

Quarry Bay School



LANGUAGE POLICY

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**Quarry Bay School:
“Empowering Learners to Make a Difference”**

Empowering individuals to become confident, independent learners who strive to make a difference within their changing local and global communities.

We achieve this by:

- Recognising that everyone is a learner and that learning is continuous
- Working collaboratively and supporting each other
- Communicating effectively in a variety of ways and in more than one language
- Respecting and valuing our own and other people's cultures
- Appreciating that we are all different and that we learn in different ways
- Having a balanced approach to life and learning
- Striving for excellence in learning
- Being active learners who are curious about the world around us
- Reflecting on our experiences and learning from them
- Sharing responsibility for ourselves and others and believing that our actions can make a difference

In doing all this, we aim to develop students who are:

Inquirers – Thinkers – Communicators - Risk-Takers – Knowledgeable –
Principled – Caring - Open-Minded – Balanced – Reflective

And who demonstrate the following attitudes:

Appreciation – Commitment – Confidence – Cooperation – Creativity –
Curiosity – Empathy – Enthusiasm – Independence – Integrity – Respect -
Tolerance

Quarry Bay Language Policy **2010**

The teaching of language at Quarry Bay School is based on our belief that language is a means to express, convey, explore, expand and reinforce the learner's ideas, concepts, perspectives and culture. We believe that every one in our community is a language learner and a language teacher. Students learn languages, learn through languages and learn about languages.

"As they go about their daily lives, they learn to talk by talking and listening to others, by exploring how language functions and by using language to get something done, with all three operating simultaneously if events make sense to them."

Kathy Short 1999 The search for balance in a Literature-Rich Curriculum
See Appendix A

All students in the PYP programme are required to study at least one language in addition to English. At Quarry Bay School Chinese is taught across all year levels.

Philosophy Statement

Language stands as the cornerstone of learning at QBS. Through language learning we promote a culture of inquiry and curiosity, new cultural perspectives on the world and an appreciation of the world's diversity and richness. We strongly believe that language is one of the most significant factors in the development of each individual. It is our primary means of thinking and communicating and as such is essential to all learning. It provides a foundation on which to build academic success, social interaction and global understanding. Language permeates our entire curriculum; supporting and enhancing each individual's ability to develop and reach their potential. QBS uses students, parents, teachers and others as positive role models.

Children at QBS are often multilingual and we acknowledge that progress and proficiency in these languages is interdependent. All children experience an enriched language programme in which English is the medium of instruction and Chinese is taught as an additional language. At QBS we recognise that Mathematics, PE and the Arts are examples of other languages that our students should be constantly exposed to and encouraged to use when exploring and developing a greater understanding of our world.

QBS also supports and values the mother tongue languages represented throughout our school and encourages individuals to use their first language. We believe that it is important to expose children to a variety of languages not represented within our community and therefore expand horizons and widen their awareness of the world around them.

Language for Learning

At Quarry Bay School we believe that learning experiences should be designed to engage students in authentic and meaningful language learning. Lessons should simultaneously involve:

- learning language (as children listen to it and use it with others in their everyday lives)
- learning about language (as children discover how it works, engage with teachers in focused instruction on how it works or in critiquing its impact)
- learning through language (as children use it to learn about or do something).

We believe that children should be:

- provided with a stimulating, rich language environment that supplies them with the tools they need for further developing their spoken and written language abilities.
- involved in a wide variety of experiences including those which engage children in learning about language such as those that teach phonemic awareness, features of specific texts and grammar.

We agree with the IBO which states:

“Effective language teaching and learning are social acts, dependent on relationships with others, with context, with the environment, with the world, and with the self. Such learning is relevant, engaging, challenging and significant. Exposure to and experience with languages, with all their richness and diversity, creates an inquisitiveness about life and learning, and a confidence about creating new social interactions. Language provides a vehicle for learners to engage with the world ...”

