



**AUBURN  
SOUTH**  
PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ***TEACHING & LEARNING POLICY***



## **Background:**

**Vision: At Auburn South we will develop resilient students who have a highly developed capacity to inquire, create, challenge, think internationally, be engaged and be responsible.**

As educators we always look for continuous school improvement and challenge ourselves to give to the learners we teach the best opportunities in education. After much research and comparative studies of available curriculum the Primary Years Programme (PYP) of the International Baccalaureate (IB) was chosen as the vehicle for this continued growth.

The driving force behind the PYP, MYP (Middle Years) and the DP (Diploma) is a deeply held philosophy about the nature of international education expressed in the mission statement of the IB and in the IB Learner Profile. The mission statement expresses the IB's overall purpose in promoting and developing programmes of international education. It states:

*The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.*

*To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.*

*These programmes encourage learners across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.*

(Reference: IB (2008) *Towards a Continuum of International Education*)

In 2004 Auburn South was Authorised as a PYP school. In the PYP the importance of the traditional subject areas is acknowledged: language, mathematics, social studies, science, the arts and personal, social and physical education are specified components of the PYP curriculum model. Overall expectations for each subject, within each age range, are specified in detailed scope and sequence documents. For us at Auburn South, as a Victorian Government School, these expectations are outlined in our AusVELS (national curriculum) documents. The PYP does not replace the curriculum set by the Victorian Government but rather integrates all subjects traditionally taught under the 'umbrella' of this approach.

It is particularly important for learners in the primary years of education to acquire skills in context, and to explore content that is relevant to them and that transcends the boundaries of the traditional subjects. The PYP curriculum is centred on six transdisciplinary themes based around shared human commonalities that are considered essential in the context of international education. These themes are supported by knowledge, concepts, and skills from the traditional subject areas but utilise them in ways that transcend the confines of these subjects, thereby contributing to the transdisciplinary model of teaching and learning. (Reference: IB (2008) *Towards a Continuum of International Education*)

The PYP is designed for learners between the ages of 3 and 12 years. It is an international, transdisciplinary programme designed to foster the development of the whole child, not just in the classroom but also through other means of learning. The PYP focuses on the total growth of the child, touching hearts as well as minds and encompassing social, physical, emotional and cultural needs in addition to academic welfare. The philosophy of the PYP, as it directly affects the child, is expressed in a series of desired attributes and traits that characterise learners with an international perspective. Taken together, they create the IB Learner Profile.

The IB has focused on developing the kind of learner who, in the struggle to establish a personal set of values and a code of ethics, will be laying the foundation upon which international-mindedness will develop and flourish. The attributes of such a learner are listed in the IB Learner Profile. The IB Learner Profile is the mission statement in action; it is central to the IB definition of what it means to be internationally minded, and it directs schools to focus on learning.

The IB Learner Profile is based on values that are the embodiment of what the organisation believes about international education. The attributes described in the learner profile are appropriate to and achievable by all IB learners from the ages of 3 to 19. The teacher needs to interpret these attributes in a manner appropriate to the age and development of the student, always bearing in mind that part of the adaptability and versatility of IB programmes lies in what these attributes may look like from one school culture to another.

*What do we want our learners at Auburn South to be?*

**INTERNATIONALLY-MINDED PEOPLE LIVING OUT THE IB LEARNER PROFILE**

**IB LEARNER PROFILE**

<b>Inquirers</b> 探究者	We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.
<b>Knowledgeable</b> 知识渊博的人	We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.
<b>Thinkers</b> 思考者	We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.
<b>Communicators</b> 交流者	We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.
<b>Principled</b> 有原则的人	We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.
<b>Open-minded</b> 胸襟开阔的人	We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.
<b>Caring</b> 富有同情心的人	We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.
<b>Risk-takers</b> 敢于冒险的人	We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.
<b>Balanced</b> 全面发展的人	We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives – intellectual, physical, and emotional – to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.
<b>Reflective</b> 反思者	We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

**Principles of the Policy:**

At Auburn South we recognise that all learners have special skills, abilities and aptitudes and all have an entitlement to access a broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum. Every learner is also entitled to experience a variety of teaching and learning styles and the appropriate level of individual support which will enable them to achieve their full potential. ASPS aims, through successful teaching and learning, to develop the whole person and to enable our students to become lifelong learners.

