



Language Policy

Rationale

At Balwyn North Primary School, we acknowledge that we have an important role to play in promoting an inclusive language environment and that language is a vital building block for all learning. We place importance on the roles that all members of the teaching and support staff play in the continual development of all students as language learners. Whilst taking on this approach of all teachers supporting all students in their language development and learning, we acknowledge that students within our community come from diverse language backgrounds, with differing needs and development levels. Therefore, for effective teaching and learning of language, a differentiated approach needs to be taken.

Aims

At Balwyn North Primary School, we aim to develop critical language learners who engage in their community and the wider world, becoming successful and engaged citizens. Through active participation in a stimulating and supportive learning environment, students are supported to become effective communicators, gathering and expressing themselves through written, spoken and visual forms. Proficiency in mother tongue languages is an important component of learning in any language and we aim to encourage and promote continued development in our students' mother tongue languages.

Language Profile

Balwyn North Primary School has a diverse cultural population with more than 13 mother tongue languages spoken in homes. Across our school approximately 55% of all students come from language backgrounds other than English. Each year a significant number of families enrol and transfer their children into the school (up to 50 new families in any given year). Most transfers into the school are related to families moving into the area from elsewhere in Victoria or overseas. Students arriving from overseas are supported in language learning according to individual need as set out in the Balwyn North Primary School New Arrivals Policy.

Implementation

The primary language of instruction at Balwyn North Primary School is English. Where possible, language is taught through relevant, authentic contexts of the units of inquiry and is the basis of daily focused literacy blocks.

Language learning is guided by the school's English Scope and Sequence which is informed by the Victorian Curriculum. To ensure differentiation in class instruction, planning takes into account student learning needs, language backgrounds and prior learning gathered through the use of various assessments.

To ensure consistency in language teaching, collaborative planning around Language planners takes place in all year levels of the school each term.

Reading and Viewing

Reading is a developmental process that involves constructing meaning from texts. Through daily instruction and explicit teaching of reading, students are supported to develop reading skills based on their level of achievement. Through language experience, modelled reading, shared reading, guided reading and independent reading, learners engage in texts appropriate to their experiences and developmental phase.

Students are provided with learning experiences that develop their understanding of multimodal texts and the way that images and language interact to convey ideas and meanings. The F-2 iPad program, in conjunction with the Netbook Program for students in Years 3-6, allows all students to access visual texts including websites, videos, graphs, maps and various apps.

At Balwyn North Primary School, we consistently encourage students to develop an appreciation of literature. Students are encouraged to regularly choose books to read for enjoyment both in class and at home. Classrooms are equipped with 'classroom libraries' and students are encouraged to borrow from the school library during their weekly session. In the early years of school, students are also supported to choose a book for nightly reading based on their achievement level.

Speaking and Listening

At Balwyn North Primary School the teaching and learning of Speaking and Listening is integrated across the whole curriculum through meaningful and purposeful learning activities that build upon students' prior learning. Students are given opportunities to participate as active listeners and speak in a variety of situations for various purposes.

Through structured and explicit language experiences, students gain understanding and improve their skills in Speaking and Listening. This is evident when students ask and answer questions; participate in whole class share time, such as class discussions or circle time; use strategies such as Think Pair Share effectively; and when students understand and follow instructions. Students are also given the opportunity to develop skills of formal speaking by structured teaching and learning of presentation skills.

Authentic opportunities are provided for students to extend their skills in Speaking and Listening including Expo and Student Learning Evenings, biennial student concerts and school assembly presentations. Speaking and Listening is further supported through a range of performing arts opportunities, culminating in a Senior School musical every two years.

Assessment of Speaking and Listening is completed in contexts including group work, partner work and whole class work across the curriculum, in particular in cooperative learning tasks.

Writing

At Balwyn North Primary School, we believe writing in its many varied forms is central to the development of a self-confident, engaged and articulate learner. Through written expression students communicate ideas, information and feelings to construct meaning.

At Balwyn North Primary School the teaching of writing occurs through a teaching and learning program that builds on prior knowledge, strategies and skills informed by the school's English Scope and Sequence and the Victorian Curriculum. Where possible, writing instruction and learning takes place in authentic contexts across all areas of the curriculum and throughout the transdisciplinary Program of Inquiry.

The teaching and learning of writing incorporates specific strategies and skills, including the conventions of writing and is implemented through teaching strategies such as modelled, shared and guided writing. Teachers include explicit and focused instruction when teaching, which is supportive of individual student needs.

A range of factual and fictional text types are explored by all students from Foundation to Year six. All year levels are exposed to a range of text types, however not all grade levels will focus explicitly and in the same way on all text types.

Additional Language Program

At Balwyn North Primary School, students are given the opportunity to learn Mandarin as an additional language from Foundation to Year Six. The program is developed sequentially, according to the student's abilities and is aligned to the Victorian Curriculum and PYP documents.

Students develop skills in the Additional Language by using the inquiry approach to learning.

When possible, the Additional Language program is embedded within the classroom unit of inquiry. Where this is not possible, stand alone units of inquiry based on the PYP concepts are developed.

All students work on the Victorian Curriculum Languages Pathway One Phase of Learning. Student learning is enriched by a biennial China Study Tour offered to students in Years Five and Six and by the annual visit of students from our sister school Ping Jiang Experimental School in Suzhou.

Development of links with Balwyn High School and with parent groups such as Friends of LOTE enable the support of mother tongue language through conversational groups.

EAL learning support

Students who have English as an Additional Language (EAL) are supported by the EAL Coordinator who facilitates regular assessments, conducted by DET experts, of our students

who are newly arrived to Australia. These assessments inform a personalised program for the student. The approach to learning English as an additional language is inclusive and students learn in their regular classroom. Students often offer support to peers within the classroom context. The EAL coordinator also provides professional development and support to classroom teachers to address the learning needs of the students in their classrooms. New students are supported in line with the BNPS EAL New Arrivals Policy and families are supported with interpreters for school communications and meetings when required.

Assessment

Assessment in all areas of English are developed in line with the school's Assessment Policy. Students complete formative and summative assessments as set out in the school's Assessment Schedule, along with a range of anecdotal evidence informing planning for teaching and learning in Language.

Resources

The library is the hub of the school. It is used by teachers, parents, individual students, groups of students and whole classes. Resources for students and cultures represented in the school are constantly being revised. Our units of inquiry benefit from a wide variety of resources and provide students with both content and context that aims to foster international mindedness and develop global citizens, while developing key skills and knowledge.

Specific and levelled resources are important in the teaching and learning of language. Levelled classroom and home resources including class sets of books, big books and take home books are organised in resource rooms across the school to support all learning.

The LOTE program is equipped with a subject specific collection of texts to support the learning of Mandarin as an additional language.

The EAL program is enhanced with specific resources for the support of the teaching and learning of English as an additional language. These resources support not only the EAL program but also are available to classroom teachers to be utilised in the classroom.

The development of mother tongue languages in our school is supported by a range of increasing resources in a range of languages through the school library.

Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review.

Ratified: 30th November, 2016