7. ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Results of Primary 3 English Language in TSA 2012

The territory-wide percentage of P.3 students achieving English Language Basic Competency in TSA 2012 is 79.7%. The percentage of students achieving basic competency in 2012 is similar to that of 2011.

Primary 3 Assessment Design

The assessment tasks for TSA 2012 P.3 English Language were based on the *Basic Competency (BC) Descriptors (Tryout Version) for English Language at the end of Key Stage 1 (Primary 3)* and *the CDC Syllabus for English Language (Primary 1 – 6) 1997*. The tasks covered the four language skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking, as well as learning objectives in three interrelated strands, i.e. Interpersonal (IS), Knowledge (KS) and Experience (ES).

The P.3 written assessment consisted of four sub-papers for Listening and four sub-papers for Reading and Writing, comprising a total of 92 items and 104 score points. The duration of each Listening sub-paper was approximately 20 minutes, while each Reading and Writing sub-paper was 25 minutes. The oral assessment consisted of twelve sub-papers. The composition of the P.3 written sub-papers is provided in Table 7.1a and that of Speaking sub-papers is given in Table 7.1b.

Table 7.1a   Composition of P.3 Written Sub-papers

Written Assessment				
Basic Competency	**No. of Items (Score Points)**			
Listening	3EL1	3EL2	3EL3	3EL4
	20(20)	20(20)	19(19)	19(19)
Reading	3ERW1	3ERW2	3ERW3	3ERW4
	25(25)	26(26)	25(25)	26(26)
Writing	3ERW1	3ERW2	3ERW3	3ERW4
	1(7)	1(7)	1(7)	1(7)

Table 7.1b   Composition of P.3 Speaking Sub-papers

Speaking Assessment			
Basic Competency	**No. of Items (Score Points)**		
L2-R-3-P3BC (Reading aloud)	3ES01 & 3ES03 2 (8)	3ES05 & 3ES07 2 (8)	3ES09 & 3ES11 2 (8)
L1-S-3-P3BC (Short answers)	3ES01 – 3ES04 4 (16)	3ES05 – 3ES08 4 (16)	3ES09 – 3ES12 4 (16)
L3-S-1-P3BC (Picture description – pronunciation)	3ES02 & 3ES04 2 (4)	3ES06 & 3ES08 2 (4)	3ES10 & 3ES12 2 (4)

P.3 Listening Items

Each student was required to attempt one of the four sub-papers (about 20 minutes), each of which consisted of two listening tasks. All listening materials were played twice. Descriptions of the listening assessment tasks are provided in Tables 7.2 and 7.3.

Table 7.2   P.3 Listening: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L2-L-1-P3BC	Discriminating between common words with a small range of vowel and consonant sounds	7
L2-L-3-P3BC	Using a small range of strategies to understand the meaning of short and simple texts on familiar topics which are delivered slowly and clearly in familiar accents	32
	TOTAL	39

Table 7.3   P.3 Listening: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L2-L-1-P3BC L2-L-3-P3BC	Shopping *3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1*	Multiple Choice	10(10)
L2-L-1-P3BC L2-L-3-P3BC	Lucky Charlie *3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2*	Multiple Choice	10(10)
L2-L-1-P3BC L2-L-3-P3BC	Jobs *3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2*	Multiple Choice	10(10)
L2-L-1-P3BC L2-L-3-P3BC	Last Day at School *3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1*	Multiple Choice	9(9)

P.3 Reading Items

Each student was required to attempt four reading tasks in one of the four Reading and Writing sub-papers (25 minutes each). About 15 minutes was allotted for completion of the reading tasks in each sub-paper. Descriptions of the reading tasks are provided in Tables 7.4 and 7.5.

Table 7.4   P.3 Reading: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L2-R-5-P3BC	Using a small range of reading strategies to understand the meaning of short and simple texts with the help of cues	45
L2-R-6-P3BC	Applying a small range of simple reference skills	6
	TOTAL	51

Table 7.5   P.3 Reading: Item Description and Question Types

Basic Competency	Item Description	Question Type	No. of Items (Score Points)
L2-R-5-P3BC L2-R-6-P3BC	Book Cover *3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1*	Multiple Choice	6(6)
L2-R-5-P3BC	Green Week *3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 2*	Multiple Choice	6(6)
L2-R-5-P3BC	My New Friends *3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3*	Multiple Choice	6(6)
L2-R-5-P3BC	At the Beach *3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4*	Multiple Choice	7(7)
L2-R-5-P3BC L2-R-6-P3BC	Contents Page *3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 1*	Multiple Choice	6(6)
L2-R-5-P3BC	No Air-conditioner Day *3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2*	Multiple Choice	7(7)
L2-R-5-P3BC	English Fun Day *3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4*	Multiple Choice	7(7)
L2-R-5-P3BC	The Train World *3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 3*	Multiple Choice	6(6)

P.3 Writing Tasks

Each student was required to attempt one writing task in one of the four Reading and Writing sub-papers (25 minutes each). About 10 minutes was allotted for completion of the writing task in each sub-paper. Descriptions of the writing tasks are provided in Tables 7.6 and 7.7.

Table 7.6   P.3 Writing: Distribution of Items

Basic Competency	Descriptor	No. of Items
L2-W-3-P3BC	Writing and/or responding to short and simple texts with relevant information and ideas (including personal experiences and imaginative ideas) with the help of cues	1
L2-W-4-P3BC	Writing short and simple texts using a small range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and cohesive devices fairly appropriately with the help of cues despite some spelling and grammatical mistakes	1
	TOTAL	2

Table 7.7   P.3 Writing: Item Description

Basic Competency	Item Description	No. of Items (Score Points)
L2-W-3-P3BC L2-W-4-P3BC	Classroom Cleaning Day *3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 5*	½ (4) ½ (3)
L2-W-3-P3BC L2-W-4-P3BC	In the Park *3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 5*	½ (4) ½ (3)

P.3 Speaking Tasks

Two components were designed for P.3 oral assessment. The first was 'Reading Aloud and Expression of Personal Experiences' (hereafter RA & PE) which required students to read aloud a text of approximately 35 – 40 words in length and then answer a set of questions based on the theme of the text. Students were assessed on their reading fluency and response to the Oral Examiners' questions. For this task, students were given two minutes to prepare for the assessment, one minute to complete the RA text and two minutes to complete the questions for PE. The second task was 'Picture Description' (hereafter PD) which required students to answer the Oral Examiner's questions based on a single picture or series of smaller pictures. Students were assessed on the relevancy and response to the questions as well as their pronunciation. For PD, students were given three minutes to study the question paper and two minutes to complete the Oral Examiners' questions.

Each component represented one half of the total sub-papers used for the oral assessment. RA & PE were comprised of sub-papers *3ES01, 3ES03, 3ES05, 3ES07, 3ES09, 3ES011* and PD comprised of *3ES02, 3ES04, 3ES06, 3ES08, 3ES10, 3ES12*. A set of four sub-papers (two RA & PE tasks and two PD tasks) were alternately assessed in an assessment session. Sub-papers consisted of different topics: *School Picnic (3ES01), In a School Playground (3ES02), My Teacher (3ES03), In a Classroom (3ES04), My Classmate (3ES05), At Home (3ES06), In the Evening (3ES07), A Dance Show (3ES08), Spring (3ES09), In a Toy Shop (3ES10), A Christmas Party (3ES11)* and *Mary's Dad's Birthday (3ES12)*. A total of three sessions were conducted over the 1.5 days of assessment held on 3 and 4 May 2012. Descriptions of the speaking tasks are provided in Table 7.8.

