



**ACT**  
Government  
Education and Training



# **Forrest Primary School**

## **Primary Years Programme**

### **Languages Policy**

**Reviewed March 2016**

Principal's Name and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Board Chair's Name and Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## Language Learning Philosophy

Forrest Primary School's Language Policy supports the International Baccalaureate's view that 'the development of language is fundamental in the need to communicate; it supports and enhances our thinking and understanding' (PYP Language Scope and Sequence, pg. 1). At Forrest Primary School English is the language of instruction and is taught in a transdisciplinary manner to ensure learning experiences are relevant, meaningful and engaging. Oral, visual and written language are paramount to the development of language acquisition and are integral to all learning experiences. All teachers are responsible for language learning at Forrest Primary School and believe we need to provide students with 'a learning environment and the necessary language support to enable them to participate fully in the academic programme and in the social life of the school, as well as develop as individuals' (Making the PYP Happen, pg. 68). Immersion in the English language and student mother tongue languages 'play a vital role in constructing meaning' (PYP Languages Policy pg. 1).

Language learning is differentiated to meet individual student need and learning environments are inclusive of all students' cultural backgrounds and needs. Teachers believe that students learn through a gradual release of responsibility model, where modelled, shared, guided and independent learning experiences support all students to learn. We believe every learner benefits from experiencing an additional language as it develops effective communication skills and facilitates international mindedness. Also, success in mother tongue maintains cultural identity and is an indicator of success in acquiring other additional languages.

## Language Profile

Forrest Primary School is an Australian Capital Territory (ACT) government school situated in the parliamentary triangle. Forrest Primary is a culturally and linguistically diverse school, which provides education for approximately five hundred students, from 45 different nations at any one time. English is the language of instruction and Japanese (Preschool-Year 6) is formally taught as an additional language within the school. Mother Tongue language learning has been established and is supported throughout the school. A preschool campus is located in the neighbouring suburb of Deakin. The school also provides mainstream integration for a number of children with learning disabilities. Our school community is one which covers a broad socio-economic base. As a government school, Forrest Primary School uses the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme as an organiser for the Australian Curriculum (including The Early Years Learning Framework for Preschool).

The teaching of language is embedded into the transdisciplinary Programme of Inquiry. This provides students with authentic learning experiences for their acquisition of language. Teachers develop language programmes collaboratively in year levels and align Australian Curriculum requirements with a focus on written, visual and oral language. The Australian Curriculum: English is organised into three interrelated strands that support students' growing understanding and use of Standard Australian English (English). Together the three strands focus on developing students' knowledge, understanding and skills. The three strands are:

- **Language:** knowing about the English language
- **Literature:** understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature
- **Literacy:** expanding the repertoire of English usage.

The Australian Curriculum addresses the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, traditions and holistic world views. This knowledge enriches all learners' ability to participate positively and develop a deepening understanding and connection with Australia's Indigenous culture (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority). Units of Inquiry are developed with a lens of this cross

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curriculum priority. At Forrest Primary School there are usually around 22 students who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. A Homework Club operates every Monday to support both parents and students with their reading, homework completion and school engagement. An Executive Teacher has been appointed as the Indigenous Officer and works collaboratively with the Directorate's Indigenous liaison, children and families to support student attendance and academic growth. Any student who is identified as Indigenous has a Personalised Learning Plan (PLP). PLP goals are created collaboratively with the classroom teacher, family and student then progress against the goals are assessed.

## **Oral Language**

*'Reading and writing float on a sea of talk' (James Britton, 1970).*

The more opportunities and experiences we give children to develop and practise oral language skills, the more confident children become as language learners. Planned experiences in speaking and listening in an inquiry based approach allow for rich discussion and a collaborative approach to learning. Children are encouraged to ask questions, negotiate, socialise, inquire and experiment in a range of settings that allow their ideas, opinions and thinking to be heard. We know children come to school with different experiences of language and it is important to recognise family and cultural background, community and prior knowledge in establishing the needs of each student.

## **Written Language**

'Reading is a developmental process that involves constructing meaning from text' (PYP Scope and Sequence pg.15). At Forrest Primary School there is a focus on language acquisition through developing lifelong reading habits and meeting the individual needs of each child. Teachers plan and deliver learning experiences using a range of reading procedures and strategies from the First Steps Reading programme. The reading procedures of modelled, shared, guided and independent as well as reading workshops, provide meaningful contexts of the reading process for students (First Steps Reading Resource Book pg. 5) Critical and analytical reading strategies are developed through the explicit planning and modelling of reading behaviours, through a supportive and interactive environment and by focusing on different ways to make meaning from print.

