



Language Policy

Rationale

Balwyn North Primary School acknowledges 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 role that all members of the teaching and support staff play in the continual development of all students as language learners. We acknowledge that students within our community come from diverse language backgrounds, with differing needs and development levels. Therefore, for the effective development of language, a differentiated and personalised approach is undertaken.

Aims

At Balwyn North Primary School, we aim to develop critical language learners who engage with 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, expressing themselves through written, spoken and visual forms. We believe that learning through and about language is an essential gateway for children to develop a rich language reservoir, constructing knowledge and sparking curiosity and imagination. 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, a high proportion of students come from language backgrounds other than English. Each year, a number of families enrol and transfer their children into the school. 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 within Units of Inquiry and is the basis of daily focused literacy blocks.

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

To ensure consistency in language teaching, collaborative planning using Language and Unit of Inquiry 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, shared, guided and independent reading, learners engage with texts appropriate to their experiences and developmental phase. A rich vein of both fiction and non-fiction runs through all Unit of Inquiry experiences and students are provided with the opportunity to deepen their conceptual understandings and extend their knowledge through engaging texts.

At Balwyn North, we place a high value on students being immersed in rich literature. Students are encouraged to regularly choose books to read for enjoyment both in class and at home. Classes work collaboratively to curate 'classroom libraries' and students maintain personal reading collections of texts, selected for interest and reading challenge. Students are also encouraged to borrow from the School Library. All students are supported to select texts for nightly reading that are suitable for their achievement level.

At BNPS, all classes engage in regular mentor text inquiries. These explorations inspire a deeper engagement and passion for literature for students, teachers and across our community. An important aspect of these inquiries is the chance for students to delve deeply into the interesting language choices that authors make and consider the impact on their audience.

Students are also provided with learning experiences that develop their understanding of multimodal texts and the ways that images and language interact to convey ideas and meanings. The school is well-resourced with digital technologies and students access visual texts including websites, videos, graphs, maps and various online portals.

Speaking and Listening

At Balwyn North Primary School, the teaching and learning of Speaking and Listening is incorporated across the whole curriculum through meaningful and purposeful learning experiences 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. They engage in cooperative structures that support effective speaking and listening with peers. They collaborate in teams, participate in whole class discussions and circle times, respectfully share and challenge ideas, give and

follow instructions and engage in peer reflection. Students are also given the opportunity to develop skills in formal speaking, through the explicit learning of oral presentation skills.

Students are encouraged to access learning through their mother tongue, where appropriate, such as reading a class novel in their primary language. Students that are multilingual can support peers to settle into the school, by translating key information and developing social connections.

Authentic opportunities are provided for students to extend their skills in Speaking and Listening including Learning Expos and the Year 6 Exhibition, 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.

Writing

At Balwyn North Primary School, we believe writing in its many varied forms is central to the development of self-confident, engaged and articulate learners. 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 through 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 year levels will focus explicitly and in the same way on all text types. Personal Writing experiences are privileged at all year levels, supporting students to see writing as a vital tool for expressing ideas, knowledge and feelings. Through mentor text inquiries, students explore sentence level grammar and the impact of powerful writing choices, unravelling the mechanics of writing and adding newly discovered techniques to their own repertoires.

Additional Language Program

At Balwyn North Primary School, students learn Mandarin as an additional language from Foundation to Year Six. The program is developed sequentially, according to students' abilities and is aligned to the Victorian Curriculum and PYP support literature. Students develop skills in this Additional Language through an inquiry approach to learning.

Where possible, the Additional Language program is connected to 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.

Our school has a full time multicultural aide, who supports connections with families from diverse language backgrounds.

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 students who are newly arrived to Australia. These assessments inform a personalised program for students. 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 is implemented in line with the school's Assessment Policy. Students complete formative and summative assessments as set out in the school's Assessment Schedule, and teachers collect a range of anecdotal evidence informing planning for teaching and learning in Languages.

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 aim 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, guided reading 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 are also 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 resources in a variety of languages and housed in the School Library.

Evaluation

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

Ratified: 1st December, 2021