All staff have a responsibility, collectively and individually, to contribute to the delivery of the broad, challenging and appropriate curriculum. In addition they individually have a responsibility to strive to deliver lessons where the teaching and learning is of the highest quality and where the learning needs of all learners are met.

We recognise that continued professional support, coaching and mentorship at whole school, team and individual level is essential to empower staff to deliver effective learning experiences and we hope that this policy will help provide teachers with a framework of guidance to help them deliver learning and support of the highest quality.

At ASPS, our teaching and learning aims to:

- improve learners learning outcomes through quality teaching practices and programs
- provide learners with optimism and self esteem
- encourage high achievement
- develop independent learners who accept responsibility for their own learning
- provide a highly skilled staff who are enthusiastic about teaching and learning
- provide learners with an understanding of and respect for cultural diversity
- develop students who display all aspects of the IB Learner Profile.

### ***Purpose of this policy is:***

- to ensure high quality teaching and learning experiences for learners of all abilities and aptitudes
- to provide a framework for teaching and learning within which there is flexibility and scope for creativity
- to provide coherence of approach and consistency of expectations
- to make explicit the entitlement of all learners
- to raise attainment by increasing levels of learner motivation, participation and independence
- to promote reflection on, and sharing of, best practice
- to promote an understanding of how learning takes place
- to make explicit a baseline for monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning that takes place
- to provide practical guidance and clear procedures
- to provide a focus for development
- to inform teachers, students, parents, governors and the wider community about the aims and processes of teaching and learning.

### ***Definition of Learning:***

Learning is the acquisition, retention, application and development of skills, knowledge, understanding, values, and wisdom to promote greater understanding and to make evaluations about the world in which we live. Learning can be applied throughout life. It is the goal of education, and the product of experience. Learning is an exercise of constructing personal knowledge that requires the learner to be mentally active rather than passive; interpreting rather than recording information.

### ***What is learning?***

Learning is an active process of taking in information and building knowledge and understanding. This constructivist philosophy is the basis of the contemporary learning where learners are supported in constructing their own understanding by:

- selecting, interpreting and transforming information; constructing hypotheses; and making decisions
- using mental models to interpret and organise experience in order to elaborate and extend current understandings, and their overall framework of knowledge.

The following principles for teaching and learning are based on the constructivist view that:

- learning is the process of constructing knowledge
- learning is not linear; it involves learners extending, elaborating, reorganising, reformulating and reflecting upon their own frameworks of knowledge
- learning involves building upon prior knowledge

- learning is making explicit the implicit conceptions, frameworks and explanatory systems in the minds of learners, which shape how they interpret and what they learn. Learners; conceptions are embedded in their culture and tied to their use of language
- learning occurs in a context, and the understandings about the context are part of what is learned
- learning involves learners communicating their questions, intuitions, conjectures, reasons, explanations, judgements and ideas in a variety of forms
- learning involves developing knowledge, skills and dispositions to think and act in ways which determine individual effort, the setting of personal goals, self-assessment and awareness of the uses (and misuses or abuses) of knowledge
- learning involves the progression of learner through cycles of growth.

***As teachers we know that learning will be effective when:***

- the environment is secure, stable and stimulating
- students' self-esteem is high
- students understand the purpose of the learning and see relevance to their own experience
- students understand the ways in which learning takes place
- the learning builds on prior knowledge and understanding
- success criteria are explicit and models are provided
- the learning is active and collaborative
- students questioning, reflection, and discussion are encouraged
- independent learning and thinking is facilitated and encouraged
- there are opportunities for creativity and utilising different learning styles
- students can self-assess, know what they need to do to improve and are able to set appropriate targets
- students have opportunities to transfer skills, knowledge and understanding to other contexts.

