St Thomas the Apostle
Primary School

Core Curriculum
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This Core Curriculum document has been formulated to reflect the journey of curriculum development at St Thomas the Apostle School in light of the *Every Chance to Learn Curriculum Framework for ACT Schools* (2007), the Registration Panel Recommendations (2008) and the *Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority* (ACARA) release of versions 1-5 of the Australian Curriculum (2010-2013).

In 2008, the curriculum at St Thomas the Apostle was developed to meet the needs of the crowded curriculum and to implement the new ACT curriculum framework, *Every Chance to Learn*. At this time the panel commended staff for “their willingness to embrace change, modify current practices, and engage in professional dialogue...”

Since the introduction of the Australian Curriculum in 2010, staff have continued to embrace change by focusing on developing the curriculum at St Thomas the Apostle not only in line with the recommendations of the 2008 registration panel, but also in accord with changes in curriculum that have transpired in the ACT and Australia in general.

In 2010, the ACT Government as part of a cross-sectoral initiative produced *A Bridging Document for ACT Schools*, designed to “guide and support all teachers in the ACT as they move from using the ACT curriculum *Every Chance to Learn*, to implementing the Australian Curriculum”. In 2012, as an extension of the Bridging Document, the ACT Cross Sectoral Australian Curriculum Implementation Committee (ACIC) released a paper titled; *Updated Implementation Schedule*, this draft document sets out the familiarisation and engagement, consolidation, implementation and reporting timelines for Phase 1 and Phase 2 Learning Areas for Primary and Secondary ACT Schools.

Our Core Curriculum reflects the current version of the Australian Curriculum (5.0) which includes the learning areas of English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography F-10, in conjunction with the General Capabilities and the Cross-curriculum priorities. All other key learning areas are currently referenced to *Every Chance to Learn Curriculum Framework for ACT Schools* (2007) In light of this; our *Pathways to Learning* units reflect a broad curriculum base with content from both local and national documentation. While we are committed to learning that is authentic, purposeful and relevant, we also recognise that we will be unable to produce a truly integrated *Pathways Document* until all learning areas of the Australian Curriculum are released.

The Religious Education (RE) Programme at St Thomas the Apostle has been guided over the past ten years by the Archdiocesan Curriculum document, *Treasures New and Old* (TNO). Teachers have been involved in writing Praxis Units to complement the Curriculum. In 2009, the *Revised Treasures New and Old* Curriculum Units were released and have consequently formed part of our school RE Program. Documentation has now incorporated the Four Revised strands from the TNO syllabus which include Sacramental and liturgical content into our School Scope and Sequence. The implementation of the ACT curriculum framework, *Every Chance to Learn*, has made an impact on the document. We have rewritten our scope and sequence for grades using the new strands. The Staff completed Professional Development on the Revised TNO units and the implementation of ELA 26. We are focusing on implementing the Quality Teaching Framework and utilising the Catholic Education Office (CEO) RE assessment rubrics.
In Semester One, 2011, teachers were trained in *First Steps 2nd Edition Writing* and introduced to the document; Read On, *Implementing a Comprehensive Reading Approach in Archdiocesan Schools* (2010). In semester two 2011, after familiarisation with the English content of the on-line curriculum, staff developed a scope and sequence over four terms using the content descriptions and elaborations. The English curriculum is built around the three interrelated strands of Language, Literature and Literacy which are balanced and integrated in learning programs.

Together the three strands focus on developing students’ knowledge, understanding and skills in reading, viewing, speaking and listening, writing and creating. In 2012, with the introduction of new reporting requirements for English, the staff developed literacy planners highlighting the productive modes of speaking, writing and creating and the receptive modes of listening, reading and viewing. In developing the scope and sequence for English, staff also identified cross-curriculum priorities and opportunities for integration. The focus moving forward includes updating the scope and sequence to allow for multi-age structures, the teaching and learning of Writing and using the Quality Teaching Framework to improve classroom pedagogy.

In 2009, St Thomas the Apostle was part of the National Partnerships- School Improvement - Numeracy program. The Numeracy Block format and Agreed Practice for Mathematics was developed after extensive staff training undertaken during that year. The model of lesson planning and programming formed the school’s agreed practice for Numeracy Blocks commencing in Semester Two, 2010.

In 2011, the Australian Curriculum: Science was released and the school developed a scope and sequence using the Primary Investigation Units as a key resource. In 2012, the Australian Curriculum: History was released and teachers began to engage with the curriculum content. In 2012, teachers commenced the familiarisation and engagement stage of the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. To assist in this process, they were encouraged to use a mapping tool matching essential content elements from the two curriculum frameworks: *Every Chance to Learn* ELA 16, ELA 17 and ELA 18 to the Australian Curriculum (Mathematics). In 2013, with CEO assistance, the school is focusing on developing a school scope and sequence for the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics.

The Australian Government’s Building the Education Revolution (BER) Program, provided funds for updating the school buildings between the years of 2008-2010. The school now provides modern and appealing learning areas enhanced by Information and Communication Technology (ICT) resources. In 2011, there were changes in the school leadership team and in 2013 several new teachers have joined the St Thomas teaching staff.

The refurbishment of the school, new staff and the introduction of the Australian Curriculum including and up to Version 4.1 released in January 2013, has provided exciting and challenging opportunities for curriculum innovation and design at St Thomas the Apostle School. This core document is the beginning of a journey which will continue to evolve as further national documentation is released. The future focus for our school and all schools will be to find creative ways to link concepts and understandings to provide meaningful and purposeful integrated pathways to learning.
CORE CURRICULUM: Vision and Mission

Our Mission as the Community of St Thomas the Apostle, Kambah is to follow Jesus, The Way, The Truth, and the Life, by providing a welcoming and supportive learning environment where we strive to live the gospel values of love and compassion, forgiveness, justice and peace.

As staff of St Thomas the Apostle:

We believe that we share, celebrate and grow together as a Christ centred faith community to encourage a sense of belonging to God’s family.

We believe that positive relationships develop in an atmosphere of trust which recognises the dignity of each person.

We believe that it is our responsibility to provide quality education which allows the full potential of all in the community to be developed.

We believe that each person is unique and gifted and we will provide opportunities for experiencing success, happiness and fulfilment.

We believe that the Catholic School has a special role in the Parish community and therefore we aim to develop effective partnerships with parents, families and the wider community.

We believe in building a caring environment that encourages children to make informed choices while recognising that personal freedom is linked with responsibility.

As parents of St Thomas the Apostle:

We actively support the staff in their efforts to provide a quality education that promotes the development of the whole person.

We are dedicated to a genuine partnership between parents and the school and accept the responsibility that comes with it.

We welcome all families to the school community, treating all with equality.

We value effort and achievement equally while encouraging all in our community to strive for excellence in their endeavours.

We recognise the integral role the school plays in our children’s development.
The Catholic ethos of St Thomas the Apostle reflects the Core Curriculum which has at its heart, the school's Mission. Within the context of our Catholic community, it is the mission of all members of the school community to build the Kingdom of God by nurturing each other. Our community strives to provide each student with a powerful sense of self-worth and to instil in all members life-giving values and attitudes which encourage the search for meaning and truth.

The religious dimension of the Catholic faith is reflected in student/teacher relationships and in the values which guide our teaching and learning. Teachers promote the skills of reflection, critical thinking, problem solving, analysis and discernment. These skills are fundamental to effective decision-making and the formulation of personal attitudes, values and opinions.

Our Mission Statement values of love, compassion, forgiveness, justice and peace underpin the work of the teacher in the Catholic school. These are addressed both implicitly and explicitly in the interpersonal relationships of all community members.
The philosophy of teaching and learning at St Thomas the Apostle, finds its source in our School Vision; that the way to God is through Jesus, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. We are a professional learning community dedicated to providing the best possible spiritual, emotional, social and academic learning outcomes for all students. We do this by being the Way, the Truth and the Life.

**The Way**
We show our students the way to Jesus by entering into a relationship with them. We understand their needs and create a learning environment that is supportive, safe and intellectually stimulating.

**The Truth**
We lead by the wisdom of Christ’s teaching, endeavouring to use sound pedagogy and evidence-based practice to plan and present a rich curriculum. We value differentiation and inquiry and an environment where all learners have a voice.

**The Life**
We are all part of a vibrant community that builds the Kingdom of God. We set personal, professional and community goals and are life-giving in our interactions with each other.
We show our students the way to Jesus by entering into a relationship with them. We understand their needs and create a learning environment that is supportive, safe and intellectually stimulating.

The purpose and goals of curriculum at St Thomas the Apostle are to develop each student as a person, learner, community member and contributor to society whose values are based on the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. Our goal is to provide a curriculum that will develop each student as:

...... a person
The curriculum at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School provides the foundation for each student's intellectual, physical, social, emotional, moral and spiritual development, enabling them to discover and develop their capabilities and talents through a balanced education of the whole person created in the image of God.
““The person of each individual human being….is at the heart of Christ's teaching: This is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.”

Pope John Paul II Coming of 3rd Millennium

...... a learner
The curriculum at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School is Christ centred, fostering within the learner knowledge, attitudes and values that are life giving and transformative, promoting the search for meaning and truth. The curriculum will help the students to understand themselves and the Catholic faith tradition and to have an appreciation of the faith traditions of others.
““The various school subjects do not represent only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered.”