IBO Scope and Sequence 2009 pg 2

All teachers should:

- provide an environment in which their students are able to develop language according to their individual development and needs.
- ensure that language learning is an engaging experience that fosters curiosity and a desire to learn.
- build on students' previous cultural and language experiences.
- encourage students to look for commonalities and use this knowledge to learn more.
- promote a love of language.

Language is a complex web of connections, transcending timetables and individual curriculum disciplines. The strands identified by the IBO are:

- Oral language – listening and speaking
- Visual language – viewing and presenting
- Written language – reading

- Written language – writing.

These strands are interdependent and taught and learned simultaneously. They are the major connecting elements throughout the curriculum.

Oral Language Across the Curriculum

Students should have the opportunity to:

- experience oral language development through oral presentations, speeches, poetry, role-play and drama.
- share their learning.
- participate in small and large group discussion work to foster listening and speaking.
- be exposed to and use correct grammar.
- use and explore a wide range of vocabulary.
- be exposed to the conventions of oral language.
- learn how to apply skills appropriately in different contexts.
- understand the importance of body language, gestures, and expressions in order to aid communication.

Written Language Across the Curriculum **Reading**

Students should have the opportunity to:

- read for meaning.
- read to learn.
- experience high quality international literature.
- use a range of appropriate resources.
- experience a variety of genres.
- listen to text read aloud.
- explore language and words to heighten their awareness of the intrinsic beauty within language.
- experience success through a differentiated programme.
- develop a love of reading.

Written Language Across the Curriculum **Writing**

Students should have the opportunity to:

- write for a real and meaningful purpose with an awareness of audience across a variety of genres.
- be involved in a variety of challenging and stimulating writing opportunities.
- work within clear success criteria through the use of check lists and rubrics.
- receive constructive feedback from teachers, peers and others.
- have their writing valued by publishing and sharing samples throughout

- school.
- connect with the wider community through portfolio pieces, showcasing samples and home school communication.
- express their ideas through writing and develop a sense of voice and style.
- apply standard writing conventions including grammar, spelling and punctuation
- extend their use of language to enrich their writing.
- develop a legible and well presented handwriting style.

Visual Language Across the Curriculum

Viewing and presenting

Students should have the opportunity to:

- understand the ways in which images and languages interact to convey ideas, values and beliefs.
- be exposed to a range of visual text – for example graphic organizers, computer games, advertisements.
- respond to a variety of visual texts.
- interpret, use and construct multi-media and visual texts.

International Awareness through Language

Students should have the opportunity to:

- develop cultural curiosity through exploring different points of view.
- use guided inquiry to facilitate learning.
- model open mindedness and respect.
- use additional languages with confidence and ease.
- develop international mindedness through exposure to quality fiction and non fiction from, or about, other cultures.
- have mother tongue and the learning of language valued.

Mother Tongue

Mother tongue is the language that is most strongly linked to the culture that an individual most strongly with as their culture of origin and is often the language that is used at home. At Quarry Bay School we believe that the influence of mother tongue development is significant for all learners. Research has shown that development of mother tongue language is crucial for cognitive development and maintaining cultural identity. See Appendix A

“...Recognition of the home culture and mother tongue is an important feature of any successful additional language learning approach. Provision for the maintenance and further development of the mother tongue helps to address many of the emotional, social and academic needs of the language learner. By continuing to have opportunities to engage in their mother tongue, the learner is able to build on the language skills that they have

already established in their home language making it possible to draw on these skills when learning the additional language... “

From: Primary Years Programme: Learning Additional Languages in the Primary Years, January 2002

Mother tongue development also has the potential to increase intercultural awareness and understanding, and enables students to remain in touch with and maintain esteem for the language, literature and culture of their home country. Quarry Bay School strives to develop its library resources for mother tongue support such as picture dictionaries, bilingual dictionaries, literature in various languages as well as literature translated into other languages. Quarry Bay School encourages parents to arrange mother tongue classes after school. Additionally parents are invited in on a regular basis to share their language and culture in classroom presentations. Often school communications are provided in other languages including information letters and curriculum workshops.