## **Visual Language**

'The processes of viewing and presenting allow students to understand the ways in which images and language interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs' The ability to interpret data, communicate and construct meaning are invaluable lifelong skills (PYP Languages Scope and Sequence, pg. 11). At Forrest Primary School environmental print and visual imagery play a vital role in enriching the learning environment, developing learners ability to critically analyse images and apply his/her understanding to make meaning. The use of graphic organisers, picture books, art work, posters, magazines, comic strips and video clips are integral in all Units of Inquiry. The ability to view and present using a multi modal approach is explicitly taught and students are given choice in presenting their ideas and knowledge.

## **Language Learning Leadership**

A PYP Coordinator and Literacy Co-ordinator have been appointed to support teachers implement a consistent approach to the delivery of language teaching and learning. An Executive Teacher Professional Practice (SLC PP) also supports teachers in classrooms, models lessons and provides feedback about teaching. Coaching and mentoring staff and providing professional training and development are key aspects of these roles. An experienced classroom teacher is also being trained in the Marie Clay 'Reading Recovery' programme. Reading Recovery identifies students experiencing reading and writing difficulties

after their first year of school and provides an intensive, individually designed and individually delivered series of lessons for 30 minutes each day for 20 weeks.

### **Learning Support and Extension**

At Forrest Primary School each teacher differentiates the teaching and learning programme to cater for individual student needs and abilities. Whether it be through support or extension learning experiences, teachers are responsive to the needs of students and then plan and make adjustments accordingly. We believe that early intervention in language learning is pivotal in ensuring all children become successful learners and a team of expert language teachers has been established to provide assistance and support to teachers and/or those students who are not meeting their language development goals. This is provided through in class support, Reading recovery and a Response to Intervention (RTI) programme. This programme focusses on intervention in the early years to support the development of language learning.

Student growth and data is collected and measured in a variety of ways. These include Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs), PM Reading Benchmarks, Core Spelling growth, Response to Intervention (RTI), Gifted and Talented (G & T) screening, teaching and learning programmes and planners, school reports, A-E , student portfolios, Performance Indicators in Primary Schools (PIPS) for Kindergarten students and the National Assessment Program in Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) for students in Years 3 and 5. Anecdotal information is also collected by teachers over time. All Preschool to Year 6 students have their academic skills assessed and tracked through the creation of Personalised Learning Plans that are constructed as a part of the 3 way interview process. Interventions can then be made where necessary. If students do not make growth after interventions have been implemented then an ILP may be developed. An ILP is a teaching tool used to deliver a targeted educational programme to achieve appropriate learning outcomes for identified students with specific needs. It is developed through a collaborative planning process involving the school, parents/carers and any other relevant services and agencies. An ILP identifies student's individual needs and priorities for learning and outlines both short and/or long term goals as well as actions, strategies, modifications and adaptations that will be taken to achieve them. ILPs are reviewed throughout the year and new goals made accordingly.

### **Language Needs of the Community**

#### **LOTE (Languages other than English)**

See also LOTE Statement

The *Australian Curriculum: Languages* is designed to enable all students to engage in learning a language in addition to English. The key concepts of language, culture and learning, as described in the *Shape of the Australian Curriculum: Languages*, underpin the learning area. A specialist teacher of Japanese delivers a specific language and culture study programme for preschool to year 6. This year each class from Kindergarten – Year 6 engage in one lesson per week. Class teachers are encouraged to reinforce the Japanese language by modelling key vocabulary such as greetings and calling the roll and by incorporating Japanese language signs around the classroom and school. Every Wednesday as part of the cultural studies, all classes participate in a Japanese inspired cleaning ritual to traditional music in order to take responsibility for the upkeep of their own learning environment. The specialist teacher of Japanese reports on student achievement and progress in learning Japanese to parents annually in a student report and portfolio work samples.

