and effective organizational practices. The school is distinguished by exemplary practices in relevant fields. Such foundations justify the **EXCELLENT** rating in this domain.

4 – SCHOOL STRENGTHS AND IMPROVEMENT AREAS

The evaluation team highlights the following strengths in the school's performance:

- Prominence of the Portuguese School of Macau as a unifying centre of the Portuguese community, promoting the conditions of success, monitoring the school trajectories of students and celebrating dates and commemorations alluding to national history and culture;

- Multicultural and multilingual context as a gain, along with the uniqueness of the school providing the study of Portuguese language as students' first language and of more two foreign official languages, offering traineeships for linguistic skills improvement;
- Adequacy of the learning support activities provided both to students with learning difficulties and with very high capacities, mobilizing the necessary resources, particularly in study rooms, and using diversified methods and techniques for reflection and learning school subjects;
- Consistency of the development plan, which is a structural document of educational action, embodies the guiding principles, the values and the development lines that strategically contribute to accomplishing the school's mission;
- Celebration of the *Open Day*, which has an extraordinary impact on the motivation and involvement of the entire educational community, fostering a sense of belonging and identity within the school, and disseminating the Portuguese language and culture;
- Development of self-assessment reflected in the annual accounts made by the departments and by the educational community assembly, as well as in the systematic reflections on the students' academic achievements, in view of adapting and improving educational responses.

The evaluation team believes that the areas where the school should, mainly, concentrate its efforts for improvement are:

- Participation of students, in particular through the assemblies of delegates, in stimulating activities within the health and environmental education, which are very important for their integral formation;
- Wider implementation of differentiation practices in the classroom, fostering the improvement of teaching and learning;
- Strategic and systematic planning of training, focused on teachers' professional development needs, oriented to the effective scientific consolidation and to the renewal of their methodological practices, taking into account the identity and mission of the school;
- Formalize the self-evaluation project, involving the whole school community, to give greater visibility to the production and implementation of enhancement plans and uphold the sustainability of progress.

Evaluation Team:

João Nunes, João Ramalho e Rosa Micaelo

A Ministerial Order (Despacho n.º 7433/2012, 30th May) determined an intervention in the Foundation of the Portuguese School of Macau and in the Portuguese School of Macau, accomplished by the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science. This intervention served two main goals, allowing, on the one hand, to evaluate the school in order to maintain the excellent level of the education provided there and, on the other hand, to audit the Foundation and the School administrative and finance sections;

Considering that, as a result of the external evaluation undertaken by the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science, the External Evaluation Report was presented, reflecting the outcomes of this intervention;

Considering the main findings and observations contained in the External School Evaluation Report.

Thus, I hereby determine the following:

1. I approve the External Evaluation Report of the Portuguese School of Macau, attached to this Order;
2. Regarding the External Evaluation of the Portuguese School of Macau, I should emphasise the conclusions of the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science contained in the External Evaluation Report with respect to the actions developed by the school, which have produced a consistent impact and far above the expected values in the enhancement of learning and student outcomes and their respective school trajectories, as a result of consolidated, widespread and effective organizational practices, and this determined the **Excellent** rating of the three domains included in the external evaluation framework – outcomes, educational provision and leadership and school management;
3. The External Evaluation Report of the Portuguese School of Macau highlights the following strengths in the school's performance:
 - 3.1. Prominence of the Portuguese School of Macau as a unifying centre of the Portuguese community, promoting the conditions of success, monitoring the school trajectories of students and celebrating dates and commemorations alluding to national history and culture;
 - 3.2. Multicultural and multilingual context as a gain, along with the uniqueness of the school providing the study of Portuguese language as students' first language and of more two foreign official languages, offering traineeships for linguistic skills improvement;
 - 3.3. Adequacy of the learning support activities provided both to students with learning difficulties and with very high capacities, mobilizing the necessary resources, particularly in study rooms, and using diversified methods and techniques for reflection and learning school subjects;
 - 3.4. Consistency of the development plan, which is a structural document of educational action, embodies the guiding principles, the values and the development lines that strategically contribute to accomplishing the school's mission;
 - 3.5. Celebration of the Open Day, which has an extraordinary impact on the motivation and involvement of the entire educational community, fostering a sense of belonging and identity within the school, and disseminating the Portuguese language and culture;
 - 3.6. Development of self-assessment reflected in the annual accounts made by the departments and by the educational community assembly, as well as in the systematic reflections on the students' academic achievements, in view of adapting and improving educational responses.
4. In order to develop its mission and in view of continuous enhancement, the Portuguese School of Macau should, mainly, concentrate its efforts for improvement in the areas identified on the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science's External Evaluation Report:
 - 4.1. Participation of students, in particular through the assemblies of delegates, in stimulating activities within the health and environmental education, which are very important for their integral formation;
 - 4.2. Wider implementation of differentiation practices in the classroom, fostering the improvement of teaching and learning;
 - 4.3. Strategic and systematic planning of training, focused on teachers' professional development needs, oriented to the effective scientific consolidation and to the renewal of their methodological practices, taking into account the identity and mission of the school;

- 4.4. Formalize the self-evaluation project, involving the whole school community, to give greater visibility to the production and implementation of enhancement plans and uphold the sustainability of progress.
5. The contents of this Order shall be communicated to the Foundation of the Portuguese School of Macau, represented by the president of its Administrative Board, to the Direction Board of the Portuguese School of Macau and to the Portuguese Inspectorate of Education and Science, for all due purposes.
6. The contents of this Order shall be communicated to the Secretary of State for Education and School Administration.

The Minister of Education and Science

Nuno Crato