## ***Access to Learning***

ASPS recognises that its community reflects diverse skills, backgrounds and cultural needs.

We endeavour to:

- meet the physical, mental and emotional needs of learners
- provide support to learners with identified learning disabilities and giftedness
- determine and respond to the range of learning styles of learners
- provide individualised programs of learning where required
- provide counselling and psychological support
- link with external institutions, industry and the broader community who may support and further learning opportunities

## ***Principles of Learning & Teaching (PoLT)***

With this in mind, the six PoLT developed by DEECD (2005) are used by ASPS teachers to reflect on their practice and to provide the best learning environment, engagements and opportunities to meet the diverse needs of their learners.

### **1. The learning environment is supportive and productive.**

The teacher builds positive relationships with and values each learner. Through teacher modelling and classroom strategies based on cooperation and mutual support, an environment is created where learners feel comfortable to pursue inquiries and express themselves. They take responsibility for their learning and are prepared to pursue and try out new ideas. Key components of this principle are:

- the teacher builds positive relationships through knowing and valuing each student
- the teacher promotes a culture of value and respect for individuals and their communities
- teaching strategies promote students' self-confidence and willingness to take risks with their learning

- each learner experiences success through structured support, the valuing of effort, and recognition of their work.

## **2. The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation.**

Teachers model practices that build independence and motivate learners to work in an autonomous manner. Learners are involved in decision making within the classroom in relation to what and how they learn and are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning. Team building skills are also explicitly taught so that learners learn to collaborate, negotiate and contribute to joint assignments and experience the sharing of roles, responsibilities and ownership. Key components of this principle are:

- the teacher encourages and supports learners to take responsibility for their learning
- the teacher uses strategies that build skills of productive collaboration.

## **3. Students' needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program.**

A range of strategies are used to monitor and respond to learners' different learning needs, social needs, and cultural perspectives. Learners' lives and interests are reflected in the learning sequences. A variety of teaching strategies are used to accommodate the range of abilities and interests, and to encourage diversity and autonomy. Key components of this principle are:

- teaching strategies are flexible and responsive to the values, needs and interests of individual learners
- the teacher utilises a range of strategies that support the different ways of thinking and learning
- the teacher builds on learners' prior experiences, knowledge and skills
- the teacher capitalises on learners' experience of a technology rich world.

## **4. Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application.**

Learners are challenged to explore, question and engage with significant ideas and practices, so that they move beyond superficial understandings to develop higher order, flexible thinking. To support this, teaching sequences should be sustained and responsive and explore ideas and practices. Key components of this principle are:

- teaching sequences to promote sustained learning that builds over time and emphasises connections between ideas
- the teacher promotes substantive discussion of ideas
- the teacher emphasises the quality of learning with high expectations of achievement
- the teacher uses strategies that challenge and support learners to question and reflect
- the teacher uses strategies to develop investigating and problem solving skills
- the teacher uses strategies to foster imagination and creativity.

## **5. Assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning.**

Assessment contributes to planning at a number of levels. Monitoring of student learning is continuous and encompasses a variety of aspects of understanding and practice. Assessment criteria are explicit and feedback is designed to support learners' further learning and encourage them to monitor and take responsibility for their own learning. Key components of this principle are:

- assessment practices that reflect the full range of learning program objectives
- the teacher ensures that learners receive frequent constructive feedback that supports further learning
- the teacher makes assessment criteria explicit
- assessment practices encourage reflection and self-assessment
- the teacher uses evidence from assessment to inform planning and teaching.

## **6. Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom.**

Learners' learning needs to connect with their current and future lives, and with contemporary thinking in the broader community. A variety of links are made between the classroom program and the local and broader community, leading to learners developing a rich view of knowledge and practice, including social and ethical issues. This principle

concerns relevance and connectedness, and also the communal nature of learning. Key components of this principle are:

- learners engage with contemporary knowledge and practice
- the teacher plans for learners to interact with local and broader communities and community practices
- the teacher uses technologies in ways that reflect professional and community practices.