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

An EAL student is one who has at least one parent whose first language is not English. It is likely that the parent will either use their first language with the child or converse in it with other members of the family. The student grows up hearing two languages even if he/she uses only English at home. We provide intervention and support to respond to the variance among EAL learners in the classroom.

We believe all languages are interconnected. All languages communicate meaning, which is dynamic, purposeful and rich in culture, tradition and heritage. As an International School, and part of the IBO, we believe it is not only our responsibility to teach language acquisition in English and Chinese but also to ensure that EAL students and all languages are celebrated and supported. This ensures that the student is confident communicating in their home or mother tongue language. We believe that teaching children effective EAL strategies and providing them with relevant and engaging resources and experiences will enable them to be more successful in their learning.

Appendix A

Curricular Model for integrated language learning.

Taken from Kathy Short 1999 *The Search for "Balance" in a Literature Rich Curriculum*

All notes and diagrams taken from the above.

If all students are to be involved in the 3 opportunities identified by Halliday (1985)

- To learn language
- Learning through language
- Learning about language

They need opportunities to learning language by reading extensively, to learn about language by reflecting on their reading strategies and literary knowledge and to learn through language by using literature to inquire about the world and their own lives.

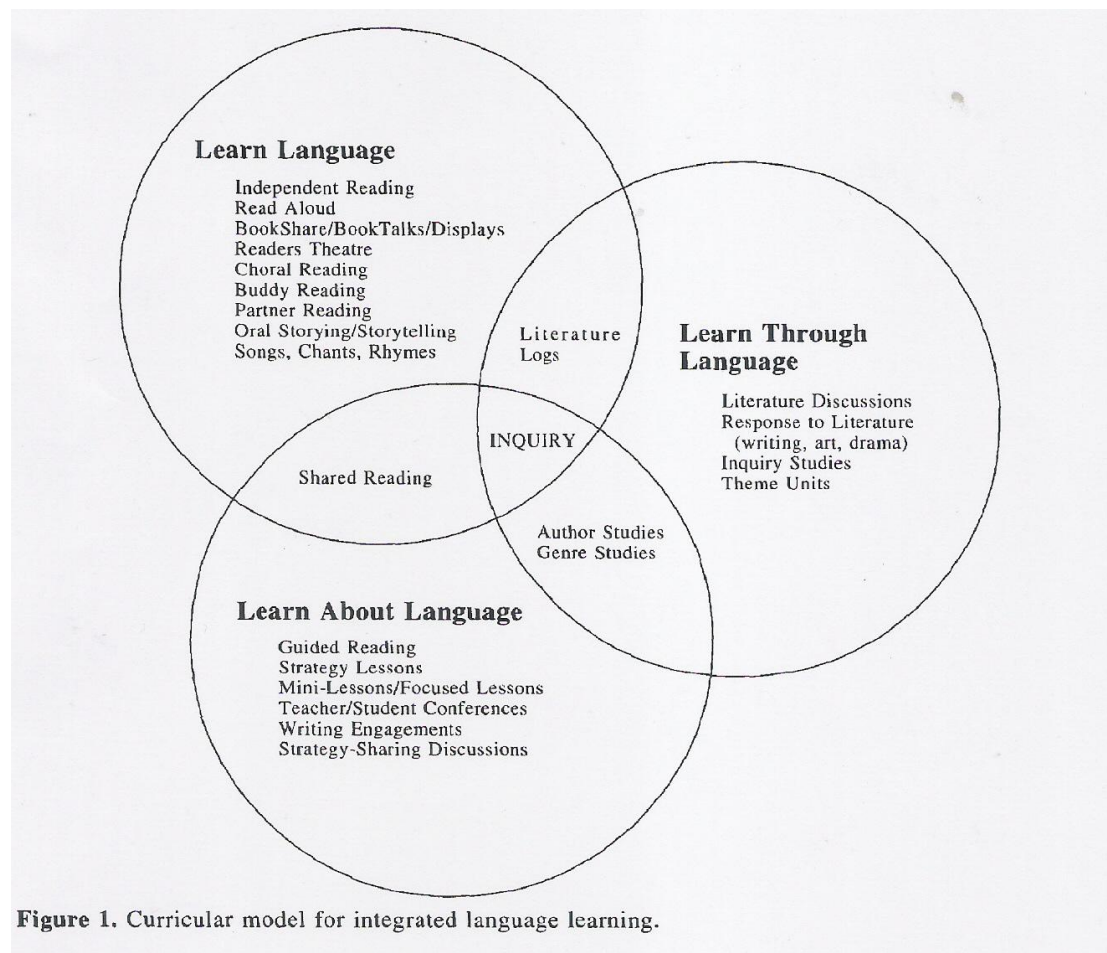
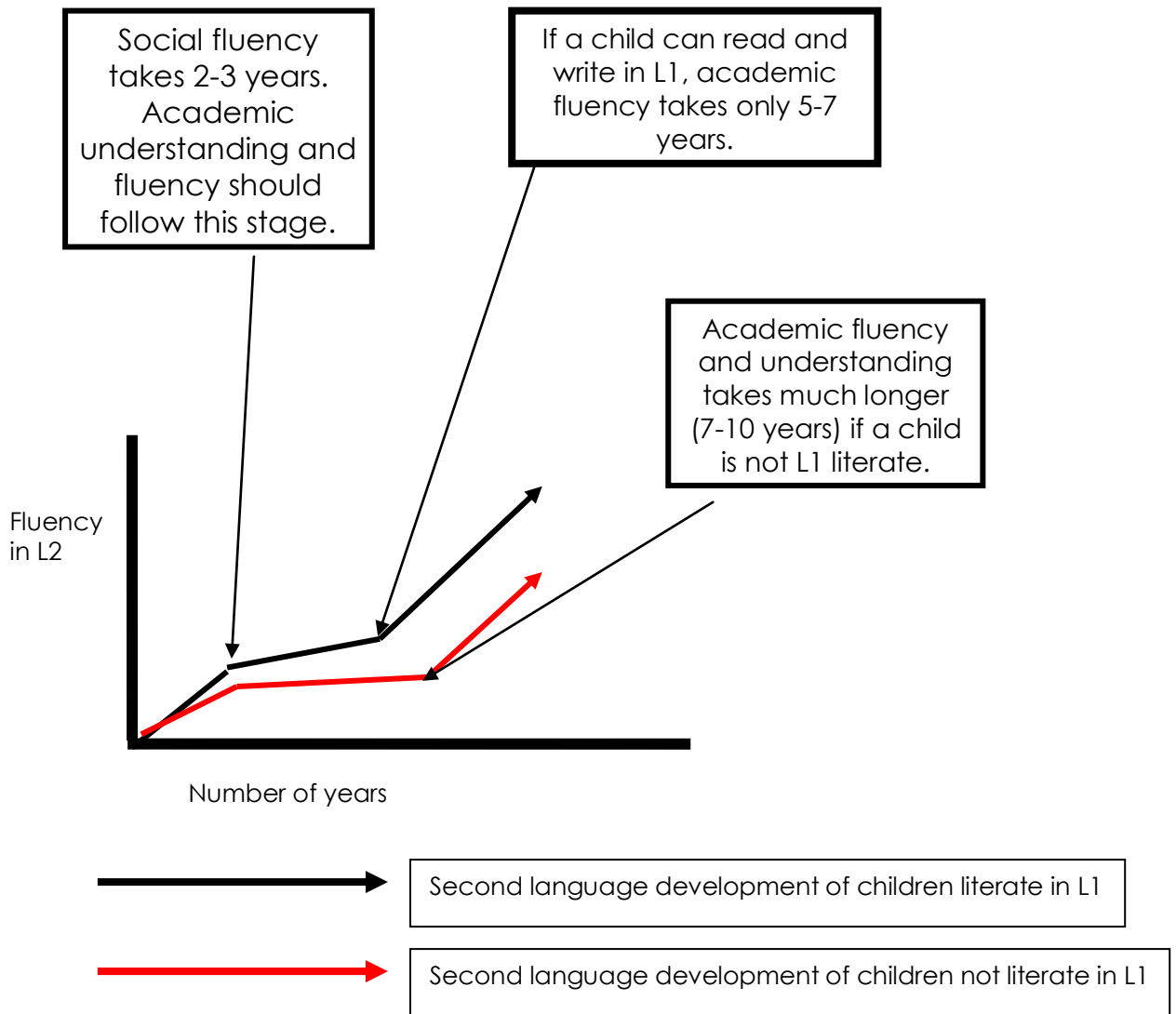


