

St. Matthew's Elementary School Report 2007-2008



Strive For Excellence

Message from Director of Education

Message from the Director of Education

In keeping with a commitment to be accountable and transparent all schools within the jurisdiction of the Eastern School District are required to develop and release on an annual basis a report to the community. An Annual Report reflects an attempt to capture in brief format the multitude of activities, programs and initiatives that comprise the life and work of the entire learning community – its successes, its achievements, its issues and challenges, and its ambitions and plans for the forthcoming year. Schools are, indeed, busy places as these Annual Reports attest to.

This Annual Report reflects the efforts and energies of students, teachers, parents and other community partners, working in a collaborative and collegial manner to ensure that all students achieve and succeed to the fullest of their potential within a healthy and active, safe and caring, and socially-just learning environment. This goal remains our primary reason for doing all that we do.

I encourage all partners in education to review this annual report and use this report, and the information contained therein, as a basis of further engagement and discussion around items of interest pertaining to the education of our children within our schools.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Eastern School District I commend each and every school for their dedication to teaching and learning as evidenced by this Annual Report 2007-2008.

Yours in Education
Mr. Darrin Pike, CEO/Director of Education
Eastern School District

Message from the Administration

It is with great pride that we present the Annual School Report for St. Matthew's Elementary for 2007-08. The St. Matthew's school community continues to be very supportive as we work together to improve and celebrate student achievement. This annual report outlines our students' achievements, programs and services, and provides an update of our stage in the School Development Plan.

We hope that you review the report very carefully, noting our strengths and weaknesses, and work with us to enhance the learning environment at St. Matthew's Elementary School. We welcome your comments and encourage you to contact the school with your suggestions. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

Always in Education
Kyran Dwyer
Principal

Wade Smith
Assistant Principal

Message from the School Council:

School Council 2007-2008

St. Matthew's Elementary has had a dedicated, enthusiastic school council this year. Members included Dave Hicks, Sean Burke, Glenn Cake, Sarah Colbourne Penney (chair), Angela Dawe, Dean Menchions, Bev Brace, Stephen Spratt, Wade Smith (for Denise Coady) and Kyran Dwyer.

Throughout the course of the year, many initiatives were addressed including the conclusion of the long awaited playground, parking lot safety, school safety including security cameras and preliminary lockdown procedures, outreach programs for the families of St. Matthew's, fundraising, teacher appreciation, welcoming students, staff and administration of Paradise Elementary, and various other issues as they arose.

The primary focus of school council this year is to support St. Matthews as it works to achieve its school development goals. This year council is looking specifically at the goal of continuing to enhance St. Matthews as a safe and caring school. As a council we would like to reach out to more parents/guardians of our students to help build a solid community at St. Matthew's Elementary where everyone could feel welcome and comfortable.

We want to give a huge thank you to Sarah Penney and Dave Hicks who have served on school council over the past number of years. Their tenure on council has been very successful with many accomplishments due to their hard work and dedication.

We look forward to another successful year working with the St. Matthew's School community.

School's Mission Statement

THE MISSION OF ST. MATTHEW'S IS TO STRIVE TO PROVIDE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT PROMOTES THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF ALL STUDENTS BY ENDEAVORING TO CREATE A PARTNERSHIP INCLUDING HOME, SCHOOL AND THE COMMUNITY.

Our School Community

Our school, St. Matthew's Elementary, is part of the Eastern School District that has 127 schools and approximately 44,000 students. Our Board employs over 4,000 teaching staff and student-support personnel. St. Matthew's Elementary currently has an enrollment of 427 students and offers grades Kindergarten to Grade Six, including the Early French Immersion program in Kindergarten and Grade 1, and 2, 3, 4 and the Intensive Core French program in grade 6.

Our Staff and Classes

Our school has an educational staff that includes 17.0 classroom teachers and 6.75 special services personnel. We have a full time guidance counselor, a half time learning resources teacher, 2 half-time music specialist teachers, 1 physical education teacher, 1 and 1/4 administration, 1/4 band teacher as well as the support of 5 student assistants and 2 program assistants. In addition to staff based at the school, we have access to District office staff including: an educational psychologist, Numeracy Support teacher, speech/language pathologist, and itinerant teachers for the visually impaired, the hard of hearing and ESL (English as a second language). The school also has the services of secretarial, maintenance and cafeteria personnel.

Programs Provided

St. Matthew's offers the full range of academic programs set by the Department of Education. The prescribed curriculum includes; Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, Science, French, Religion, Health, Art, as well as Physical Education and Music. French Immersion, which began in September 2004, is now offered up to Grade Four. St. Matthew's offers a number of other activities to enhance the learning environment for our students. Students are provided the opportunity to participate in the following clubs/activities; Drama, Chess, Choir, Band (Grade Five and Six), Intramural Sports,

Basketball, Cross Country Running, Aikido. As well, St. Matthew's offers computer lab facilities for all grades, and a well stocked resource centre.