The Catholic School (1997)

...... a community member
Curriculum in a Catholic school prepare students with the knowledge, understandings, skills and values to be active, informed citizens inspired by the reign of God to participate in the life of the Church and serve in the social and economic life of the wider community.
“the Catholic School can be of such service in developing the mission of the People of God and in promoting dialogue between the Church and the community at large to the advantage of both....

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (1997)

......and a contributor to society
Curriculum in a Catholic school is based on a vision of society which develops students as critical thinkers, problem solvers, innovators, and people of justice. It supports students to apply their faith, knowledge and skills to their relationships, their experiences beyond school and to contribute to the local, national and global society.
“Catholic schools emphasise the contribution of education to the common good of the Australian community.

National Catholic Education Commission (2009)
We lead by the wisdom of Christ’s teaching, endeavouring to use sound pedagogy and evidence-based practice to plan and present a rich curriculum. We value differentiation and inquiry and an environment where all learners have a voice.

In coming to know Jesus, the way, the truth and the life, Religious Education has a central place in the life of St Thomas the Apostle School. While Religious Education has a prime focus on knowledge, it aspires to be genuinely transformative;

“The learning outcome of Christian Religious Education should be more than what the western world typically means by ‘knowledge’; that is to engage the whole ‘being’ of people, their heads, hearts and life-styles, and is to inform, form and transform their identity and agency in the world.”

(Groome, 1991, cited in Treasure New and Old, Core Document p.19)

St Thomas the Apostle is a faith community and an educational institution. As a professional learning community, the school continues to implement the Australian Curriculum. The Australian Curriculum sets out seven General capabilities and three Cross-Curriculum Capabilities which underpin all learning. They encompass skills, behaviours and dispositions that students develop and apply to content knowledge and that support them in becoming successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens. We would see Religious Education at the heart of the following diagram:

(General Capabilities in the Australian Curriculum - January 2013)
In conjunction with the General Capabilities, the Australian Curriculum also gives special attention to three priorities: one national priority, one regional priority and one global priority. These will immerse students in learning beyond their local context.

The three cross-curriculum priorities are:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures; to ensure that all young Australians are given the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, their significance for Australia and the impact these have had and continue to have on our world. This is a national focus.
- Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia; to reflect the importance of young people knowing about Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia. As young people learn about and develop a better understanding of the countries and cultures of the region, they appreciate the economic, political and cultural interconnections that Australia has with the Asia region. This is a regional focus.
- Sustainability; to develop in young people an appreciation of the need for more sustainable patterns of living, and to build capacities for thinking, valuing and acting necessary to create a more sustainable future. This is a global focus.

The “Every Chance to Learn” Curriculum Framework for ACT Schools sets out ten principles which underpin the curriculum framework for ACT schools and the curriculum decisions that schools need to make when exercising their school-based curriculum responsibility. The first two principles relate to the core of what is essential learning for all students from preschool to Year 10 and the responsibility of individual schools to make decisions about the organisation of the curriculum for their students to maximise opportunities to access learning about the Essential Learning Achievements in the curriculum framework.

The remaining eight principles provide and support schools in making school-based curriculum decisions on the basis of the framework.

The staff at St Thomas the Apostle have reviewed, discussed and acknowledged these principles as those which continue to guide the curriculum decision making at St Thomas’ school.

The principles are:

1. The Framework of the curriculum should identify learning that is essential for all ACT students.
2. Schools should be responsible for their students’ curriculum.
3. Curriculum should be based on the belief that every student can learn.
4. Curriculum should focus on maximising student learning.
5. Curriculum should provide every student with sustained opportunities to learn.
6. Curriculum should promote depth of student understanding and expertise.
7. Curriculum should be equitable and inclusive.
8. Curriculum decisions should be based in ethical practice.
9. Curriculum should be coherent and aligned.
10. Curriculum should be dynamic and responsive.
As learning is an integral part of life, the formal curriculum should be meaningful and related to real-world experiences and integrated, where authentically possible. The teaching and learning process should contain elements of inquiry learning, repetitive learning, hands-on experiences and explicit teaching and revision, exposing children to a variety of ways to apply each new concept in real-life and problem-solving situations. It should involve modelling, guided practice, group practice and independent practice that is relevant and caters for all the children’s needs including support and extension. Learning should be an enjoyable experience for all. It should be exciting, rewarding and challenging. It should be accessible to all children and empower them with a sense of achievement and success.

At St Thomas the Apostle, we value contemporary research to align our vision and mission in the pursuit of transformative pedagogies:

- We believe in devising learning pathways that begin with a purpose in mind and achieve a variety of learning experiences for all students (Wiggins and McTighe, Understanding by Design).
- We value current research linked to the way the brain functions and how this can impact teaching and learning across a range of curriculum areas (David Sousa, How the Brain Learns Mathematics).
- We acknowledge that teachers are models and ultimately aim to develop in students the capacity to take responsibility for their own learning (Pearson and Gallagher, Gradual Release of Responsibility).
- We understand that making meaning in a variety of social contexts is crucial to our students (Christie and Derewianka).

Our commitment to Integrated Inquiry (Kath Murdoch, 2007) allows learning to be relevant and meaningful. Integration enables students to utilise acquired skills and prior knowledge in different contexts. It provides opportunities for the demonstration of skills and understanding in varied learning domains. Students make connections between content learnt at school and other life experiences. At St Thomas’ we believe that authentic learning occurs when all curriculum areas are connected and learning tasks show this connection. Authentic learning is purposeful and related to the life experiences of students.

We believe integrated curriculum:

- maintains a clear and discrete view of a discipline
- motivates students to see connections between ideas, leading to the review, re-conceptualisation and assimilation of ideas within a curriculum area
- gives attention to several areas at once, leading to enriched and enhanced learning
- sequences learning facilitating transfer of learning across content areas
- shares instructional experiences
- threads learning so students know how they are learning, facilitating future transfer of learning
- encourages students to see interconnectedness and interrelationships among curriculum areas, students are motivated as they see these connections
- provides learning that is proactive with the learner stimulated by new information, skills or concepts
- encourages depth and breadth of learning
- provides more quality time for curriculum exploration.
Quality Teaching in a Catholic School
The teaching staff at St Thomas the Apostle are presently engaged in learning about, and learning to deliver, a model of teaching and learning that encompasses the essential characteristics of teaching in a Catholic school. These characteristics are enlivened by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers and the Quality Teaching Framework.

The Quality Teaching Framework identifies three dimensions of the pedagogical process that have positive effects on learning outcomes for all students. These dimensions are Intellectual Quality; Quality Learning Environment; and Significance.

Intellectual Quality
The Intellectual Quality dimension recognises that high quality student outcomes result if learning is focused on intellectual work that is challenging, centred on significant concepts and ideas, and requires substantial cognitive and academic engagement with deep knowledge. In order to develop these characteristics in classroom and assessment practices, the teachers at St Thomas the Apostle recognise that it is important for themselves to have a deep understanding of the knowledge they are addressing with their students and to seek that depth in the work of their students.

**Intellectual Quality is central to effective teaching.**

Quality Learning Environments
The Quality Learning Environment creates conditions where students and teachers work productively in an environment clearly focused on learning. The teachers at St Thomas the Apostle recognise that learning is improved when the classroom or other learning environments provide high levels of support for learning. This dimension of pedagogy draws attention to the specific need to support learning, as well as the need to support students in classrooms. Teachers understand a positive environment to be a caring, safe and supportive place and recognise the value of this environment in being supportive of learning.

**Quality Learning Environments are central to effective learning.**

Significance
To achieve high quality outcomes for each student, students need to see why, and to understand that, their learning matters. The significance of students’ learning lies in the connections between and among the students as individuals and social beings, the nature of the work at hand, and the contexts in which such work matters.

To make these connections clear teachers at St Thomas the Apostle endeavor to link lessons to: the prior knowledge from which students work; the social, demographic and cultural backgrounds of students, families and the local community; the future contexts in which school learning would be applied; and the differing fields of knowledge with which teachers and students interact. To build effective connections therefore, teachers aim to work from a combination of their knowledge of the specific subject matter they are teaching and their knowledge of the cognitive, social and cultural backgrounds of their students.

**Significance is central to effective teaching and learning.**
At St Thomas the Apostle School teachers also acknowledge that quality teaching and learning is fostered by:

- quality relationships between teacher and student, and amongst students themselves
- flexible teaching approaches designed to respond to individual differences in students’ needs, abilities, interests and learning styles
- the encouragement of students to engage in independent planning, thinking and learning
- the active engagement of students in activities that are purposeful and relevant
- genuine interest in and enthusiasm about the topic on the part of the teacher
- critical reflection by the teacher on his/her teaching practice, and by the student on his/her progress in learning
- a classroom atmosphere that is characterised by interest, challenge and high expectations that are developmentally appropriate
- the assessment of student progress
- students being assisted to make connections between old and new experiences and knowledge, and between different areas of knowledge
- students being encouraged to try new approaches and to solve problems in different ways
- teachers undertaking regular professional development via
  - Professional Reading
  - Staff Meetings
  - Professional Development courses.

