

OUR LADY OF THE NATIVITY SCHOOL

Language Policy

“Through a holistic approach to education we aspire to develop life long learning.” Our Lady of the Nativity School Vision Statement

“At Our Lady of the Nativity School we aim to deliver a curriculum and design learning experiences that maintain the integrity of the crucial core skills- reading, writing and numeracy...” Our Lady of the Nativity School Philosophical Statement

Statement of Philosophy

Our Lady of the Nativity School recognises that language development is fundamental to learning. Language is used to communicate and convey meaning from one person to another. It is used to talk to each other, write and email and text. Language has rules which involve word structure (morphology), grammar and sentence structure (syntax), word meaning (semantics) and social appropriateness (pragmatics).

We believe that:

- The need to communicate is fundamental and instinctive
- Proficiency in language is essential to learning and living
- Through language we construct meaning about the world around us
- An optimal learning environment will support language development
- Social interactions and relationships are dependent upon, and foster, language development
- Correct language structures for a variety of contexts must be modelled
- Language is the major connecting element across the curriculum
- Through language we express our feelings, thoughts and ideas
- Learning language extends beyond the classroom walls
- Language provides a vehicle for inquiry
- A teacher’s personal knowledge of language is of key importance
- Every learner benefits from having access to different languages
- Acquisition of more than one language enriches personal development and helps facilitate international-mindedness” *Making the PYP Happen, December 2009.*
- All staff are language teachers
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Language of Instruction

The language of instruction at Our Lady of the Nativity School is English therefore fluency and competence in English are seen as essential for success across all areas of the curriculum.

Language Strands

Speaking and Listening (Oral Language)

Students are provided with many opportunities to develop skills in the area of speaking and listening. Through a variety of learning and social contexts students are encouraged to:

- Listen actively
- Respond appropriately during speaking and listening activities
- Articulate their feelings/thoughts/opinions and ideas
- Expand their vocabulary
- Use and understand language appropriate to the context

Reading & Viewing (Written & Visual Language)

Through explicit teaching students are provided with opportunities to develop the skills of reading. These skills are decoding, comprehending and analysing text. Students are also taught the purpose of reading:

- To gain information (research)
- To learn about the world and its peoples
- To understand different perspectives
- To engage with texts
- See reading as an essential means of communication
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Through reading and viewing, students are further encouraged to read for enjoyment and are supported through modelling and assistance with appropriate text selection. As a school we value our culture of reading and place importance on all teachers reading to children. Time is allocated to sustained independent reading on a daily basis.

Writing (Written Language)

Together with reading, writing is an essential tool for communication. Students are explicitly taught the structure, language features and purpose of text types. Accurate spelling and legible handwriting are imperative for effective communication. The development of these skills is supported by explicit classroom writing skills sessions.

Competency in areas of writing will allow students to:

- Effectively communicate for a variety of purposes (both formal and informal)
- Express their thoughts and ideas
- Demonstrate their understanding

Mother Tongue Support

The students at Our Lady of the Nativity School come from predominantly English-speaking backgrounds. Only 8% of the student population identify with a mother tongue other than English. Our Lady of the Nativity School acknowledges the language backgrounds of all our students and their families. If required Our Lady of the Nativity School can provide the following services for families of non-English speaking backgrounds:

- Oral and written translation services
- All school communication translated via the use of the school app

We are continually building up resources and books in languages other than English which can be accessed by students and their families. We promote maintenance and development of the mother tongue by encouraging families to continue speaking, reading and writing the language at home.

Learning a Second Language

Our Lady of the Nativity School provides second-language instruction in French for all students from Prep to Year 6. Through language instruction, all students acquire age-appropriate standards in the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing French. Cultural awareness and understanding form a fundamental part of the program across the school.

Language instruction is guided by the VCAA (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority) standards.

At Our Lady of the Nativity School, students enter a school where inquiry based learning acts as a vehicle to facilitate the acquisition of language. Our Lady of the Nativity School is a place where there is an appreciation of the richness of the world's diversity and commonalities.

Language Development and the Learner Profile

The language program Our Lady of the Nativity School helps its members with fundamental communication skills. It also assists in developing the social, academic, affective, spiritual and attitudinal skills, which promote an holistic education. Our aim is to develop the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will develop the following attributes:

Inquirers: We inquire into language, how it works, gather information and make sense of the world.

Knowledgeable: We have an understanding of the mechanics and vocabulary of the language. We are also equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively communicate.

Thinkers: We think about what we are communicating and how we communicate it. We analyse the language whether we encounter it via written form or orally.

Communicators: We are able to communicate in written and oral forms. We are able to listen and respond attentively. We speak clearly and with confidence.

Principled: We use our language responsibly with an awareness of the effect it can have on others.

Open-minded: We recognise and respect the differences and similarities between individuals and their language, language skills and language experiences.

Caring: We are mindful in our use of language and ensure that we choose our words carefully and appropriately.

Risk-takers: We 'have-a-go' at new experiences in reading, writing and speaking.

Balanced: We can communicate across all areas of language (writing, listening and speaking & reading and viewing).

Reflective: We reflect on our language, how we use it and develop it. With this, we reflect and refine the development and teaching of language in our school.