Partnerships

St. Matthew's has many community based partnerships. We received a grant from the Department of Education to offer a Pre-Kindergarten program to identified students scheduled to begin school in the fall. This program took place twice a week in the spring and the focus was to provide a pre-school readiness program for 4-year olds and their parents that is rich in literacy, numeracy and social development. It was a great success and we hope to continue this program next year.

Our Grade Six students participated in the DARE program, which was delivered by Constable Kevin Foley of the RNC. This police officer-led series of classroom lessons teaches students how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug and violence-free lives.

The Canadian Parents for French offered a "French Club" to our grade 3 students in preparation of the students starting Core French in Grade 4. There were 10 students who took part in the French Club and it consisted of 24 one hour sessions that was taught by a MUN student who was studying to be a French teacher.

Our school has developed a close relationship with seniors from St. Luke's homes. Kindergarten and Grade Six students planned visits with the seniors, which often occurred around special occasions such as Christmas and St. Patrick's Day. Both students and seniors enjoyed these interactions and they learned much from each other.

Parents/caregivers may avail of the YMCA After School program for child care. We also have a close relationship with Little People's Workshop, a daycare which is located on our school grounds.

St. Matthew's has partnered with Evergreen Recycling as we continue to recycle drink containers on a daily basis, and we have a number of Recycling Blitzes throughout the year that are strongly supported by our school community.

This year, St. Matthew's introduced a Breakfast Program, through a partnership with Kids East Smart Foundation. This highly successful initiative was well attended by our students, as some mornings over a hundred students would enjoy breakfast with others before beginning their school day.

Several of our students have been paired with an In School Mentor, through Big Brothers/Big Sisters. Mentors will spend one lunch hour per week with a student. Students look forward to these days as they enjoy this opportunity to spend time with a positive role model.

St. Matthew's had a number of students participate in the Tutoring for Tuition program. Local high school students earned tuition credit in return for tutoring students after school. Our students benefited from the individual help provided by these students.

Key Highlights/Special Projects

Outreach Projects

St. Matthew's students participate in many outreach initiatives through out the year. Food drives were held at Thanksgiving and Christmas and the food was donated to the St. Vincent de Paul society, based at Mary Queen of the World Parish. Students and parents generously donated winter coats during the annual VOCM Coats for Kid Campaign. Students participated in Operation Christmas Child. This year, this project was spearheaded by the Grade Three students and our students were responsible for preparing over one hundred shoeboxes with gifts to be sent to needy children world wide.

St. Matthew's students donated over \$1000 to a number of charities throughout the year, including the Daffodil Place, Children's Wish Foundation, Cancer Society, Spina Bifida Association. This is organized by the Silly Squad, a group of students and a teacher. They organize and promote a number of theme days throughout the year and students donate change/money to participate in these days. It offers a great opportunity to enhance school spirit, along with learning important life lessons of giving to others.

Safe and Caring School Projects

St. Matthew's is proud of its designation as a Peaceful School. This year a number of initiatives were introduced to build on previous projects. We continued with the 'Gotcha' program, as a part of PBS (positive behavioural supports). Students who were caught doing kind things may be given a 'Gotcha' ticket by a staff member. Tickets are then placed in a box and selected students names are drawn and read over the PA. We began School "Families", which was met with a lot of enthusiasm from both students and staff. Students were placed in cross-graded school 'families', which were lead by a teacher. School families met twice throughout the year and worked collaboratively on projects which focused on the themes of peace and friendship. It was great to see our elementary students take a leadership role in helping the primary students. We also introduced an Awards Assembly, which occurred each term. During the school year, every student received an award for displaying a variety of behaviours (good manners, kindness, effort, helping others, etc...). During our first assembly, we were proud to introduce our school mascot, Matt the Tiger to the students. St. Matthew's finalized its Code of Conduct this year which outlines student expectations. Student will be provided with both French and English versions. Also, one of our Grade five classes participated in the Roots of Empathy program again this year. A baby and his mom visited the class once a month and the students observed developmental changes in the baby. This program fosters the development of empathy in elementary school children and was enjoyed by all participants.

Student Leadership

Students are provided opportunities for leadership at St. Matthew's. We have the Big Buddies program in which students in Grades Five and Six volunteer to help in primary

classrooms during recess and lunch. Students may also join the Friendship Club, in the Developmental Unit. These students also volunteer their time during recess and lunch. Activities in the Friendship Club may include reading to students, sitting quietly with a student, or wheeling a student up and down the hallway. A number of our Grade 6 and Grade 3 students volunteered with our Breakfast Club. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday 6-8 students would set up and serve breakfast to approximately 120 students.

