



## CURRICULUM POLICY 2019

Armadale Primary School, as defined in the Strategic Plan, is to be an exemplary learning community. We place the highest value on developing the whole child with the skills, knowledge and dispositions for a lifetime of inquiry. We strive for a culture of excellence for all learners with a nurturing and inclusive community to create a sense of belonging.

The school provides a comprehensive curriculum with a strong focus on literacy, numeracy and learner agency. The way we organise the learning for our students is underpinned by the proficiencies of understanding, problem solving, fluency and reasoning. To promote a deep understanding, we place importance on providing our students with learning opportunities that enable them to apply concepts in different ways and apply their learning between content areas. Hence our Pedagogical model has the child at the centre and learner agency is at the core. We use the *Know, Do, Be* model to develop a programme of inquiries. These inquiries are important as they are investigations into important ideas, identified by the school, and require a high level of involvement on the part of the students. We refer to these inquiries as Bid Ideas.

### What is the Big Idea?

The Big Idea is a statement summarising an important idea. The idea must:

- Be transferrable within and sometimes across disciplines.
- Call for high order thinking, such as analysis, inference, evaluation and prediction and cannot be effectively unpacked by recalling of facts alone.
- Be thought-provoking and intellectually engaging, often sparking discussion and debate.
- Raise questions and spark further inquiry
- Recur over time (can and should be revisited again and again)

### What do we need to consider when designing for the Big Idea?

- We need to consider the different dimensions of the learner as a person
  - **Head** – what our learners need to know and understand (disciplinary knowledge)
  - **Heart** – the attitudes and motivations to learn (feelings, dispositions, values)
  - **Hands** - what our learners need to be able to do (skills, capabilities, proficiencies)

### How do we connect the Victorian Curriculum to the Big Idea?

The Big Idea will have a theme directly linked to at least one of the following Learning Areas:

- The Humanities (Civics & Citizenship ;Economics and Business; History; Geography)
- Science
- Technologies

The Big Idea Design must also be considered through a capabilities lens. Key teacher questions are devised during the design stage which will reflect:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Ethical Understandings
- Intercultural Understandings
- Personal and Social Learning

The Big Idea Design must also consider at least one of the Cross-curriculum priorities:

- Sustainability
- Learning about Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- Learning about Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander traditions and cultures

### **How long is spent on a Big Idea?**

This is dependent on the level of engagement of the students but a Big Idea usually takes 7-10 weeks to unpack. The Big Idea is unpacked through English, Maths, Investigations for Prep-2, and Educational Research Projects for Years 3-6. In Year Level Teams, teachers use the Armadale Primary School planning template to design weekly learning experiences with specific learning intentions that are aligned to the Victorian Curriculum learning continuum.

### **English**

Weekly planning reflects the Big Idea design. The English Planner requires teachers to plan Reading and Viewing, Writing and Speaking and Listening through Language, Literature and Literacy. Our Instructional model of 'Whole, Small, Individual, Whole', is specified in the planning template and teachers are aware of the need to plan experiences that are 'low floor high ceiling'. Emphasis on addressing the learning needs of the individual is at the core of decisions made which is why we use the Victorian Curriculum Scope and Sequence in English as a learning continuum.

The example of the English Planner shows how each Year Level plans on a weekly basis. Time to deliver this plan is: Reading and Viewing 240 mins; Writing 240 mins; Speaking and Listening is embedded within these areas.

Year 2-6 accompany the English Planner with a Spelling Planner. Spelling is explicitly taught for 3 x 30 minute sessions a week. Our Instructional Model of 'Whole, Small, Individual, Whole' is embedded in the planning template. Analytic and synthetic teaching of spelling is supported in the template and the 3 spelling sessions are divided into the study of regular words, spelling rules (a focus on the 6 rules and the 7 syllable types), and irregular words. Guided discovery is the technique used by the teachers to support our learner to discover, invent and explore spelling. The spelling template offers further clarity into this technique.

