

Rationale

“The goals of deep learning are that students will gain the competencies and dispositions that will prepare them to be creative, connected, and collaborative life-long problem solvers and to be healthy, holistic human beings who not only contribute to but also create the common good in today’s knowledge-based, creative, interdependent world.” (Michael Fullan, Maria Langworthy. “A Rich Seam.”)

In designing the Curriculum Plan for Emmaus Catholic Primary School the above philosophy of learning and teaching has been at the forefront of our thinking.

There are a few key principles that have driven what we teach and how we teach it.

1. We will creatively use three ‘gateways’ to engage with our students. The Creative use of Physical space, the creative deployment of Personnel and the creative use of Learning Technologies.
2. We have adopted the mantra that we believe children, teachers and parents in our school community, “are the authors of our own future.”
3. That when engaging with students in their learning we need to consider the words of St Paul...

“Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” Philipians 4:8

As we consider the Australian Curriculum (AusVELS) our endeavour is to provide the students in our care with deep learning experiences. Therefore, rather than having our students complete numerous learning tasks, essentially only enabling them to ‘scratch the surface’ of their learning, our aim is to assist students and teachers to gain deeper and cross curricula understandings by engaging in project / problem based learning that honours their developmental levels.

Project-based learning using well considered provocations and / or deep questions are designed around the core strands of the Australian Curriculum.

School Structure

Emmaus Catholic Primary School functions in four levels with each of the levels having been named with local indigenous (Watheraug) language to capture the essence of what it is we aspire to in each level. Foundation (Prep) is known in our school as Vornda, meaning “Joy.” Years one / two are referred to as Kanamo, meaning “love.” Years three and four are named Mok-Borreeyn, meaning “peace” and our year five and six students are known as Nyereeka, meaning “dance.”

In designing curriculum delivery for our students, it is our endeavour to ensure that students are exposed in a detailed, in depth way to all key learning areas over the course of their two years in each level. (with the exception of Vornda)

Thus, “Project / Problem Based Inquiries” are structured in such a way as to allow our students to engage in a project, or projects, in an in depth manner and for extended periods of time. It is important to note that we are not bound by term dates for the start / conclusion of Project Based Inquiries.

Curriculum Design

AusVELS is designed to be implemented under three core headings:

1. Physical, Personal and Social Learning

- Health and Physical Education
- Interpersonal Development
- Personal Learning
- Civics and Citizenship

2. Discipline- Based Learning

- English
- Mathematics
- The Arts
- The Humanities (Economics, Geography, History)
- LOTE (Japanese, school wide)
- Science

3. Interdisciplinary Learning

- Communication
- Design, Creativity and Technology
- Information and Communication Technology
- Thinking Processes

Implementation

Our curriculum structures provide students with learning opportunities in all curriculum areas. Our school learning day begins at 9.00 am and concludes at 3.10 pm. Morning tea is scheduled from 11.00 - 11.30 am and lunch from 1.00 - 1.40 pm.

Consistent with contemporary teaching and learning the curriculum and learning opportunities we provide are project based, real to life in context and as personalised as possible, for each child. There are opportunities for whole class, small group and individual learning instruction each of which take place within the context of the three gateways (noted previously) we have adopted to more effectively personalise the learning programs of the children at Emmaus.

Thus, we ensure that learning is presented using the beautiful and plentiful physical spaces we have available to us, both on campus and off. On a daily basis we ensure that all staff, both teaching and otherwise are committed improving the performance of students whilst also developing the capacity of teachers. We also ensure that wherever possible contemporary practices are adopted in the usage of Information and Communication Technologies, practices that encourage creativity and innovation with the children.

School Improvement Framework

School improvement is always central to our teaching at Emmaus. To this end we have adopted a “School Improvement Framework” that has been deliberately designed under five key headings that we as a staff team have agreed to refer to when planning units of work.

1. **Pedagogical practice.** How we actively consider we might effectively engage all learners, the manner in which we encourage a desire in our students to actively and enthusiastically engage in their learning.
2. **Curriculum design.** A sound knowledge of where our students have come from in various discipline areas and importantly where they might go to next.
3. **Assessment.** A carefully assessed picture of the strengths of students and of their next step as learners.
4. **Language of Growth.** The way we encourage the students in our care to develop in the belief that they can always improve, that through effort, diligence, grit and a willingness to ‘have a go’ growth will occur.
5. **Environment.** How are we as teachers create the environment, physical, socially and emotionally to ensure that children feel inclined to give of their best as learners.

(see “Learning and Teaching at Emmaus Catholic Primary School” document included)

In designing units of work that provide opportunities for deep understanding / learning projects / inquiries for our students we ensure that each of the above five factors in our school improvement framework are referred to, considered carefully and planned for.