



Rationale

'The study of English is central to the learning and development of all young Australians. It helps create confident communicators, imaginative thinkers and informed citizens. It is through the study of English that individuals learn to analyse, understand, communicate and build relationships with others and with the world around them. The study of English helps young people develop the knowledge and skills needed for education, training and the workplace. It helps them become ethical, thoughtful, informed and active members of society and plays an important part in developing the understanding, attitudes and capabilities of those who will take responsibility for Australia's future.'

- Victorian Curriculum, English Rationale.

St. Therese's School's Vision reflects a desire that our students develop into life-long learners. A competency in English is essential for this to occur. Students need to understand and control the English language to develop the confidence and competence to meet the demands of school, employment and further education.

Goals

St Therese's English program aims to develop in students:

- the ability to appreciate, enjoy and use language and develop a sense of its richness and power to evoke feelings, to form and convey ideas, to inform, to discuss, to persuade, to entertain and to argue
- a broad knowledge of a range of texts and media in print and electronic forms (including imaginative literature, popular fiction and non-fiction, personal writing, commercial and workplace texts, everyday communication, plays, film and other multimedia texts) and a capacity to relate this to aspects of contemporary society and personal experience
- the knowledge, skills and personal qualities that enable them to read, view and listen critically and to think, speak and write clearly and confidently
- an understanding of the way purpose, audience and situation influence the structures and features of language and learn to apply their knowledge in reading, writing, viewing, speaking and listening
- the ability to control language by applying their understanding of the grammatical structures of English, by learning to spell accurately and use punctuation effectively and by imitating good readers and writers

Professional Learning Teams

Professional Learning Teams have been established and meet on a regular basis. These meetings are used for professional reading, to promote strategies, to discuss issues regarding the teaching of literacy, to analyse data and determine directions for individuals and groups.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

The following assumptions will be used to determine strategies and approaches selected by teachers:

- language learning takes place through interactions in meaningful events, rather than through isolated language activities
-

-
- language learning is seen as holistic; that is, each mode of language supports and enhances overall language development
 - language develops in relation to the context in which it is used; that is, it develops according to the situation, the topic under discussion and the relationship between the participants
 - language develops through the active engagement of the learners
 - language develops through interaction and the joint construction of meaning in a range of contexts
 - language learning can be enhanced by learners monitoring their own progress
 - oral language underpins both the reading and writing process.

Current Practice

All levels of the school have implemented literacy blocks. These occur 5 times a week for 2 hours in the junior school and at least 4 times per week for approximately 1 1/2 - 2 hours in the middle and senior school. Where timetabling permits, they are scheduled for the morning session (9.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m.). During this time reading, writing, word study, phonics, handwriting and oral language are timetabled.

The school has adopted the 'whole-part-whole' strategy in the junior area. This influences the testing utilized, the components implemented and the planning and programming. Shared, modelled, guided / reciprocal and independent reading are components of the reading program in all areas of the school. The writing program incorporates shared, modelled, interactive and independent elements in the junior school and shared, modelled and independent in the middle and upper school.

Word study is an important element of the literacy program. In the junior school, it is built into the shared or modelled elements or into the literacy tasks. In the middle and upper school, the students' writing and common resources are used to determine the focus for each spelling unit. Students are tested and lists adjusted to meet the needs of individuals.

Speaking and listening are essential elements of the curriculum. Proficiency in oral language provides children with a vital food for thought (Bruner,1996) and a solid foundation for the development of reading and writing skills. The three components of the oral language program are 1. Social Talk – the language of social interaction, 2. Talking to learn -- language and thinking, 3. Formal Talk – the language and skills of public speaking.

Planning is important in ensuring the success of the literacy program. Teachers use assessment data to determine the needs of their students and plan accordingly. These plans are recorded on planning sheets or work programs. AusVELS is used as a basis for:

- identifying skills to be taught
- selecting content
- devising units of work
- determining assessment foci.

This ensures that the whole school program is balanced and sequential. By employing different teaching approaches, including those listed below, individual differences can be catered for.

- the whole – part – whole strategy
 - individual, pairwork, groups and whole class
 - structured through to open ended.
-

Assessment

An Assessment Plan has been devised where all students are exposed to the same type of assessment tools at the beginning and towards the end of each year. This provides both the teachers and the school with evidence of the effectiveness of the programs being implemented. The initial testing influences the planning and groupings. Throughout the year, teacher designed checklists, work samples, teacher designed tests and anecdotal information is used to determine the children's progress, assist in further planning and to report to parents.

The commercially designed tests that are administered include, but are not limited to:

- Marie Clay's Observation Survey
- Sutherland Phonological Awareness
- Running Records
- PAT R
- BURT Word Recognition Test
- Peter's Dictation Test
- Record of Oral Language
- Words their Way Test
- PROBE
- TORCH

Digital Technologies

The school is well resourced with digital technologies and promotes the use in all areas of the curriculum. Within the literacy program, technology is an important aspect. It enables the students to further enhance their experiences and understandings and provides a realistic context for learning. Learning technologies are used to prepare the children for the demands of a technological society.

Evaluation

This Policy will be reviewed as part of a cyclical process in accordance with the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Document Control

Version	Author	Purpose/Change	Date
0.1	Various STS L'ship Members	Initial policy drafting	Pre 2018
1.0	L&T Team	Various updates throughout policy	Mid 2019