Academic Highlights

Students in Grades Three to six participated in Public Speaking and CanSpell Spelling Bee. Two of our elementary students qualified to participate in the regionals of the CanSpell Spelling Bee.

Parent Involvement

St. Matthew's has a fantastic parent community. Our parent community overwhelmingly supports our two school fundraisers. Our 11th Annual Spring Bazaar was organized by a dedicated group of parents who met for months to plan and finalize details for our spring fundraiser. This year, parents formed a group called the 'Cool It Up Crew'. This group, initiated by a teacher had a mandate to improve the overall aesthetics of the school environment. Parents came in after hours to decorate the main entrance and library throughout the school year. This group plans other school enhancing projects next year. Their efforts were very appreciated by students and staff.

School Development Plan for Current Year

School development is a systematic approach to change at the school level designed to guide and focus a school towards the achievement of its mission - enhanced student learning. Developed within the context of both the provincial and district strategic education plans, a School Development Plan reflects the uniqueness of the local school environment. The Newfoundland and Labrador School Development Model is a results oriented process that involves collective reflection, analysis, problem solving, planning, and continuous improvement leading to the attainment of specific school goals.(Source department of Education)

Below we have provided our school development plan for the next school year. We are working on three goals this year. The plan is constantly being reviewed, as more data becomes available, to ensure it addresses any area of weakness. Each year our staff has two-three professional development days to work on our plan. These days are used to review the plan and provide inservice for teachers on aspects of the plan.

School Development Plan 2008-2009

Goal 1: To improve teaching and learning of mathematics.		
Objective 1.1: Students will continue to improve their knowledge of place value through a variety of means.	Objective 1.2: Students will develop a math vocabulary especially in the area of place value.	Objective 1.3: Review present math assessment techniques to monitor student achievement.
Indicators of Success: Improved CRT scores in the area of place value Rubric Work Samples Math Portfolios Student-Teacher Interviews	Indicators of Success: Improved CRT scores in the area of place value Rubric Work Samples Math Portfolios Student-Teacher Interviews	Indicators of Success: Improved CRT scores in the area of place value Rubric Work Samples Math Portfolios Student-Teacher Interviews
Strategies: 1.1.1 Designate an additional School Development Close-out Day to focus on place value. 1.1.2 Teachers will continue to avail of the Numeracy support teacher to determine appropriate activities on place value. 1.1.3. Teachers will begin to inventory all math manipulatives in classrooms to be organized in a school database. 1.1.4 Teachers will continue to increase the use of manipulatives in teaching and learning of place value. 1.1.5. Monthly meetings (Staff/Divisional) will again include time for sharing best practices in Math (place value). 1.1.6. Math activities throughout the school (Bulletin boards, problem of the week/month, Math Night, Math Olympics) will continue to be highlighted and encouraged. 1.1.7. Mental Math Strategies will again be highlighted in instructing Place Value.	Strategies: 1.2.1 Classrooms will continue to display math vocabulary in a Word Wall format. 1.2.2. Math outcomes/language for place value will again be communicated to students and parents (Math Night). 1.2.3 Teachers will continue to encourage student math explanations in both oral and written form (Math Journals/Portfolios, etc.).	Strategies: 1.3.1 Develop common quizzes, tests and exams at grade level in similar structure to Provincial Assessments. 1.3.2. Teachers will continue to use a variety of assessment tools. 1.3.3. Participate in PD on the CAMET and math rubrics.

Goal 1. Support Plan	
Financial	Professional Development/Time Required
\$500 for Place Value Materials \$500 towards Math Olympics and Math night	PD scheduled for Place Value PD session dedicated to CAMET

