

Reading Approach

TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY (READING)

AIM

At Brunswick South West Primary School (BSWPS), our aim is for every child to become an avid reader who explores and engages in a wide range of literature from diverse authors, diverse cultures and own voices. Our aim is to develop engaged, critical thinkers who are confident, motivated and can self – regulate their learning. This has been articulated as a goal in the school’s Strategic Plan.

TEACHING STRATEGY

At Brunswick South West Primary School, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and individual classroom teachers plan for and deliver reading instruction based on the core teaching practices as outlined by the Department of Education and Training. These research based teaching practices include Modelled Reading, Shared Reading, Guided Reading and Independent Reading, Reciprocal Reading, Literature Circles and the Language Experience approach in our Junior School classrooms.

By implementing the use of Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark reading approach (F&P), we have established a school wide reading assessment system that is consistent from Foundation to beyond Level 8. We use this consistent school wide reading approach to observe and assess the literacy behaviour of students, to capture student thinking and to find texts that are appropriate for instruction so that students can make continuous progress in their reading.

The teachers at BSWPS use evidence of student learning progress and knowledge of individual student learning profiles to make adjustments and to differentiate the reading curriculum for individuals so all students experience challenge, success and improved learning. Individual reading goals are established for each student to work towards and teaching practices are modified to provide and ensure reading success for all students.

Some strategies used by our teachers to achieve this include:

- teachers use data and teacher judgement to establish what students already know and what they need to learn next*
- targeted teaching occurs in small group settings, or on a 1:1 basis where learning steps are scaffolded for success*

Students work along a continuum of learning, where they acquire reading skills and strategies in a developmental sequence.

Literacy Leaders have undergone training in the implementation of the F&P approach across the school and have facilitated school-wide Professional Development with the support of the F&P in-depth resources and continua. Teachers have gained confidence in using this resource to diagnose and identify what students know and what they are ready to learn next. This explicitly informs curriculum planning and teaching practice.

HOW DOES THIS CATER FOR MY CHILD?

Each student's learning journey is different and at BSWPS we cater for students working at all levels. The literacy focus of reading lessons across Foundation to Year 6 are based on the best practice exemplars as outlined by the Department of Education and Training. These include instruction around:

- *Early literacy skills - such as concepts of print, phonics and phonological awareness*
- *The knowledge of words – word work and vocabulary*
- *Fluency – accurate and efficient readers*
- *Comprehension – literal, inferential and evaluative levels*
- *Literature – opportunities for students to choose texts of interest and to share their responses and insights with peers and teachers*

Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark reading approach has enabled teachers of BSWPS to develop deeper knowledge around effective reading instruction. It also supports our teachers to use consistent practice through the use of structured lessons with explicit teaching of reading concepts such as decoding, word work and comprehension strategies.

BSWPS teachers provide explicit instruction in early literacy skills such as concepts of print, phonics and phonological awareness. This is consistent across the school. Developing these fundamental reading skills is a priority of all classes at BSWPS and are modelled in daily two-hour protected literacy blocks. We encourage students to read independently and with their peers. Our buddy reading program in the Junior School, encourages students to practise phrased and fluent oral reading with books at an appropriate level. Through buddy reading, students work on specific reading skills they have been learning during the literacy block. Students have opportunities to discuss the texts they are reading, building comprehension skills.

As students become more proficient decoders, BSWPS teachers use teaching practices that provide explicit instruction in developing comprehension strategies, expanding the knowledge of words and developing fluent readers. The focus is on higher level thinking skills and teachers aim to facilitate rich conversations, observations and wondering about text.

Daily opportunities are provided for Foundation to Year 6 students to read, to be read to and to discuss their reading. This includes opportunities to interpret, appreciate and evaluate literature, enabling students to expand their ideas and notice new things in their world.

We acknowledge that there are many ways in which reading can be taught and that no single reading approach works best for all children. Our approach is comprehensive and balanced, encompassing all aspects of reading. Our aim is to improve literacy outcomes in each classroom through the use of consistent practices and resources, collaborative planning and differentiation.