#### **English as an Additional language or Dialect (EAL/D)**

See also EAL/D Statement

The teachers at Forrest Primary recognise the need to value the students' home languages as both an important part of their identity and as a useful tool to access English. It develops flexible thinking and open

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mindedness amongst all children. They realise that it is critical to build relationships with parents/carers as well as using knowledge of the students' cultural and educational backgrounds when planning and developing appropriate teaching and learning experiences. There is clear understanding amongst teacher that they need to provide a culturally inclusive curriculum.

While students spend time with their class teachers and their peers, the EAL/D teacher plays an important role in liaising with the Introductory English Centre, welcoming new families to the school and doing the initial assessment of the student's current language levels and needs. The EAL/D teacher assists the family in completing the enrolment procedures, organising uniforms, books packs, bus tickets etc.

### **Mother Tongue Languages Across the School**

Mother tongue language clubs facilitate the building of community that is connected, respectful and internationally minded. Mother Tongue clubs were developed in response to our belief as an IB school that diversity is a valued and an essential element of our school culture that enriches the academic and personal lives of our students. The PYP Making it Happen states that an IB school

- Offers support in the medium instruction and in the mother tongue of students
- Provides the opportunity to learn further languages, notably the language of the host country
- Provides for language across the curriculum, in recognition of the fact that all teachers are language learners
- Is empathetic towards adults in the school's community for whom the school's medium of instruction is not their mother tongue

Mother Tongue Clubs provide students with the opportunity to engage with the language and culture of various cultural groups within our school. In facilitating parents to act as expert others, we are valuing languages and cultures other than that of the hegemonic culture. We are exposing students to a variety of perspectives and building his/her world view as a global citizen. In asking classroom teachers to facilitate clubs we are acknowledging that the learning of language is a whole school responsibility and that every teacher contributes to building our resources.

Mother Tongue language clubs operate during lunchtimes and involve volunteers from a specific linguistic and cultural background who expose a group of students from K-6 to the language a culture of their parents country. Volunteers often choose celebrations such as new year or important religious dates to share. Typically, a presentation will be followed by an activity, new words are learned in context, and questions are taken during the session. Students participant then share their experiences with the class. The club is then reflected upon in the Forrest newsletter, sometimes with links to community events or online communication. Mother Tongue Clubs are very popular with our students. Other initiatives which encourage the valuing of Mother Tongue languages include:

- Mother Tongue breakfasts and afternoon teas, events which we invite parents to meet, develop relationships and share their thoughts on building capacity as an internationally minded school
- The development of a Mother Tongue section in our school library
- The sharing and valuing of Mother Tongue languages and celebrations in classrooms, for example responding to the class roll in a Mother Tongue language or using Mother Tongue signage
- A variety of languages are offered through our after school care programme
- Advertising of community cultural events to staff and students such as Chinese New Year celebrations and the Canberra Multicultural festival.

### **Library as a Resource for Language Learning**

See also Library documents.

The Forrest Primary School Library is a primary resource for students, teachers and parents and is accessible to support language development. The Teacher Librarian collaborates with classroom teachers

to ensure that the collection in the library supports the Units of Inquiry. Research skills are introduced to the students early and built upon as the students' progress to higher grades. The Teacher Librarian plans and teaches in conjunction with Units of Inquiry, ensuring that all students are using the same skills to successfully find, evaluate and use information.

The Forrest Primary School (FPS) Library contributes to the attainment of the school's Mission Statement in many ways. At its core is a focus on promoting lifelong learning and the desire to develop in students inquiry skills.

Forrest Primary School maintains a library with the express aims of:

- Enriching and supporting the curriculum and Unit of Inquiry
- Providing texts which vary in the level of difficulty and appeal
- Supporting literate development in mother tongue
- Representing a range of views on all issues
- Valuing difference without deficit, including efforts to reduce indigenous disadvantage
- Supporting personal intellectual growth in students
- Promoting understanding of diversity
- Encouraging pursuit of recreational interests
- Fostering a love of reading

### **ATTACHMENTS**

Curriculum Statement

LOTE Statement

EAL/D Statement

Library Documents

### **RELATED DOCUMENTS/RESOURCES**

*Making it Happen – A curriculum framework for international primary education*

*Australian Curriculum*

*IB Guidelines for developing a school language policy*

*PYP Language scope and sequence*

*The Primary Years Programme – A basis for practice*

*ESL Scales*

*Teaching ESL Students in Mainstream Classrooms*

*First Steps*