(Treasures New and Old Core Document Religious Education Curriculum K – 12, Catholic Education Office Canberra Goulburn, 2000, pp56 – 58)

At St Thomas the Apostle School teachers also understand that learning should be appropriate to each student’s current stage of development. Therefore teachers:

- cater for the variety of developmental levels that may exist among a group of students, providing a flexible learning situation where there is a variety of opportunities for involvement
- understand that whilst the student’s readiness to proceed to new work will depend on previous knowledge and understanding, this does not mean that there is an absolute order in which learning should proceed for all students. There are many paths to understanding
- respond to emergent opportunities to capitalise on the student’s interests and needs and vary the intended sequence of learning experiences
- should proceed, where possible, from the concrete to the abstract. Concepts should be continually developed and consolidated through a wide variety of learning experiences
- monitor the development of understanding and should, as a general principle, precede a requirement for recall of factual information and skills through meaningful practice and enjoyable drill.

We acknowledge that students differ from each other in temperament, ability, achievement, maturity, style of learning and in many other ways. However, they share a common journey towards maturity passing through recognisable stages of growth.

(Treasures New and Old Core Document Religious Education Curriculum K – 12, Catholic Education Office Canberra Goulburn, 2000, p. 43)
CORE CURRICULUM:

We are all part of a vibrant community that builds the Kingdom of God. We set personal, professional and community goals and are life-giving in our interactions with each other.

Staff
The School Vision and Mission is enlivened by the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. The St Thomas the Apostle Staff have engaged with the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers since their introduction in 2011.
As part of whole school professional planning, teachers set personal and professional goals aligned with the Australian Professional Standards and use the Quality Teaching Framework as a guide. Teachers maintain a professional journal recording professional development and evaluations of courses attended. The following statements link the school's vision and mission with the seven Australian Professional Standards for Teachers.

I Am the Way
I show my students the way to Jesus by entering into a relationship with them. I understand their needs and I create a learning environment that is supportive, safe and intellectually stimulating.

Professional Standard 1
Know students and how they learn.

Professional Standard 4
Create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments.

I Am the Truth
I lead by the wisdom of Christ's teaching, I endeavour to use sound pedagogy and evidence-based practice to plan and present a rich curriculum. I value differentiation and inquiry and an environment where all learners have a voice.

Professional Standard 2
Know the content and how to teach it.

Professional Standard 3
Plan for and implement effective teaching and learning.

Professional Standard 5
Assess, provide feedback and report on student learning.

I Am the Life
I am part of a vibrant community that builds the Kingdom of God; I set personal and professional goals and am life-giving in my interaction with all community members.

Professional Standard 6
Engage in professional learning.

Professional Standard 7
Engage professionally with colleagues, parents/ carers and the community.

The school Leadership Team develops annual management and improvement plans in order to cater for teaching and learning needs. The School Community Council supports the school in providing further resources where needed. Parents are involved in many ways throughout the school including Fete committees, Grounds committees, Sport coaching, Finance Committees, helping out at the Canteen and assisting teachers in the classroom.
At St Thomas the Apostle agreed practice and subject scope and sequences are being formulated for each learning area of the Australian Curriculum as documentation is released.

The following flow chart describes agreed practice for planning teaching and learning programs.

Teachers refer to the Australian Curriculum learning area content that aligns with their students’ chronological age as the starting point in planning teaching and learning programs.

Teachers take account of the range of their students’ current levels of learning, strengths, goals and interests and personalise learning where necessary through adjustments to the teaching and learning program, according to individual learning need, by:

- drawing from learning area content at different levels along the Foundation to Year 10 sequence
- using the general capabilities and/or cross-curriculum priorities to adjust the learning focus of the age-equivalent learning area content
- aligning individual learning goals with age-equivalent learning area content.

Teachers assess students’ progress through the Australian Curriculum in relation to achievement standards. Some students’ progress will be assessed in relation to their individual learning goals.

Starting with learning area content that aligns with students’ chronological age enables teachers to:

- plan dignified teaching and learning programs that are respectful of their students’ age
- develop rigorous teaching and learning programs that will challenge and engage all students
- ensure all students progress through the Australian Curriculum.

Personalising the teaching and learning program enables teachers to:

- select age-equivalent content that is meaningful and respects students’ individual needs, strengths and interests
- use their knowledge of students’ learning and support needs to make adjustments in relation to curriculum, instruction and/or environment to enable access to the teaching and learning program.
CORE CURRICULUM: Assessment and Reporting

Rationale

At St Thomas the Apostle our understanding and implementation of assessment practices is based on the following definition:

‘Assessment is the process of gathering and interpreting evidence to make judgments about student learning. It is the crucial link between learning outcomes, content and teaching and learning activities. Assessment is used by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are at in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there. The purpose of assessment is to improve learning, inform teaching, help students achieve the highest standards they can and provide meaningful reports on students’ achievement.’

The Cross Sectoral Assessment Working Party, June 2011, Assessment in ACT Schools

At St Thomas the Apostle we believe that quality assessment and feedback, delivered in a timely and appropriate manner, can have a significant impact on student learning outcomes. It provides a sound evidence base for our decisions regarding the effectiveness of our teaching programs, the prior knowledge and attainment levels of students and effectively informs our reporting process.

Aims

At St Thomas the Apostle we aim to use best practice in assessment which includes:

- having a clear understanding that the purpose of assessment is for students to develop and improve in their learning and for teachers to plan and teach effectively
- the use of diagnostic tools to determine what the students already know, understand and can do
- ongoing assessment through a variety of differentiated tasks and strategies, both formal and informal, so that sufficient evidence is gathered to make sound judgments about individual students’ learning
- students being actively involved in, and having some control over, their learning
- providing learning goals that are explicit in that students know what they are learning
- why the learning is important, what products are expected, and how they will be assessed
- using assessment tasks that are differentiated through offering quality choices of ways for students to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and skills
- assessment tasks and strategies that are fair and enable all students to demonstrate their learning achievements
- the giving of specific and timely feedback, for example, through conversations between students and the teacher, written feedback, peer assessment and self-assessment
- students’ work being discussed and moderated through shared concepts and language
- using assessment tasks that are integrated/embedded in instruction so that they are a planned and an essential part of teaching and learning, using authentic assessment tasks that align with the ways such knowledge and skills would be used in the real world.

The Cross Sectoral Assessment Working Party, June 2011, Assessment in ACT Schools
Types of Assessment

Assessment of the Australian Curriculum, ‘Every Chance to Learn’ ACT curriculum framework and Treasures New and Old, takes place for different purposes, including:

- ongoing formative assessment within classrooms for the purposes of monitoring learning and providing feedback
- for teachers to inform their teaching, and for students to inform their learning
- summative assessment for the purposes of twice-yearly reporting by schools to parents and carers on the progress and achievement of students
- annual testing of Years 3 and 5 students’ levels of achievement in aspects of literacy and numeracy, conducted as part of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN)
- periodic sample testing of specific learning areas within the Australian Curriculum as part of the National Assessment Program (NAP).

Agreed Practice

In order to report to parents, to develop consistency across year levels and to track student achievement from grade to grade, the school has implemented the following procedures to monitor and record student achievement:

- Formal, school developed, reporting on social and learning behaviours at the end of Term One.
- Formal reporting, using the CEO On-Track A-E reports, on academic achievement and social and learning behaviours at the end of Terms Two and Four.
- Student/Parent Learning Showcase and Conversation at the end of Term Three.
- A year-long formalised schedule of standardised and diagnostic testing for Literacy and Numeracy across all grades.
- A student ‘Assessment Data Tracking Sheet’ for all students in the school that provides evidence of their achievement in these standardised and diagnostic tests, from year to year.
- Teacher maintained formative and summative assessment records for all curriculum areas, focussing on programmed units of work.
- Teachers in the same year levels programing collaboratively for assessment and moderating work samples between different classrooms.
Analysis of this data relating to student achievement is undertaken in a number of ways, depending on the assessment task.

Examples of the type of data collection that occurs at St Thomas the Apostle Primary and the way this data is analysed includes:

- **NAPLAN data** is used by the Leadership Team to inform the school strategic plan and to develop areas of priority for development. This data is also utilised by teachers to inform their future teaching and learning programs.

- **Standardised and diagnostic school assessment** is analysed by the Learning Support Teacher, learning support staff and teaching staff. It is then used to identify students at risk of falling below standards, or who will benefit from enrichment and extension support. As part of identifying students with significant areas of concern through this assessment process, the teacher and learning support teacher will report as outlined in the Learning Support Program. Teachers will also use this data to form same or mixed ability classroom grouping and to inform their reporting feedback to parents.

- **Teacher maintained assessment records** are analysed by teachers and their grade colleagues to develop further teaching and learning programs, to identify students who need further assistance or extension, and to provide evidence for student reports. Much of this data is also used to provide appropriate and timely feedback to students on their learning.
Rationale

‘The Catholic school’s core purpose is unashamedly religious. Through the total cultural experience it offers, it shares in the Church’s work of evangelisation, it provides those elements of catechesis that are appropriate to individual students, and it teaches Catholic beliefs and practices in a systematic fashion in programs of classroom–based religious education.’