Goal 2: To improve the literacy levels of students across the curriculum.		
Objective 2.1: Students will increase their sight word vocabulary and application of reading strategies across the curriculum.	Objective 2.2: Students will increase their reading comprehension skills in a variety of text forms.	Objective 2.3: Students will increase their comprehension of visual text.
Indicators of Success: Running Records Sight Word Checks Portfolios Work Samples Observation Informal testing CRT results Reading Inventories	Indicators of Success: Provincial assessment results Running Records Cloze assessments Work samples Interviews	Indicators of Success: Provincial assessment results Interviews Work Samples Observation
Strategies: 2.1.1 Group literature activities (ex. Lit. Circles) 2.1.2. Dept. of Ed. assessment results shared/discussed with classroom teachers at staff/divisional meetings 2.1.3. Re-activate the School-Wide Literacy Events Committee. 2.1.4. Develop and implement an effective Buddy Reading Program throughout the school. 2.1.5. Utilize the L.R.T. for classroom-based language activities (ex. Lit. Circles). 2.1.6. Invite MUN Ed. students to assist with Guided Reading. 2.1.7. Continue to display high frequency words from across the curriculum (ex. Word Walls). 2.1.8. Direct teaching and modeling of specific reading strategies	Strategies: 2.2.1 Daily read-alouds using a variety of text forms 2.2.2 Direct teaching of genre-specific characteristics (as demonstrated by the CRT results) 2.2.3 Direct teaching/modeling of pre-reading, reading, and post-reading strategies 2.2.4 Literature Circles/Guided Reading 2.2.5 Direct teaching of answering constructed response questions 2.2.6 Consistent use of provincial reading rubrics for assessment. 2.2.7. Specific and consistent 1 st term and 3 rd term assessments implemented at grade level	Strategies: 2.3.1 Incorporate visual material across the curriculum. 2.3.2 Direct teaching of characteristics of visual text 2.3.3. Increase student and teacher use of the school website and the foyer television. 2.3.4. Professional Development Day on visual literacy
Goal 1. Support Plan		
Financial	Professional Development/Time Required	
\$500 for visual literacy resources \$750 for PD materials	Release time to attend CRT assessment sessions PD session on Visual Literacy PD session on Development of Personal Websites	

Goal 3: St. Matthew's, a safe and caring school, will continue to encourage home and school collaboration which fosters the development of the whole child.		
Objective 3.1: To promote healthy eating habits	Objective 3.2: Students will develop more positive relationships in all school settings	Objective 3.3: To develop a partnership with the Barachois Community Group and other applicable agencies.
Indicators of Success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation of snacks • Decrease in sick days • Student, teacher and parent feedback • Observation of student participation 	Indicators of Success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chart and monitor behavior incidents • Students surveyed and results compared • Teacher observation • Student charting of Gotcha Tickets 	Indicators of Success: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A secured place on the B.C.G. Board • Frequent collaboration between S.M.E. and B.C.G. • Comparison of parental participation before and 1 year after the B.C.G. opening (i.e., attendance at programs, events, Parent-Teacher Interviews) • Compare Kindergarten Readiness skills before and 1 year after B.C.G. opening
Strategies: <p>3.1.1 Include family-chosen healthy recipes and fun fitness activities in every school newsletter.</p> <p>3.1.2 Encourage students to eat healthy snacks at recess and have Healthy Snack Day 2-3 times a week.</p> <p>3.1.3 Offer an incentive for student participation in Healthy Snack Day.</p> <p>3.1.4 Provide opportunities for students to taste-test healthy foods.</p> <p>3.1.5. Update the cafeteria walls to reflect our nutrition policy.</p>	Strategies: <p>3.2.1 Implement Matrix of behaviours to be followed in all school settings</p> <p>3.2.2. Opening week assembly emphasizing the Code of Conduct behaviours</p> <p>3.2.3 Review school Code of Conduct in classrooms</p> <p>3.2.4 Continue with the Gotcha Tickets, Awards Assemblies and School Families.</p> <p>3.2.5. Classroom guidance activities on bullying, conflict resolution, etc. on an as needed basis</p> <p>3.2.6 Guest speakers/presentations celebrating self and others</p>	Strategies: <p>3.3.1 To pursue the possibility of school input into the Center by June 2009</p> <p>3.3.2 To have a S.M.E. representative sit on the B.C.G. Board.</p> <p>3.3.3 To offer periodic presentations on Readiness topics by school personnel.</p> <p>3.3.4 To encourage parental participation in the B.C.G. programs (i.e., Homework Club)</p> <p>3.3.5 S.M.E. will actively promote B.C.G. and its programs (newsletters, foyer TV, announcements).</p> <p>3.3.6. To invite a B.C.G. representative to speak on Curriculum Night in Sept. 2008</p> <p>3.3.7. To organize a field trip to acquaint students/teachers with B.C.G.</p> <p>3.3.8. To keep a school-based record of family attendance at school-based events (ex. orientation, Parent-Teacher Interviews)</p>

Goal 1. Support Plan	
Financial	Professional Development/Time Required
\$750 for healthy foods \$500 for PD related materials \$500 honorariums for guest speakers	PD time to develop consequence guide

Provincial Assessments

One way in which we can determine how well students achieve the learning outcomes of provincial curriculum is through using Provincial Assessments (PAs). These Provincial Assessments measure what a student is expected to have learned at the end of Grades 3 and 6 in the Elementary School. Each test is made up of subtests that focus on different elements of the curriculum.

In June 2007-2008 our grade 3 and 6 students completed PAs in language arts and math. PAs are just one means schools use to “evaluate” students and to assess the course’s successes and challenges. It offers the school a standardized set of scores to compare with the district and province. It is however, one assessment tool in the school’s assessment package. Classroom assessment and student evaluation within the classroom make up the majority of both the formal and informal evaluation of our students. That being said, it is always useful to review PAs results as they help to inform instruction and support us with program planning and implementation.