Our Assessment schedule for reading, writing and spelling supports our weekly planning and drives whole, small and individual instruction. These schedules are employed as follows:

- Reading assessment Schedule
  - Reading Interview (once a term)
  - Alphabetics & Vocabulary assessment (3 x a year)
  - Running Records (2 x a term)
  - Student self assessment – *How I see myself as a reader (once a term)*
  - Reading Comprehension TORCH (2 x a year)
- Writing assessment Schedule
  - Two Writing SATs are completed each term and assessed on a school designed rubric. The rubric is aligned to the Victorian Curriculum F-10 Levels. The criteria addresses the 6 traits of writing *Ideas: Voice, Organisation, Sentence Fluency, Word choice, Conventions and Spelling & Presentation.*

## **Maths**

Teachers plan mathematical learning experiences on a weekly basis. These experiences are linked to the Big Idea however, teachers use the 6 Numeracy Focus Areas as a framework for exploring mathematical concepts within the year. These focus areas are specified in the DET Numeracy Toolkit, <https://numeracyguidedet.global2.vic.edu.au/numeracy-focus-areas/>. The 4 proficiencies are used as a lens for each learning experience. The planning template ensures that 240 minutes is allocated for weekly mathematical sessions.

The Numeracy Focus Areas are:

- Developing number sense
- Exploring patterns and relationships
- Using proportional language
- Understanding and using geometric properties and spatial reasoning
- Understanding, estimating and using measurement
- Exploring chance and data

Assessment for maths is based on the following criteria:

- Assessment FOR learning
- Assessment AS learning
- Assessment OF learning

## **What about the other Learning Areas?**

We have 3 specialist teachers who are each responsible for:

- Health/Physical Education
- The Arts
- Languages – Italian

The teaching and learning designs for the specialists also consider the different dimensions of the learner as a person:

- **Head** – what our learners need to know and understand (disciplinary knowledge)
- **Heart** – the attitudes and motivations to learn ( feelings, dispositions, values)
- **Hands** - what our learners need to be able to do (skills, capabilities, proficiencies)

Specialist Designs also apply the Capabilities lens and ensure that the following are embedded:

- Critical and Creative Thinking
- Ethical Understandings
- Intercultural Understandings
- Personal and Social Learning

Their designs must also consider at least one of the following Cross-curriculum priorities:

- Sustainability
- Learning about Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia
- Learning about Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander traditions and cultures

Students attend specialist classes once a week for 60 minutes.

## **INVESTIGATIONS / EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECTS**

Investigations are a part of the P-2 learning program. There are 3 sessions a week and each session runs for 120 mins. Investigations fosters a student-focused learning environment that promotes curiosity and provides each child with the opportunity to develop skills such as: Thinking critically and creatively, speaking clearly, posing questions, developing a rich vocabulary, collaborating and making connections to the real world.

The pedagogical model of Know, Do & Be is applied to the design template. Investigations is carefully planned and areas are designed to provoke. Each session begins with 3 focus children. Each focus child will speak to the class at the beginning of the session informing their peers and teacher of why they chose this item and their investigation intentions. The teacher works individually with each Focus Child to scaffold their learning. The Focus Child will report back and share their learnings and observations at the end of the session.

In each session there will also be a Reporter and Photographer. The role that each child is given to fulfil their role is specific to the Big Idea and it usually has a mathematics or literacy intention.

Investigation Time is designed to enable children to be apply skills in a 'real context. Children are offered provocations to be scientists, or writers, or botanists or designers or chefs or engineers etc.

The Investigations planner ensures that teachers plan once a term. Student voice is integral to the planning and design of spaces. Provocations are an important component of each learning space with the intent to prompt critical and creative thinking. Bloom's Taxonomy of questioning is at the helm of promoting learner agency. All learning areas of the Victorian Curriculum are considered when designing the learning spaces.

Educational Research Projects are part of the Year 3-6 learning program. These projects aim to reflect the knowledge, skills and dispositions enabled throughout the Big Idea. The students are supported through the research process using a template whereby their interest is embedded in their chosen line of inquiry. This research leads to some form of action. The action is determined by the students in consultation with the teacher and emphasis is placed on the purpose, need and effectiveness.

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