(TNO Core Document: Section 2 p.17)

In proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom of God, St Thomas the Apostle Primary School has Religious Education as the core of our curriculum. We are guided by the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Treasures New and Old Curriculum K-6, writing units of work in the Shared Christian Praxis format which provide students with the opportunity to know and understand Catholic Faith, practices and traditions. In this manner we seek to inform students about Catholicism. However through praxis, students are given encouragement to form a loving relationship with God and then to transform themselves and those they meet through a living out of that relationship.

Thus our Religious Education Curriculum is not an isolated area. We seek out the religious dimension of all curriculum areas by cultivating a climate of reflection, discernment, decision–making and action, and by nurturing the development of an informed conscience and dignity of the whole person. We do this through living a culture of faith, recognising our partnership with St Thomas the Apostle Parish and the wider church community, and by seeking to continue the church’s mission of evangelisation in our world.

Aims

The Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Treasures New and Old Curriculum Documents aim to ensure that students:

- develop an appreciation of the love of God revealed through the person of Jesus Christ, the wonders of God’s creation and the dignity of the human person
- promote growth in self-knowledge and in knowledge of the life, faith tradition and mission of the Catholic Church
- increase understanding of the nature of religion and of different religions
- foster skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking, judging and deciding how to act in accordance with conscience
- develop the capacity to critique the surrounding culture in the light of the Catholic Faith and Tradition.

Religious Education aims to develop students’ religious literacy in the light of the Catholic tradition, so that they develop as people, learners, community members and contributors to society. Religious Education promotes the development of the knowledge, skills and values which students need to participate as active lifelong learners within Church and community contexts. Students are actively involved in constructing understandings of the Catholic tradition as well as acknowledging other religious traditions, the nature of religion and its place in life and Australian society. (Supplement to Treasures New and Old, 2009, p.7)
In 2008 the Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn published an Essential Learning Achievement for the Teaching of Religion in alignment with the essential learning areas as described in the *ACT Curriculum Framework, Every Chance to Learn*.

**ELA 26: The student knows, understands and values the living faith tradition and mission of the Catholic Church.**

This Essential Learning Achievement is at the heart of Catholic Education, defining its culture, its curriculum and its classroom-based Religious Education programs.

The Catholic Church is the gathering of people who profess faith in the risen Jesus and who try to live their lives inspired by His message of justice and loving service. The Church’s mission is to proclaim and spread the Gospel so that people might be renewed and transformed by a personal encounter with Jesus.

Tradition refers to the living experience of the Christian community, a living faith believed, shared, and handed on. This is expressed in various ways: in the worship and Sacraments of the community, in Scripture, in definitions and statements of belief, in music and art, in theology, in various spiritualities and in the life stories of individuals and communities.

This ELA and associated Markers of Progress are contained in the Supplement to Treasures New and Old, 2009, p.31.

**Components of the Religious Education Curriculum**

**A) Teaching Catholic Beliefs and Practices**

‘*Treasures New and Old’* Units (TNO)

The Essential Content of TNO is organised into four strands, with each class being taught a unit from all four strands each year:

**God and God’s Creation** is concerned with how understandings of God and the created world shape Christian beliefs, Church teachings and Church practice. In this strand students have opportunities to explore and clarify personal and social values of respect, cooperation, responsibility and fairness.

**Jesus and Discipleship** is concerned with making meaning of Scriptural texts in order to understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. In this strand students have opportunities to explore and clarify personal and social values of compassion, service, and forgiveness.

**Church in the World** is concerned with how the mystery of God in the world has been understood and expressed by the Church and the implications it has for contemporary living. In this strand students have opportunities to explore and clarify personal and social values of truth, integrity and justice.

**Prayer and Celebration** is concerned with Sacraments of the Church, prayer, ritual and spirituality and how these are expressed in Church and other contexts. In this strand students have opportunities to develop wellbeing and to explore and clarify personal and social values of peace, freedom and tolerance.
Teachers at St Thomas the Apostle have developed a Scope and Sequence of Religious Education units based on TNO guidelines and our class multi-age structure. This document is located on the local area network (LAN) P:

**Sacramental Programs**

The sacraments are celebrated at a parish level at St Thomas the Apostle. The Religious Education Coordinator (REC) and class teachers support the sacramental program by coordinating and hosting many of the events and with classroom teaching, usually arising from a TNO unit.

Confirmation – Years 5 and 6; odd calendar years; early Term 2.
Eucharist – Year 3; yearly; mid Term 3
Reconciliation – Year 2; yearly; early Term 4

**Teacher Programs**

Religious Education Programs give detailed and specific information about content and assessment in the classroom. Programs provide opportunities for teacher reflection and evaluation. Programs are retained on the LAN P: each year.

**Teaching for Effective Learning of Religious Education**

Teaching and learning programs are written in a Shared Christian Praxis format as detailed in the TNO Core Document: Syllabus 2000 p.59. Resources to support teachers in the writing of praxis units which reflect a deep knowledge of Religious content; understanding of scripture; and quality teaching, learning and assessment practices are plentiful. Key resources include:

a) Sample units written in praxis format. These are attached to the revised TNO unit outlines.
b) Examples of the structure and activities for each of the five praxis ‘movements’. These are located on the LAN P: and in the purple covered booklet ‘TNO Teaching Strategies’.
c) Quality teaching strategies, including ‘Studying Scripture Using KITE’ are located on the CEO website at [http://www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au/learning/Pages/TNOTeachingStrategies.aspx](http://www.ceocg.catholic.edu.au/learning/Pages/TNOTeachingStrategies.aspx). New resources are being added to the RE Curriculum LIFE page.
d) During 2013 draft assessment rubrics have been released to guide quality teaching in the area of assessment. These files are located on the LAN P:
e) The REC Office hosts many of the school resources including texts, music and equipment. New resources are purchased regularly.
f) Teachers have access to the ACU library. They can borrow online and utilise the internal courier to transport resources.

Teachers develop programs that are of a professional standard. The Religious Education Coordinator, as well as other members of the Leadership Team, regularly monitor programs and engage in professional dialogue on various levels including individual feedback, module meetings and staff meetings.
Assessment

Assessment in Religious Education needs to be rich and to cater for differing learning styles and needs, so all students can demonstrate achievement. The quality assessment practices that are used in other curriculum areas are applied to assessment in Religious Education. Student achievement is measured against unit outcomes and is both formative and summative in nature. Sample assessment rubrics are available on LAN P:

In Religious Education particular emphasis will be given to approaches that support and strengthen the Shared Christian Praxis style as set out below. Further guidelines for assessment, reporting and evaluating can be found in Treasures New and Old Core Document: Curriculum, p. 77-89

A praxis orientation, in particular, directs the teacher to indicate that a student:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movements of Shared Christian Praxis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● reflects on personal experience, values and prejudices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● is willing to respectfully hear and consider another’s point of view</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● has a knowledge and understanding of the Christian Story and Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● makes connections between the experiences and actions of others and his or her own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● uses imagination to express insights in words and symbols</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● brings ideas into a meaningful whole.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Treasures New and Old Core Curriculum, p. 82)

B) Living a Culture of Faith

Overarching Yearly Theme

Since our 30th year celebrations in 2007, St Thomas the Apostle School has sought to enrich and focus the spiritual development of the entire school community through a yearly theme. 2007 – 2009: Values focus titled Pathways, Footprints and Hands that Unite. 2010 – Present: Three-year cycle of ‘The Way, The Truth The Life’ arising from our school motto, seeking to build our knowledge of scriptures and the liturgical year. 2012 and 2013 have closely aligned with ‘The year of Grace’ (focus on scripture) and ‘The year of Faith’ (focus on prayer), while maintaining our 3-year cycle.
Each year the REC plans the Overarching Theme in consultation with the Leadership Team and RE Committee. The theme is marked by a scripture passage, symbol and hymn which are used throughout the year in school and class prayer, newsletters and school displays. Classroom lessons around the year theme or smaller term or weekly focus invites individual response and interaction with the theme.

Prayer

Prayer is very important within our school community in building and strengthening our faith. It allows us as a school, class or individual to join with others and share our intentions. The teaching of a variety of approaches to prayer allows the students to practise prayer and deepen their relationship with God.

We pray as a school community regularly. We start the week with a formal prayer service ‘Monday Prayer’ in our parish church. Classes are rostered to prepare our prayer which follows the liturgical year and a set format. Tuesday to Thursday mornings we pray our School Prayer at morning line-up. On Friday mornings grades gather together inside for a prayer usually focused on world or classroom happenings and curriculum. We pray our School Prayer at Friday afternoon assemblies. Parents are invited to all our prayers. Whole school prayer time allows the students, staff and parents of St Thomas the Apostle to join in witnessing and strengthening their faith together.

Classroom prayer is an important part of our daily routine. Classes say grace before meals, pray to finish the day and pray in various forms arising from TNO units. Children are encouraged to join in the choice and preparation of classroom prayers. Teachers are supported to celebrate prayer in all its forms with their classes. Prayer Strategies by Beth Nolan, Coming Home: A Guide to Teaching Christian Meditation to Children by E. Christie and our liturgical music are well used resources.