Table 7.8   P.3 Speaking: Distribution of Tasks

Basic Competency	Task Description	Descriptor
L2-R-3-P3BC	Reading Aloud *3ES01, 3ES03, 3ES05, 3ES07,* *3ES09, 3ES11*	Showing a basic understanding of short, simple and familiar texts by reading aloud the texts clearly and comprehensibly
L1-S-3-P3BC	Expression of Personal Experiences *3ES01, 3ES03, 3ES05, 3ES07,* *3ES09, 3ES11*	Providing short answers to short and simple questions
L3-S-1-P3BC	Picture Description *3ES02, 3ES04, 3ES06, 3ES08,* *3ES10, 3ES12*	Pronouncing simple and familiar words comprehensibly
L1-S-3-P3BC		Providing short answers to short and simple questions

Performance of P.3 Students with Minimally Acceptable Levels of Basic Competence in TSA 2012

P.3 Listening

Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were generally able to identify key words on familiar topics which were delivered slowly and clearly in spoken texts. They were able to identify the connection of ideas linked by a small range of cohesive devices. They could also distinguish basic differences in intonation and discriminate between common words with a small range of consonant sounds.

Key Words

- Most students at this level were able to identify key words in the spoken texts related to their daily life experiences such as year, telephone number, country, days of the week and toys. They could identify '2001' as the year Uncle John started working as a fireman when they heard Uncle John saying '*I started my work in 2001.*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.1*). They could also identify the new telephone number of Tom's mum when they heard '*Tom, write down my new telephone number. It's 4037 8442.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Shopping' Q.10*). When students listened to a conversation between Tom and his mum about a school picnic, they were able to identify key words about the day of the picnic with distractors built in, '*Is it next Thursday or Friday?*', '*It's next Wednesday, 12 November.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Shopping' Q.1*). Students also listened to a conversation between Tom and his mum. They were talking about Tom's classmate Grace and her last day at school. They could identify when and where Grace was going when they heard straightforward spoken clues '*She's going to Canada with her family. She's leaving next Saturday.*' in the spoken text (*3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 'Last Day at School' Q.2 & Q.3*). When asked which toy Charlie wanted to play with, most of the students could identify 'a toy car' as the answer with distractors given in the spoken text: '*He can see a robot, a ball and a train. He does not want to play with them. He only wants to play with his toy car.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Lucky Charlie' Q.7*).

- The majority of students were able to get the correct answer with straightforward verbal cues given. When they listened to a story about Lucky Charlie, they could identify that Charlie felt sad at the beginning of the story by interpreting the spoken text: '*Charlie is at home. He is unhappy.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Lucky Charlie' Q.1*). In the same listening task, when asked what Charlie thought about the story in the

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newspaper that he read, they could identify 'boring' as the correct answer when straightforward spoken clues were given: '*Charlie thinks the story is boring.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Lucky Charlie' Q.5*).

- A majority of the students were also capable of identifying key words that were delivered slowly and clearly in the spoken texts. They could identify that Tom and his mum would meet at the supermarket when they heard '…*let's meet at 4:30 at the supermarket.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Shopping' Q.9*).   Students could also identify the correct picture of Grace with the spoken clues '*Grace has short curly hair with a pair of round glasses.*' (*3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 'Last Day at School' Q.9*).

- Many students were capable of identifying key words on familiar topics such as money and district of Hong Kong, even though distractors were built into the spoken texts. They could identify that Tom's mum had a $100 coupon when they heard '*I used all the $50 coupons two days ago. I only have one $100 coupon left.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Shopping' Q.6*). They were also able to identify that Uncle John worked in Lai Chi Kok when they heard '*In the first eight years, I worked in Ngau Tau Kok. I now work in Lai Chi Kok.*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.2*). Students could also identify that Uncle John thought firemen worked fast when they heard '*I think firemen work fast to help people. We can't be slow because fire is dangerous!*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.10*).

Connection between Ideas

- Most students at this level showed their understanding of the connection between ideas linked by the cohesive device 'because'. When they heard '*My classmates gave her a pencil case, a colouring book and a beautiful hat. But I gave her a set of coloured pencils because she likes drawing.*', they were able to choose Grace liked drawing as the reason why Tom gave Grace a set of coloured pencils (*3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 'Last Day at School' Q.7*). They could also understand the implicit connection of two contrasting ideas. When asked which sentence Tom liked most in the card that his class made for Grace, students could identify 'See you on the computer' as the correct answer by interpreting '*I wrote "Thinking of you". Others wrote "Forget me not" and "All the best". My favourite sentence was "See you on the computer*."' (*3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 'Last Day at School' Q.6*).

- A majority of the students could identify the connection between ideas by interpreting more than one piece of information. When asked what Charlie read in the newspaper,

students could identify the correct picture of a strong wind blowing down many houses in a village by interpreting '*Then he reads a newspaper. In it he reads a story about a strong wind that blows down many houses in a small village in China.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Lucky Charlie' Q.4*). They could also identify the connection of ideas using 'But'. They were capable of identifying 'driving the fire engine' was not Uncle John's job as a fireman when they heard him saying '*Well, my job is to put out fires, help people and teach students to be careful with fires. But I don't drive the fire engine.*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.3*). Students could also understand the connection of ideas linked by 'and…But'. They were able to tell why Uncle John liked to be a fireman. They could identify 'he wants to help people' as the reason when they heard the spoken text '*Some people think it's a good job and it's exciting to put out fires. But I want to help people.*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.4*).

- A majority of the students were able to identify fruit juice and biscuits as the food that Tom could buy for his school picnic. This showed there was an understanding of the connection between ideas linked by 'and' in the spoken texts when students heard '*No soft drinks…no potato chips. They're bad for you. Just fruit juice and biscuits.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Shopping' Q.3*). The students could also identify the connection between two ideas implicitly linked. When asked why Charlie thought he had a bad day, they could identify 'his baby brother broke his toy car' as the reason by interpreting '*Charlie thinks about his bad day. His baby brother broke his toy car.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Lucky Charlie' Q.6*).

Intonation

- Most students showed their competence in distinguishing speakers' tones when expressing praise, happiness, sadness, surprise and excitement. They were able to identify that Tom's mum praised Tom's generosity when he wanted to give money to help the poor children in China by saying, '*You're a good boy.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Lucky Charlie' Q.10*). Students could also identify Tom's sad tone when he said '*Some of my classmates and I cried.*' (*3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 'Last Day at School' Q.8*). When they listened to the conversation between Uncle John and Tom, students could also interpret Tom was surprised when they heard '*Do you have to work long hours?...Yes, I work 24 hours…Wow! 24 hours!*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.9*). They also knew that Uncle John was happy when they heard him saying '*Yes, I like it very much. When I put out fires, I feel great!*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.8*).

- A majority of the students could identify that Tom's mum was surprised to find it was Grace's last day at school when they heard her saying '*Her last day at school? Why?*' (*3EL3 / 3EL4 Part 1 'Last Day at School' Q.1*). Students were capable of identifying the happy tone of Tom's voice when he said, '*That's great! They're my favourite!*' (*3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Shopping' Q.4*).

