

Alderney Elementary



WWW.ALDERNEY.EDNET.NS.CA

School and Community Context

Alderney School is located in the older central area of Dartmouth and has served this community since September 1953. In 1966, additions were completed to the existing structure. We offer programming to 100 students from grades Primary to 6. Our community has not experienced the growth that other areas of our board have, and our enrollment has steadily declined over the last number of years. For the most part, our classes are small and staff can get to know many students outside of their own class. Alderney School has a diverse student population and serves a variety of family structures.

We provide our students with the opportunity to participate in instrumental music in Grade 6, choir Grades 3-6, Active Girls Club for Grades 3-6 and a weekly intramural program. We are also able to offer additional programs such as Hackmatack Reading Club, Mad Science, First

Aid and Babysitting Courses.

All members of our school community work hard to ensure a positive and welcoming school environment where student success is the focus. Our staff is dedicated to meeting the needs of all of our learners. They have taken an active role in preparing our school plan to improve student achievement.



Contents

School & Community Context	1
Family & Community Involvement	1
Safe & Orderly Environment	1
Assessment Results	2
Student Engagement	3
Professional Development	3
Time to Learn	3
Additional School Supports	3
Planning for Improvement	4

Family and Community Involvement

For the past three years, 100% of parents/guardians surveyed agreed that they feel welcome at our school. However, parental involvement in school activities has been a concern for Alderney. We have been focusing on encouraging more parental and community involvement in school activities. This year we offered a parenting program, Internet Safety session, and we hosted a play group for preschoolers and their parents one day a week.

Safe and Orderly Environment

Our survey results over the past five years have been consistent in indicating that our students feel safe. We are proud to report that most of our students and their parents feel bullying isn't a problem at Alderney and feel it is a safe place to learn. We believe this is due to the many programs that we currently offer that promote good behaviour in our school, such as Positive Effective Behaviour Support (PEBS), Playground

Pals, Alderney Awards, and Alderney Gotchas. Our teachers will continue to learn about effective classroom management and how to promote positive student behaviour.

Provincial and Board Assessment Results

Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) students participated in provincial and board-wide assessments. The information gained through these assessments will help us determine our next steps in improving student achievement in literacy and mathematics. Please note that the percentages used throughout this report are rounded to the nearest whole number.

* French Immersion students completed the assessment in French.

Literacy Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
Grade 2 HRSB Literacy Reading	English Program Accuracy: 60% English Program Fluency: 60%	English Program Accuracy: 74% English Program Fluency: 67%
Grade 3 DOE Literacy	Reading: 69% Writing (Information) : 69% Writing (Narrative) : 77%	Reading: 80% Writing (Information) : 80% Writing (Narrative) : 87%
Grade 5 HRSB Literacy	English Program Reading: 94%	English Program Reading: 82%
Grade 6 DOE Literacy	Reading: 94% Writing: 100%	Reading: 88% Writing: 94%
Mathematics Assessments	School Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations	Board Results: Percentage of students meeting expectations
*Grade 2 HRSB Mathematics	100%	95%
*Grade 3 DOE Mathematics (June 2008)	60%	71%
*Grade 5 HRSB Mathematics	88%	84%

At Alderney School our Grade 2 and 3 students have performed below the board results in both reading and writing. However the Grade 5 and Grade 6 students performed higher than the board results in the Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) and Department of Education (DOE) literacy assessments. A closer investigation indicates that our students have demonstrated the need for improvement in the area of comprehension. Our students have performed above the board average on the Grade 2 and Grade 5 mathematics assessment but they performed below the board's average on the Grade 3 mathematics assessment. Even though the majority of our students are performing well, operational sense and communication are key target areas for improvement. To improve student success, our teachers will be engaging in professional development on effective teaching in these important areas.

Classroom Assessment

Focus on Reading Comprehension

Teachers worked across grade levels to examine students' abilities to question and infer during reading in order to identify areas of strength and areas requiring additional instruction. The October results revealed that 57% of our students met the criteria for questioning and inferring. The May results showed great improvement, with 72% of students meeting the criteria. As a result of the accreditation process, improving students' comprehension will be our literacy goal to be implemented in the fall.

Focus on Mathematics

Teachers have been assessing students' competency in the area of mental math. The math coach worked with teachers to develop progression mapping in mental math. Samples of student work were collected and showed some improvement over time. However, through closer examination of this new data, teachers determined that a concentration in the area of operational sense was necessary. This year the teachers took part in the accreditation process and after examining all data, it was determined that improving operational sense would be our math goal. The teachers have planned strategies for effective teaching, assessment and evaluation of operational sense and implementation will begin in the fall.



