

ENGLISH POLICY

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.

Although Australia is a linguistically and culturally diverse country, participation in many aspects of Australian life depends on effective communication in Standard Australian English. In addition, proficiency in English is invaluable globally. The English curriculum contributes both to nation-building and to internationalisation, including Australia's links to Asia.

English also helps students to engage imaginatively and critically with literature to expand the scope of their experience. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have contributed to Australian society and to its contemporary literature and literary heritage through their distinctive ways of representing and communicating knowledge, traditions and experience.

Victorian Curriculum, English Rationale.

At St Robert's, following Jesus and enlightened by faith, we aspire to create a learning environment that respects the past, rises to the challenges of the present and inspires hope for the future.

At St Robert's our school vision reflects our desire to prepare children for life as it is now and for how it may be in the future. We strive to build a culture of low variance and to design learning that builds knowledge, deeply discusses progress, consistently builds on prior student knowledge and checks student understanding, so all students feel successful. 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 and Aims

St Robert's English program aims to ensure that students:

- learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of contexts with accuracy, fluency and purpose.

- appreciate, enjoy and use the English language in all its variations and develop a sense of its richness and power to evoke feelings, convey information, form ideas, facilitate interaction with others, entertain, persuade and argue.
- understand how Standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms and in combination with non-linguistic forms of communication to create meaning.
- develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature

Professional Learning Teams and Staff Meetings

Professional Learning Teams have been established and meet weekly. These meetings are used for professional reading, rehearsing of teaching techniques, to promote whole school routines and to discuss teaching strategies regarding the teaching of English. Data is also analysed to determine directions for individuals and groups. Our Annual Action Plan (AAP) details specific English priorities.

1. That teachers deliver a low variance spelling curriculum across all year levels.
2. That teachers know, understand and can follow LLLL and Spelling Mastery routines consistently.
3. That all students receive high quality, explicit instruction and have their progress monitored to ensure that students who are not progressing as anticipated can receive targeted support, early.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Staff at St Robert's build knowledge, skills and strategies to assist with:

- Development of instructional guides to conceptualise what high quality, tier 1 instruction looks like at St. Robert's.
- Over communication of St Robert's specific spelling terminology to assist staff towards a low variance understanding of how to plan and implement spelling.
- Coaching/mentoring- through teachers watching coach role models, team teaching, goal setting and feedback.
- Little Learners Love Literacy - LLASS data informs explicit teaching.
- Little Learners Love Literacy - enacted scope and sequence with review built in.
- Teachers use teaching strategies from training that align with the implementation of the direction instruction program; hand gestures, signals, correction procedures that form the Spelling Mastery lessons.
- Daily lessons include the following components aligned to Explicit Direct Instruction (EDI), Daily Review, Activating Prior Knowledge, Concept and Skill Development and Independent Practice.

Whole School Approaches to Literacy

All levels of the school have implemented Core Literacy blocks including decoding, encoding and transcription, as well as Reading and Writing instruction times. It is recommended across the school that 600 minutes is spent on these areas in a typical week of learning. Our goal at St Robert's is to deliver low variance across curriculum and behaviour expectations to all students. To ensure this goal is met curriculum programs have been put into place across the school

Spelling Mastery is implemented from Year 2-6. Spelling Mastery is an effective, research-based program that allows the explicit teaching, practice and learning of spelling strategies, patterns, and reliable rules.

Little Learners Love Literacy is introduced in Foundation and continued into Year One. Little Learners Love Literacy supports the explicit and systematic teaching of reading and spelling. Children learn at a quicker rate if they are taught systematically and explicitly using synthetic phonics and a structured

literacy approach. They know what they are learning and can verbalise it. Teaching is mostly the whole class following an “I do, we do, you do” structure: I do - teacher instructs and provides a model. We do - guided practice supported by the teacher. You do - the learner practises/applies new content independently – moving towards mastery.

Core Knowledge Language Units teach skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking, Core Knowledge Language Arts (CKLA) also builds students’ knowledge and vocabulary in literature, history, geography, and science. The earliest reading instruction teaches children to decode—to turn the marks on the page into their corresponding speech sounds (c – a – t > “cat”). But the ability to decode text fluently is only part of the challenge for developing readers.

Reading instruction typically proceeds from decoding to a focus on skills, such as finding the main idea, inferring, and comparing and contrasting. But if students are to understand what they read, they also need broad, content-rich knowledge.

From Foundation to Year 6 students at St Robert’s are exposed to language rich units beginning with Fables and Nursery Rhymes and then exploring Early World and Ancient Civilisation, Astronomy, Greek Myths and Australian History. Students have the opportunity to read classic stories including The Wind in the Willows, Treasure Island and Storm Boy during text based units.

The Writing Revolution (TWR) guides our planning and teaching of writing. TWR strategies are adapted and interwoven into the curriculum and content instruction. The TWR method rests on six principles.

1. Students need explicit instruction in writing, beginning in Foundation.
2. Sentences are the building blocks of all writing.
3. When embedded in the content of the curriculum, writing instruction is a powerful teaching tool.
4. The content of the curriculum drives the rigour of the writing activities.
5. Grammar is best taught in the context of student writing.
6. The two important phases of the writing process are planning and revising.

