

Brunswick East Primary Literacy Essential Agreement

What we believe about Literacy:

Our core moral purpose is to ensure the culture of learning we create ensures every child reaches the highest standards of literacy possible.

Our literacy teaching is contextualized by the following beliefs. Literacy is communication, the core element of what makes us human, it gives us purpose and meaning and helps define and express who we are. As our technology evolves so does the concept of what literacy is. From paintings in caves, to the use of iPads, we are always striving to create new ways to record and share our collective history, knowledge, information and imagination. Throughout history we have communicated in many different and increasingly complex ways and for many different and increasingly complex purposes; dance, art, performance, architecture, design, fashion, music, song, science, philosophy, innovation, writing, reading, listening and speaking, through books, newspapers, advertising, magazines and more recently through radio, television, film, computers and the internet.

Literacy helps us to understand, explore and process the universe around us. It helps us survive and evolve and gives us a sense of belonging. Literacy provides us with entertainment and information. We need to know how to creatively produce forms of communication and how to be wise and thoughtful audiences of communication. To navigate, interact and communicate in society our children need to be critically literate, technologically savvy, and able to express their ideas, wonderings, opinions, research and stories in a myriad of ways. Literacy includes decoding, understanding, thinking skills and metacognition. We expect children to become analytical, articulate, deep thinkers, global citizens and reflective philosophers of the world. Literacy is deeply embedded in all aspects and experiences of life.

At Brunswick East Primary School literacy will be taught in a cohesive and progressive curriculum across and within all year levels of the school and we believe literacy is best learnt in a culture of inquiry. We do this in the following ways:

What we believe about literacy learning:

At BEPS we provide children with a 21st century approach to learning and children are respected as capable and highly intelligent. Project based learning is rich with deep inquiries into the world around us and is embedded with meaningful literacy learning.

Within inquiry projects teachers carefully and explicitly plan experiences based on student needs and curriculum standards that enable the acquisition and strengthening of literacy skills. With high expectations for engagement in literacy learning during explorative and project based learning, children extend themselves via teacher scaffolding, through carefully planned spaces and experiences and via collaborative learning with each other, beyond their current knowledge and understandings. There are infinite ways to express ourselves, embedding literacy within rich, meaningful inquiry allows children to explore and understand the many different ways to be literate.

Children at BEPS are involved in collaborate Projects that explore big ideas, involving whole learning communities, in smaller groups and/or individually. Inspired by Reggio Emilia and other initiatives in student learning these projects are multi disciplinary and are ideal for rich and meaningful literacy learning. The acquisition of many literacy skills will occur naturally through this approach to learning.

It is expected that Literacy will be deeply embedded within all inquiry projects. When planning inquiry projects teachers must identify and construct appropriate literacy learning and teaching, that meets the needs of individuals and groups based on accurate literacy assessments and curriculum expectations.

Through project based learning Children at BEPS create purposeful forms of literacy such as making animations, movies, communicating with the local community, designing and planning, documenting and recording. Other ways children develop literacy skills through inquiry at BEPS include discussion during community circles or through questioning and wondering during philosophy.

Explicit teaching as needed:

All aspects of Literacy development are planned for through the inquiry process, whether inquiring into menus during a cooking project or inquiring into a spelling strategy during a literacy toolbox.

It is expected that teachers will plan for the explicit teaching and learning of literacy to ensure our students reach their highest potential. Explicit teaching moments may be within toolbox or workshop sessions, or may be planned moments within inquiry projects. Teachers will use balanced assessment to identify children's Zone of Proximal Development and plan accordingly. Explicit teaching will be carefully planned and timed. The expertise and skills of all team members should be utilised to best extend children's literacy knowledge and understanding. Explicit teaching will be guided by Curriculum Standards. Vital literacy skills that may be taught explicitly include reading strategies, spelling strategies, conventions of print, features of different text types, editing skills, comprehension strategies and how to use different technology. An outline of concepts that may need to be taught explicitly and examples of best practise can be found in the Department of Education's Key Characteristics of Effective Literacy Teaching P-6.

We identify children at risk and provide them with extra support through individual learning goals, ILP's, targeted learning groups and where needed, Reading Recovery.

We know the Literacy Curriculum:

It is expected that we know our children and know the literacy curriculum. We will have a deep understanding of developmental continuums such as VELs, First Steps and VEYLDF to help us know what key concepts, knowledge, skills and understandings children need to learn. Documents unique to BEPS such as our High Expectations documents and our Essential Agreements support our pedagogy to have high expectations of all students in literacy. Teachers will use E5 and the Northern Metropolitan Powerful Learning and Curiosity documents to guide their teaching practice. Teachers will continue to research, question, take action, collect evidence and reflect as part of our Action Research cycles. We are inspired by principles of Reggio Emilia, such as creating a learning culture of listening and inquiry. Other inspirations include the Constructivist approach and the research of Vygotsky. We work collaboratively in teams and provide each other with feedback and support around the teaching and learning of Literacy. We are always seeking to learn, develop, read widely and share the knowledge we collectively have as a staff.

Assessment and Planning of Literacy:

Teachers will use a variety of assessment methods agreed upon in the school's Assessment Schedule to strengthen teaching, guide instruction and show progress over time such as:

- Careful documentation of literacy learning to identify where literacy is occurring throughout the inquiry curriculum.
- Photos, videos, observations, anecdotal records student work, student reflections, student/teacher feedback, peer to peer observations, conversations and more.
- Provide children with feedback based on data (as identified in the schools Assessment Schedule) to move them forward with their learning. Examples of feedback to children are verbal, displayed learning journeys and student work and through providing semester reports.
- First Steps continua for Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking are used regularly to track student progress.
- Teacher/student conferences
- On demand tests in Reading at years 3,4,5&6 in April and October
- Running Records for children below level 30
- Online literacy interview for years Prep, One and two

We place children on VELs progression points and agree that 75% of our children will be above or well above expected level in all areas of literacy across all levels of the school. Planning documents show a balance of the explicit teaching of literacy skills and embedded literacy within inquiry.

We use assessment to identify each student's strengths and areas for improvement then plan for a differentiated curriculum that enables all children to achieve and build on their current knowledge and understandings.

The classroom environment:

The classroom environment is orderly and predictable. Children have access to items that support their literacy development such as dictionaries, paper and other materials, various writing utensils, laptops, computers and cameras. A literate classroom will have student work that is of the highest quality respectfully and professionally displayed, showing and celebrating high expectations. Classrooms will have a classroom library and a publishing area. Books children have made will be evident within the classroom.

Resources:

The literacy resources we buy such as class sets and take home readers will be meaningful, relevant books by authors children are interested in.

Curriculum resources we use are:

6-18 month strategy

Key Characteristics of Highly Effective Literacy Teaching P-6

High expectations profile

High Expectations document

VELS/Australian Curriculum

First Steps

Assessment schedule

Victorian Early Years Learning and Developmental Framework 0-8