Figure 1. Curricular model for integrated language learning.

Facts about Second Language Learning



How do we define Bilingualism?

Pupils who live in two languages, who have access to, or need to use, two or more languages at home and at school. It **does not** mean they have **fluency** in both languages or that they are competent and literate in both languages.

Facts about being bilingual from Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why Is It Important for Education? By Jim Cummins

When children continue to develop their abilities in 2 or more languages throughout primary school, they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively.

Bilingual children develop more flexibility in their thinking as a result of processing information through 2 different languages.

Children with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the second language.

Children's knowledge and skills transfer across languages

Development of concepts and thinking skill is improved when children use 2 languages

'Bilingualism is cognitively enriching, bilingual children outperform their monolingual peers, matched for socio-economic status and various measures of cognitive and intellectual abilities.'

(Liddicoat 1991)

Subtractive Bilingualism

Occurs when the development of the second language is detrimental to the development and maintenance of the first language. Through this, students may also come to have lower self-esteem for the culture of their first language. This can happen in many situations, for example when the first language is regarded as unnecessary for learning, has a lower status in the community, or is simply not supported. Students experiencing subtractive bilingualism tend to achieve much less success than their peers, as their academic, cognitive and social progress is restricted during the period of learning the second language. This in turn can also have a long-term effect on students' motivation and self-esteem.'

Wallace Lambert 1975 in Thomas & Collier 1997.

Additive Bilingualism

Occurs when students acquire a second language with neither detriment to development in their first language, nor to esteem for their own culture, whether academic, cognitive, linguistic or social. This can lead to students being highly proficient in both languages, with all the benefits that accompany bilingualism, for example, a higher academic success compared to monolingual students.'

-Wallace Lambert 1975 in Thomas & Collier 1997.

Teaching of English

Reading

The foundations of reading are laid well before children enter school. Some children will have had a wide range of reading experiences in terms of bed time stories, rhymes and library visits, others will have had less experience of reading material and the literal world. It is the teacher's job to acknowledge the variety of experiences and provide opportunities for the children to develop strategies and contexts in which they can become literate. Without the ability to read children cannot function effectively in our society. It is our job to ensure that children at Quarry Bay School become enthusiastic and critical readers who can make inferences and construct meaning from a wide variety of texts.

Reading should be systematically taught to ensure that children acquire the appropriate skills and knowledge necessary. They should be given opportunities to use these skills through engaging in authentic, real experiences. Teachers should expect all children to learn to read and have a positive attitude towards children's learning. This should all take place within a supportive language environment in which a variety of reading materials are on offer, children are encouraged to take risks and comprehension is seen as an active process through the discussion and enjoyment of texts.

In order to embed a love of reading, children should be read to daily throughout the school. Listening skills, memory and concentration, visualization and communication skills are just some of the benefits of regular story times. Too often, this is seen as an activity more appropriate for younger children. Older primary children, however, need to experience stories and story telling. Unless children hear stories and have a bank of them at their finger tips, they will struggle to write creatively.

Shared reading and guided reading are two of the vehicles for the teaching of reading. Children need to be taught to decode words through their knowledge of sounds and spellings, however, meaning should be at the heart of the process. Children should be taught to engage with texts, to explore concepts of print and check for meaning.