Sounds

- A majority of the students could distinguish the brand name of chicken wings with different initial consonants. They could distinguish '*Dennis*' from '*Hannis*', '*Janis*' and '*Bennis*' (*3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Shopping' Q.5*). The majority of them at this level could also distinguish numbers. They could distinguish '*4*' from '*14*', '*40*' and '*44*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.7*).

- Many students could identify the street name where the supermarket was situated. They were capable of distinguishing initial consonants '*B*', '*D*', '*H*' and '*M*'. They could identify '*King Billy Street*' as the correct answer from '*King Dilly Street*', '*King Hilly Street*' and '*King Milly Street*' (*3EL1 / 3EL2 Part 1 'Shopping' Q.7*).

P.3 Reading

With the help of straightforward contextual clues, students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence were able to identify key words. They could also identify the connection between ideas with pictorial cues and cohesive devices. Students at this level were capable of applying a small range of simple reference skills to obtain information from book covers and the contents page. They were also capable of following pronoun references and predicting content with the help of pictorial cues and contextual clues.

Key Words

- When asked to read a postcard about a visit to the Train World, most students were able to identify Mary as the sender of the postcard (*3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 3 'The Train World' Q.1).*

- The majority of students were able to identify key words about weather conditions, time and places. When asked about the weather conditions when Paul went to the beach, students at this level were able to identify the picture of sunny weather as the correct answer by locating the words '*a sunny day*' in the story (*3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4 'At the Beach' Q.1).* They were asked to read Tom's diary about English Fun Day and they could identify the key word '*rainy*' in the diary to identify the weather conditions on that day (*3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4 'English Fun Day' Q.1).* When reading the notice about No Air-conditioner Day, students could identify the starting time of the activity by reading, '*Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.*' in the notice (*3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2 'No Air-conditioner Day' Q.1).*

- A majority of the students could match the correct picture with the key words identified. They were able to identify the picture of a classroom as the place where students could not use the air-conditioners on the No Air-conditioners Day with the contextual clue, '*Place: all classrooms (but not the Music Room, Art Room or Computer Room*)' (*3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2 'No Air-conditioner Day' Q.2).* Students could also identify key words that described people in a story. When asked what Paul's parents thought of Jimmy, students could identify 'helpful' as the correct answer after reading the straightforward contextual clues '*They thank Jimmy for his help and say he is kind and helpful.*' (*3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4 'At the Beach' Q.7).*

Connection between Ideas

- A majority of the students were able to identify the connection between ideas with the help of pictorial cues. When reading a notice about No Air-conditioner Day, students were able to interpret that Tom, a P.3 student, could get a $50 coupon for winning the drawing competition (*3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2 'No Air-conditioner Day' Q.7).*

Reference Skills

- Most students were able to obtain information from the contents page of a book. They could identify that there were altogether six chapters in the book 'My Family' (*3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 1 'Contents Page' Q.1).*

- The majority of students were able to identify Mary Jones as the illustrator of 'Running with Jim Smith' by reading the book cover (*3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1 'Book Cover' Q.6).*

- Many students were able to identify information from the book covers. They were able to identify John Chan as the author of the book 'An Exciting Visit' (*3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1 'Book Cover' Q.2).*

Predicting Content

- A majority of the students could deduce meaning from the book cover of 'Running with Jim Smith'. Students were able to predict that Jim Smith was a runner using the pictorial cue on the book cover (*3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1 'Book Cover' Q.1).*

- By reading the book cover of 'Running with Jim Smith', many students were able to predict the book was about sports (*3ERW1 / 3ERW3 Part 1 'Book Cover' Q.5).* When reading the contents page of the book 'My Family', many students could predict that Tom could see the picture about Chinese New Year on page 23 in Chapter 5 '*Chinese New Year Fun*' with the help of pictorial cues (*3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 1 'Contents Page' Q.6).*
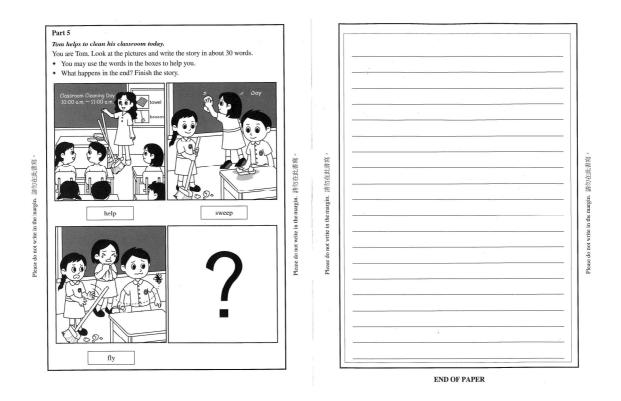
Reference Words

- A majority of the students were able to identify what 'We' referred to in a postcard. They could identify what the pronoun referred to when the pronoun immediately followed the object it referred to. Students could interpret that 'We' referred to 'Mary and her parents' when they read '*I am in Australia with my parents. We visited Train World.*' (*3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 3 'The Train World' Q.2).*

P.3 Writing

Students were required to complete one writing task of about 30 words. Students with minimally acceptable levels of basic competence generally understood the task requirements and could provide relevant ideas. In terms of content, most students were able to provide a factual account of the story based on the pictures with almost no supporting details in *3ERW1 / 3ERW2* while all the students could provide brief and relevant ideas to the prompts in *3ERW3 / 3ERW4*. In terms of language, some students at this level were able to use a small range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and/or cohesive devices fairly appropriately, with some grammatical and spelling mistakes in *3ERW1 – 3ERW4*.

Classroom Cleaning Day (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 5)

In this writing task, students were asked to write a story about a Classroom Cleaning Day based on the given pictures.

Student Exemplar 1

#The Classroom Cleaning Day was from 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock. We all wanted to help. #At 10o'lock, I, Alla and Kelly sweap the floor, rubbed the board...

Suddeny, there's a bee. We all screamed.
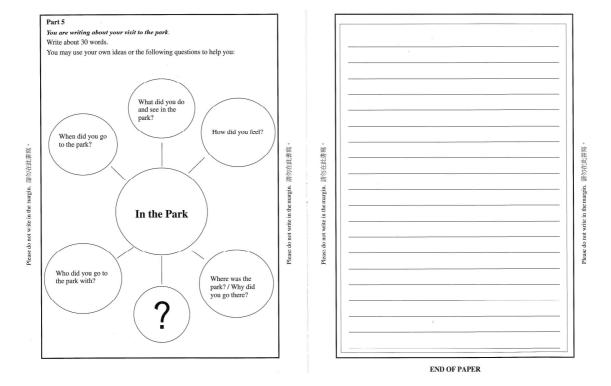
Finally, the bee was scared. So, it flew away.

Annotation

➤ Student is able to provide a factual account of the story based on the pictures, with almost no supporting details ("The Classroom Cleaning Day was from 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock…At 10 o'lock, I, Alla and Kelly sweap the floor, rubbed the board...", "Suddenly, there's a bee. We all screamed."). The description is quite clear and an ending is given to the story ("Finally, the bee was scared. So, it flew away.").

➤ Student uses a small range of vocabulary ("screamed", "scared") and cohesive devices ("Suddenly", "Finally") fairly appropriately.