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 the differentiation of instructional support that is offered to the students.

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 scheduled assessment tests that are administered include, but are not limited to:

- DIBELS
- PAT R-Semester 2
- Cubed
- SPAT-R
- Comparative Judgment - Writing

Literacy Intervention

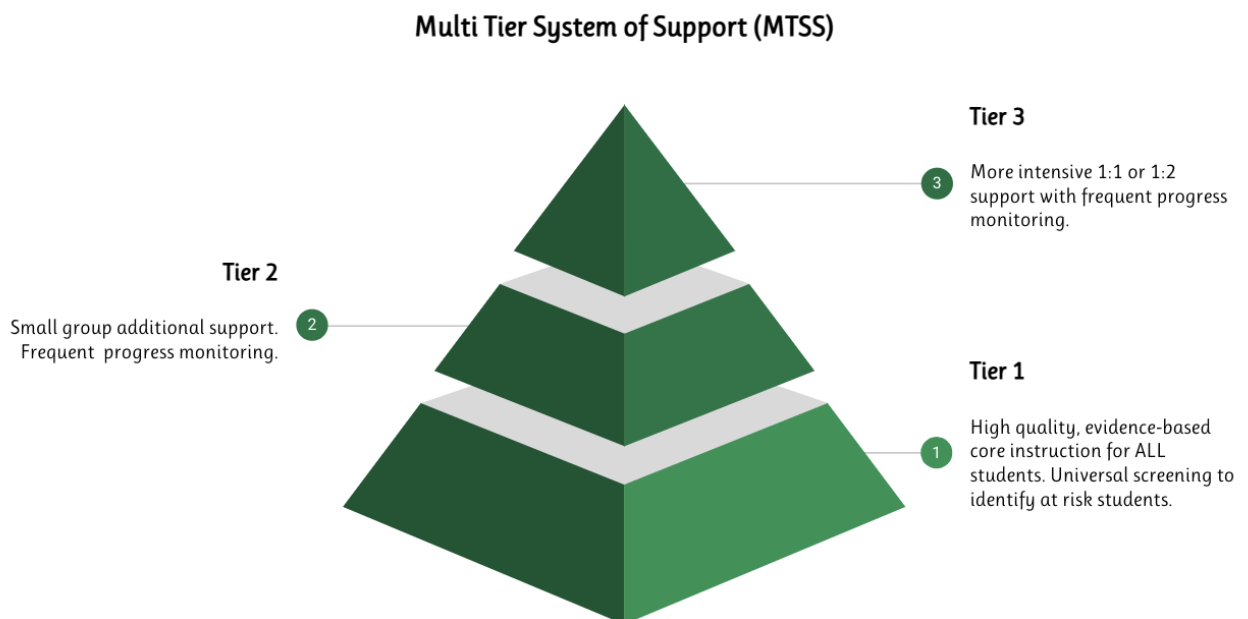
Literacy Intervention at St Robert's utilises the evidenced-based program Little Learners Love Literacy (LLLL) as a key resource. This is a Structured Synthetic Phonics program, based around the science behind how children learn to read. It provides children repeated opportunities to develop their knowledge of phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension - the five building blocks required when learning to read. Children develop their knowledge of sounds within the English language in an ordered manner through explicit instruction. Upon mastering a sequence of sounds, children learn to apply these known sounds to decodable texts and build their fluency in reading at text level.

Additional programs, including Spelling Mastery and Story Champs are incorporated into the intervention program where spelling only, or language comprehension may be the single focus area.

The Identification Process

At St Robert's, we have worked tirelessly to establish a Multi Tier System of Support (MTSS) model that allows us to teach, monitor and support all students in their Literacy development. MTSS is a three step process that allows us to:

- Provide services and interventions for all students, including those who are at risk of not meeting grade level
- Improve the early identification and support of students with learning needs



Tier 1: Refers to evidence-based instruction and universal screening for all students. This means that all students receive high quality, evidence-based classroom instruction and undergo assessments at the beginning of the year, as a first step. We have adopted the use of DIBELS (Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills) that allows us to screen all students in the foundational sub-skills that make up skilled reading and spelling. DIBELS is administered by classroom teachers and flags students who have not yet reached the benchmark for their year level, or who are at risk of not reaching grade level standard.

Tier 2: For students who have received high quality Tier 1 instruction, but have been highlighted as requiring more support, we can offer small group, tier 2 instruction. This is a 'top up' of classroom instruction that targets the key skills and knowledge students need to become skilled readers and writers. Regular progress monitoring is undertaken for students receiving tier 2 instruction.

Tier 3: For students who have been provided with small group, tier 2 instruction and still do not make the progress we anticipate, more frequent intervention is recommended and is something that can be discussed with our intervention team.

Evaluation /Review

Our English program will be evaluated through:

- monitoring of student progress and response and adjusting the curriculum as necessary
- development of appropriate attitudes such as interest and participation in English
- collaboratively reviewing topics and appropriate resources available
- monitoring staff needs in professional development and ensuring a common understanding of current teaching practices of literacy in the classroom.

This Policy aligns with our annual action plan (AAP) and will be reviewed as part of a cyclical process in accordance with the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

This policy will be reviewed in 2027