Shared Reading

Teachers should ensure that shared reading sessions are focused on specific language features and comprehension. There should be some form of discussion about the text including: illustrations, layout, structure, function, grammar and vocabulary. Wherever possible, the text should be shared in its entirety during the first session and this should focus initially on meaning and enjoyment. Later readings should then spotlight specific objectives. It should, where possible, connect to the U of I to ensure meaningful transdisciplinary experiences. The links between the curriculum areas enable children to

generalize their language skills and understandings and use them in different contexts.

Language outcomes should be taken from the IBO Scope and Sequence (2009) and highlighted in order to keep track of conceptual understandings. Children should be made aware of what they are learning and have the success criteria shared with them. During shared reading sessions, we need to provide the children with a language in which to talk about texts and writers. Shared reading may happen more frequently in the lower school than the upper school.

Shared reading enables pupils to:

1. Access text beyond their independent reading level.
2. Increase fluency through teacher modeling.
3. Consolidate sight vocabulary and phonemic awareness.
4. Gain an understanding of how able readers decode text and the strategies they used to comprehend them.

Guided reading

Guided reading involves a predetermined focus on reading and thinking. It is a focused session used for engaging children with texts, scaffolding their use of reading strategies and deepening their understanding of the text. The reading of the text is preceded by, and regularly interspersed with, discussion about the content, structure and language features. Discussion is guided by the teacher but generated by the children.

All children should have a guided reading session on a weekly basis.* The groups could be differentiated by ability, individual needs or purpose of the lesson. Children reading longer text should be given the opportunity to take the text home to continue, or to start their reading prior to the session, thus giving the teacher and children time to discuss the text on its return. The teacher should support the child's reading but the children should be fully engaged with the text and given plenty of opportunity to read for themselves.

Children should be encouraged to make connections and apply their learning in the context of the inquiry. Specific language conventions and comprehension skills should be taught during this time. Teachers need to use their professional judgment as to the type of texts that are most appropriate for the session, however, there must be an element of challenge so that strategies can be taught. It is only through the mistakes made and the risk taking that learning can take place. The teacher should be able to work with a group undisturbed during this time. Therefore, the other children need to be able to work independently on a range of worthwhile and meaningful activities, not time fillers.

All teachers need to monitor each child's reading progress and keep a record of their learning.

*Whilst guided reading is seen as an effective way to explicitly teach students about reading strategies it is not the only approach. Teachers need a variety of approaches for teaching reading strategies such as strategy sharing sessions, conferences and strategy lessons. Regardless of the approach being used in anyone week all children should have a reading lesson/session. This may at times take the form of a literature discussion

Literature Discussion

Literature discussion groups or literature circles do not primarily focus on the teaching of strategies. They encourage students to think deeply and critically about text through dialogue and encourage students to become critical readers and thinkers. The teacher participates as a reader to model ways of thinking and responding to text. Using the model from Appendix A it is clear that there should be opportunities for children to participate in literature discussions on a regular basis.

Home Reading

All children should be taking books home regularly and where possible, books should be chosen independently. Children should be keeping a record of the books they have read in a journal or in their diary. Reflection activities are encouraged but must take a variety of forms and should not discourage reading. Teachers should monitor the home reading system to ensure that all children are reading regularly. Those children who are not reading regularly at home should be encouraged to read with a buddy, an EA or the teacher. Parents should be alerted to the teachers' concerns.

At present children select a text 2 levels below their PM / PROBE instructional level. This is to ensure that home reading is a positive, enjoyable experience where they can practice their comprehension and fluency. However, care must be taken to ensure that the children do not become complacent or bored by a perceived lack of challenge. Teachers need to use their professional judgment and, if they feel that a child would benefit from more challenging text, they need to be proactive and provide more difficult material. Teachers need to encourage children to engage with a variety of texts therefore, expanding their skills and understanding of how different texts work.

