CURRICULUM PLAN - 2012

OUR SCHOOL
Catering for diversity is a priority at St Columba’s School Bayswater. We have specialist teachers in the learning areas of Science, Information Technology, Music, Physical Education, Library and Italian. An Options Program has been implemented into the curriculum, giving the students in Year Five and Six the opportunity to experience and explore a variety of interests that would not normally be experienced in the classroom.

OUR STRATEGIES
St Columba’s was involved in the RAISE process from its inception in 2004. Staff continue to implement all the essential elements of a successful Literacy and Numeracy Program, as identified in the RAISE pedagogy.

Specifically, these aspects of Literacy and Numeracy teaching have become embedded in our pedagogy:

- Therapy Focus in Kindergarten - Early Identification of children at risk, with immediate referral to outside agencies eg Speech, O.T, SCDC, Non Government Schools Psychologist etc.
- PIPS (Performance Indicators in Primary Schools) in Pre – Primary
- Diana Rigg Phonemic Awareness Program - Pre – Kindergarten to Year 6
- Observation Surveys – Year 1 and 2
- EMU testing - Year 1 and 2
- EMU Program - Year 2
- EMU techniques used in ECE
- Whole School Assessment Timetable (WTW, DMT, NAPLAN, WAMSE, REBLT)
- Literacy Dedicated Time - involving whole class, small group, individual explicit teaching
- Teaching strategies that reflect developmental learning
- Using IT to enhance the pedagogy in both Literacy and Numeracy (including Mathletics and Lexile Reading as developmentally appropriate)
- Specialist Support staff to assist the classroom teachers.
- Gifted and Talented testing for the Enrichment Program
- Professional Learning Community Meetings
- Professional Developmental including opportunities for teachers to engage in shoulder to shoulder learning, to enhance the development of quality teaching practice.
Our students achieve very highly in spelling. The students, especially our Year 3, are achieving well above the national average for high achievers.

In both Years 3 and 5 it is clear that there is a consistent upward trend in the spelling results. The implementation of the Words Their Way seems to have made a positive impact on the spelling ability of our students.
In the latter part of 2010 and throughout 2011, St Columba’s teachers began a whole school approach to teaching and assessing persuasive text, hence writing resources were purchased for all classes. Staff looked at standardised marking of persuasive text across all levels and what features were indicative of a good persuasive writing piece. As 2011 was the first year in writing persuasive text in NAPLAN, we have limited data available for review and analysis. In both Years 3 and 5 classes however, the results are pleasing and indicate students are working above the national standards.
Our students are generally working above the national standard. There is definite growth in our whole school grammar and punctuation results since 2010. We have moved from our mean being at the national standard to the mean being well above the national standard. In July 2009, we undertook whole staff PD to enhance our explicit teaching of Grammar and Punctuation (“The Explicit Teaching of Grammar” by Pearson). It is clear from the graphs above that the PD and additional resources that were purchased had an impact on students’ learning.
In reviewing the reading data, it appears that the Year 3 Cohorts are travelling well and that the Year 5’s have made progress, but there is still room for improvement, especially in Year 5.
In 2011 the Years 3 and 5 results indicate that our students are performing well above the national average. We have identified that there are small gaps in the area of problem solving in both year levels and this will be an area of discussion and focus. Over time our test results show an upward and steady trend in achievement. We acknowledge that this is a great outcome for the students at St Columba’s.

St Columba’s NAPLAN results show that there is exemplary teaching and learning happening in all year levels. Our students have achieved fantastic results as individuals and in comparison to the nation.
At St Columba's we are mindful of the need to attend to the development of the whole child. What we can achieve in our Literacy and Numeracy teaching has to fit within the other needs that we are endeavouring to meet and the new Australian Curriculum. We will use the 2011 EARS and APPRAISE data to determine our content focus while we continue to consolidate, further refine and monitor the Spelling and Word Work initiatives that we put into place in 2010.

In 2009 as a whole school, we implemented programs to streamline our teaching pedagogy. The staff felt the need for whole school programs which scaffold the students’ learning. These programs include Words Their Way (WTW) and Diagnostic Mathematic Test (DMT). We now use our compliance data to inform us of the effectiveness our programs have on the development of the written and oral language of our students, and determine future focus. An effort will be made to give foundational competencies in literacy and numeracy in our Pre-Year One classes, which will allow for a seamless move into the Australian Curriculum.

LITERACY

We have embedded the Diana Rigg Phonemic Awareness Program in all classes from Pre-Kindergarten to Year 6. This program has provided us with a consistent approach to the presentation of sounds. ECE staff has been empowered through attending the professional development that has been offered to support this program. In 2012 we will engage in a Diana Rigg Phonemic Awareness Program refresher course for all ECE and support staff.

The WTW program has been implemented effectively in all classrooms and we have developed a whole school approach to document our results to monitor that this program continues to be successful. St Columba’s has been collecting data for this program for the past two years. Below is an example of how we are plotting individual progress with this program.

Example
The WTW program assists staff with skills and strategies to boost students’ spelling, word attack skills, vocabulary, fluency and reading comprehension using word study. The positive effects of this program are highlighted through our NAPLAN results. In 2012 a focus for St Columba’s will be to look at factors affecting this transfer of knowledge and adjust teaching accordingly.

In 2011 we reviewed our whole school writing plan. For 2012 and beyond, we will continue to review our writing plan and adjust it accordingly as we progress into implementing ACARA. We are continuing to look at ways for whole school refinement of standard marking guides. The marking guides will specify indicators for demonstration of complete understanding of the requirements for the various writing genres.

**NUMERACY**

In 2010 the staff identified the need to have a diagnostic mathematics assessment. In these discussions we decided on a whole school approach, as this would give longevity to data result analysis. We now use the DMT in term one and term three in an effort to show gaps in teaching and learning and give opportunity for re-teaching skills that students have not yet grasped. Along with the outcome of this testing, we will continue dialogue regarding the implementation of the Australian Curriculum.

EMU will continue to be a focus in 2012. ECE and support staff will be empowered through attending the professional development put in place early in 2012 that will support this program. Although EMU is a focus for ECE, it is useful for students in older years who are experiencing difficulty as it can be used as a diagnostic analysis tool. Consideration will be given to using such diagnosis in the upper years in 2012.

2012 will be a time of familiarisation of the National Mathematics Curriculum. Staff will look at the adjustments required for our students to have a smooth transition from Curriculum Framework to ACARA. By 2014 we are mandated to use the National Curriculum.

**FUTURE FOCUS**

After much discussion and exploration of school level data, the Professional Learning Community has agreed to identify areas of streamlining in data collection in numeracy. Generally our results reflect that our students are competent in all areas of mathematics.

In 2012 we will further explore:

- **Content**
  The development continuum for Number and Place Value

- **Students**
  How to determine where our students sit in relation to Number and Place Value
  How we can streamline our data collection for these strands

- **Pedagogy**
  Streamline and consolidate instructional practices

Structures in place to support the investigation of our focus will include:

- Shoulder to shoulder teaching experience
- Sharing of expertise in any one area
- Effective PLC time
- Use of IT with discernment