Student Exemplar 2

Yestaday, Miss chan said" classroom cleaning Day time is ten o'clock in the morning." Miss chan said" Who help classroom Cleaning." Then, I sweep near the desk. Then, the bee fly in the classroom, I said" Oh, the bee in the classroom. Then, the boy open the window, the bee went to the window.

Annotation

➢ Student is able to provide a factual account of the story based on the pictures, with one supporting detail ("Yestaday, Miss chan said "classroom cleaning Day time is ten o'clock in the morning.", "Miss chan said "Who help classroom Cleaning…I sweep near the desk. Then, the bee fly in the classroom."). The description is quite clear and an ending is provided ("Then, the boy open the window, the bee went to the window.")

➢ Student uses a small range of vocabulary ("help", "near") and cohesive devices ("Then") fairly appropriately with some grammatical mistakes ("Miss chan said "Who help classroom Cleaning.", "Oh, the bee in the classroom.", "Then, the boy open the window…").

In the Park (3ERW3 / 3ERW4 Part 5)

Part 5

You are writing about your visit to the park.

Write about 30 words.

You may use your own ideas or the following questions to help you:

- What did you do and see in the park?
- How did you feel?
- When did you go to the park?
- In the Park
- Who did you go to the park with?
- Where was the park? / Why did you go there?
- ?

END OF PAPER

In this writing task, students were asked to write about the things that they did in the park with the help of prompts.

Student Exemplar 3

I visited the park with my grandparents last Sunday. I saw some beautiful flowers and I played the slide. I felt very excited. I went there because I was bored in the afternoon.

Annotation

➢ Student is able to provide brief and relevant ideas/responses to the questions ("I visited the park with my grandparents last Sunday.", "I saw some beautiful flowers and I played the slide.", "I went there because I was bored in the afternoon."). The ideas are quite clear.

➢ Student uses a small range of vocabulary ("bored", "beautiful", "excited") and sentence patterns ("I felt very excited. I went there because I was bored in the afternoon.") fairly appropriately.

Student Exemplar 4

I went to the
park at three o'clock.
I went to the park with
my mama. I go to the
park because I want
to learn kung fu. I
saw some flower in the
park. I felt happy, After
it, we ate noodles.

Annotation

➤ Student is able to provide brief and relevant ideas/responses to the questions ("I went to the park at three o'clock.", "I went to the park with my mama.", "I saw some flower in the park."). The ideas are quite clear.

➤ Student uses a small range of vocabulary ("kung fu", "ate noodles") and sentence patterns ("I go to the park because I want to learn kung fu.", "I felt happy") fairly appropriately with some grammatical mistakes ("I go to the park because I want to learn kung fu.", "I saw some flower in the park.").

P.3 Speaking

Depending on the size of the school, a sample of either 12 or 24 students were randomly selected to participate in the oral assessment. No attempt was made to report results for schools in terms of the percent achieving basic competency in speaking because of the small sample size. However, a descriptive summary of the overall performance levels of students can be found in the 'General Comments on P.3 Student Performances' section.

Best performance of P.3 Students in TSA 2012

P.3 Listening

Students with the best performance demonstrated their ability in the following areas.

Connection between Ideas

- More able students could identify the connection of ideas which were not familiar to them in spoken texts. Students could identify Charlie's toy car and match with the correct picture by interpreting '*His baby brother broke the back window and a front wheel was missing.*' (*3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Lucky Charlie' Q.3*). They could also identify why Uncle John needed to pass tests in running and swimming with the reason implicitly built in the spoken texts: '*Yes, we need to pass many tests in running and swimming to show that we are fit. Fit firemen can do a good job.*' (*3EL2 / 3EL3 Part 2 'Jobs' Q.5*).

Sounds

- More able students could also identify the price of Charlie's toy car. They were able to distinguish '$*16*' from '$*6*', '$*60*' and '$*66*' (*3EL1 / 3EL4 Part 2 'Lucky Charlie' Q.2*).

P.3 Reading

Students with the best performance did well in the following areas.

Connection between Ideas

- Students could understand the implicit connection of two or more ideas in the diary. When students were asked why Peter and Tom did not like the matching game, they could identify that 'it was a boring game' as the reason by interpreting three pieces of information, '*We did not like the matching game. We had to match some words to pictures. It was not difficult but boring.*' (*3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4 'English Fun Day' Q.6*).

- Students could identify the implicit connection of ideas with the help of the cohesive device 'and' in a story. When asked why Paul walked on the rocks, students were able to identify 'He wants to get his cap' as the reason by interpreting '*The wind is strong and it blows Paul's cap away. He wants to get it back and he walks on the rocks.*' (*3ERW1 / 3ERW4 Part 4 'At the Beach' Q.3*). In reading the notice about No Air-conditioner Day, students were able to identify there were four winners in the Paper Fan Drawing Competition by interpreting '*…there are two winners from each group…Group 1…Group 2…*' (*3ERW2 / 3ERW4 Part 2 'No Air-conditioner Day' Q.6*).

Reference Words

- More able students could interpret the pronoun 'us' correctly in the sentence '*Suzie, Bobby and I help each other. Bobby's best subject is Maths. He helps us when we don't know how to do our homework.*' Students had to read a few lines in the letter before they could show their ability in following the pronoun reference. (*3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 3 'My New Friends' Q.4*).

- The students were able to interpret the pronoun which was close to the subject it referred to correctly. Students understood that 'them' referred to 'the sweets' when they read '*I got some sweets and we shared them.*' in the diary (*3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4 'English Fun Day' Q.5*).

Unfamiliar Words

- Students were able to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words correctly with the help of contextual clues in the diary. When asked what Peter got after winning the

reading game, students could interpret the unfamiliar words 'a photo album' with the help of the contextual clue, '*He can put his photos in it.*' (*3ERW2 / 3ERW3 Part 4 'English Fun Day' Q.7*).

P.3 Writing

Students with good writing skills were able to provide a logical story based on pictures with many supporting details in *3ERW1 / 3ERW2*. Students could provide relevant ideas with many supporting details or examples based on the prompts in *3ERW3 / 3ERW4*. The ideas were well organised and coherent. In terms of language, students at this level were able to use a range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and cohesive devices appropriately with minor, few or no grammatical and spelling mistakes.

Classroom Cleaning Day (3ERW1 / 3ERW2 Part 5)

Student Exemplar 5

> One day, the teacher held a classroom cleaning day. Everyone must join. The teacher had two brooms and five towels. Anna took one of the brooms and Tom got a towel to clean the desks. Christy took a towel to make the blackboard clean. They were very happy. One time, They three heard some zzz sound. Anna said "there is a bee!" "Stand still!" Tom said. Christy was crying. They ran to their teacher Miss Chan and told her this thing. "Don't be scared." said Ms Chan. At last, the bee flew away. They were really really glad

Annotation

➢ Student is able to write a logical story based on the pictures with many supporting details ("One day, the teacher held a classroom cleaning day. Everyone must join.", "Anna took one of the brooms and Tom got a towel to clean the desks…They were very happy.", "They three heard some zzz sound.", "Anna said "there is a bee!". "Stand still" Tom said."). The description is very clear and coherent. A good ending is given to the story ("At last, the bee flew away. They were really really glad").

