

## 4. STANDARDS MAINTENANCE

Following past practices, the same Research Test was administered to a sample of students in 2009. Students' scores on the 2009 TSA tests were equated with students' scores on the 2008 TSA tests so as to ensure maintenance of the set standards as shown diagrammatically below.

	Research Test	2008 TSA	2009 TSA
2008 Equating Sample			
2009 Equating Sample			

Note: Different shadings indicate different sets of items.

Having equated 2009 TSA with scores on earlier TSA tests, the same cut score from 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 2009 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	2008	2009
Chinese Language (Listening, Reading and Writing)	P.3	82.7	84.7	85.2	84.9	85.4	#
	P.6	--	75.8	76.5	76.7	76.4	#
	S.3*	--	--	75.6	76.2	76.5	76.5
English Language (Listening, Reading and Writing)	P.3	75.9	78.8	79.4	79.5	79.3	#
	P.6	--	70.5	71.3	71.3	71.5	#
	S.3	--	--	68.6	69.2	68.9	68.8
Mathematics	P.3	84.9	86.8	86.9	86.9	86.9	#
	P.6	--	83.0	83.8	83.8	84.1	#
	S.3	--	--	78.4	79.9	79.8	80.0

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

# Due to H1N1 Human Swine Influenza causing the suspension of primary schools, the TSA was cancelled and no data has been provided.

At Secondary 3 level, the proportion of students achieving basic competency was once again highest in Mathematics followed by Chinese Language and English Language. In the case of the S.3 students performance, after four consecutive years of results, it is possible to discern overall trends, which are shown graphically in Figure 4.1. There was a steady development from 2006 in all three subjects across these years.

**Figure 4.1 S.3 Territory-wide percentages of students achieving basic competency**

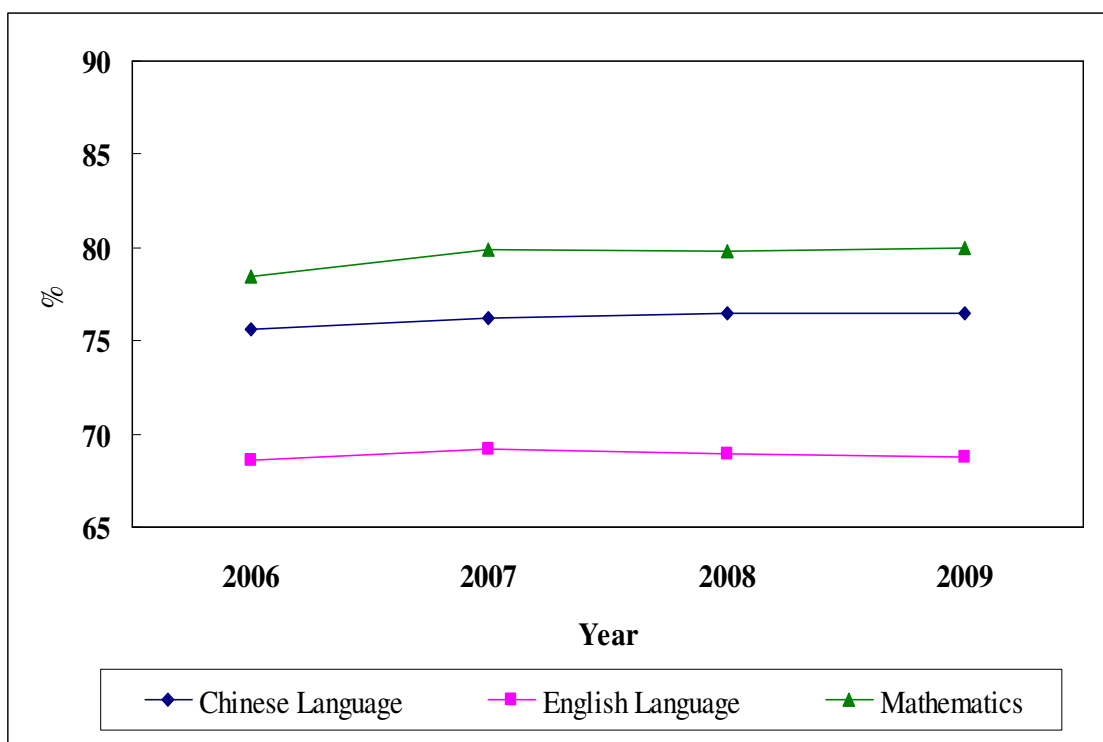


Table 4.2 summarises some key statistics for those S3 TSA 2009 students who also took the TSA in 2006.

**Table 4.2 Numbers and Percentages of Students Achieving or Not Achieving Basic Competency in Both 2006 and 2009**

	Chinese Language	English Language	Mathematics
Achieved basic competency in both 2006 and 2009	44,133 (69.4%)	41,628 (65.9%)	49,256 (78.0%)
Achieved basic competency in 2006 but not in 2009	6,122 (9.6%)	5,164 (8.2%)	5,432 (8.6%)
Achieved basic competency in 2009 but not in 2006	5,441 (8.6%)	3,166 (5.0%)	2,393 (3.8%)
Number of students sitting the TSA in both 2006 and 2009	63,624	63,174	63,168

Due to H1N1 Human Swine Influenza causing the suspension of primary schools, TSA 2009 was cancelled and no data was captured this year. The Authority can only link the data of P.6 students attending TSA 2007 and S.3 students of TSA 2009. To generate this table, it was necessary to link the data for 2006 and 2009. The number of students that were successfully linked was smaller than the total number of students currently in S.3. This is largely explained by problems in matching some students on the basis of their STRN identifier. It was however possible to identify records for around 85% of students who completed the TSA in 2006 when they were in P.6 and in 2009 when they were in S.3.

As anticipated, most students achieved basic competency both in 2006 and in 2009. In fact, with the exception of Chinese at the S3 level, the percentages of such students, indicated in the first row of Table 4.2, are only 2-3% lower than the percentages for all students achieving basic competency in 2009, as summarized in Table 4.1. This indicates the importance of prior attainment on future success. If they do well early on, students are likely to do well in future years.

The percentages of students who achieved basic competency in 2006, but not in 2009 were greater than the percentages achieving basic competency in 2009 but not in 2006. This is expected, 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 notable, however, is that for Mathematics the proportion achieving basic competency “in 2009 but not in 2006” is smaller than 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.

The issue on students’ performances across the years is worth investigating and conditions will be ideal for further study. In 2010, it will be possible, for the first time, that the Authority is able to track the first cohort of students over six years from P.3 to P.6 to S.3.