



ENGLISH POLICY

Rationale

Active and effective participation in society depends on the ability to speak, listen, read, view and write with confidence, purpose and enjoyment. The study of English, and the broader concept of literacy, is about the appropriate and effective use of language as a means of learning and communicating effectively in our immediate surroundings and in the wider community. Ensuring universal literacy has long been the primary mission of St. Francis of Assisi School, to ensure its students are able to communicate fluently using the written and spoken word.

Aims

The English program aims to develop in students:

- the ability to speak, listen, read, and write effectively with confidence, purpose and enjoyment
- a knowledge of the ways in which language varies according to context, purpose, audience and content, and the capacity to apply this knowledge
- a knowledge of the linguistic patterns used to construct different texts, and the capacity to apply this knowledge, orally and in written form.
- a broad knowledge of a range of texts and a capacity to relate this to aspects of contemporary society and personal experience
- the capacity to discuss and analyse texts and language critically
- a knowledge of the ways textual interpretation and understanding may vary according to cultural, social and personal differences, and the capacity to develop reasoned arguments about interpretation and meaning.

Implementation

- All students at our school will study a sequential English course based upon the AusVELS Learnings Domain.
- All teachers are provided with the latest in written research, resources, and professional development, and are required to work with their respective teams to develop and implement a joint English course for all students. Students in Prep to Year 4 are involved in the Foundation Years Program. The Years 5 and 6 children are involved in the “Learning to Read, Reading to Learn” Project.
- Student’s individual abilities are monitored using a large variety of formal measurements conducted on a regular basis, and learning opportunities are provided that cater for the identified needs of each individual student.

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- Student progress in all dimensions of English is reported in half and end of year academic reports, and are communicated verbally during mid-year Parent Teacher interviews. Parent chat sessions are offered both formally and informally for communication between parents and teachers throughout the school year.
- English activities are integrated into the topics being studied at school, and are appropriate to each child's ability. English activities form a regular component of each student's homework regime.
- The Literacy Coordinator oversees the effective running of English in each area of the school. This coordinator leads the professional learning teams (PLT) on a weekly basis for both Prep to Year 4 and Years 5 and 6.

PREP TO YEAR 4: FOUNDATION YEARS

Rationale

Students require intensive support and dedicated staff in the critical Prep to Year 4 early years to develop their individual English skills. These skills are vital for later success, particularly in terms of interaction with other people and with the myriad of institutions and processes involved in daily life. Of particular importance, the establishment of sound and well developed literacy skills at an early age have been demonstrated as essential to future student learning across the curriculum. In an information-driven world, literacy is the key to accessing knowledge, opening up choices and freeing the individual to find self-fulfilment.

Foundation Years is a systematic approach to maximising the literacy achievements of all children in the first five years of primary schooling. It provides a structured approach to ensure all students experience success in early literacy through a comprehensive program that provides a supportive framework for effective classroom teaching and student learning in literacy. It requires the development of literacy skills, including reading, writing and speaking and listening and this is achieved through many varied classroom teaching strategies and support opportunities. Teaching goals are guided by assessing individual needs and addressing these needs in whole class, small group and individual child activities. Children's success in their literacy development is monitored on a regular basis throughout the year, in particular with a formal assessment period at the start and end of each year, and this ongoing testing helps inform the direction for teaching and learning required for all students in the Grade Prep to Year Four.

Aims

- To ensure all students achieve high standards in literacy given sufficient time and support.
- To ensure all students experience success in early literacy (reading, writing, spelling and oral language development).
- To enable students to communicate fluently using the written and spoken word.
- To develop a range of confidences in literacy, including the confidence to speak publicly, express ideas, thoughts and feelings, and make and justify opinions.
- To identify and provide early intervention for children who require literacy support.
- To utilise various forms of assessment to monitor individual performance and to drive program development and delivery.

Implementation

- Our school has consistently identified early years literacy as a whole school priority and have undertaken to be involved in the CLaSS program since 1999, including the appointment of a full time trained CLaSS Coordinator.
- The Literacy Coordinator oversees and coordinates all aspects of the program, providing support and direction to others when needed, and organising professional development as required, including regular Professional Learning Team meetings with all Prep to Year 4 teachers.
- The school provides an uninterrupted 2-hour literacy block for all Prep to Year 4 classes, between the hours of 9.00am and 11.00am (Prep to Year 3) and 11.30 am to 1.30 pm (Year 4) every weekday.
- *Reading Recovery* is provided for the most 'at-risk' Year 1 students who require reading assistance. Trained Reading Recovery teachers implement this program throughout the school year on a one-to-one basis. (See Special Needs: *Reading Recovery* policy)
- Literacy Aides are appointed to assist students requiring literacy support throughout Prep to Year 6. This support includes one-on-one assistance, small group work, and whole class teaching, and in particular provides extra assistance for ex- reading recovery students in Year 1 and Year 2 classes.
- Appropriate system supported professional development is made available for all Prep to Year 4 teachers throughout the year.
- The 'Early Years Parent Helper Program' is a parent-training program offered throughout the school year to all parents interested in assisting student learning. This program is a pre-requisite to helping in the Prep to Year 4 grades, and once trained these parent helpers are placed on a roster in the various grades to assist in supporting children's literacy learning through individual and small group work in the classroom.
- An assessment schedule consistent with Prep to Year 4 requirements has been developed and implemented, with minimum achievement standards and targets being set for all students in reading and writing. Running records are a feature of classroom programs as a means to monitoring student achievement and guide further teaching strategies.
- Assessment data is collected and analysed regularly, with the results being used to monitor performance, as well as to drive program development and delivery.
- A Prep to Year 4 resource budget is allocated every year to ensure the availability of a large series of resources, including various individual and group reading material. A significant feature of the program at St Francis of Assisi School is its extensive range of reading and classroom material available for the children to use. These resources are collated, monitored and updated regularly subject to the needs of the children, and the latest in teaching materials on offer.
- The capacity of St Francis of Assisi School to provide the program is directly related to the support and funding provided by the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne.
- Each year a component of the Prep to Year 4 Foundation Years is incorporated into the School Development Plan. This will involve professional development for all staff.

MIDDLE / SENIOR SCHOOL LITERACY

- Literature Circles are introduced in Year 3, Term 2, and at the beginning of Years 4, 5 and 6. Literature circles involve groups of students developing their reading and comprehension skills. They are small, temporary discussion groups of students who have chosen to read the same work of literature. This helps to promote students to read and choose good literature as well as be a part of their home reading program.

- The Years 5 and 6 use the Learning to Read, Reading to Learn model as their English lesson.
- Integrated units as well as Religious Education are incorporated into the small group literacy tasks.
- There is a greater emphasis on comprehension in order to maximise the students' understanding of the text they read.
- Spelling is also a strong feature of the Literacy block in the middle and senior years. Emphasis is placed on spelling patterns blends and rules. Spelling is also a part of the Homework expectation.
- Teachers place students on a developmental continuum for Reading, Writing, Spelling and Oral Language, and these are completed twice yearly. These DC's are used to assist teachers in planning for students' individual needs.
- Running records are taken at the beginning of the year for all students. Students at risk require running records to be taken fortnightly and the remaining students at least once a term.
- Students are exposed to and taught a greater number of writing genres.
- Each year consideration is given to Middle/Senior School Literacy in our School Development Plan. This comes as a result of the evaluation of all the reading and supplementary programs (e.g. literacy support) that we have in place.