➢ Student uses a range of vocabulary ("zzz sound", "stand still", "scared", "really"), sentence patterns ("Christy took a towel to make the blackboard clean.", "…there is a bee!", "Christy was crying.") and cohesive devices ("and", "At last") appropriately.

Student Exemplar 6

Yesterday was Classroom Cleaning Day. Everyone has to help to clean the classroom. Everyone was excited! I got the towel, and started mopping the tables. Kitty got a broom and swept the floor. Mary got another towel and stared mopping the blackboard. Not before long, everyone was cleaning. But, all of a sudden, I saw a giant bee! I told everyone the bee and warned them not to move. When the bee flew to somewhere far from me, I rushed to open the windows and went back where I just stood before. Very fast, the bee flew away, out the window. Everyone was relieved it did not do any harm!

Annotation

➢ Student provides a logical story based on the pictures with many supporting details ("Everyone has to help to clean the classroom. Everyone was excited!", "I told everyone the bee and warned them not to move. When the bee flew to somewhere far from me, I rushed to open the windows and went back where I just stood before."). The student provides an ending to the story ("Very fast, the bee flew away, out the window. Everyone was relieved it did not do any harm!"). The description is very clear and coherent.

➢ Student uses a range of vocabulary ("excited", "Not before long", "all of a sudden", "giant"), sentence patterns ("Kitty got a broom and swept the floor. Mary got another towel and stared mopping the blackboard.") and cohesive devices ("But", "When", "and") appropriately with a spelling mistake "stared".

Student Exemplar 7

Today is Sunday, I go to the park in the afternoon, I excited because it's my first time to go to Westorn Park, there is a children playground, of course, I go there with my parents.

The park is near my home, so I go there on foot, I play there whenever I have free time. The most thing I like there is there have a big garden plant of beautiful flowers, and it smells good too!

I hope that my friends could go to the Westorn Park soon.

Annotation

➢ Student is able to provide relevant ideas/responses to the questions with many supporting details or examples ("I feel excited because it is my first time to go to Westorn Park, there is a children playground, of course, I go there with my parents.", "The park is near my home, so I go there on foot.", "The most thing I like there is there have a big garden plant of many beautiful flowers, and it smells good too!"). The ideas are very clear and coherent.

➢ Student uses a range of vocabulary ("excited", "most", "garden", "beautiful", "smells good"), sentence patterns ("…it is my first time to….", "I play there whenever I have free time.", "I hope that my friends could go to the Westorn Park soon.") and cohesive devices appropriately ("because", "so", "whenever") with few grammatical mistakes ("…there have a big garden plant of many beautiful flowers…") and a spelling mistake ("Westorn") .

Student Exemplar 8

Last Sunday, the family and I went to Hong Kong Park.

When we arrived the Park, we saw a lot of butterfly and flowers. Then we went to a playground. My brother, sister and I went to play and my parents looked after us.

In the afternoon, we went to a restaurant to had a lunch. After, we went to a Chinese Tea centre. We saw some old Chinese tea cup and we visited how to make tea.

In the evening, we went to a Hong Kong Park PE centre to play table tennis.

Annotation

➢ Student is able to provide relevant ideas/responses to the questions with many supporting details or examples ("Then we went to a playground. My brother, sister and I went to play and my parents looked after us.", "After, we went to a Chinese Tea centre. We saw some old Chinese tea cup and we visited how to make tea.", "In the evening, we went to a Hong Kong Park PE centre to play table tennis."). The ideas are very clear and coherent.

➢ Student uses a range of vocabulary ("arrived", "butterfly", "playground", "parents", "looked after", "restaurant"), sentence patterns ("When we arrived the park, we saw a lot of butterfly and flowers.", "In the afternoon, we went to a restaurant to had a lunch…We saw some old Chinese tea cup and we visited how to make tea.") and cohesive devices appropriately ("When", "Then", "After") with few grammatical mistakes ("a lot of butterfly", "…to had a lunch…").

P.3 Speaking

Students with the best performance demonstrated competence in the following areas:

- In the 'Reading Aloud' component, students with the best performance were able to read a short text fluently and clearly with appropriate pausing and intonation. They made very few or no pronunciation mistakes when reading words such as '*beautiful*' (*3ES01 & 3ES05*), '*classmates*' (*3ES05*), '*newspaper*' (*3ES07*) and '*family*' *(3ES11)*. They could also adjust their pace when reading sentences with a comma, '*After dinner, Dad reads the newspaper.*' *(3ES07)* and '*In the garden, I can see butterflies.*' *(3ES09)*.

- In the 'Expression of Personal Experiences' component, students with good speaking skill could provide relevant answers to most of the questions naturally and readily with some elaboration. They could talk about the teacher they liked (*3ES02*), the time they spent at home in the evening. (*3ES07*) and the season they liked. *(3ES09)*.

- In the 'Picture Description' component, students with the best performance could provide relevant answers to most of the questions naturally and readily with some elaboration to the questions. They could answer 'Why/Why not' questions without difficulty. Students could also speak clearly and readily with very few pronunciation mistakes.

General Comments on P.3 Student Performances

P.3 Listening

- The performances of students in listening were stable. Students continued to have good performance in identifying key words. They were generally able to identify key words related to their daily life experiences about year, telephone number, country, days of the week. They were able to identify a wide range of key words on familiar topics, despite distractors were built in the spoken texts. The familiar concepts include questions about money and district of Hong Kong. Students were also good at identifying key words that were delivered slowly and clearly in the spoken texts and when straightforward spoken clues were given in the spoken texts. This showed that students were able to follow the development of the story and understand the conversation between speakers.

- As in the last year, students did well in distinguishing a speaker's tone of voice showing happiness, sadness, surprise and excitement. They could even distinguish the tone of a speaker that endorsed someone's good behaviour. This demonstrated that they were generally capable of understanding basic differences in intonation.

- Students showed that they were able to discriminate initial consonants. They could distinguish '*Dennis*' from '*Hannis*', '*Janis*' and '*Bennis*'. It indicated that they were able to discriminate between common words with a small range of consonant sounds. However, students' performances in discriminating numbers were not stable this year. While students generally were able to distinguish '*4*' from '*14*', '*40*' and '*44*', only the more able students could distinguish '*16*' from '*6*', '*60*' and '*66*'.

- The performance of students in identifying the connection between ideas in spoken texts was stable. Students were generally able to identify the connection between ideas which were explicitly linked by 'and', 'but' and 'because'. This showed that students generally understood the connection between ideas by identifying a small range of cohesive devices. It was also found that students were able to understand the connection of simple and straightforward ideas which were linked explicitly or implicitly. However, as in the last year, when the ideas were not familiar to students, and even though the ideas were explicitly linked by the cohesive device 'and', only the more able students were able to get the correct answer.

P.3 Reading

- The performance of students in identifying key words in reading texts this year was similar to that of last year. When given straightforward contextual clues, students were good at identifying key words to get the correct answers. They were able to identify key words related to a range of familiar topics such as weather conditions, time and places. Pictorial cues proved to be useful to students in identifying the correct answers. They could match the pictures with the key words identified.

- Pictorial cues were also found useful in helping students identify the connection between ideas. By reading pictorial cues in a notice, students were generally able to work out the connection between ideas. However, as in the last year, fewer students were able to identify the implicit connection between two or more ideas in a story. This showed that it was still challenging for students to identify the implicit connection of two or more ideas when reading longer texts such as stories and diaries.

