



Language Standards in Hong Kong

**LegCo Education Panel
11 July 2005**

Education and Manpower Bureau



Trilingualism – Our Expectations

- The needs and expectations of the community place a premium on higher levels of trilingualism (Cantonese, Putonghua and English) and biliteracy (Chinese and English) to support the rapid restructuring of Hong Kong, its rich culture and global interconnectedness.



What do we know about
language standards in
Hong Kong?

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features three balloons in green, blue, and purple, each with a string of yellow streamers and small yellow triangular flags. The balloons are positioned vertically, with the green one at the top, the blue one in the middle, and the purple one at the bottom.

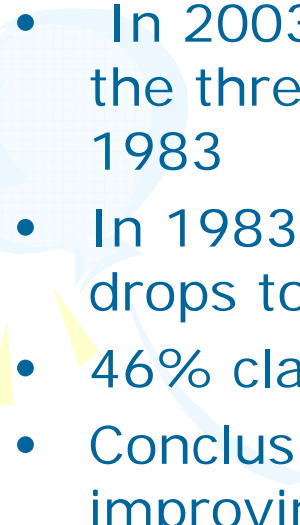
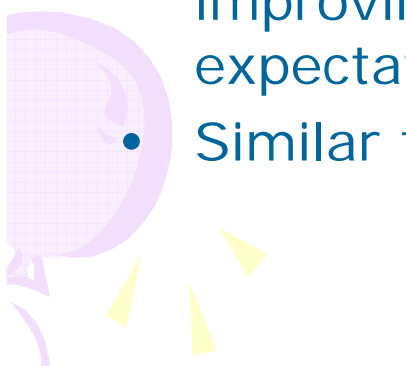
Workplace English Campaign

- Since 2000, over 22 000 working adults have attained the English benchmarks relevant to the job nature through the Campaign's funding scheme.
- Another 5 000+ individuals have also improved their English proficiency through other means of Government sponsorship, such as the Continuing Education Fund since 2002.



Community's Attitude

According to a recent survey by HKU's Department of Linguistics and its Social Science Research Centre –

- In 2003, 63% of respondents claimed some knowledge of the three languages, compared to 38% in 1993 and 17% in 1983
 - In 1983, 33% said they did not know any English. This drops to 17% in 1993 and 11% in 2003
 - 46% claimed to know English “quite well” or better
 - Conclusion: our population believes their English is improving, but perhaps not fast enough to meet the expectations of the business community.
 - Similar trend seen in Putonghua too.
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IELTS for university graduates

**Average score of 6.51 in 2004
(6.46 in 2003)**

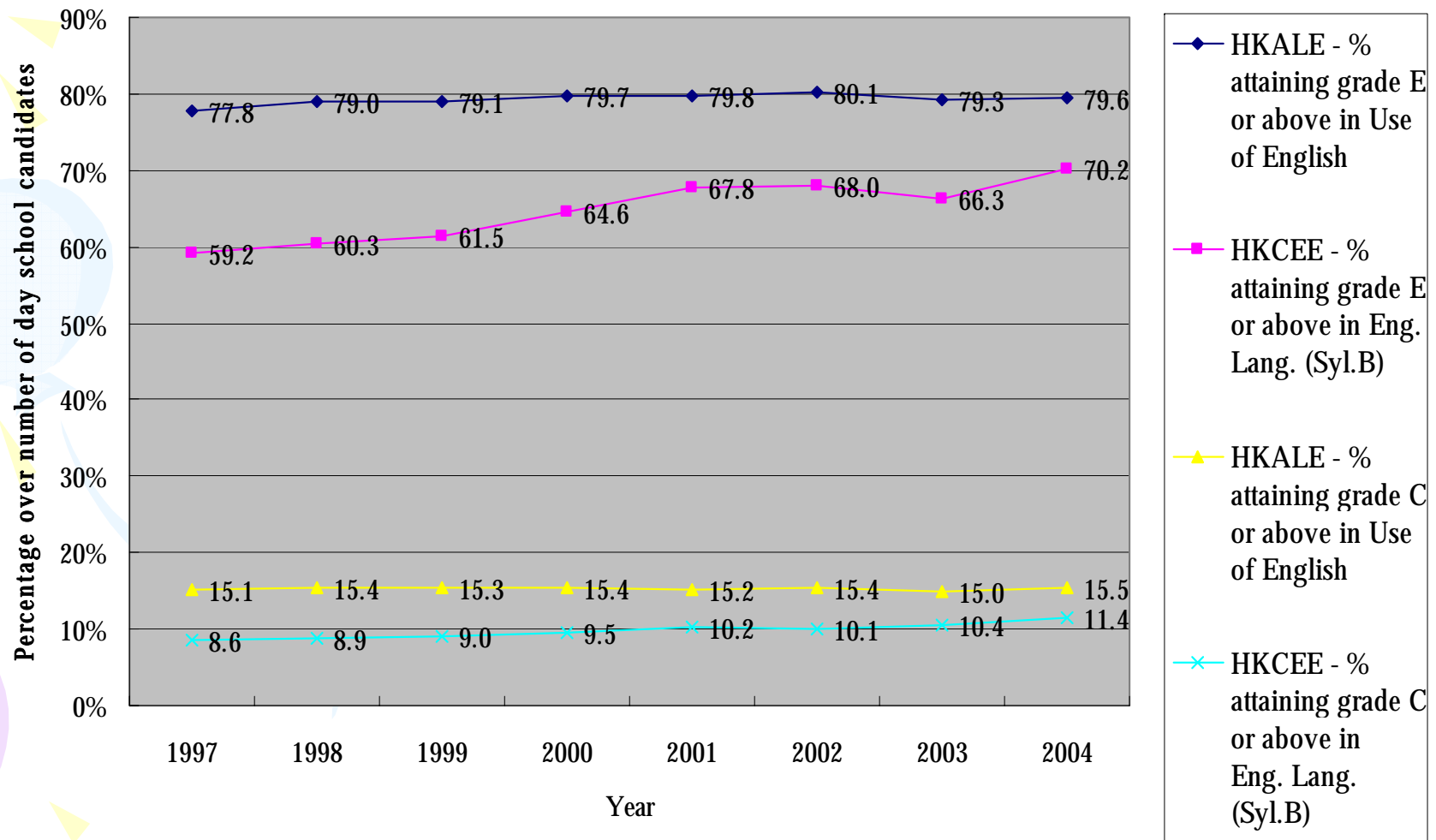
“competent user”