Language Arts

In 2008, grade three English classes and all grade six students completed reading and writing activities that were scored by a panel of teachers. Five performance levels were established for each area. Level three demonstrated an acceptable level while levels four and five demonstrated a standard of excellence. The following charts are an indication of how our students did on these tests in comparison with District and the Province.

Criterion Referenced Test – Language Arts

Process Writing*

Grade 3 (2008)

Subtest	School	District	Province	
Reading	89.6	89.1	88.6	
Listening	77.7	86.1	85.5	
Demand Writing	65.2	73.5	72.6	
Informational Reading	58.5	69.7	70.7	
Poetic Reading	65.9	55.7	56.2	
Visual Reading	51.2	59.1	60.4	
Listening	61.7	70.8	70.2	

Our primary students scored on par or above with the district and province in reading and poetic reading however on the remaining subtest we were below both the district and province. Our literacy goal in school development is addressing these weaknesses.

Criterion Referenced Test – Language Arts
Process Writing*
Grade 6 (2008)

Subtest	School	District	Province	
Reading	80.3	85.4	84.8	
Listening	90.9	91.6	91	
Demand Writing	84.2	88.1	85.1	
Informational Reading	74.5	79.3	79	
Poetic Reading	78.8	82.4	81.1	
Visual Reading	82.7	84	82.1	
Listening	50	63.7	62.6	

Our Elementary students scored below the district in all subtest on the Provincial Assessments. Our school development plan through our action plans will address these weaknesses.

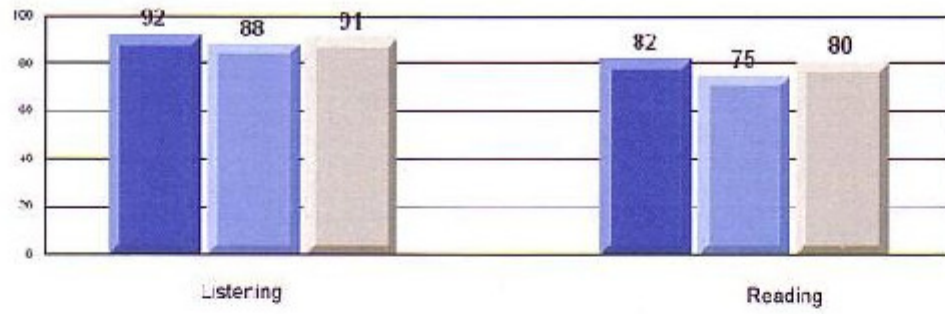
Mathematics

Our grade three and six English classes also wrote the provincial assessment for Math. The following charts are a snapshot of how our students did on these tests.

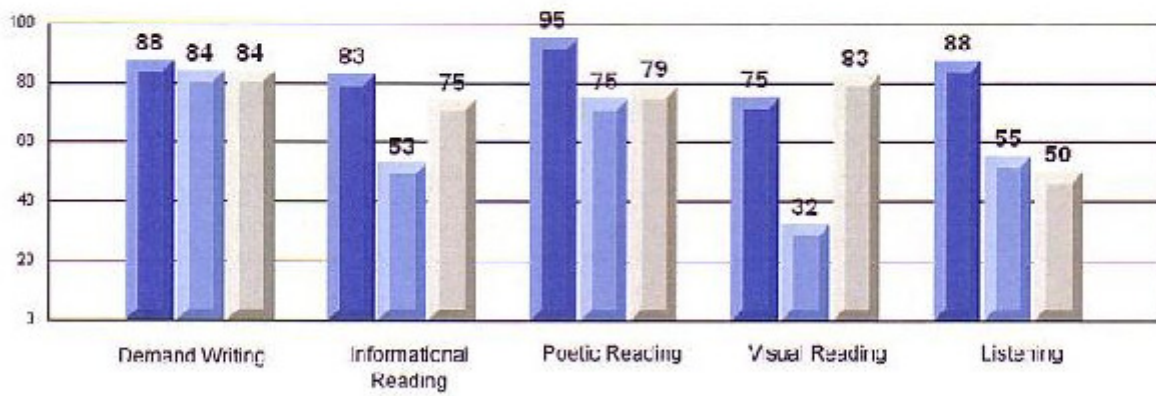
Criterion Referenced Test – Mathematics
Grade 3 (2008)

Subtest	School	District	Province
Number Operations	77	75.5	75.8
Number Concepts	77.3	76	75.6
Shape and Space	75.5	76.6	76.9
Number Concepts	59.5	60.2	61.4
Shape and Space	74.5	77.6	78.9
Reasoning	56.9	63.2	65.7
Communication	59.7	59.9	
Connections and Representing	58.5	60.8	61.3
Problem Solving	64.6	73.3	76.1
Addition	91.7	91.2	90.9
Subtraction	79	81.6	81.1
Multiplication	76.8	82.4	81.4