### ***Teaching and Learning as a Collaborative Partnership between Home and School:***

We see teaching and learning as a process of cooperative teamwork. We welcome and encourage the involvement of parents and others in the community. All members of the school community (teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and students) work towards the success of this policy by:

#### ***Teachers work towards the Teaching and Learning Policy aims by:***

- providing a challenging and stimulating programme of study designed to enable all learners to reach the highest standards of personal achievement
- recognising and being constantly aware of the needs of each individual learner according to ability and aptitude
- ensuring learning is progressive and continuous
- being good role models – punctual, well prepared and organised
- having a positive attitude to change and the development of their own expertise
- working collaboratively with a shared philosophy and commonality of practice and purpose
- ensuring early contact with parents to discuss matters which affect a learner's happiness, progress and behaviour
- a differentiated program within the classroom will provide opportunities through inquiry for extended learning
- learners of exceptional ability, will be extended within the classroom programs through guided individual inquiry and along with their parents, notified of the variety of additional programs available.

#### ***Students work towards the Teaching and Learning Policy aims by:***

- attending school in good health maintained by adequate diet, exercise and sleep
- attending school regularly, avoiding term time holidays
- being punctual and ready to begin lessons on time
- discussing matters which affect their happiness, progress and behaviour with their parents and/or teachers
- being organised – bringing necessary books, equipment, etc.
- conducting themselves in an orderly manner in the school
- taking growing responsibility for their own learning.

#### ***Parents work towards the Teaching and Learning Policy aims by:***

- ensuring that learners attend school in good health, regularly and punctually
- providing support for the discipline within the school and for the teacher's role
- being realistic about their children's abilities offering encouragement and praise
- participating in discussions concerning their child's progress and attainments
- ensuring early contact with the school to discuss matters which affect a child's happiness, progress and behaviour
- giving due importance to independent study and home learning and assisting with planning for revision
- allowing their children to take increasing responsibility as they progress through their primary school years.

### ***Transdisciplinary Learning***

The preferred term to describe the PYP is transdisciplinary and in this context the meaning of the prefix "trans" is two-fold: to convey learning that has relevance across the subject areas and more importantly, learning that transcends the confines of the subject areas to connect to what is real in the world. As suggested by Nicolescu (1999),

“Transdisciplinarity is ... radically distinct from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity because of its goal, the understanding of the present world, which cannot be accomplished in the framework of discipline research.”

The PYP endorses a belief that students learn best when the learning is authentic and transdisciplinary – relevant to the real world – where the learning is not confined within the boundaries of traditional subject areas but is supported and enriched by them.

Resource: IB (2009) Making the PYP Happen

## **Curriculum – Planning for Teaching and Learning**

Curriculum is defined as “any arrangement of activity which affects the educational outcomes of learners.”

At ASPS we recognise that we are part of a local and global community and as such, ensure curriculum provides learners with an awareness of the needs and responsibilities of citizens working within communities with rich social and cultural diversity. This includes an understanding of social and environmental issues, an awareness of differing cultural needs in decision making and the role and responsibility of being a member of a global technological world.

The IB PYP is a curriculum framework for international primary education. Within the PYP it is believed student learning is best done when it is authentic – relevant to the “real world”; and is transdisciplinary – where learning is not confined within the boundaries of traditional subject areas but is supported and enriched by them.

The curriculum model is based on strong belief about how children best learn. The learner is at the centre of all learning. Each learner brings their own knowledge and experiences to the classroom and through engaging with new experiences learners are given the opportunity to build meaning and refine understanding, principally through structured inquiry. Connections are made between the learners’ existing knowledge and their individual learning styles within the context of new experiences.

It is believed that learning takes place best when it is connected to the learner’s real world outside of the classroom. The aim of the PYP is to create a transdisciplinary curriculum that is engaging, relevant, challenging and significant.

Reference: IB (2007) – Making the PYP Happen

The first thing to clarify is that in being an IB PYP School, this in no way replaces the curriculum set by the Victorian Government but rather integrates all subjects traditionally taught under the ‘umbrella’ of this approach. All learners are still taught all the requirements of AusVELS as stipulated by DEECD.