Employers' Survey on Performance of University Graduates

	<u>1998</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>
Overall Performance	3.46	3.46	3.51
Chinese Language	3.57	3.59	3.61
English Language	3.38	3.37	3.41
Numerical Competency	3.52	3.51	3.55
IT Literacy	3.62	3.69	3.75
Problem solving abilities	3.26	3.26	3.32
Work attitude	3.57	3.57	3.62
Interpersonal skills	3.52	3.47	3.53
Management skills	3.13	3.16	3.17

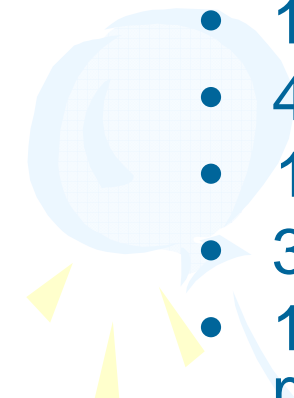
Generally speaking... sometimes exceeding the employers required standard.
 NOTE: The same survey is to be conducted on a tri-annual basis since 2000.
 The next one for the cohort of 2003 is now being conducted.

Progress in English in HKCEE and HKALE (1997 – 2004)





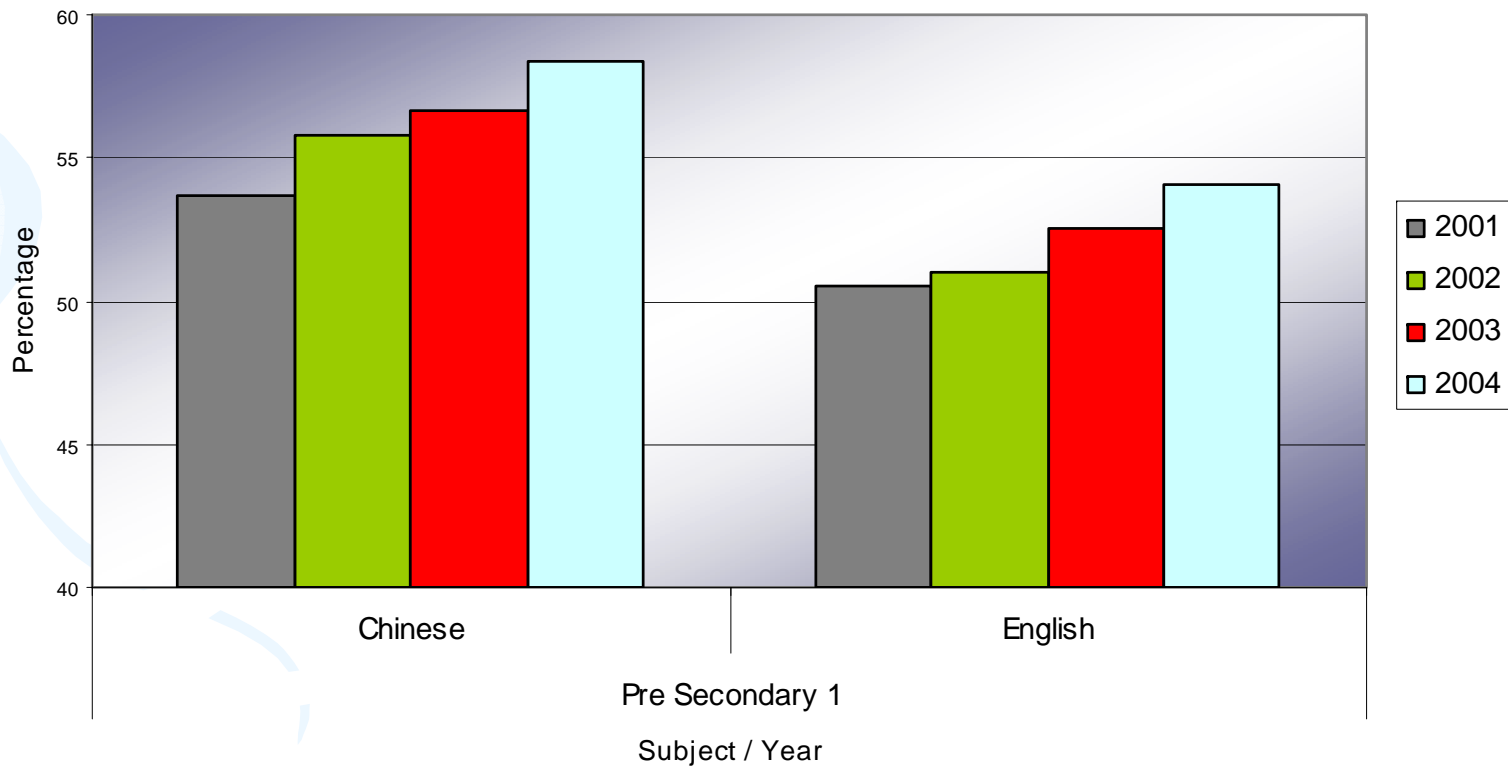
Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2003

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- 15-year olds
 - 43 countries participated
 - 1 Mathematics
 - 3 Science
 - 10 Reading (Chinese) - four countries had a mean performance statistically significantly higher than HK, namely Finland, Korea, Canada and Australia. Other countries in the range are with results statistically not that different from those of HK.

Hong Kong Attainment Tests

Students' Performance in Chinese and English Language at Pre-Secondary 1 Level

Average HKAT scores at Pre-Secondary 1 (2001-2004)



Program for International Reading Literacy Survey (PIRLS)

Dr SK Tse and colleagues, HKU

