



CHRIST CHURCH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Introduction

At Christ Church Grammar School, we believe the best education evolves within a context of rich relationships, where students feel safe and secure and have a strong sense of belonging. It is an environment where each child's contribution is valued and where he or she can develop a sustained enthusiasm for learning. Our tailored curriculum provides the challenges and encouragement that children need to thrive and develop at their own pace, thus honouring the individual. We foster a climate of intellectual rigour and creative thinking,

Teaching and learning are the core business of a school and at our school, teaching and learning are always at the forefront of everything that we do. Our job is to ensure that every child learns to the very best of their ability and that they have an equal opportunity to access a broad and comprehensive curriculum.

Fundamental to our programs is the horizontal mapping of our curriculum to ensure that the learning journey of each child, from our 3 Year Old Program through to Year 6 is sequential, consistent and a natural progression from year to year.

The essential components of our teaching and learning programs are:

- Teaching
- Pedagogy (the theory and practice of teaching)
- Assessment
- Reporting

We embrace the Australian Curriculum across all learning areas - English, Mathematics, Science and Humanities (History and Geography, Civics & Citizenship, and Economics), Technologies, Health and Physical Education, The Arts and LOTE.

Our Approach

At Christ Church Grammar, we are especially proud of our philosophical approach to teaching instruction, which is evidenced-based. We embrace an explicit instruction methodology as our approach to the teaching and learning of fundamental skills and knowledge. Explicit instruction is a structured, systematic, and effective way for teaching academic skills. It consists of a series of *supports* or *scaffolds*, where students are guided through the learning process with clear statements about the purpose and rationale for learning the new skill, clear

explanations and demonstrations of the instructional target, and supported practice, with feedback, until independent mastery has been achieved.

We understand that the educational journey for each child is different, and that a *one-size-fits-all* approach is inadequate. Children do not all develop at the same time or rate, so offering a year-levelled curriculum is not always appropriate. Many children will be ready to learn beyond the year level curriculum, and some children require some consolidation prior to accessing grade-based curriculum experiences.

An intimate knowledge of each learner is required to ensure that their learning journey is individualised and flexible, thus honouring each child. Providing flexible learning opportunities is the key to keeping children engaged and loving learning. We have both the personal resources and expert teachers to support smaller based learning groups to enhance our students' mastery of fundamental academic skills.

Subject Overviews

English

The study of English is central to the learning and development of all young people. It helps create confident communicators, imaginative thinkers and informed citizens. It is through the study of English that individuals learn to analyse, understand, communicate and build relationships with others and with the world around them. The study of English plays a key role in the development of reading and literacy skills which help young people develop the knowledge and skills needed for education, training and the workplace. It helps them become ethical, thoughtful, informed and active members of society. In this light, it is clear that the Australian Curriculum: English plays an important part in developing the understanding, attitudes and capabilities of those who will take responsibility for Australia's future. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

In Prep – Year 6 at Christ Church Grammar School, developing skills in English is fundamental and daily allocation of time for the explicit teaching of English ensures regular access to quality programs across the week. Within our *English Blocks*, children are grouped into small groups according to their needs, for explicit, targeted, instruction. Support staff are assigned to each year level to provide opportunities for discreet learning groups. Assessment prior to the teaching of curriculum content ensures that groups are formed based on children's current needs. The groups are fluid and flexible and are developed in response to children's progress and development.

Key elements of our English program include:

Reading – from our youngest readers who access the program *Little Learners Love Literacy*, which is an explicitly taught, sequential phonemic and phonics approach to teaching fundamental, foundation skills, through to our older students who engage with literature imaginatively and critically to expand the scope of their

experiences with texts. Children learn to value reading to access information in a rapidly changing world and to enjoy the delights and insights of well written narrative texts.