Simply put, the IB PYP is the HOW we educate – the philosophy, pedagogy and methodology, and the AusVELS is the WHAT we teach – the content, knowledge and skills.

According to the IB, “curriculum” revolves around the concept of learners constructing meaning, and everyone at a PYP school, including the teachers, is a learner. The PYP model of curriculum is student-centred. It is founded on the belief that learning occurs when learners build on their prior knowledge and engage in experiences that help them construct new understandings. This process involves continuous self-reflection, the freedom to ask questions, the motivation to take risks and the desire to take action based on what one has learned.

The features that form the basis of the PYP are:

- the broad nature of study, including more than one language
- the flexibility of the programme’s curriculum model, enabling the adaptation and response to our local interests
- the education of the whole person
- developing citizens of the world – culture, language and learning together
- building and reinforcing learners sense of identity and cultural awareness
- fostering learners recognition and development of universal human values
- stimulating curiosity and inquiry in order to foster a spirit of discovery and enjoyment of learning
- equipping learners with the skills to learn and acquire knowledge, individually or collaboratively, and to apply these skills and knowledge accordingly across a broad range of areas
- providing international content while responding to local requirements and interests
- encouraging diversity and flexibility in pedagogical approaches
- providing appropriate forms of assessment and international benchmarking.

So what does the PYP curriculum model look like? It is composed of three interrelated and equally important components. In keeping with the PYP commitment to inquiry, these three components are expressed in the form of

the following three open-ended questions, each of which compels teachers to think deeply about their own practice with regard to student learning.

What do we want to learn?	How best will we learn?	How will we know what we have learned?
The written curriculum	The taught curriculum	The assessed curriculum
<i>the identification of a framework of what's worth knowing</i>	<i>the theory and application of best classroom practice</i>	<i>the theory and application of effective assessment</i>

### The Written Curriculum

In the PYP a balance is sought between acquisition of essential knowledge and skills, development of conceptual understanding, demonstration of positive attitudes, and taking responsible action. In terms of achieving this balance, the five essential elements of the written curriculum are emphasised.

The PYP Programme of Inquiry (PoI) forms the basis of our learning. The PoI is made up of Units of Inquiry (UoI) which are taught at each year level. Each year level completes six UoI per year. UoI are concept driven, and related topics from different subject areas are chosen to link together as transdisciplinary units. The UoI are grouped together under the following transdisciplinary themes:

- Who we are
- How we express ourselves
- Where we are in place and time
- How the world works
- How we organise ourselves
- Sharing the planet



In developing an individual UoI, organised around a central idea, the teachers collaboratively plan and design learning engagements so that each unit is:

**Engaging** – of interest to the learners, and involving them actively in their own learning.

**Relevant** – linked to the learners' prior knowledge and experience, and current circumstances, and therefore placing learning in a context connected to the lives of the learners.

**Challenging** – extending the prior knowledge and experience of the learners to increase their competencies and understanding.

**Significant** – contributing to an understanding of the transdisciplinary nature of the theme, and therefore to an understanding of commonality of human experiences.

This way of teaching and learning helps learners make connections, develop a sense of continuity during the day and caters for individual learning styles and interests. A transdisciplinary curriculum provides a powerful context within which learners can develop skills and understandings across the curriculum. This leads to an understanding of how things connect with one another.

At Auburn South we believe a transdisciplinary approach is the most effective means by which learners can explore, gather, process, refine, and present information about topics without the constraints of traditional subject barriers. It provides greater purpose and meaning in the daily experience of teaching and learning and acknowledges the complex links that connect ideas and concepts. The real world is not fragmented nor boxed into separate compartments. Life is a complex mix of interrelated experiences (each action affects another) and people depend on each other for their very survival.

The inquiry pedagogy allows learners to make sense of their world by making connections and building on their prior knowledge. In this approach learners are given greater independence to implement their own learning. It also helps learners to increase their awareness of the different styles of learning while creating different levels of challenge. Strategies for problem solving, organising and sorting, thinking creatively and reflecting can be used in many different aspects of the school curriculum and applied to life beyond the school.