Study of bilingual literacy of P4 students

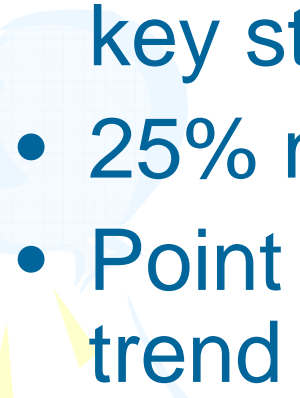

Findings 2001 – 2004

- Improved literacy in Chinese, but individual differences are growing
- For biliteracy our top students are good at both C and E and by international standards are excellent
- Girls do better than boys
- Parents give importance of learning to Chinese more than they do for English. We may have the impression otherwise
- Reading habit and self concept in C is as high as other countries, but not so for E



Territory-System Assessment (TSA)

P3 English

- 75.9% able to proceed with confidence to key stage 2
 - 25% need support
 - Point in time : over time TSA will show trend
 - Improvement expected as teachers engage more with the expected professionally defined competencies
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Student Performance

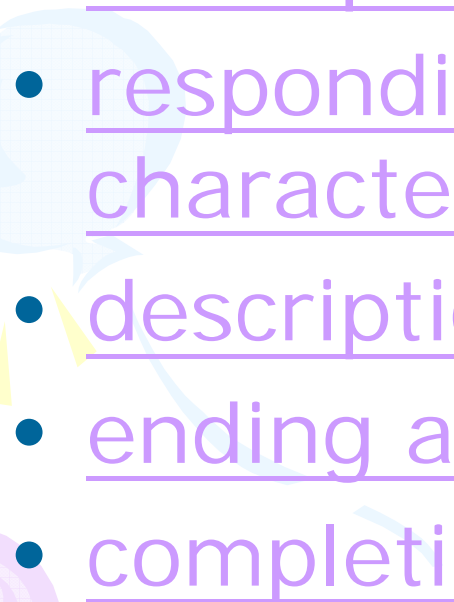

- Writing
- Speaking
- Listening
- Reading

Top	BC
<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>
<u>✓</u>	<u>✓</u>
✓	✓
✓	✓



Writing

Performance of Top Students

- description of an animal
 - responding to descriptions of characters
 - description of a good friend
 - ending a short, simple story
 - completing a short, simple rhyme
- 
- 

Description of an animal (top)

It is a cat. It has a long tail. It is yellow and black. It eats fish and it drinks milk. It likes play balls. It lives in the house. It can't swim but it can climb the tree.