Assessment of reading

PM benchmarks or PROBE are used to assess children at **least** 3 times a year, usually within the first 4 weeks of a term. These are to be administered by the class teacher and the instructional levels are to be recorded on the English record sheets termly. Teachers should take particular note of the comprehension aspect of the test and should avoid children accelerating through the levels unless comprehension is secure. Running records should be used to inform teaching, groupings and move learning forward. The PM Bench Mark manual makes it very clear how to use the assessment and it is expected that all aspects of the record sheet will be completed, in particular the self correction and error ratio. By using these detailed records, teachers are able to highlight individuals' strengths and weaknesses and should tailor their planning and learning intentions accordingly. The bench marking of children is to be completed at least 3 times a year however many teachers feel that this is inadequate and assess at other times to ensure progress.

After a child reaches PM Bench mark level 25, PROBE becomes the preferred reading assessment. Once the PROBE is introduced a drop in levels may occur due to a weakness in comprehension. If there is a disparity between levels children will continue to take home readers at their current level, this should be noted and work should then be focused upon the development of

comprehension. A discussion with parents to alert them to this regarding is recommended.

All new children should have a PM Bench mark or a PROBE completed within the first two weeks of attendance.

Support Programs

Children who are performing below expectations should be monitored closely and receive additional support.

This support may involve

1. Additional differentiation within class.
2. Increased adult intervention, teacher or EA. For example additional individual or guided reading sessions.
3. Involvement in a specific catch up program; ALS, phonics (English coordinator informed and involved, parents informed by the class teacher)
4. If concerns continue, the Individual Needs Coordinator needs to be informed and additional support may be offered.

Writing

As with reading, writing should be specifically taught to ensure that children have the skills, knowledge and strategies to communicate effectively through text. Teachers need to ensure that children are given a wide range of opportunities to put into practice what they have learned in a meaningful and, as often as possible, a transdisciplinary way.

Guided writing

Guided writing could happen whilst the rest of the class are writing independently. The teacher works with a specific group decided upon by individual needs; this could be ability based or more flexible groupings depending upon the children's targets. It may take many different forms but talk and oral rehearsal should be encouraged. The use of whiteboards, punctuation fans and drama may all have a role to play during these sessions.

Shared writing

Teachers model the writing process and provide a running commentary on what's happening at a level appropriate to the needs of the class and with specific reference to the learning outcomes. Children help shape the text through shared composition. Here the teacher will be the editor and scribe, keeping the focus clearly on the outcomes and encouraging the oral rehearsal of sentences. The use of a talking partner should be developed during this time, ensuring that everyone rehearses what they are going to write and that everyone participates.

Graphic organizers should be utilized to help structure and plan writing.

Independent writing

Independent writing should take place after shared writing and oral rehearsals. Success criteria should be made clear to the children and

adequate support given (check lists, rubrics and writing mats). Scaffolding for less confident children should be available in the form of writing frames, modeled texts, word banks and sentence starters. For convenience, these could be displayed around the classroom for constant reference. During this time, children should be encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility for their own writing. Systems should be in place for children who need help with spelling so that they are not overly reliant upon the teacher. Conferences should take place with the children whilst they are writing so that editing and improvements can take place at the point of composition. It is often useful to use examples during these sessions to highlight good practice thus prompting all the children rather than a few individuals. Children should also be given opportunities to select their own subject matter and write for pleasure. This writing should be seen as a form of expression and may not be formally marked. These pieces are often very interesting from a teacher's perspective as they illustrate the children's needs, interests and any difficulties they may be facing, as well as giving further information as to their attainment in writing.

Embedding writing within the U OF I

Where possible, the type of text being studied should support the Unit of Inquiry. This frees up more time within the timetable and allows children to write for a real and tangible purpose. This is not a difficult task as language is embedded throughout the curriculum, however, teachers may have to be creative particularly when teaching narratives. Good quality fiction needs to be the starting point for this and stories linked to the Unit used where possible. If no texts are immediately apparent, the Librarian or English Curriculum Leader's help should be sought.