<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Concepts</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Attitudes</b>	<b>Actions</b>
Significant, relevant content that we wish the learners to explore and know about, taking into consideration their prior experience and understanding.	Powerful ideas that have relevance within the subject areas but also transcend them and that learners must explore and re-explore in order to develop a coherent, in-depth understanding	Those capabilities that the learners need to demonstrate to succeed in a changing, challenging world, which may be disciplinary or transdisciplinary	Dispositions that are expressions of fundamental values, beliefs and feelings about learning, the environment and people.	Demonstrations of deeper learning in responsible behaviour through responsible action; a manifestation in practice of the other essential elements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Who we are</i></li> <li>• <i>How we express ourselves</i></li> <li>• <i>Where we are in place and time</i></li> <li>• <i>How the world works</i></li> <li>• <i>How we organise ourselves</i></li> <li>• <i>Sharing the planet</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Form</i></li> <li>• <i>Function</i></li> <li>• <i>Causation</i></li> <li>• <i>Change</i></li> <li>• <i>Connection</i></li> <li>• <i>Perspective</i></li> <li>• <i>Responsibility</i></li> <li>• <i>Reflection</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Social Skills</i></li> <li>• <i>Communication Skills</i></li> <li>• <i>Thinking Skills</i></li> <li>• <i>Research Skills</i></li> <li>• <i>Self-management Skills</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Appreciation</i></li> <li>• <i>Commitment</i></li> <li>• <i>Confidence</i></li> <li>• <i>Cooperation</i></li> <li>• <i>Creativity</i></li> <li>• <i>Curiosity</i></li> <li>• <i>Empathy</i></li> <li>• <i>Enthusiasm</i></li> <li>• <i>Independence</i></li> <li>• <i>Integrity</i></li> <li>• <i>Respect</i></li> <li>• <i>Tolerance</i></li> </ul>	<p><i>The Action Cycle</i></p>

### **The Taught Curriculum**

The taught curriculum involves the methods teachers use to engage learners with the written curriculum. It is not only “what” learners will learn about but also “how” they will learn it that matters. PYP teachers are expected to constantly examine and improve the practices they use to actively involve learners in learning. Inquiry-based instruction and differentiation of instruction to meet individual learner needs are featured within the wide array of best practices employed by teachers at Auburn South.

- Teaching practices will incorporate learners’ learning styles, higher order thinking skills and the application of quality programs and practices in line with the expectations of the PYP and AusVELS Curriculum which promote optimism and high self-esteem in learners.
- An environment will be established which encourages learners to accept responsibility for their own learning.
- Programs will be provided which enable learners to conclude their primary education with the skills and qualities which will support them throughout their lives.
- A comprehensive curriculum will be provided to meet the needs of all learners.
- Teachers will plan programs which incorporate the school’s mission, vision and values and utilise where possible the cultural diversity of staff and students.
- Assessment of student achievement will be used to ensure quality learning and instruction.

### **Inquiry based learning**

The PYP provides an opportunity for learners to construct meaning, principally through concept-driven inquiry. Traditional academic subjects are part of the program but it emphasises the interrelatedness of knowledge and skills through a transdisciplinary program of inquiry. The most important premise of the PYP is that children learn through their own curiosity – and that is the school’s responsibility to encourage them to be curious, to ask questions and to explore ways of finding the answers to their questions. This is called “inquiry based learning”, and it shapes our entire program. We teach learners through this approach to learning by:

- implementing inquiry based learning and the use of guiding questions across all areas of learning
- guiding learners in making connections between concepts and processes
- making learning purposeful, contextualised, challenging and inherently interesting.

In the inquiry based classroom there is increased emphasis on real life situations, decision-making, problem solving, research and action. Learners are actively:

- exploring, wondering and questioning
- experimenting and playing with possibilities
- making connections between previous learning and current learning
- making predictions and acting purposefully to see what happens
- collecting data and reporting findings
- clarifying existing ideas and reappraising perceptions of events
- deepening understanding through the application of a concept
- making and testing theories
- researching and seeking information
- taking and defending a position
- solving problems in a variety of ways.