Responding to descriptions of characters (top)

4. What do you think of Daisy, Flopsy and Bunny?
Write one sentence or more.

They are very lazy and naughty.
It was because they do not
listen to Mrs. Rabbit and do not wash
the dishes.

Description of a good friend (top)

My good friend is Joanne. She is nine years old. She studies in my class. She is clever and always got one hundred marks in the tests or exams. We always play together and we do activities together. We are happy at all the time. She always teach me. She is very kind. She always help teachers. The teachers like her very much.

Ending a short, simple story (top)

Bunny opens the door of the house. She sees a lot of flowers in the house. When she goes inside, the door changes into stone. A wizard come out and he want to eat Bunny. Bunny is afraid, she see a open window. She jump through it. The house changes into flower and Bunny is happy.



Writing

Performance of Students with Minimally

Acceptable Levels of Basic Competence (BC)

- relevant content
- writing about an animal
- writing about a good friend
- completing a story
- completing a short, simple poem



Relevant content - 3 wishes (BC)

You are Bunny. What do you want to ask for? Give your three wishes.

I want all of things.

I want one big books.

I want eat cheese cake.



Writing about an animal (BC)

Write about one more animal in your own words.

It is cat.

It has big eyes.

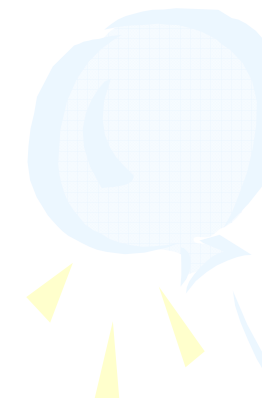
It is yellow.

It eat cat food.



Writing about a good friend (BC)

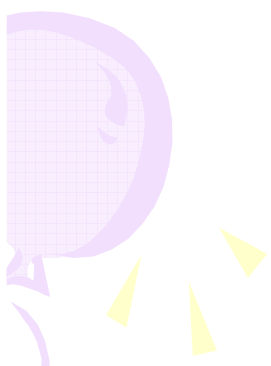
My Good Friend



My friend is very beautiful.

Her eyes is big.

Her ears is small.



She has long hair.



Completing a story (BC)



Bunny opens the door of the house. She see

some animals. They are beautiful

and they teay with her.



Speaking

Part 3 Practice 2

Performance of Top Students

- speak fluently
- provide relevant answers to all questions naturally and readily
- give elaboration to many answers
- make very few mistakes in pronunciation
- capable of using their own words
- give detailed information about the topic

Speaking

Part 3 Practice 4

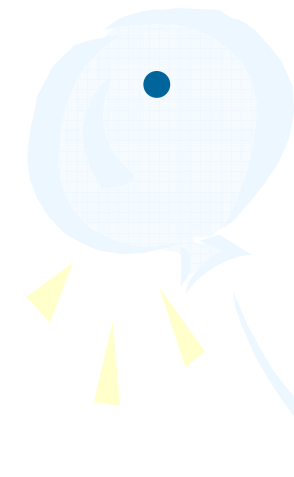
Performance of Students with Minimally Acceptable Levels of Basic Competence (BC)

- make some mistakes in pronunciation
- respond to some simple questions hesitantly
- give brief answers
- lack vocabulary to provide more details
- need prompting to continue responses



TSA

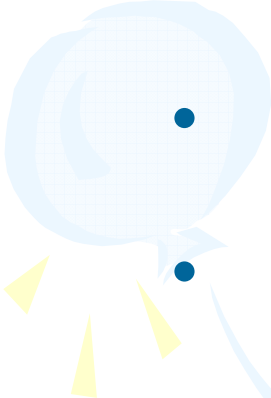
- P3 and P6 assessments held during July 2005
- First S3 assessment in July 2006



Empirical evidence shows those behind at KS1 will fall further behind unless we narrow the gap early.



TSA

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- Schools are not necessarily consistently strong or weak in all subjects, Chinese, English and Mathematics
 - Schools have a greater range of performance in English than for Chinese and Mathematics
 - School performance varies within and across districts



Therefore ... support for schools in language learning must be targeted and school based....



Conclusion

- There is evidence showing modest but steady trend in improvement of English Language standards.
- However community aspirations, expectations and demands are escalating more rapidly than any improvement we are making.
- The biggest challenge is the range of performance standards among our young people.
- Enhanced targeted professional support for teachers and schools remains our key strategy for improved language learning.