Obviously, how the text type is worked into the unit will dictate when the writing happens and how much time is spent upon it, however, one suggested guideline within a 6 week unit is as follows:

- 2 weeks deconstructing the text, exploring how experts write, identifying the key features and developing success criteria.
- 2 weeks exploring writing, shared.
- 2 weeks extended writing resulting in at least one published piece.
-

By using the IBO Scope and Sequence, unit overviews are being developed by the Year Teams and English Coordinator. These are to be used to help structure planning but teachers must realize that the Scope and Sequence is a developmental continuum and some children may not fall into the expectations within the yearly overview. If this is the case, the Scope and Sequence document should be referred to in order to ensure the correct level of challenge is provided.

Handwriting.

At Quarry Bay School, we use the Nelson Handwriting Scheme. Each year group has 2 copies of the handbook and the relevant photocopiable work sheets. All classes have the handwriting font installed upon their computers and Years 1 to 4 have interactive white board lessons that can be utilized.

Handwriting sessions should be short, regular and, where possible, linked to phonic and spelling work. Children should sit correctly at their desks and be taught the correct pencil grip. Teachers need to be aware of left handed children and seat them accordingly. All children should be encouraged to write in a neat and legible style every time they write unless drafting or note taking.

Assessment of writing

Writing is formally assessed at **least** 3 times a year. Children write an unaided piece of writing that should take no longer than two 45 minute sessions, including planning time, dependent on age, development and text type. Writing frames should not give prompts and clues as to what should be included. Blank graphic organizers, if used when teaching the text type, are an excellent prompt when planning. At the time of writing this policy, writing is leveled using the Bristol Levelling Criteria which can be found in the English Curriculum file. The type of text written is up to the discretion of the year group, however, at least one narrative and one non-fiction piece should be included each year.

The moderating of writing should happen after each writing assessment. Teachers' from the year group should get together to discuss and level at least 8 pieces of work (2 per class illustrating a range of levels). Work brought to the leveling meeting should be photocopied and the teacher's initial level removed. Borderline work often prompts the most discussion. This should be seen as a collaborative exercise in improving our ability to level and mark work, not as a criticism of another teachers leveling. Cross year group moderating is to be encouraged as this widens teachers' perspectives and increases their knowledge of levels and next steps.

Each piece of writing, including the plan, needs to be placed in the child's portfolio alongside the dated completed criteria sheet. Targets must be attached to the piece of writing and be shared with the child. The final writing assessment along with targets and criteria sheet must be photocopied and discussed with the next year's teacher. They then should be stored in their assessment trays.

NB: The target card can be found in:

P:\Full Access Folder\Curriculum Groups\English\assessment\Targets for Writing

Phonics and spelling

Phonemic awareness, and a working knowledge of the alphabetical code is critical to success in both reading and writing. As the English Language is approximately 80% phonetically regular, all teachers should ensure that they have a working knowledge of phonics in order to be able to teach reading and spelling. The teaching of phonics should be daily, systematic and relentless. Repetition is often the key and this needs to be done in an engaging, multisensory, differentiated and cumulative way. A strong structure and system are vital and teachers, particularly in Years One and Two, need to keep records of student learning.

Children should be initially taught sound to symbol. This means they need to be able to hear phonemes before launching into how to write them in a multitude of ways. From the beginning, games that illustrate how to blend and segment words should be included. This stops children from becoming stuck on initial sounds and helps to develop auditory memory. Every opportunity should be taken to explicitly demonstrate how phonics works.

The teaching of spelling is about:

- Alerting children to patterns relating to sounds, letters and grammatical functions.
- Patterns relating to word origins.

Spelling should be actively taught. Teaching should be explicit and interactive, drawing attention to the shape and sounds of words. The teaching of spelling should be short and often.

Teaching should involve:

- Unit related words.
- Word families.
- Word origins.
- Opportunities to practice words in context.
- Differentiated work.
- Personal chosen target words which are frequently misspelled.

Teachers should ensure that children have instant access to high frequency words. Without these prompts, children can learn the incorrect spelling. This means all classrooms should be equipped with spelling mats, word charts, thesauruses and a range of appropriately levelled dictionaries.