Rationale

Active and effective participation in Australian society depends on the ability to speak, listen, read, view and write with confidence, purpose and enjoyment. Language is one of the most powerful tools that humans have. The study of English, and the broader concept of literacy, is about the appropriate and effective use of language; to communicate feelings, articulate opinions, reflect on thoughts, interpret information, present a convincing argument, effectively communicate through electronic modes and have access to various multi-media tools which are considered essential parts of the English curriculum at Westgarth Primary School.

Aims

The general aim of the English program then is to support all students in building on their skills and achieving their personal best in all areas of language. To achieve success all students need to be able to listen, speak, read and write. We aim to develop in all students:

- the ability to speak, listen, read and write effectively with confidence, purpose and enjoyment;
- a knowledge of the ways in which language varies according to context, purpose, audience and content, and the capacity to apply this knowledge;
- a knowledge of the linguistic patterns used to construct different texts, and the capacity to apply this knowledge, especially in writing;
- a broad knowledge of a range of texts and a capacity to relate this to aspects of contemporary society and personal experience;
- the capacity to discuss and analyse texts and language critically;
- a knowledge of the ways textual interpretation and understanding may vary according to cultural, social and personal differences, and the capacity to develop reasoned arguments about interpretation and meaning;
- an ability to use, interpret and evaluate multi-modal literacies (for example visual literacies and e-literacies).

Implementation

- All teachers plan English programs for students using the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), the National Curriculum in English and suggested strategies outlined in related supplementary course outlines.
- All teachers work with their respective teams to develop and implement a consistent English language approach for all students ensuring that students are exposed to engaging, rich and diversified programs.
- Teachers in P-6 classes will base their programs on the Victorian Early Years Literacy Program and Middle Years Program, ensuring that a range of reading, writing, listening and speaking strategies are employed to support a differentiated curriculum.
- Teachers in P-6 classes will implement explicit teaching in grammar, language conventions, spelling and writing genres.
- Teachers will assist students in understanding where they are on VELS learning continuum and discuss with students goals that will assist them in improving individual learning outcomes.
• Teachers in years 3-6 will incorporate MP3 players and other multi-media tools to scaffold learning; listening posts and multi-media tools will also be used in Prep, year 1 and year 2.

• Parents are encouraged and welcome to assist in classrooms (in accordance with the Volunteers Policy). Where possible, teachers will organise a parent helper’s timetable to facilitate this assistance.

• A range of strategies to support and challenge students will be utilised to promote thinking skills; examples include: graphic organisers, directed reading and thinking activities, author’s circles, guided reading, assessment rubrics for writing genres, self-assessment and peer assessment for speaking and listening.

• Student’s individual abilities will be monitored using formal and informal measurements covered in the Assessment Schedule and found in the individual W.P.S. assessment folders that cater for the identified needs of each student.

• Where resources allow, literacy support will be available for students in years P-6 deemed at risk as determined by student data and need.

• Student progress will be reported in Semester 1 and 2, half and end of year academic reports, as well as be reported in the school’s annual report. Portfolio entries will also show student’s English progress.

• English study for each student will not be less than 10 hours per week, consisting of 5 x 2 hour literacy blocks for Prep/1/2’s time-tabled throughout the day, but preferably during the morning sessions.

• In Grades 3 – 6, timetabling priority will be given to allow at least one 2 hour block each week for Literacy in these grades, if possible.

• English activities that are appropriate to the child’s ability will form a regular component of each student’s homework, ranging from reading regularly each evening in all years, to more complex and consolidating tasks as students move through to year 6. The year level team coordinator is responsible for overseeing and setting consistent homework across the year level each term. In accordance with the Homework Policy, the expectation is that student homework is of a consolidating nature, which should be made clear to both students and parents.

• A staff member will be allocated the responsibility for coordinating English, English as a Second Language and Library across the school and the associated budgets.

• Teachers will be responsible for setting up a mini classroom library to ensure that all students are exposed to a range of literature on a daily basis.

• The school will consider purchasing an individual student textbook to consolidate spelling and grammar each year. This will be reviewed at the end of each year and be decided upon for the following year using a consultative process across years P-6.

**Evaluation**

This Policy will be reviewed annually as part of the overall VELS English Curriculum and Early Years Literacy Plan. The annual evaluation will inform school’s triennial review cycle. This policy is currently being reviewed in June 2011-following endorsement the proposed review will occur in 2014.