Student Engagement

We are doing really well in keeping our students engaged. At our school we have a variety of activities in which many of our students participate. In addition to their participation in these activities, 92% of our students feel that their math and language arts school work is challenging yet understandable. Our students also feel confident about their abilities in most subject areas; however, we need to improve their level of interest in writing.

Time to Learn

All schools in the Halifax Regional School Board follow the Time to Learn requirements set by the Department of Education. This means that each course or subject has a required or recommended number of minutes. Our teachers ensure that their class schedules follow the guidelines provided by the Department of Education. This is done collaboratively across classrooms involving administration, classroom teachers and all specialists, to maximize student learning.

Professional Development

When teachers learn, students learn. Teachers at Alderney are actively involved in professional development on an ongoing basis. Our literacy and math coaches assist teachers to incorporate effective teaching strategies. This year our school-based professional development days with staff focused on designing our school plan for improvement, Accreditation and our Positive Effective Behaviour Supports (PEBS). Some of our teachers have extended their professional development by completing their Masters of Education degrees.

Additional School Supports

At Alderney we have a number of additional school supports to improve student achievement:

- speech language pathologist
- resource teacher
- school social worker
- educational program assistants (EPA)
- lunch monitors
- math leader
- literacy coach
- school psychologist
- secretary
- Reading Recovery teacher
- library support specialist



Planning for Improvement

The school community of Alderney takes great pride in our students' success. There is much to celebrate here at our school! However, we also know that we can do even better. We are very dedicated to demonstrating our continued improvement. The Halifax Regional School Board's Planning for Improvement process helps us to identify what our students are doing well, and what areas need further attention and improvement.

Our school staff have chosen goals in the areas of literacy, mathematics, and improving our communication with the community. We have discovered from looking at student achievement data that our students could benefit from a focus on reading comprehension. We want our students to be better able to use questioning and inferring as

strategies for understanding what they read. In mathematics we are currently focusing our efforts on improving our students' ability to apply mental math skills when problem solving. Our focus in the fall, as further outlined in the section below, will be operational sense.

Alderney's school improvement plan is available for your viewing on our website. You will find details about what teachers will be focusing on with their students in class and also what teachers will be learning.

School Goals

Literacy Goal

To improve the reading comprehension of students at all grade levels.

Strategies:

- all staff will explicitly teach reading strategies through a balanced literacy approach as outlined in the DOE Provincial English Language Arts (ELA) guide
- staff will use the gradual release of responsibility model that includes modeled, shared, guided and independent reading.
- teach at least one reading comprehension lesson per week, using professional literature provided by the board and province. i.e. 'Reading with Meaning' by Debbie Miller, 'Strategies that Work' by Goudvis and Harvey. The lessons will include higher levels of questioning and critical thinking
- staff will use differentiated instruction and assessment, with a focus on reading comprehension.
- the independent practice of the strategies will take place in a

workshop model that includes mini-lessons, independent reading and share time

- staff will engage in effective Professional Learning Communities that collect and examine assessment data, particularly running records and oral reading records, and use it to inform classroom practice (PM Benchmarks, AYR, and comprehension rubrics)

Mathematics Goal

To increase student achievement in the key outcomes as identified in operational sense.

Strategies:

- teachers will work together to develop a progression mapping of operational sense concepts as they develop from grades primary to 6
- teachers will develop and implement instructional strategies such as three part lessons, including an emphasis on the 5 representations (pictures, symbols, real world context, oral explanations and manipulatives).

This will support the development of the students' communication skills and understanding in the area of operational sense.

- teachers will incorporate a variety of story structures into their daily math activities
- teachers will develop and implement a common assessment that measures number sense as it relates to grade-level curricular expectations; the resulting data will be examined by teachers and used to guide further classroom instruction and assessment in operational sense
- teachers will provide multiple opportunities for students to use writing as a thinking and communication skill in mathematics (for example, math journals, frayer model and exit cards) - samples will be showcased on a monthly bulletin board called Alderney's 'Thoughtful Thinkers'



Every Student Can Learn. Every School Will Improve.

Contact Information: 2 Penhorn Drive, Dartmouth, B2Y 3K1

Tel: 902-464-2040 Email: alderney@hrsb.ns.ca Principal: Sherry Thistle