If learning skill difficulties, such as decoding or comprehension, are identified, they are promptly addressed.

Learning skill difficulties:

- *targeting teaching occurs in small group settings*
- *best practice advice is sought from colleagues and then school leaders*
- *an ILP is developed where necessary*

Where necessary we seek expert advice to help implement the best teaching approach for that student.

Our aim is for each student to be an engaged and avid reader. Learning to read must take place within the context of a language and literature rich classroom where teachers model a love of reading. It is a priority of our teachers to carefully select rich texts to engage and capture our students.

AS A PARENT, HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD'S LEARNING?

Reading together

Reading together is a valuable thing to do. Reading increases your child's vocabulary, expands your child's understanding of the world, and gives them confidence when using language. Reading is also an important way to make the link between spoken words and written words.

Here are some general tips:

- *Visit your local library to select and read books together, and to attend story time sessions. Library story time sessions are a great way to share the joy of reading with your child in a group setting.*
- *Encourage your child to select books, magazines, catalogues, or multimedia stories according to their interests.*
- *Set aside time for reading every day. Reading before bedtime is a good habit to get into.*
- *Position yourself so your child can see the words and the pictures.*
- *Run your finger across the page with each word to help your child identify and remember words and sounds.*
- *Look for rhyme, rhythm or repetition in books. This will help develop your child's love of language.*
- *When reading to your child, read stories with expression, or try putting on the voices of characters. This will help make reading fun.*
- *Point out important features about a book – for example, the words and pictures, the front cover, the spine, the contents page, or the title.*
- *Encourage your child to take over some or all of the reading if they feel confident.*
- *If your child is confident with their reading, allow them to read without interruption. Fluency is gained with confidence. Mistakes can be discussed after a block of reading, or in subsequent readings.*
- *Allow your child to read at their own pace. Model good pace when you read to them.*
- *Give your child the opportunity to re-read books.*
- *Encourage your child to join the Victorian Premiers' Reading Challenge, which runs each year from March to September.*

Helping your child work out difficult words

When your child begins to read to you, they will often have difficulty with long or tricky words. It is important to give your child time to work out difficult words themselves. This helps develop their reading skills. You might, however, help them if they are stuck by asking questions like these:

- *Look at the picture. What word makes sense?*
- *Look at the picture. What object can you see in the picture that might start with that letter?*
- *What letter (or letters) does the word start with? What sound does that letter (or letters) make?*
- *What letters are in the middle of the word? What sound do these letters make?*
- *What letter (or letters) does the word end with? What sound does that letter (or letters) make?*
- *Can you put those sounds together to make a word?*

Another good strategy is to ask your child how they worked out the word. This helps reinforce reading strategies they learn from you and from school.

Book chat

Discussing the content and meaning of books is an important part of reading. Chat about the book before, during and after reading, and encourage your child to share their ideas and to ask questions about the book.

Here are some questions you can ask before, during and after reading the book:

- *Look at the cover. What do you think this book might be about?*
- *How would you describe the character at the beginning of the story?*
- *How does the place the book is set in make you feel?*
- *What is happening in the pictures?*
- *What do you think is going to happen next?*
- *Why might a character have done this? What would you do in the same situation?*
- *Who was your favourite character in the story? Why did you like that character?*
- *What was your favourite part of the book?*
- *Can you retell the story in your own words?*

REPORTING TO PARENTS OF STUDENT PROGRESS

Student progress is reported to parents throughout the year. Twice yearly reports give a comprehensive assessment of student growth and capabilities in reading and other subject areas.

Where assessment data indicates that extra support is required for students to meet expected educational outcomes, teachers develop Individual Learning Plans (ILPs). Specific learning goals and strategies are negotiated between the learner, the teacher and the parent/carers with the aim to improve student learning and build student capacity to learn.

Parent/teacher conferences throughout the year are a chance for teachers to give a formal update on student outcomes. Our teachers welcome discussions and feedback from parents as to their child's reading progress.

EVALUATION OF PROGRAM

As with any learning strategy, the school will commit to evaluating the effective learning development of reading not only for the individual child, but across each grade level and as a school.