Teachers are provided with items including glass crosses, children’s bible and a small prayer cloth in the Liturgical colour for the church season e.g. green for Ordinary time, red for Pentecost, purple for Lent etc. Children are encouraged to use these to set up and maintain a prayer space within their classroom which reflects the current liturgical calendar or TNO unit. A scope and sequence of traditional prayers to be taught at each grade level is located on the LAN P:

Staff Prayers are shared every Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8.30am in the staff room, where all staff gather and are rostered to organise Staff Prayers once per semester. Our staff is encouraged to listen and reflect on a scripture passage and share a spiritual moment whether through prayer, song, music, meditation or the use of symbols. Staff prayers follow the church calendar eg. A Lenten program. In order to live as a Christian faith community we must always keep our own life balanced and focus on the physical, intellectual and spiritual parts of our being. Staff meetings and Leadership Team meetings always begin with a prayer or reflection.

“We look to those involved in our schools to ensure that their very significant resources achieve, as far as possible, what the Catholic community rightly expects: young men and women of character and faith whose individual gifts are nurtured to their highest potential so that they can contribute effectively to Church, society and culture.” (Catholic Schools at the Crossroads 2007)
Masses and Reconciliation

Dates for masses are set on the term calendar after consultation with our Parish Priest. We celebrate whole school masses for Holy Days of Obligation and special feast days, including St Thomas on the 3rd July and special events such as beginning a year and graduation. The special season of Lent and Holy Week are celebrated with whole-school prayer events. Each class is allocated two masses per year, in a grade or buddy-class group. Class masses are at 9.30am on Wednesdays or Thursdays as part of the parish mass.

Staff are asked to organise the mass with child-centred readings and songs guided by the REC in accordance with the Church ORDO for the year. All masses are presented using the PowerPoint Program.

Students are encouraged to read, write prayers, learn songs, create artistic displays and learn liturgical dances or dramatisations to join in the mass. The mass PowerPoint needs to be given to Father several days prior to the actual mass. Mass guidelines are located on LAN P:

Catholic children in Years 3-6 receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent and Advent each year. Dates are set on the term calendar after consultation with our Parish Priest. Teachers, supported by the REC, prepare children for the second-rite using a prepared Reconciliation Liturgy and Examination of Conscience reflections.

Charity Collections

Throughout the year we seek ways to live out our mission of witness in the world by supporting Catholic and local charities and events.

Yearly support is given to the Caritas Lenten Appeal, St Vincent de Paul Winter and Christmas Appeals and Catholic Mission Children’s Appeal. We participate in local appeals, such as Cancer Council, in response to staff or class experiences. We seek innovative and fun ways to make the giving a community building experience.

Wellbeing

The wellbeing of staff, students and parents is a vital component of living our faith. The Wellbeing Team, headed by the Principal, REC, School Welfare Officer and School Counsellor oversees a number of programs including student counselling, class parent representatives and KidsMatters.

Our Student Management and Wellbeing Policy has at its core a Catholic Ethos for human dignity and The School-wide Positive Behaviours framework.

Community events, such as Mother’s and Father’s Day breakfasts; family activities during Week 7 of each term; School Community Council BBQ’s and working bees are free events hosted by the school to promote community. Our biggest event, the FETE, while not free, unites school and parish in a day of festivities, fun and hard work, raising funds for school and parish.
Staff Spirituality, Wellbeing and Faith Development

The Staff at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School seek to maintain the wellbeing of the whole person; mind, body and soul. We believe that our faith journey is always growing and maturing. We seek to participate within our school community, in harmony with our environment, to create healthy, loving and active people.

We maintain our staff spirituality through:

- Staff Morning Prayer and scripture readings every Tuesday and Thursday.
- Staff and family support with gifts of meals, cards, flowers etc.
- Staff Retreats that are organised on a bi-annual cycle. On the even calendar year a venue ‘out of school’ is booked to allow staff to stay together and a visiting facilitator talks on a specific spiritual topic. The retreat usually goes for 1 ½ days. Our retreat in the odd calendar year is a local, one day retreat. All staff are encouraged to participate fully.
- Staff and School Masses that are organised to support our faith journey and interaction with each other as a team.
- The Staff Social Committee which is made up of a variety of staff to oversee a variety of social events to support staff wellbeing.
- Staff dinners each term to allow all staff a social opportunity out of school hours.
- Celebrations of staff birthdays and significant events with morning or afternoon teas and gatherings after school hours, mid-term lunches and end-of-term breakfasts.
- Staff fundraising to encourage support of the wider community such as St Vincent de Paul, Biggest Morning Tea and Christmas Raffles.
- Professional Development opportunities made available to all staff through though the CEO calendar and Leadership Team.
- Encouragement and support of staff to gain higher levels of accreditation and further study in Religious Education.
- Staff supported by the Principal and RE Coordinator to take on leadership within the school, via RE committees and sacramental roles.
- The Staff Library which is maintained by the REC. Spirituality texts and well-being Resources are being collected and shown to staff.
- Sharing of web resource such as www.loyola3minuteretreats, www.liturgyplanning, www.liturgyplanningimages,
- Encouragement of staff to look after self – though prayer, reflections, physical activity, good health and fun.
Rationale

English is the dominant language used in Australia and within a school context. It is the foundation of all teaching and learning experiences. It is a vehicle for written and spoken communication and is used to express reality and to understand the world within a particular social context.

The study of Standard Australian English 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.

Teachers at St Thomas the Apostle have adopted the Australian Curriculum: English, together with a variety of successful pedagogies, to inform their teaching practice. Students are supported to learn, listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect critically on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts. Students are supported to engage accurately, fluently and purposefully with texts according to their purpose.

At St Thomas the Apostle, our English Curriculum values the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Australian society and to its contemporary literature. It also emphasises Australia’s links to Asia.

We recognise that the English Curriculum at St Thomas needs to cater for a diversity of learners. Some of these learners will include students with disabilities (SWDs), students for whom English is an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) and students with specific educational needs.

It is our aim to encourage all students to develop a passion for literacy. Our ultimate hope is to inspire a love of literature that sustains and ignites the imagination in a life-long learning journey.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: English aims to ensure that students:

- learn to listen to, read, view, speak, write, create and reflect on increasingly complex and sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of contexts with accuracy, fluency and purpose
- appreciate, enjoy and use the English language in all its variations and develop a sense of its richness and power to evoke feelings, convey information, form ideas, facilitate interaction with others, entertain, persuade and argue
- understand how Standard Australian English works in its spoken and written forms and in combination with non-linguistic forms of communication to create meaning
- develop interest and skills in inquiring into the aesthetic aspects of texts, and develop an informed appreciation of literature.
Agreed Practice: Components of the English Curriculum

Teachers at St Thomas the Apostle have developed a conceptual framework using the Australian Curriculum: English, this is expressed as our English Scope and Sequence and is located on the LAN P: The teaching of English at St Thomas the Apostle occurs in a daily literacy block where the elements of quality teaching i.e. intellectual quality, quality environment and significance are implicit.

The English curriculum is built around the three interrelated strands of Language, Literature and Literacy. Teaching and learning programs balance and integrate all three strands. Together the three strands focus on developing students’ receptive skills of listening, reading and viewing, as well as their expressive and productive skills of speaking, writing and creating. Learning in English builds on concepts, skills and processes developed in earlier years, and teachers will revisit, strengthen and develop these as needed.

Teaching for Effective Learning of English

Major teaching resources for the English curriculum at St Thomas the Apostle include the Australian Curriculum: English, First Steps 2nd Edition Reading, Writing, Read On and Write On. Teachers use a wide variety of resources and strategies to cater for diverse learning styles and to provide for differentiation in learning opportunities. Teachers implement inquiry methods which support an integrated approach to learning and teaching. English Programs reflect the Gradual Release Model for teaching and learning and the processes and practices outlined in the Read On Document, Implementing a Comprehensive Reading Approach in Archdiocesan Schools (2010)

As part of the Gradual Release Model, teachers incorporate modelled, shared, guided and independent tasks in reading and writing. They engage in explicit instruction of comprehension strategies to assist students to interpret, integrate, critique, infer, analyse, connect and evaluate ideas and texts. The explicit teaching of reading procedures and strategies to develop a balanced Class Reading Program are set out in Part 3 of the Read On Document. Teachers have also adopted the strategies suggested in this section for a successful Home Reading program.

Teachers develop a spelling program informed by the Conventions elements of First Steps Writing 2nd Edition. As part of this program students learn important aspects of grammar and punctuation. Handwriting is taught formally in the infants grades using the NSW Foundation Style. In senior grades students are encouraged to develop a legible, neat, personal handwriting style.

Teachers at St Thomas the Apostle have developed separate scope and sequences for Grammar, Spelling and Handwriting that guide teaching and learning programs. These are stored digitally on LAN P: Teachers implement a comprehensive Home Reading Program and there is a Literacy Information Night to support parents with ideas for Home Reading. We produce a weekly Newsletter article titled: PALS, passionate about Literacy at St Thomas’, that also provides parents with reading and writing tips and strategies.
Teacher Programs

English Programs give detailed and specific information about content and assessment in the classroom. Programs provide opportunities for teacher reflection and evaluation. Teacher programs reflect a sound knowledge of the Australian Curriculum: English, as well as support documents and relevant policies and procedures.

Teachers develop programs that are of a professional standard. Members of the Leadership Team regularly monitor programs and engage in professional dialogue on various levels including individual feedback, module meetings and staff meetings.

