

4. STANDARD SETTING

To ensure maintenance of the standards set in previous years, students' scores on the 2007 TSA tests were equated with students' scores on the 2006 TSA tests. This was done by administering the same Research Test to a sample of students in both years, as shown diagrammatically below.

	Research Test	2006 TSA	2007 TSA
2006 Equating Sample			
2007 Equating Sample			

Note: Different shadings indicate different sets of items.

Having equated 2007 TSA with scores on earlier TSA tests, the same cut score as used in previous years was used to calculate percentages of students achieving basic competency.

The final result in territory-wide percentages of students achieving basic competency in 2007 is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Territory-wide Percentages of Students Achieving Basic Competency

Subject and Level		Percent Achieving Basic Competency			
		2004	2005	2006	2007
Chinese Language (Listening, Reading and Writing)	P.3	82.7	84.7	85.2	84.9
	P.6	--	75.8	76.5	76.7
	S.3*	--	--	75.6	76.2
English Language (Listening, Reading and Writing)	P.3	75.9	78.8	79.4	79.5
	P.6	--	70.5	71.3	71.3
	S.3	--	--	68.6	69.2
Mathematics	P.3	84.9	86.8	86.9	86.9
	P.6	--	83.0	83.8	83.8
	S.3	--	--	78.4	79.9

Note: Chinese Audio-visual component included in the calculation of the cut score at the S.3 level in 2007.

At all three levels, the proportion of students achieving basic competency was once again highest in Mathematics followed by Chinese Language and English Language. At the primary level, results for 2007 were virtually unchanged from 2006. At the S.3 level, the percentages of students achieving the basic competency in 2007 were slightly higher than in 2006.

In the case of students' performance at P.3, with four consecutive years of results, it is possible to have some observations on the overall trends, which are shown graphically in Figure 4.1. There was a significant improvement in 2005 in all three subjects, a small improvement in 2006 in the two languages and no change in 2007.

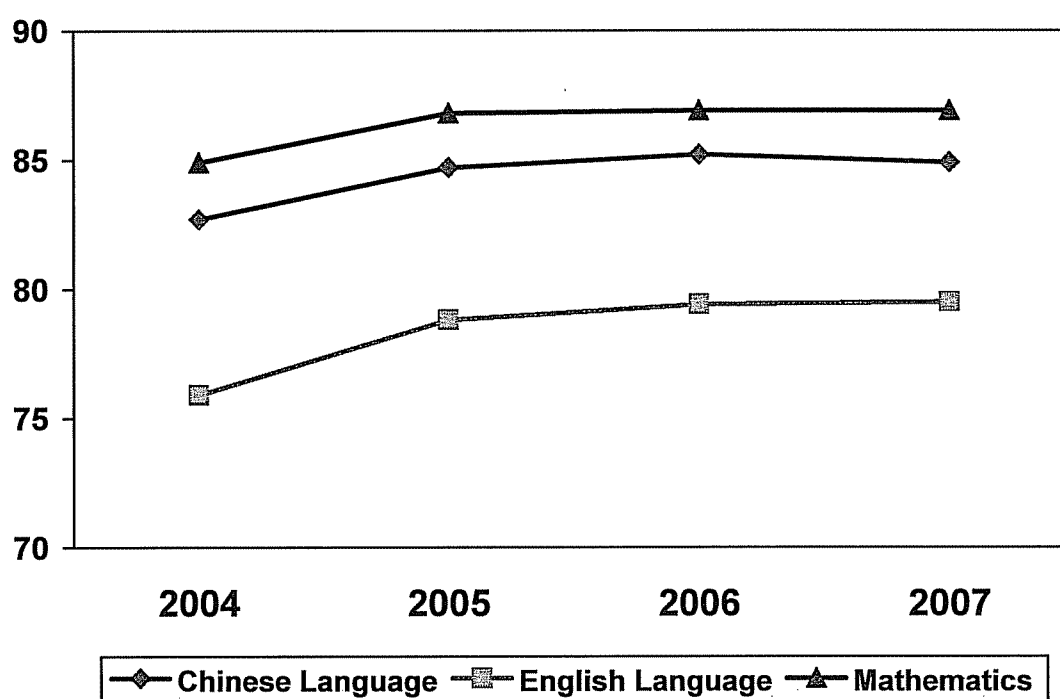


Figure 4.1. P.3 Territory-wide Percentages of Students Achieving Basic Competency

2007 was the first year in which it was possible to track performance of the same cohort of students over more than one Key Stage. This is because the majority of students in P.6 in 2007 were in P.3 in 2004. Table 4.2 summarises some key statistics for students who took the TSA in both 2004 and 2007 in the same school.

Table 4.2 Numbers and Percentages of Students Achieving or Not Achieving Basic Competency in Both 2004 and 2007

	Chinese Language	English Language	Mathematics
Achieved basic competency in both 2004 and 2007	47,735 (72.5%)	45,046 (68%)	53,004 (80.4%)
Achieved basic competency in 2004 but not 2007	7,866 (11.9%)	6,358 (9.6%)	4,149 (6.3%)
Achieved basic competency in 2007 but not 2004	3,385 (5.1%)	3,363 (5.1%)	3,107 (4.7%)
Number of students sitting the TSA in the same school in both 2004 and 2007	65,877	66,226	65,948

To generate this table, it was necessary to link the data for 2004 and 2007. The number of students that were successfully linked was smaller than the total number of students currently in P.6. This is explained by movement in and out of schools of students between P.3 and P.6 and, in a small number of cases, problems in matching some students on the basis of their Student Reference Number (STRN) identifier. It was however possible to identify records for around 66,000 students who were in the same school and who sat the TSA in 2004 when they were in P.3 and in 2007 when they were in P.6.

As anticipated, most students achieved basic competency both in 2004, when they were in P.3, and in 2007, when they were in P.6. In fact the percentages of such students, indicated in the first row of Table 4.2, are only 3-4% lower than the percentages for all students achieving basic competency in P.6, as summarised in Table 4.1. This indicates the importance of students getting off to a good start. If they do well early on, students are likely to do well in future years.

The percentages of students who achieved basic competency in P.3, but not in P.6 were greater than the percentages achieving basic competency in P.6 but not in P.3. This is as expected, since as can be seen from Table 4.1, the proportion of students achieving basic competency decreases over the Key Stages, in line with the widely observed tendency for a growing achievement gap to emerge between high and low performing students over successive years of schooling.

What is noticeable, however, is that for Mathematics the proportion achieving basic competency in P.3 but not in P.6 is smaller than for the two language subjects. This may reflect the fact that Mathematics learning builds strongly on mastery of discrete competences and is more hierarchical in nature than the language subjects. Therefore, performance at P.3 in this subject is highly predictive of performance at P.6.