Writing – children undergo explicit instruction into the construction and development of well written texts. They learn to structure pieces appropriately for their purpose and audience. Critical to the skill of writing is the understanding and application of sound grammatical skills. The importance of the teaching and learning of fundamental grammatical skills cannot be underestimated as the capacity for children to write well is directly dependent on a deep and thorough understanding, and appreciation of, grammar and the structure of the English language. We explicitly teach our children a comprehensive grammar program *When You Write, Get It Right* and all teachers in our school have high levels of specific training in the teaching of grammar.

Spelling – is also a critical skill for all children to master if they are to be successful writers. We implement the Spelling Mastery Program which is an explicitly taught program that ensures mastery of a progression of spelling sub skills, including phonics, morphographs, rules and generalisations. Children are taught how to apply the skills they learn to construct new words, which enhances high order thinking skills and develops the skill of application through purposeful writing.

LOTE

Through learning languages, students acquire communication skills in the language being learnt, an intercultural capability, and an understanding of the role of language and culture in communication. We believe that learning languages broadens students' horizons in relation to the personal, social, cultural experiences that an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world presents. Languages other than English (LOTE) offered from Prep include French, Mandarin Chinese, and Year 6, Italian.

Mathematics

Learning mathematics creates opportunities for and enriches the lives of all Australians. The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics provides students with essential mathematical skills and knowledge in number and algebra, measurement and geometry, and statistics and probability. It develops the numeracy capabilities that all students need in their personal, work and civic life, and provides the fundamentals on which mathematical specialties and professional applications of mathematics are built. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

Mathematics provides our students with essential skills in number and algebra, measurement and geometry, and statistics and probability. As with our English program, classes are organised into smaller groups with the support of additional teaching staff, allowing all children the opportunity to work on the essential skills at their developmental level and pace. Assessment prior to the beginning of any element of the mathematics curriculum ensures children are placed in groups

appropriate for their individual needs. These groups are fluid and flexible to support the range of skill development and pace of learning required by each child.

Our focus is on developing fundamental numeracy skills through explicit instruction based on content that meets each child's developmental stages. We aim to foster a love of mathematics and for children to see not only its functionality, but also the beauty of mathematics, and to explore the world through its unique perception.

The Humanities, Social Science & Science

Science provides an empirical way of answering interesting and important questions about the biological, physical and technological world. The knowledge it produces has proved to be a reliable basis for action in our personal, social and economic lives. In addition to its practical applications, learning science is a valuable pursuit in its own right. Students can experience the joy of scientific discovery and nurture their natural curiosity about the world around them. In doing this, they develop critical and creative thinking skills and challenge themselves to identify questions and draw evidence-based conclusions using scientific methods. The wider benefits of this 'scientific literacy' are well established, including giving students the capability to investigate the natural world and changes made to it through human activity. Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA)

We view Science and its applications as part of everyday life. Science helps students to order and organise their world. It is an ideal vehicle for the development of problem solving and problem seeking skills and an important area of human endeavour. Students need to develop scientific literacy to help make decisions about the many issues they face. Students are taught to use scientific vocabulary to describe and explain their observations and investigations. They are encouraged to become scientific thinkers in the way they view the world around them. We have a dedicated Science laboratory purposefully designed to support the learning of science by young children. Classes are timetabled each week to ensure that our children's development in this key learning area is enhanced.

The Humanities are taught through units of work that encourage students to develop a local, national and international perspective and a commitment to lifelong learning. In a world that is increasingly culturally diverse and dynamically interconnected, it is important that students come to understand their world, past and present, and develop a capacity to respond to challenges, now and in the future, in innovative, informed, personal and collective ways.

At Christ Church Grammar School our students undertake experiences within the areas of history, geography, civics & citizenship, and economics and business. These studies play an important role in harnessing students' curiosity and imagination about the world they live in and supports them to make reflective, informed decisions; value their belonging in a diverse and dynamic society; and positively contribute locally, nationally, and globally.

The Arts

The Arts are viewed as a form of expression that is inherent in all cultures. They are a powerful means to assist in the development of the whole child and are important for interpreting and understanding the world. The Arts promote imagination, communication, creativity, social development and original thinking. The Arts curriculum includes:

- Dance and Drama
- Music
- Visual Arts
- Media Arts

Our Visual Arts and Music departments provide our children with comprehensive access to these elements of the arts. Students access music through the classroom music program and the many cocurricular opportunities available, including access to a range of instrumental tuition and ensembles and, through our extensive choral program they develop a joy and pleasure of singing.