Teacher Programs provide an overview of the English Curriculum for the term. This includes content descriptions, assessment, reference to general capabilities cross-curriculum priorities including ICT and sustainability. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia may also be integrated in the term content. English may be integrated as part of other Curriculum areas such as Science, History and Religious Education.

As part of agreed practice, teachers use weekly planners that address the content descriptions of the Australian Curriculum: English. These planners also provide evidence of the gradual release model and the way in which a literacy block may function over a weekly duration. Planners are working documents that also provide indications of modifications and differentiation. The teacher program also contains the Individual learning plan (ILP) for students with disabilities and reference to SMART goals for individual students.

Literacy Blocks

As part of agreed practice, daily Literacy Blocks are included in classroom timetables. The School Scope and Sequence for English, together with the Term Overview provide the broad focus for the term. The weekly English planners provide the daily information for teaching and learning practice that addresses the content descriptions of the Australian Curriculum; English. During the daily Literacy Block teachers provide quality experiences that allow students to engage with the English language by:

- Knowing
- Understanding
- Appreciating
- Responding
- Analysing
- Creating
- Expanding the repertoire of English usage
Literacy Blocks

Daily Literacy Blocks incorporate the processes of listening, speaking, reading, viewing and writing in an integrated and interdependent way. Using the Gradual Release of Responsibility Model (Pearson and Gallagher 1983) teachers use the strategies of modelling, sharing, guiding and applying to explicitly teach a range of reading and writing strategies. Students will learn new vocabulary through listening and reading and apply their knowledge and understanding in their speaking and writing as well as in their comprehension of both spoken and written texts.

Teachers may conduct specific lessons involving the teaching of spelling strategies and grammar. Daily Literacy Blocks are organised according to the needs of the students and may involve cross-stage groupings. During Literacy Blocks, Learning Support Assistants provide valuable opportunities for teachers to provide for differentiation.

The school agreed practice requires teachers to incorporate a variety of strategies and practices including the integration of ICT, to ensure students expand their repertoire of productive and receptive skills. The following lists contain examples of teaching and learning activities that take place across the school as part of Literacy Blocks.

Kindergarten:

- explicit teaching of handwriting formation
- daily phonemic-awareness sessions to develop skills in listening, speaking, sound production, sound isolation and sound representation
- daily and weekly news sessions that can be prepared and planned at home
- modelled, shared, guided and independent Reading
- peer reading
- silent reading
- modelled, guided and independent writing sessions
- IWB Tasks associated with texts and phonics.

Year 1 and 2:

- explicit teaching of handwriting formation
- daily phonemic-awareness sessions to develop skills in listening, speaking, sound production, sound isolation and sound representation
- daily and weekly news sessions that can be prepared and planned at home
- modelled, shared, guided and independent reading
- preparation and presentation of class speeches
- weekly spelling blend and grammar activities
- silent reading
- peer reading
- modelled, guided and independent writing sessions
- IWB Tasks related to all English modes.
CORE CURRICULUM: English

Year 3 to 6:
- preparation and presentation of class speeches
- handwriting and typing experiences
- rostrum speaking
- debating
- modelled, shared, guided, independent and reciprocal reading
- book discussion groups, including roles of the reader
- silent reading
- weekly spelling and grammar activities
- peer reading
- modelled, guided and independent writing sessions
- IWB tasks related to all English modes
- activities designed to promote research skills
- tasks related to visual and critical literacy.

Use of Texts

At St Thomas the Apostle we believe in exploring a variety of texts used for many different purposes so that students have a range of material to navigate and explore. Teachers assist students to critique the different organisational features and language features of many text structures. We aim to provide a love of literature by helping students interpret, appreciate, evaluate and create a variety of texts.

We value the importance of writing for a purpose. The purposes of texts are: to entertain, to recount, to socialise, to inquire, to describe, to persuade, to explain and to instruct. Texts in First Steps are classified into three categories; written, spoken and visual. These categories can then be divided into printed, live and electronic. (First Steps Writing Resource Book, Second Edition, 2005, p.3)

Teachers expose students to many literary texts such as narratives, poetry, prose, plays, film and multi-modal texts. Teachers value the importance of displaying students work and ensuring that students are exposed to a variety of cultural texts e.g. texts from Asia, contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island literature and texts that celebrate the cultural inheritance of individual students.

A scope and sequence of specific text purposes to be taught at various class levels are stored digitally on LAN P:

Multiliteracies

Literally meaning many literacies, the term multiliteracies encapsulate two significant shifts in how we view literacy. The concept of multiliteracies acknowledges that in a rapidly changing, culturally and linguistically diverse society we need to use texts in critical, active and reflective ways. It also acknowledges that literacy goes beyond print language and incorporates the multiple modes of meaning found in new information and communication technologies. Multiliteracies provide a bridge between the real-life texts of the community and school texts and encourage a real-world, interdisciplinary approach to learning through the use of disciplined knowledge. Using a multiliteracies approach enables students to understand, use and critically evaluate the multimodal texts of the 21st century. These complex texts incorporate elements of linguistic, visual, spatial, audio and gestural design.

CORE CURRICULUM: English

Multiliteracies

At St Thomas the Apostle we believe that multimodal texts play a key role in curriculum and pedagogy. The Australian Curriculum: English, defines multimodal texts as ‘the use of two or more communication modes for example, print, image and spoken text, as in film or computer presentations.’

The English curriculum at St Thomas the Apostle:
- acknowledges significant changes for literacy education as a result of technology, globalisation and the diversity this brings to people’s lives
- assists students to have the skills associated with the recognition of different social languages and the multimodality of digitally-mediated texts
- provides a means of transforming education to reflect real-life practice
- harnesses diversity and leads learner transformation through a focus on four knowledge processes – experiencing, conceptualising, analysing and applying
- challenges traditional classroom organisation and learning resources in ways that effect knowledge producing communities. Healy (2004)

Assessment

St Thomas the Apostle teachers have developed an agreed assessment schedule that incorporates the major elements of assessment in English; this is stored in the LAN P: Teachers use both formative and summative assessment to develop a detailed analysis of students and their specific learning needs. Assessment data is recorded digitally and used to inform and develop classroom practices such as grouping for best practice teaching. Ongoing assessment also provides crucial information regarding students with diverse needs or those on ILPs. The Learning Support Program provides information about identifying students with a variety of learning needs.

The Read On Document (Catholic Education Office, 2010) sets a System Guide to Benchmark Levels which relates to students’ reading achievement over the early years; it is as follows:
- Level 8 by the end of Kindergarten
- Level 15 - 17 by the end of Year 1
- Level 20+ by the end of Year 2

Information gathered as part of formal assessment in Kindergarten and Year One is analysed by the Learning Support teacher and classroom teachers to identify students requiring Learning Support. The information from NAPLAN testing in conjunction with the SMART website is used to generate strategic planning that incorporates short term and long term literacy goals.

Teachers use a range of tools and methods for collecting data about students’ literacy development. Formal assessment of English commences in Kindergarten and Year 1, as per the CEO guidelines. These assessments include:

- phonological awareness
- concepts about print
- letter identification
- benchmark records
- Canberra word test
- An Observation Survey of Early Literacy Achievement for at risk literacy learners. (Clay, M.M)
Formal assessment of English in other classes include:

- Burt word test
- Probe reading assessment
- benchmark records
- South Australian Spelling
- Waddington spelling
- writing samples using writing analysis
- oral speeches
- NAPLAN testing in Year 3 and Year 5.

Informal assessment of English is an ongoing process and may include:

- teacher observation of literacy skills
- news blocks
- weekly spelling and grammar
- spelling tests
- homework
- silent reading
- buddy programs
- explicit handwriting sessions
- writing samples for a variety of purposes
- personal inventories
- think-alouds
- oral and written retells
- questionnaires
- cloze procedures
- work samples
- conversations/conferences/interviews.

A Diversity of Learners

At St Thomas the Apostle we recognise that the school environment contains a variety of learners with a diversity of needs. Some of these students include students with English as a second language or dialect (EAL/D) students with a disability (SWD) and gifted and talented students. More information around identification and provision for these students is contained in the Learning Support section of this document.
CORE CURRICULUM: Mathematics

Rationale

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.

Mathematics has its own value and beauty and the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics aims to instil in students an appreciation of the elegance and power of mathematical reasoning. Mathematical ideas have evolved across all cultures over thousands of years, and are constantly developing. Digital technologies are facilitating this expansion of ideas and providing access to new tools for continuing mathematical exploration and invention. The curriculum focuses on developing increasingly sophisticated and refined mathematical understanding, fluency, logical reasoning, analytical thought and problem-solving skills. These capabilities enable students to respond to familiar and unfamiliar situations by employing mathematical strategies to make informed decisions and solve problems efficiently.

The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics ensures that the links between the various components of Mathematics, as well as the relationship between Mathematics and other disciplines, are made clear. Mathematics is composed of multiple but interrelated and interdependent concepts and systems which students apply beyond the mathematics classroom. In Science, for example, understanding sources of error and their impact on the confidence of conclusions is vital, as is the use of mathematical models in other disciplines. In Geography, interpretation of data underpins the study of human populations and their physical environments; in History, students need to be able to imagine timelines and time frames to reconcile related events; and in English, deriving quantitative and spatial information is an important aspect of making meaning of texts.