3 Year CRT (Subtest) Mark Trend 2006-2008
Multiple Choice



Rubric Results: Percentage of students performing at Level 3 and Above 2006-2008



2006

2007

2008

Criterion Referenced Test – Mathematics
Grade 6 (2008)

Subtest	School	District	Province
Number Operations	63.1	68.5	69.1
Number Concepts	63.2	69.8	69.8
Shape and Space	46.9	58.3	59.2
Number Concepts	42.9	57.1	57.3
Shape and Space	42.9	57.1	57.3
Reasoning	27.8	46.6	48.4
Communication	21.8	39.3	42
Connections and Representing	18.2	38.7	41.3
Problem Solving	36.4	52.9	55.3

The provincial assessment results provides necessary data to the School Development process to ensure constant focus on areas of weakness and to celebrate the strengths. Our goal in math included in our school development plan will address the challenges in math. Our staff along with the Numeracy Support teacher and the Math Program specialist will work together to further enhance our math goal and strive to increase math achievement.

Three Year Trends

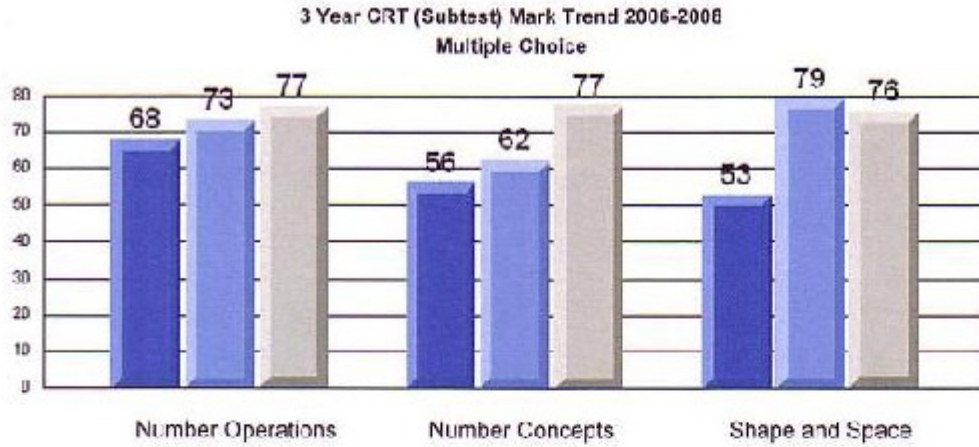
The following four pages of graphs show the three year trends for students at St. Matthew’s Elementary. The first graph shows how our primary students have done in math over that time. With multiple choice questions in both Number Operations and Number Concepts our students have made gains however there was a small decline in Shapes and Space. In constructed response questions for number operations there was a substantial increase in achievement. While we are encouraged by the increase we will continue with action plans and strategies to even improve further.

The next graph gives an indication of how our primary students are doing in Language Arts over the last three years. In reading, poetic reading and visual reading our students have made gains. However on the remaining four subtests the results are showing a decline. Our Literacy Action Team through our school development plan is addressing these weaknesses and with this involvement the achievement levels will increase. The action team is specifically targeting listening skills as an area of action.

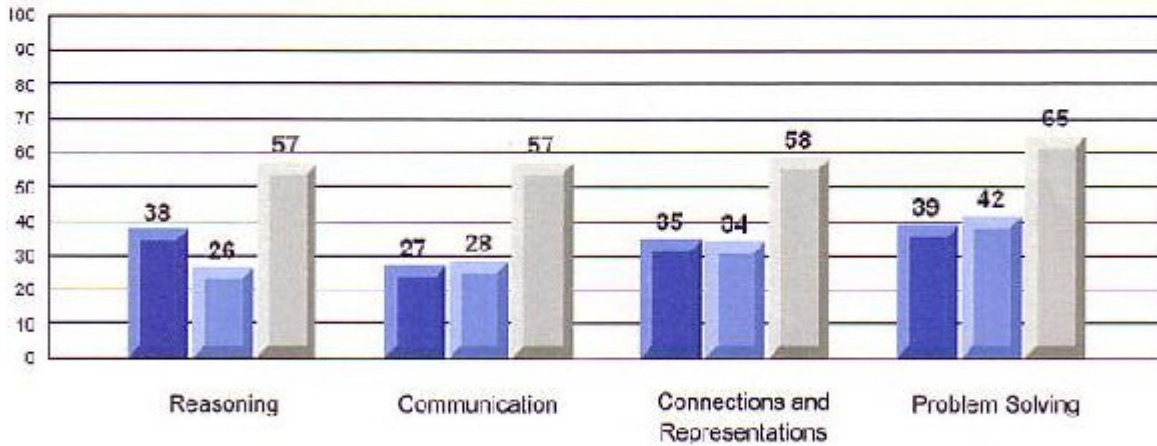
The next two graphs shows how our Elementary students did over the last three years in both Math and Language Arts. Our math results show there are still some weaknesses that we are hoping will be addresses with the new math curriculum and continued focus through our action plans. Our Language Arts results at Elementary are far more favourable. Our three year trends are showing growth in most areas. However, as previously stated listening will be a major focus of our literacy action plan this year.