### **Differentiation**

Differentiation involves teachers designing learning experiences that match learners readiness levels, learning styles and interests. All learners learn differently, and differentiation is how teachers react responsibly to different learning needs. Inquiry and differentiation are closely linked because both strive to actively engage learners in learning, provide learners with choices for their learning and help them construct new understandings.

At ASPS we believe that every learner should be challenged to grow in their skills, knowledge and understandings, moving beyond where they are at the beginning of the school year. Differentiation ensures that every learner demonstrates growth.

Differentiation can take many forms, some of which are more visible and others which are more subtle. Some of the key differentiation strategies include:

- providing learners with choices in how they learn and demonstrate their learning
- using assessment results to design learning experiences that meet individual learner's needs
- learners working in small groups, with partners, and independently on learning tasks focused on their unique learning needs
- providing learners with alternative class work and home learning (not just more of the same work) that extends their learning of a specific skill or topic
- providing review and re-teaching for learners who need help in developing an important skill or concept
- open-ended learning tasks and questioning strategies that encourage the development of learners' high-level thinking skills.

### **Collaborative Planning**

In order to plan for the diverse needs of learners, all ASPS teachers are required to engage in structured collaborative planning and reflection. Each planning team consists of all teachers teaching learners within any particular year level. Vertical planning will take place to revise and strengthen the articulation within the programme of inquiry. Planning for learning is based on the premises and beliefs that:

- There is no known ceiling to achievement. Intelligence can be developed by effective teaching.
- High expectations are important, but to fulfil these high expectations learners must be shown how to improve by their teachers. This requires learners to be taught to learn and to reflect on their learning, and to assess their progress.
- Learning objectives that challenge each learner and take their own learning forward must be shared explicitly with learners and reviewed at the end of the lesson or unit of learning.
- Lessons must be carefully planned and clearly structured to include an engaging and stimulating variety of learning experiences that contribute to meeting the learning objectives. Teachers must evaluate their lessons so that their own practice can improve.

## **Guidelines for Lesson Structure**

### **Start of the Lesson**

- The start of the lesson has a clear focus, using experiences which immediately engage the learner.
- The expected learning outcomes are shared with learners, in the context of prior learning to ensure they understand what they are doing and why (Our learning intention is... or WALT – We are learning to...).
- The success criteria by which the learning will be evaluated are made explicit (WILF – What I’m looking for...).

### **Lesson Development**

- Present lessons with clarity, enthusiasm and pace, ensuring timings are clear and adhered to.
- Make learning active by providing experiences which enable learners to make meaning, construct knowledge and develop understanding and skills.
- Model learning and process, make their thinking and decision-making explicit to learners.
- Provide exemplar work so that learners are aware of the sophistication of response expected.
- Use a variety of questioning techniques to probe and develop learners understanding.
- Promote active listening, inviting a range of different responses and building in time for reflection.
- Give constructive, positive feedback on work in progress.
- Provide opportunities for success for every learner and seek frequent opportunities for praise.
- Provide opportunities for progression which increase the level of conceptual challenge, the depth of understanding and the breadth of application of skills.
- Demonstrate flexibility in their approach and be prepared to deviate from the lesson plan where appropriate.
- Set a variety of home learning tasks to deepen, extend, or initiate learning.

### ***The Learned Curriculum***

The third question, “How will we know what we have learned?” represents the learned curriculum. Auburn South teachers employ a variety of authentic assessment strategies (examples include: student presentations, portfolios, projects, written tasks, student self-reflections, peer reflections, conferences, interviews, demonstrations and many others) to find out not only if learner learned what they were expected to learn, but also what actual learning took place instead of, or in addition to, what was expected.

Teachers and learners use the results of assessments to set goals for further learning and to think about ways to improve their teaching and learning strategies. Assessment at Auburn South has a positive connotation since it focuses on what a learner can do at the current moment instead of on what they can’t do.