The curriculum anticipates that schools will ensure all students benefit from access to the power of mathematical reasoning and learn to apply their mathematical understanding creatively and efficiently. The Mathematics curriculum provides students with carefully paced, in-depth study of critical skills and concepts. It encourages teachers to help students become self-motivated, confident learners through inquiry and active participation in challenging and engaging experiences.

Aims

At St Thomas the Apostle we aim to ensure that all students:
• are confident, creative users and communicators of mathematics, able to investigate, represent and interpret situations in their personal and work lives and as active citizens
• develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of mathematical concepts and fluency with processes, and are able to pose and solve problems and reason in Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry, and Statistics and Probability
• recognise connections between the areas of Mathematics and other disciplines and appreciate Mathematics as an accessible and enjoyable discipline to study.
Teaching for Effective Learning of Mathematics

At St Thomas the Apostle, to encourage best practice in teaching and learning teachers should:

- know the most effective strategies to teach students deep understanding of concepts and effective mathematical skills and strategies
- have a deep understanding of mathematical concepts, skills, language and symbols
- deliver learning and teaching activities that reflect a balance of content and skills, mode of delivery, conceptual understanding and mathematical processes
- use assessment activities that reflect and inform the development of mathematical concepts and skills.

The following diagram from the ‘Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Mathematics Framework: Principles for Effective Mathematics Education: A resource for Teachers’ outlines our vision for the teaching and learning of Mathematics at St Thomas the Apostle.

Principles for Effective Mathematics Education
Key Resources

The effective teaching and learning of Mathematics at St Thomas the Apostle is based on a number of key resources which include:

- The Australian Curriculum: Mathematics
- Every Chance to Learn- ACT Curriculum Framework
- Principles of Effective Mathematics Education: A Resource for Teachers
- How the Brain Learns Mathematics – D. Sousa
- Count Me In Too
- Working Like a Mathematician – Doug Williams
- SENA 1 & 2 student interviews
- Pat Maths Plus – standardised online assessment for Yr 3-6

Components of the Mathematics Program

Currently, the Mathematics curriculum at St Thomas the Apostle is in a transitional stage as we begin engagement with the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics. Year 3-6 are using an inquiry model of planning based on the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn Mathematics Framework. While, K-2 use the Gradual Release Model. The school has progressed through a period of intense development in Mathematics particularly from 2009-2011, where it was part of the National Partnerships for Numeracy. It is envisaged that during 2014 the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics will be taught across all grades using an inquiry model approach as outlined in the Archdiocesan Mathematics Framework.

Teacher Programs

In Years K-2 programming for the effective teaching of Mathematics follows the Gradual Release Model outlined in our Agreed Practice for Numeracy document. Each session progresses through a sequence of learning beginning with a warm-up activity, followed by the explicit teaching of core concepts, then checking for understanding of the new concept is undertaken during some shared activities.

In the next phase, guided learning, teachers work with students on activities based on previous concepts taught, followed by applied tasks where students work independently to show their understanding of concepts. The session concludes with a cognitive closure activity where students reflect on their learning. The Agreed Practice for Numeracy, and examples of the planning templates used at St Thomas, can be found on the LAN P:

As an interim measure, the scope and sequence for these programs can be found in the Australian Curriculum: Mathematics Essential Content statements for each year level, which are then matched to the ‘St Thomas the Apostle Mathematics Draft Scope and Sequence’ and available on LAN P: This will be superseded by the new CEO Mathematics Framework Scope and Sequence document as it becomes available.
In Years 3-6, the effective teaching of Mathematics is based upon the Principles for Effective Mathematics Education: A Resource for Teachers produced as part of the Archdiocesan Mathematics Framework. Utilising outlined units of work developed using the Understanding by Design (UbD) template where teachers develop investigations or experiences running over 2/3 weeks to engage students in an inquiry based approach to understanding mathematical concepts.

Whilst programming is still informed by the Gradual Release of Responsibility (GRM) model, there is no compulsion to move through each GRM stage every day. A copy of suggested templates to be used for this approach can be found on LAN P:

In Years 3-6 the scope and sequence for Mathematics follows the CEO Mathematics Framework ‘Sequence of Learning’ and ‘Units of Work’ as produced by the CEO numeracy team and distributed via the LIFE online platform.

**Numeracy Blocks**

Numeracy blocks are scheduled as part of class timetables on each day over the week. The preferred numeracy block session is for 60 minutes. Each numeracy block should contain a number-based warm up activity, followed by explicit/shared/guided/independent work depending on the program and should finish with cognitive closure.

**Assessment**

Assessment and reporting on Mathematics at St Thomas’ is based on the Australian Curriculum strand organisers of Number and Algebra, Measurement and Geometry and Statistics and Probability. Teaching and learning programs are developed by teachers to either focus on a particular strand and some key ideas over one week, the ‘GRM model’, or on a number of strands and concepts over a two week period, the ‘inquiry model’.

St Thomas the Apostle has developed an assessment schedule which incorporates the major formalised assessment tasks to be used for Mathematics from grades K-6. This assessment schedule with minimum targets of achievement outlined can be found on LAN P:

The assessment tasks we administer and collect data for include SENA 1 & 2, Pat Maths Plus, Minute Maths tests, Scaffolding Maths and NAPLAN. Other formative and summative assessment tasks are also used by teachers on an ongoing basis during the course of teaching their Mathematics programs. Teachers maintain their own separate records for these. The use of a variety of assessment strategies is recommended, including but not limited to, closed and open ended assessment tasks, problem solving tasks, games, pen and paper tests, anecdotal notes, and student/teacher discussions, rubrics, simulations and journals.
CORE CURRICULUM: Pathways Curriculum Integration

Rationale

Our original Pathways Curriculum Integration Document was published in 2009 to meet the needs of the crowded curriculum, to reflect current educational research and to implement the ACT curriculum framework, Every Chance to Learn. Pathways was designed to find creative ways to link concepts and understandings to provide meaningful and purposeful integrated pathways to learning.

The Pathways Document used the core curriculum areas of: The Arts, Science, Social Studies and PD and Health to form the basis for integrated units of work. Religious Education, Mathematics, English and PE are also integrated wherever possible; however, these are also stand alone curriculum documents.

The release of the Australian Curriculum has provided exciting and challenging opportunities for curriculum innovation and design at St Thomas the Apostle School. The full release of the Australian Curriculum in coming years will provide an opportunity to create an updated Pathways Document and approach to integrated teaching and learning.

Teachers are currently working with the two main curriculum sources, the ACT curriculum framework, Every Chance to learn and the Australian Curriculum. Depending on the term focus, teaching units and program formats will vary at this point. Decisions will need to be made for the 2014 school year with regard to covering essential understandings in History, Science and Geography.

Aims

Integration enables students to utilise acquired skills and prior knowledge in different contexts. Integration provides opportunities for the demonstration of skills and understanding in varied learning domains and to make connections between content learnt at school and other life experiences. At St Thomas we believe that authentic learning occurs when all curriculum areas are connected and learning tasks show this connection.

The Pathways Integrated Curriculum approach aims to:

- Maintain a clear and discrete view of a discipline.
- Connect key concepts leading to the review, reconceptualisation and assimilation of ideas within a curriculum area.
- Give attention to several areas at once, leading to enriched and enhanced learning.
- Share instructional experiences.
- Motivate students to see connections between ideas.
- Thread learning, encouraging students to know how they are learning, facilitating future transfer of learning.
- Encourage students to see interconnectedness and interrelationships among curriculum areas, promoting student motivation as they see these connections.
- Stimulate proactive learning, with the learner stimulated by new information, skills or concepts.
- Encourage depth and breadth of learning.
- Provide more quality time for curriculum exploration.
Rationale

At St Thomas the Apostle, History is a disciplined process of inquiry into the past that develops students' curiosity and imagination. Awareness of history is an essential characteristic of any society, and historical knowledge is fundamental to understanding ourselves and others. It promotes the understanding of societies, events, movements and developments that have shaped humanity from earliest times. It helps students appreciate how the world and its people have changed, as well as the significant continuities that exist to the present day. History, as a discipline, has its own methods and procedures which make it different from other ways of understanding human experience.

The study of history is based on evidence derived from remains of the past. It is interpretative by nature, promotes debate and encourages thinking about human values, including present and future challenges. The process of historical inquiry develops transferable skills, such as the ability to ask relevant questions; critically analyse and interpret sources; consider context; respect and explain different perspectives; develop and substantiate interpretations, and communicate effectively.