Three Year Trends

Primary Math



Rubric Results: Percentage of Students Performing at Level 3 and Above 2006-2008
Number Operations



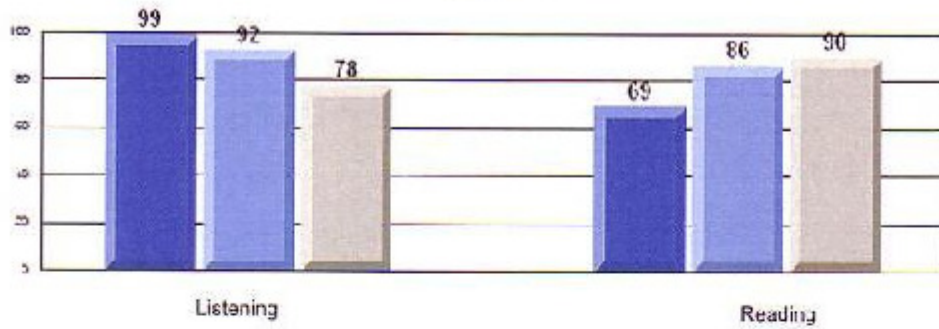
2006

2007

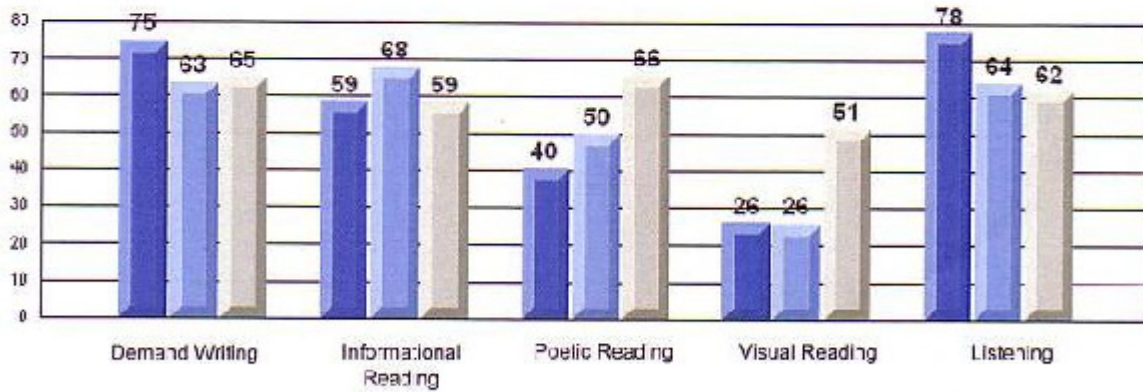
2008

Primary Language Arts

3 Year CRT (Subtest) Mark Trend 2006-2008
Multiple Choice

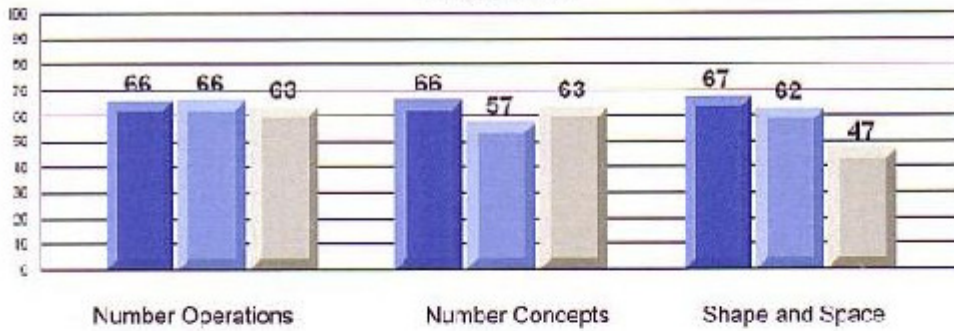


Rubric Results: Percentage of students performing at Level 3 and Above 2006-2008

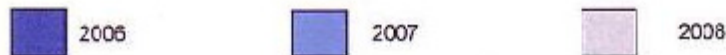
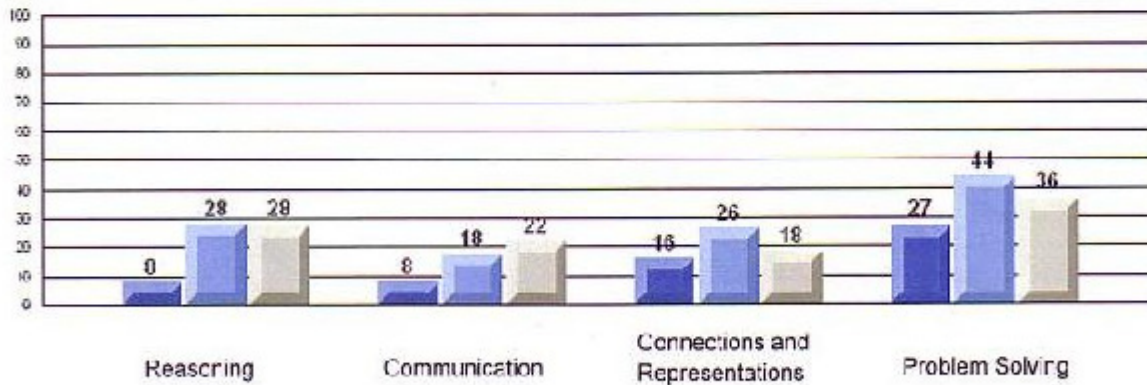


Elementary Math

3 Year CRT (Subtest) Mark Trend 2006-2008
Multiple Choice

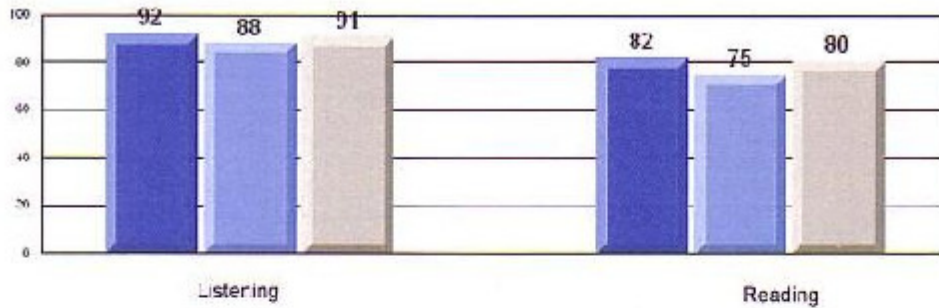


Rubric Results: Percentage of Students Performing at Level 3 and Above 2006-2008
Number Operations

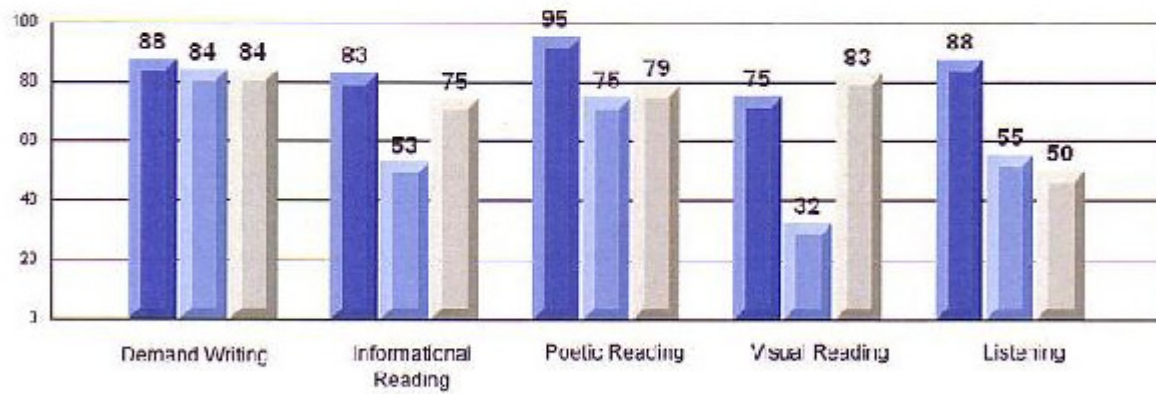


Elementary Language Arts

3 Year CRT (Subtest) Mark Trend 2006-2008
Multiple Choice



Rubric Results: Percentage of students performing at Level 3 and Above 2006-2008



Conclusion

The 2007-2008 school year has been very busy and productive. Our students were exposed to a range of activities and events to promote inclusion and enrich learning opportunities. We have worked hard to promote academic achievement for all students in a safe, caring and inclusive learning environment. We strive to improve the teaching and learning that takes place at St. Matthew's Elementary. The school community works together to maximize each students learning and provide rich opportunities for all students. We continue to celebrate the accomplishments of all students and staff at our school.