#### **For learners – effective assessment:**

- supports learners learning by highlighting areas of strength and giving feedback to assist further growth
- provides learners with the opportunity to assess their own work and progress
- encourages learners to take pride in what they do
- give learners a sense of purpose
- make learners accountable.

#### **For teachers – effective assessment will:**

- find out what learners know and can do
- show how well learners can apply what they know
- show whether learners can apply what they know
- measure learners’ ability to inquire
- show what learners remember, and understand, of what has been taught, done, explored or discussed in class
- reveal areas in which learners are experiencing difficulties
- determine the interest level of learners
- help the teacher understand how individual learners think
- monitor learners’ performance over a period of time

- provide data to support discussions with parents and colleagues about learner progress
- indicate how a learner is performing in comparison with others in the group
- help teachers evaluate whether learners are keeping pace with age-appropriate cognitive development.

*\*See the Assessment Policy for a more detailed outline on assessment expectations at ASPS*

## **Single Subject Teaching and Learning**

At ASPS the single subject learning that is offered to students is:

- Languages – Mandarin
- Physical Education
- Visual Art
- Performing Arts

Single subject teachers will make connections to at least one unit of inquiry at each year level. Connections can be made through knowledge, key and related concepts, lines of inquiry, attributes of the learner profile, attitudes and skills. It is vital that the single subject is valued and therefore the single subject teacher/s must be involved in collaborative planning with the homeroom teachers during the unit of inquiry process. Single subject teachers must utilise the PYP curriculum model for all teaching and learning. They are to ensure that the five essential elements are embedded within their teaching and learning.

## **Professional Learning**

*“Learning is a social activity. Much can be learnt from the experiences and perspectives of others.”*

*Peter Senge*

*“When teachers engage in reflective practice, collegiality, and shared leadership, they come to understand themselves and their work differently. This new understanding causes a shift in their beliefs and norms. This shift in turn creates new opportunities, new visions of what can be done.”*

*Linda Lambert, Educational Leadership, September 1989*

ASPS is a learning community. We are therefore committed to support the learning needs of staff to ensure they have current and appropriate training to support the learning and curriculum needs of the school and its learners. In particular:

- Professional Learning will be organised to ensure the development of highly skilled, enthusiastic teachers who reflect on their practice in line with the PYP
- staff will undertake professional learning in line with the school’s strategic plan
- staff will undergo appraisal to determine their personal professional learning needs
- teaching staff will regularly update their pedagogical skills to reflect contemporary education trends
- staff will draw upon expertise within the school through coaching, peer observation and mentoring.

## **Resources**

ASPS will endeavour to provide that:

- class sizes and resources are appropriate to the age of learners and areas of study
- learning spaces are appropriate for the diverse needs of learning and curriculum
- information and communication technologies are appropriate to support learning and teaching.

## ***Responsibilities***

### **Principal and Assistant Principals:**

- to provide the effective and rigorous implementation and monitoring of the policy

### **Assistant Principal (Curriculum):**

- to provide appropriate support, training and resources for teams and individuals
- to monitor and evaluate the delivery and impact of the policy
- to modify and update the policy in the light of ongoing developments and the changing needs of the school.

### **Team Leaders:**

- to be responsible for the leading of long, medium and short term planning of schemes of work taking into consideration the aims and objectives of the policy
- to monitor and evaluate consistent delivery of the policy at team level
- to provide appropriate support to team members through training materials or coaching.

### **Teaching staff:**

- to implement the policy by ensuring a consistent delivery of high quality learning experiences
- to be responsible for short term planning, in conjunction with team.

### **All staff:**

- to be aware of the principles of the policy and how they can contribute to it.

### **Students:**

- to work positively within lessons to enable staff to implement the policy effectively
- to extend the learning experience outside the classroom by ensuring completion of the learning tasks set as home learning/independent study.

## ***Evaluation:***

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's review cycle or before as appropriate.

## ***Status:***

Ratified November 2013