- The performances of students in obtaining information from book covers and contents page were similar to that of last year. When reading the contents page of a book, they were able to correctly obtain information about the total number of chapters in the book. They also showed they could identify information on book covers, including the author and the illustrator. Contextual clues and pictorial cues helped students to get the correct answers.

- Pictorial cues were also crucial in helping students to predict contents. Many students were able to deduce the contents of the books when given pictorial cues on the book covers and in the contents page.

- Students' performance in following pronoun references was the same as last year. They could follow pronoun references when the pronouns were close to the subjects they referred to. However, it was only the more able students who could follow pronoun reference in longer texts (e.g. letters) when the pronouns were not close to the subjects they referred to.

- As in the last year, interpreting unfamiliar words was a challenge to students. When only one contextual clue was given, only the more able students were able to make use of the clue to interpret meaning of the unfamiliar words.

P.3 Writing

- In the writing task 'Classroom Cleaning Day', students were given word prompts 'help', 'sweep' and 'fly' for the three pictures and were asked to write a story. They had to write a story about what happened on Classroom Cleaning Day according to the pictures. They were also asked to provide an ending to the story. Many students were able to write a factual account of the story with an ending, though not many supporting details were given. The description of the story was quite clear.

- In the writing task 'In the Park', students were asked to write about what they did when they went to the park. Prompts were given to help students write: *'What did you do and see in the park?'*, *'Who did you go to the park with?'*, *'When did you go to the park?'*, *'Where was the park? / Why did you go there?'*, and *'How did you feel?'*. Students were generally able to respond to the questions with brief but relevant answers. The ideas were quite clear and were well organized.

- The performances of students in the two writing tasks are summarized below.

Classroom Cleaning Day

- Many students were able to write a short story about the Classroom Cleaning Day based on the given pictures. Students generally were able to provide a factual account of the story based on pictorial cues with a clear storyline. They were able to write about the duration of Classroom Cleaning Day and the items used for cleaning: *'Today is Classroom Cleaning Day. We are help teacher cleaning classroom.'*, *'The Classroom Cleaning Day was from 10 o'clock to 11 o'clock.'*, *'Today is my classroom cleaning day. We can help.'*, *'On Tuesday, Miss Wong said we want to cleaning the classroom. So we clean the class room…'*. They could also describe what the students did in the classroom with brief but relevant ideas. For example, *'May is sweeping the floor, I'm cleaning the black board, ken is cleaning the table.'*, *'At 10 o'lock, I, Alla and Kelly sweap the floor, rubbed the board…'*, *'Then I sweep near the desk.'*, *'…Alex took a towel to clean the table…Amy and Jenny took a broom to sweep the floor.'*. They could also write brief ideas about what happened when the students were cleaning in the classroom: *'Then the bee fly in the classroom.'*, *'Suddenly, there's a bee. We all screamed.'*, *'I see a bee fly on the tabe, I was sad, I fight the bee.'*, *'Then, have a fly goes to our classroom. I'm scared, May, Ken are sared too.'*, *'Oh no, they saw a fly! So I take a broom to hit the fly.'*.

- In general, students were able to use the word prompts as well as the vocabulary given in the pictures to write the story. However, some students mistook 'the bee' as 'the fly'.

- Fewer students were able to include short conversation exchanges in the story this year. Some students were able to include dialogues between students or the teacher and the students in the story, e.g. '*Miss chan said "Who help classroom Cleaning."'*, '*"I said "Oh, the bee in the classroom."'*, '*Miss Chan say "Timmy, Paul and May. Please help me to clean the classroom."'*. The dialogues made the story more vivid and interesting. However, students made mistakes in writing dialogues. Some students forgot to put the close quotation marks at the end of the conversations, while some did not put any punctuation marks in the sentences at all. Therefore the meaning of the sentences was not clear. For example, '*Yesterday, Miss chan said, "classroom cleaning Day time is ten o'clock in the morning."'*

- Many students were able to provide a very brief ending to the story, though without much elaboration: '*The fly flew away, we clean the classroom again*', '*The boy put the pen on the bee…it is out. We thanks the boy.*', '*Then the boy open the window, the bee went to the window.*', '*Finally, the bee was scared. So, it flew away.*', '*I fight the bee, the bee fly on the grass*'. However, few students were able to provide a story with imaginative ideas.

- Students were able to use limited vocabulary related to the topic. The vocabulary commonly used were '*help to clean*', '*clean the table*', '*clean the classroom*', '*sweep the floor*', '*see a bee*', '*scared*', '*unhappy*', '*thank*', '*again*', and '*sad*'. Students wrote short and simple sentences in the story, e.g. '*We all wanted to help.*', '*They see a bee in the classroom*'. However, some students did not know that '*towel*' and '*broom*' were nouns. They misused them as verbs, e.g. '*I towel and broom…*', '*I clean the sweep.*'.

- Some students were able to use cohesive devices to link ideas. They were able to use cohesive devices such as '*first*', '*then*', '*so*', '*but*' and '*at last*'. For example, '*First, Alex took a towel to clean the table, then, Amy and Jenny took a broom to sweep the floor.*', '*So I take a broom to hit the fly*', '*We is happy but the bee come in it can fly.*', '*At last the bee is fly in his home. Today I feel so unhappy.*'.

- Grammatical mistakes were common among students. Students made errors in tenses, e.g. '*Miss Chan help in the Classroom Cleaning Day… *', '*Miss Wong say has a*

Classroom Cleaning Day.', 'Us is help...', 'Paul is help Jimmy and Mary.', 'I cleaning the backbook.', 'My friend are cleaning...', 'Mimi have a towel clean the big table.', 'May with I help my friend...', 'I see bee fly.', 'Then have a fly goes to our classroom.', 'The classmates very scard...', 'Mike call teacher go to class.', '...so we don't have classmate hurt...', 'We thanks the boy.', 'The fly flew away, we clean the classroom again.', 'We is happy.'.*

- Students also made mistakes in the choice of verbs. They wrote '*May washed the blackboard*' instead of '*May cleaned the blackboard*', '*Mary is bushing the floor*' instead of '*Mary is sweeping the floor.*'. Some students wrote incomplete sentences, e.g. '*Tom sweep. Bee fly. Bee go to park.*'. Students also did not use pronouns and prepositions correctly, e.g. '*We help she...*', '*The teacher help we...*', '*They and me clean up the classroom...*', '*The time is in 10:00 am – 11:00 am*', '*The bee fly on the door.*'.

- Students also misspelled common words: '*backboard*', '*black broad*', '*blackborkd*' for 'blackboard', '*class room*', '*calssroom*' for 'classroom', '*talb*', '*tabe*' for 'table', '*sared*', '*sarid*', '*scard*' for 'scared', '*Enily*' for 'finally', '*happ*', for 'happy', '*ticher*', '*teather*', '*techer*' for 'teacher', '*classmat*' for 'classmate', '*chirden*', '*cherden*' for 'children', '*droped*' for 'dropped'. '*flys*' for 'flies'. Some students mixed up the usage of words which were similar in spelling and the communication of ideas was impeded: '*feel*' and '*feed*', '*very*' and '*every*', '*said*' and '*sad*'.

