

Language Policy

Written by	<i>Language Committee</i>
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Rationale

The need to communicate is instinctive and language is the common thread that links people in its written, spoken and visual forms, and reflects culture. The ability to use language to communicate effectively is necessary to express thoughts, ideas and feelings. Using language is a complex social practice that involves using visual, verbal and non-verbal cues, signs and codes to produce, receive and respond to information in order to make meaning. Language plays a vital role in empowering the learner and provides an intellectual framework to support conceptual development and critical thinking. Having an understanding of one's own culture and language naturally leads to understanding and enjoying the language and culture of others. Seaford North Primary School recognises that the acquisition of language permeates all learning, and therefore, all teachers are language teachers. Language is crucial in nurturing the full development of each learner and fostering the values of diversity, international mindedness and intercultural awareness.

Language Profile

As of 2018, Seaford North Primary School has a school population of approximately 420 students. Our school is predominantly English speaking and we have a small number of families with an indigenous background. A number of mother tongue languages other than English have been identified including: German, Afrikaans, Indonesian, Chinese NFD, Mandarin, Korean and Yoruba.

Language of Instruction

Students should recognise the transdisciplinary nature of language—they use language within and across the subject areas and in a way that transcends them, both inside and outside the classroom.

The learning process simultaneously involves:

- learning language—as learners listen to and use language with others in their everyday lives;
- learning about language—as learners grow in their understanding of how language works;
- learning through language—as learners use language as a tool to listen, think, discuss and reflect on information, ideas and issues (Halliday 1980).

The PYP has identified three strands—oral language, visual language, and written language—that are learned across and throughout the curriculum, with each strand being an integral component of language learning. Each strand has been considered from both the receptive aspect—receiving and constructing meaning, and expressive aspect—creating and sharing meaning.

The English Programme

The English programme aims to develop in students:

- The ability to speak, listen, read, write, view and present with confidence, purpose and enjoyment
- A knowledge of the ways language varies according to context, purpose, audience and content and the capacity to apply this knowledge
- A knowledge of linguistic patterns and structures used to construct different texts and the ability to apply this knowledge, especially in writing
- The ability to discuss and analyse texts and language strategically and critically
- A knowledge of the ways textual interpretation and understanding may vary according to cultural, social, and personal experiences and differences, and the capacity to develop reasoned arguments about interpretation and meaning
- Opportunities to engage in learning within meaningful contexts and with purpose

Implementation

- All students at our school will study an English course based on the Victorian Curriculum Standards
- The teaching of language should be in response to the previous experience, needs and interests of the student
- English study for each student will be no less than 10 hours per week.
- Language provides a vehicle for inquiry. In an inquiry-based classroom, teachers and students enjoy using language, appreciating it both functionally and aesthetically
- Utilise a collaboratively developed, 'Seaford North Primary School – Model of Teaching,' that is based on an inquiry approach
- Where possible, students will be assessed in order to develop personal goals related to language development
- Student's individual performance will be monitored using formal measurements and learning opportunities will be provided to cater for the needs of each student
- Student progress in English will be reported in half year and end of year academic reports, as well as be reported in the school's annual report
- Take home reading is to be an essential part of the School's Language programme. It is expected that all students will read regularly at home and a record of this reading is to be maintained. Parents will be informed that students are expected to read at home
- Our Language Committee will be responsible for coordinating the School's Language Programme and will be resourced through the Language Curriculum budget
- Information sessions for "Helpers in the Classroom" and "Parents in Partnership" will be offered to parents and integration aides where possible
- Identified Year One students will be offered a Reading Intervention Programme to support the classroom programme
- English tools such as Literacy Planet and THRASS, will be utilised and resourced through school budgets
- Professional Development in up to date Language practice will be provided to all staff

Supporting Mother Tongue

It is acknowledged that the development of mother tongue language is crucial for cognitive development, affirming self-identity and maintaining cultural identity. For the majority of our students English is in fact their mother tongue. For a significant few however, English is a new language and we do provide support programmes. For students that do enter our school with no English language we can provide an EAL assessment supported by the English Language School in Noble Park.

Mandarin Language Instruction

We understand the importance of embracing other cultures and languages and pride ourselves on our Mandarin Programme. All students from Foundation to Year 6 partake in one 50 minute block per week by our qualified Language Other Than English (LOTE) teacher. These sessions, where possible, connect to students' Central Ideas and Lines of Inquiry, while still ensuring essential basic language instruction is occurring. Lessons include both language learning and cross-cultural awareness.

Professional Development

Professional Development is an essential factor in ensuring a rigorous Language Programme at Seaford North PS. Specified budgets allow for onsite and offsite PD in the area of language. All necessary official PYP Professional Development is offered and completed by all teaching staff. Language Coordinators are responsible for planning professional development for all staff based on Bastow Literacy training. The local school network and Victorian PYP network provide further valuable professional learning for staff.

Evaluation

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