Health and Physical Education

In Health and Physical Education, students develop the skills, knowledge, and understanding to strengthen their sense of self, and build and manage satisfying, respectful relationships. They learn to develop personal and community strengths and assets to enhance safety and wellbeing. They critique and challenge assumptions and stereotypes. Students learn to navigate a range of health-related sources, services and organisations.

At the core of Health and Physical Education is the acquisition of movement skills and concepts to enable students to participate in a range of physical activities – confidently, competently and creatively.

Technologies: Digital and Design

Technologies aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure that, individually and collaboratively, students:

- Investigate, design, plan, manage, create and evaluate solutions
- Are creative, innovative and enterprising when using traditional, contemporary and emerging technologies, and understand how technologies have developed over time
- Make informed and ethical decisions about the role, impact and use of technologies in the economy, environment and society for a sustainable future
- Engage confidently with and responsibly select and manipulate appropriate technologies – materials, data, systems, components, tools and equipment – when designing and creating solutions

- Critique, analyse and evaluate problems, needs or opportunities to identify and create solutions

An integrated approach to embedding the learning of technologies into relevant elements of key learning areas ensures that all students benefit from learning about and working with traditional, contemporary and emerging technologies that shape the world in which we live.

Individual Differences

Christ Church Grammar School recognises that all children develop and learn at different rates and we are committed to ensuring that every individual can access learning that allows them to progress on the learning continuum at a rate and pace that is right for them. We have a designated department with highly skilled staff who work in a team to support the differentiation of learning for all children. Staff from the Individual Differences department are assigned a year level, teach a group within Literacy and Numeracy and attend all planning sessions with their team.

Our flexible, fluid groupings ensure that children who need to access the curriculum outside their year level can do so. This includes children who are highly able and those who require extra support. Our finely-tuned assessment program ensures that teachers know the learning needs of every child prior to the planning of learning experiences and subsequent grouping of children for targeted teaching.

Assessment and Reporting

Assessment is an integral part of all teaching and learning experiences. It identifies what students can do, already know and the zone of proximal development (the point in which they are ready to learn).

Tracking and monitoring of student achievement through standardised, formative and summative assessment occurs on a regular basis. Allocated assessment points throughout the year enable review of student progress, and teaching and learning practices. The National Assessment Plan Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is administered in Years 3 and 5 and the Allwell Assessments occur in Years 2 and 4. These standardised assessments enable monitoring across the years.

Reporting on student progress is given twice a year. At the end of each semester we report, using a five-point scale, against the content descriptors outlined in the Australian Curriculum taught.

Homework

The main purposes of homework at Christ Church Grammar are to:

- Communicate on a weekly basis with parents about what their child is doing in the classroom and to encourage parents or carers to interact and talk with their child about their school work in a positive manner
- Practise the skills learned in class, to reinforce work learned in class and to revise content covered in class

- Develop time and resource management skills and to develop a disciplined and responsible attitude towards learning

Research indicates that those who do homework in the early years of school develop good organisational skills and are better prepared for learning as they progress through school. In senior years, there is a correlation between homework and improved academic achievement.

It is important to note that in their formative years, children need plenty of leisure time and homework should never be seen as a form of punishment.

The following are our maximum suggested time allocations for each year level, four nights per week:

Prep: 15 minutes per night
Years 1 and 2: 20 minutes per night
Years 3 and 4: 30 minutes per night
Years 5 and 6: 45 minutes per night

- Homework, wherever practicable, will be differentiated and may comprise of spelling, grammar, inquiry, LOTE, Mathematics and reading comprehension activities
- Finishing off work and research work will be limited and teachers will ensure all children have equal access to resources
- Internet research activities are only set when very clear guidelines are provided
- Reading is an integral part of the homework routine