- A small number of students were able to provide ideas relevant to the topic with elaboration of ideas. They could write well-organised paragraphs and provide some supporting details: '*Today is classroom cleaning day. Miss Lee gave us brooms and towels, once she left the room, we set to work.*', '*Yesterday was Classroom Cleaning Day. Everyone has to help to clean the classroom. Everyone was excited! I got the towel, and started mopping the tables.*', '*When the bee flew to somewhere far from me, I rushed to open the windows and went back where I just stood before.*', '*Lily dropped her broom on the ground and ran away screaming in her high-piched voice.*', '*At last we told the teacher, the teacher told us not to be scared and she gave us a broom to kill the fly.*'

- Some capable students could provide conversation exchanges with elaborated ideas: '*Miss Wong said, "Today is the classroom cleaning day, we should help to clean everything."*', '*Christy took a towel to make the blackboard clean. They were very happy. One time, they three heard some ZZZ sound. Anna said "there is a bee!"*

"*Stand still!*"". They also provided a good ending to the story with details: '*At last, the bee flew away. They were really really glad*', '*When Miss Lee came in she was not happy, for her classroom was a mess: Dust on the table! Dirty blackboard! And rubbish on the floor! Bad, bad bee.*'.

- A wide range of vocabulary and sentence patterns were used by more able students. For example, '*Just then, a bee flew in front of me. I was very frightened and the girls next to me shouted loudly.*', '*I saw a giant bee! I told everyone the bee and warned them not to move.*', '*Suddenly, there was a bee flying around us! We were scared. Sue threw down the broom and Judy wanted to cry.*', '*Very fast, the bee flew away, out the window. Everyone was relieved it did not do any harm!*'. Students also used cohesive devices such as '*After*', '*Just then*', '*but*', '*suddenly*', '*when*', '*At last*' to link ideas and make the story clear and coherent.

In the Park

- Students were able to write about what they did in the park with the help of given prompts. A small number of students responded to the question prompts with specific experience in a theme park. Students were able to write about when they went to the park and who went with them: '*Last Sunday morning, I went to Fun Fun Little Park with my mother.*', '*I went to the park on the Friday. I and my firmely went to the park.*', '*I went to the park at three o'clock.*', '*I visited the park with my grandparents last Sunday.*'. They also wrote about the things and people they saw in the park and how they felt about their visit to the park. Their ideas were brief but relevant:, '*I can see a boy is playing. He is happy.*', '*I saw some flower in the park…It is a happy day.*', '*I see some trees and see some bird.*'. The ideas were quite clear, however, the students did not have much elaboration on their ideas.

- Students were able to respond to the question prompts and organize their ideas well: '*Today is Sunday. I, my family and my friend go to the park…The park is in Tsim Sha Tsui. I go there because the air is great.*'.

- Some students were able to write using vocabulary related to the topic: '*went to the park*', '*saw some flower*', '*we ate lunch and play football*', '*I saw a bee and flower*', '*a lot of children*', '*feel*', '*fun*', '*happy*', '*went home*' and '*excited*'. They could also write short and simple sentences, e.g. '*I always go there, it is big and cute.*', '*I go there on foot. I felt really excited*', '*One day, I went to happy park. And we played football. I was happy.*', '*There is so many beautiful flower and a lot of green greas. I am very happy.*'.

- Some students were able to use cohesive devices to link ideas. They could use *'and'*, *'because'*, *'so'* and *'then'* in their writing. For example, they wrote *'I saw some beautiful flowers and I played the slide.'*, *'I went there because I was bored in the afternoon.'*, *'We had a good time so we were happy.'*, *'In the park, there are a lot of beautiful plants. Then we took some photos.'*.

- Grammatical mistakes were common in students' writing: *'I very much like play in the park.'*, *'I is visit the park'*, *'I go there because the park is fun'*, *'sister with I go to play ball.'*, *'We was happy.'*, *'We are go to home…'*, *'I and my family go to Hong Kong Park.'*, *'We have see a pretty flowers.'*, *'Yesterday, I was felt great and excited.'*, *'Father go to the park with me.'*, *'I go to park in Sunday.'*, *'We are go home.'*.

- Spelling mistakes were also common in students' writing. They misspelled words such as *'tried'* for 'tired', *'greas'* for 'grass', *'childen'*, *'childred'* for 'children', *'paret'* for 'parent', *'beteen'* for 'between', *'becase'* for 'because', *'pake'* for 'park', *'think'* for 'thing', *'agin'* for 'again'.

- A small number of students were able to provide relevant ideas to the topic with some supporting details or examples, *'Then we went to a playground. My brother, sister and I went to play and my parents looked after us.'*, *'After, we went to a Chinese Tea centre. We saw some old Chinese tea cup and we visited how to make tea.'*, *'In the evening, we went to a Hong Kong Park PE centre to play table tennis.'*. The ideas were clear and coherent. The more able students were capable of using a wide range of vocabulary and sentence patterns: *'We smelt the fresh air from the flowers…We also had a walk around the pond and we saw some fish swimming free in it, but we did not feed them.'*. They could also use cohesive devices appropriately to link ideas. For example, *'I felt tired <u>but</u> delighted.'*, *'<u>When</u> I went there, I can see a lot of flower and people…<u>At last</u>, I went home happily.'*, *'<u>First</u>, we sang songs and played a lot of games. <u>Then</u>, we ate some food.'*, *'I went to the park <u>because</u> I finished all my test.'*.

P.3 Speaking

- In the 'Reading Aloud' component, more than half of the students could read a text quite clearly despite a few mistakes in pronunciation. They could read simple sentences such as '*Miss Lee is our English teacher.' (3ES03)* and '*It is not too cold or too hot.' (3ES09)*. Some of them, however, omitted the ending 's' sound when pronouncing words like '*shorts*' (*3ES01*) and '*sings*' (*3ES11*). Some students were not able to pronounce words correctly with long vowel sounds, such as '*speak*' *(3ES03)* and '*good*' (*3ES05 & 3ES11*). They also had difficulty in pronouncing words with more than two syllables such as '*cameras*' *(3ES01)* and '*favourite*' *(3ES09)*. Some students mispronounced words such as '*there*' for 'their' (*3ES01*).

- For the 'Expression of Personal Experiences' component, about half of the students needed prompting from the oral examiners and responded hesitantly to the questions. Some students even gave no responses after being prompted by the oral examiners. Students tended to perform better when answering wh-questions such as '*Who is your favourite teacher?*' (*3ES03*) and '*What time do you have dinner?*' (*3ES07*) and could provide factual answers. They did not respond as well to open-ended questions such as '*Do you like the school picnic? Why?*' (*3ES01*) and '*Why do you like Spring?* (*3ES09*). Some of them also were not able to use cohesive devices to link ideas when answering questions.

- In the 'Picture Description' component, more than half of the students could provide relevant answers to most of the questions with little or no prompting. They could also respond to most of the questions naturally. With familiar topics such as *At Home* (*3ES06*) and *In a Toy Shop* (*3ES10*), students were able to respond to the questions about the pictures. However, some students had difficulty describing how the girl felt after hitting by a ball *(3ES02)* and the reasons why the girl had been raising her hand in a classroom (*3ES04*). In general, students had a limited range of vocabulary to express what they wanted to tell the oral examiners.

Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 3 TSA 2010, 2011 and 2012

This was the ninth year that Primary 3 students participated in the Territory-wide System Assessment at the end of Key Stage 1. The percentage of students achieving Basic Competency in the last three years is provided in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9   Percentage of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency in 2010, 2011 and 2012

Year	% of Students Achieving English Language Basic Competency
2010	79.2
2011	79.8
2012	79.7

A comparison of the strengths and weaknesses of P.3 student performances in TSA 2010, 2011 and 2012 provides useful information on how teachers can help students improve. Table 7.10 summarises such a comparison.

Table 7.10   Comparison of Student Performances in English Language at Primary 3 TSA 2010, 2011 and 2012

Year / Skill	2010	2011	2012
Listening	• P.3 students were able to identify key words on familiar topics such as phone number, age, food, time, activities and objects.	• P.3 students were generally able to identify key words on familiar topics such as means of transport, duration, places, food, games and days.	• P.3 students were generally able to identify key words related to their daily life experiences (e.g. year) and on familiar topics (e.g. district).
	• Students were able to distinguish initial consonants 'K' and 'J'.	• Most students were able to distinguish initial consonants 'S', 'J' and 'C'.	• Students were generally able to distinguish initial consonants 'D' and 'B'.
	• Students were generally able to distinguish different feelings (e.g. happy, sad, nervous and excited) of speakers from their tones.	• Most students showed understanding of a speaker's tone of voice (e.g. happy, sad and excited).	• Most students were able to discriminate between basic differences in intonation (e.g. happy, sad, surprised, excited).
	• Many students were able to distinguish '16' and '60'. However, fewer students were able to distinguish '15' and '50'.	• Most students were able to distinguish '95' and '55'.	• Students could distinguish '4' from '14', '40' and '44'.
	• Most students were able to understand the connection between ideas by identifying cohesive devices 'and' and 'because'.	• Most students were able to understand the connection between ideas by identifying cohesive devices 'and' and 'or'.	• Most students showed understanding of the connection between ideas linked up by cohesive devices 'because', 'but' and 'and'.

Year Skill	2010	2011	2012
Reading	• Many students were able to identify key words with straightforward contextual clues. • Some students were able to obtain information from the contents page of a book. They could identify the content of a chapter in a book correctly. • Some students could interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words with contextual clues. • When given pictorial cues, many students were able to deduce the content of a comic. • Students were generally able to follow pronoun reference in which the pronoun was close to the subject it referred.	• Students were capable of identifying key words related to date, time, places and amount of money with the help of straightforward contextual clues and pictorial cues. • Students were able to work out the connection between ideas linked up by 'and'. • Students were able to obtain information from a contents page and a dictionary cover. • Some students could predict the meaning of unfamiliar words by using more than one contextual clue. • When given contextual clues in the contents page, many students were able to deduce the contents of different chapters in the book. • Students were able to interpret a reference word which was close to the subject to which it referred. They could also follow pronoun references in a letter.	• With the help of straightforward contextual clues and pictorial cues, students were able to identify key words about weather conditions, time and places. • Students were able to work out the connection between ideas with the help of pictorial cues. • Students were able to obtain information from a contents page (e.g. no. of chapters) and a book cover (e.g. the author and the illustrator) • Only the more able students were able to interpret the meaning of unfamiliar words using contextual clues. • Many students were able to predict the contents of the book using the pictorial cues and contextual clues on the book cover and the contents page of the book. • As in the last year, students were able to interpret a reference word which was close to the subject to which it referred.

Year / Skill	2010	2011	2012
Writing	• Students were generally able to write a factual account of the story with an ending, though not much supporting details were given. Students could also provide brief but relevant ideas about his/her day at school with given prompts. • Few students could provide imaginative ideas. • Students misspelled common words, e.g. 'happly' for 'happy', 'mike' for 'milk', 'prak' for 'park', 'text' for 'test', 'taked' for 'talked', 'sandwitch' for 'sandwich', etc. • Grammatical mistakes were still common in students' writing, e.g. 'Tom see poor cat', 'I can played computer games.' • Some students were able to use cohesive devices such as 'and', 'but', 'when', 'then', 'because', 'too' in their writing. • A small number of students were able to provide relevant ideas with supporting details.	• For the writing task 'At the Farm', students were generally able to write a factual account of the visit to Happy Farm with an ending, though not many supporting details were given. A small number of students could write interesting or imaginative stories. For the writing task 'Things I Do at Weekends', students could write about what they usually do at weekends with given prompts. • Students misspelled common words, e.g. 'gril' for 'girl', 'drick' for 'duck', 'mather' for 'mother', 'chicken' for 'children', 'becuse' for 'because', 'thing' for 'think', 'brind' for 'bring', etc. • Students had difficulty with verb forms, e.g. 'I goes to Happy Farm.', 'There have corn…', 'Tom read with me…', 'I feel is happy.' • Some students were able to use cohesive devices such as 'and', 'then', 'at last', 'because' in their writing. • Capable students were able to provide relevant ideas with details. They could also use a range of vocabulary, sentence patterns and cohesive devices appropriately.	• Many students were able to provide a factual account of the Classroom Cleaning Day with an appropriate ending, though not much elaboration was given. A small number of students were able to write details for the story. For the writing task 'In the Park', students were generally able to write what they did and see in the park with given prompts. • Spelling mistakes were common among students, e.g. 'backboard' for 'blackboard', 'tabe' for 'table', 'sarid' for 'scared', 'techer' for 'teacher', 'childen' for 'children', 'paret' for 'parent', 'agin' for 'again', etc. • Grammatical mistakes were common: ''Paul is help Jimmy and Mary.', 'My friend are cleaning.', 'Father go to the park with me'. • Some students were able to use cohesive devices such as 'and', 'then', 'so', 'because', 'but' in their writing. • A small number of students were able to write relevant ideas with many details.

Year / Skill	2010	2011	2012
Speaking	• For 'Reading Aloud', more than half of the students were able to read fluently and clearly. Most of them made a few mistakes in pronunciation. A small number of them were able to use appropriate pausing and intonation. • For 'Expression of Personal Experiences', the majority of students were able to respond appropriately to most situations. Many of them provided relevant but brief answers to questions. Students with the best performance were able to provide elaboration to some questions. • In 'Picture Description', most students could provide relevant but brief answer to questions. Students with the best performance were able to elaborate on their answers readily. They could provide more elaboration on familiar topics, such as *A Birthday Party*.	• For 'Reading Aloud', more than half of the students read the text quite clearly though some mistakes in pronunciation were evident. Students with the best performance were able to read fluently and clearly with appropriate pausing and intonation. • For 'Expression of Personal Experiences', most of the students were able to provide brief answers to the questions. Questions which elicited factual answers were generally more manageable than questions asking for reasons. • In 'Picture Description', more than half of the students were capable of giving appropriate responses to the questions related to the pictures given. They could respond more naturally to familiar topics such as *A Birthday Gift* and *A School Picnic*.	• For 'Reading Aloud', more than half of the students were able to read the short texts fluently and clearly with few pronunciation mistakes. Some students found difficulty pronouncing words with more than two syllables. • For 'Expression of Personal Experiences', about half of the students responded hesitantly to questions. Questions which elicited factual answers were generally more manageable than open-ended questions. • In 'Picture Description', more than half of the students could provide relevant answers to most of the questions with little prompting. They could respond more naturally on topics such as *At Home* and *In a Toy Shop* but had difficulty providing the reasons for the questions asking 'Why?'