The curriculum generally takes a world history approach within which the history of Australia is taught. It does this in order to equip students for the world (local, regional and global) in which they live. An understanding of world history enhances students' appreciation of Australian history. It enables them to develop an understanding of the past and present experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their identity and the continuing value of their culture. It also helps students to appreciate Australia's distinctive path of social, economic and political development, its position in the Asia-Pacific region, and its global interrelationships. This knowledge and understanding is essential for informed and active participation in Australia's diverse society.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum, History aims to ensure that students develop:

- interest in, and enjoyment of, historical study for lifelong learning and work, including their capacity and willingness to be informed and active citizens
- knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the past and the forces that shape societies, including Australian society
- understanding and use of historical concepts, such as evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, perspectives, empathy, significance and contestability
- capacity to undertake historical inquiry, including skills in the analysis and use of sources, and in explanation and communication.
Components of the History Curriculum

Teachers at St Thomas the Apostle have developed a School Scope and Sequence for History using the content from the Australian Curriculum: History. In order to cater for multi-age classes and the depth of content a Year A and Year B Cycle for the teaching of History has been developed. This document is located on LAN P: The focus for curriculum in the Primary School setting is described as follows:

Years K-2

Curriculum focus: Awareness of family history and community heritage

Through experimentation, practice and play, children in these years use their interest in people and how things work to make sense of their world.

This history curriculum enables students in Years K-2 to learn about their own social context of family, friends and school, and the significance of the past. They engage with the remains of the past; develop a concept of time as present, past and future, and through role play use their imagination to speculate about the lives of others in the past.

Years 3–6

Curriculum focus: Local/national history and use of a range of sources

Students draw on their growing experience of family, school and the wider community to develop their understanding of the world and their relationship to others past and present. In these years, students begin to better understand and appreciate different points of view and to develop an awareness of justice and fair play.

This history curriculum seeks to target the distinct nature of learners in Years 3–6 by including content about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies, democratic concepts and rights, and the diversity of Australian society.

In this way, students develop an understanding of the heritage of their community and of their ability to contribute to it. They become aware of similarities and differences between people and become more aware of diversity in the wider community as well as the concept of change over time.

Teachers at St Thomas’ utilise Key Inquiry Questions to develop units of learning linked to seven focus areas, these are:

- Personal and Family Histories
- Present and Past Family Life
- The Past in the Present
- First Contacts
- Australia as a Nation
- Community and Remembrance
- The Australian Colonies
Teaching for Effective Learning of History

Teachers at St Thomas’ are committed to a model of Inquiry Learning where the focus is developing meaningful learning sequences using pedagogy based on Understanding by Design (UbD, Wiggins G, McTighe, J).

Teachers use proformas for class programs that are based on the UbD format and stored in LAN P: The teaching sequence follows the key Inquiry phases of:

- Tuning In
- Finding Out
- Sorting Out
- Going Further
- Reflecting and Acting

The History focus contains Key Concepts, Enduring Understandings, Essential Questions and Inquiry Questions. The staff are presently trialling a range of program proformas for History. These are being trialled with a view to formalising an agreed proforma for the 2014 school year.

Assessment and Reporting

The St Thomas the Apostle staff are also trialling the use of GRASP tasks in developing authentic, meaningful assessment for learning in History. The GRASP task is derived from the following elements:

- Goal
- Role
- Audience
- Situation
- Product, performance
- Standards and criteria for success

In History assessment, teachers use a variety of assessment opportunities that are reinforced in the planning proforma, the following descriptions and questions are listed in the History proforma:

- **Diagnostic Assessment** (How will you assess the students’ prior knowledge and skills?)
- **Formative Assessment** (Through what other evidence will students demonstrate achievement of the desired results?)
- **Summative Assessment** (Through what authentic performance task will students demonstrate the desired understandings?)

The Australian Curriculum, History Achievement Standards for each year level contains portfolio tasks that describe three levels of learning achievement. These are also a guide for teachers and provide opportunities for moderation and meaningful discussion around providing timely and supportive feedback to students regarding their learning.
Rationale

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. Science is a dynamic, collaborative and creative human endeavour arising from our desire to make sense of our world through exploring the unknown, investigating universal mysteries, making predictions and solving problems. Science aims to understand a large number of observations in terms of a much smaller number of broad principles. Science knowledge is contestable and is revised, refined and extended as new evidence arises.

The Australian Curriculum: Science provides opportunities for students to develop an understanding of important science concepts and processes, the practices used to develop scientific knowledge, of science’s contribution to our culture and society, and its applications in our lives. The curriculum supports students to develop the scientific knowledge, understandings and skills to make informed decisions about local, national and global issues and to participate, if they so wish, in science-related careers.

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.

The science curriculum promotes six overarching ideas that highlight certain common approaches to a scientific view of the world and which can be applied to many of the areas of science understanding. These overarching ideas are patterns, order and organisation; form and function; stability and change; systems; scale and measurement; and matter and energy.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Science aims to ensure that students develop:

- an interest in science as a means of expanding their curiosity and willingness to explore, ask questions about and speculate on the changing world in which they live
- an understanding of the vision that science provides of the nature of living things, of the Earth and its place in the cosmos, and of the physical and chemical processes that explain the behaviour of all material things
- an understanding of the nature of scientific inquiry and the ability to use a range of scientific inquiry methods, including questioning; planning and conducting experiments and investigations based on ethical principles; collecting and analysing data; evaluating results; and drawing critical, evidence-based conclusions
- an ability to communicate scientific understanding and findings to a range of audiences, to justify ideas on the basis of evidence, and to evaluate and debate scientific arguments and claims
- an ability to solve problems and make informed, evidence-based decisions about current and future applications of science while taking into account ethical and social implications of decisions.
an understanding of historical and cultural contributions to science as well as contemporary science issues and activities and an understanding of the diversity of careers related to science

- a solid foundation of knowledge of the biological, chemical, physical, Earth and space sciences, including being able to select and integrate the scientific knowledge and methods needed to explain and predict phenomena, to apply that understanding to new situations and events, and to appreciate the dynamic nature of science knowledge.

**Components of the Science Curriculum**

The Australian Curriculum: Science has three interrelated strands: *Science Understanding*, *Science as a Human Endeavour* and *Science Inquiry Skills*. Together, the three strands of the science curriculum provide students with understanding, knowledge and skills through which they can develop a scientific view of the world. Students are challenged to explore science, its concepts, nature and uses through clearly described inquiry processes.

**Science Understanding includes:**
- Biological Sciences
- Chemical Sciences
- Earth and Space Sciences
- Physical Sciences

**Science as a Human Endeavour includes:**
- Nature and development of Science
- Use and influence of Science

**Science Inquiry Skills includes:**
- Questioning and predicting
- Planning and Conducting
- Processing and analysing data and information
- Evaluating
- Communicating

**Teaching for Effective Learning of Science**

In the practice of science, the three strands of *Science Understanding*, *Science as a Human Endeavour* and *Science Inquiry Skills* are closely integrated; the work of scientists reflects the nature and development of science, is built around scientific inquiry and seeks to respond to and influence society’s needs. Students’ experiences of school science should mirror and connect to this multifaceted view of science.

To achieve this, the three strands of the Australian Curriculum: Science should be taught in an integrated way. The content descriptions of the three strands have been written so that at each year this integration is possible. In the earlier years, the ‘Nature and Development of Science’ sub-strand within the *Science as a Human Endeavour* strand focuses on scientific inquiry. This enables students to make clear connections between the inquiry skills that they are learning and the work of scientists and stories of scientific discoveries.
Students will also recognise how this science understanding can be applied to their lives and the lives of others. As students develop a more sophisticated understanding of the knowledge and skills of science they are increasingly able to appreciate the role of science in society. The content of the Science Understanding strand will inform students’ understanding of contemporary issues, such as climate change, use of resources, medical interventions, biodiversity and the origins of the universe. The importance of these areas of science can be emphasised through the content of the Science as a Human Endeavour strand, and students can be encouraged to view contemporary science critically through aspects of the Science Inquiry Skills strand, for example by analysing, evaluating and communicating.

Teachers at St Thomas the Apostle have developed a School Scope and Sequence for Science using the Primary Connections Science Units as the major resource. Primary Connections is a comprehensive approach to teaching and learning. Using Primary Connections builds teacher competence and confidence in teaching both Science and Literacy and allows for the meaningful process of integration of skills across curriculum areas. The Primary Connections units relate directly to the key concepts in the Australian Curriculum: Science and allow us to cover the three interrelated strands in a meaningful way. Using a two-year cycle assists us to cover the four key areas of Science Understanding.

Primary Connections is based on current research which highlights the need for teachers to be supported not only with students’ learning materials but also with professional development to help boost confidence and competence in the teaching of Science, ‘any serious attempt to support teachers implementing a significant science curriculum initiative in Australia would need to encompass both resource development, and a significant professional learning approach that allowed local control and contextual variation, that attended to teacher beliefs, and was supported in local areas through networks and consultants.’ (Tytler, 2007, p. 62)

**Teacher Programs**

Teachers are currently in the process of trialling a range of ways in programming for Science. The Primary Connections Unit forms the basic core content. The Science content is at the heart of the focus and this directly relates to the interrelated strands of the Australian Curriculum: Science. The Science curriculum is also rich in scientific language and provides avenues for integration of English. The five phases implicit in the Primary Connections Units, make explicit the Science Inquiry skills in the Australian Curriculum: Science these are as follows:

- Engage
- Explore
- Explain
- Elaborate
- Evaluate

**Assessment and Reporting**

Each unit contains explicit assessment opportunities at each phase level. The Australian Curriculum: Science, Achievement Standards also contains tasks that describe three levels of learning achievement. These provide opportunities for moderation and meaningful discussion around providing timely and supportive feedback to students regarding their learning.
Rationale

Geography is a structured way of exploring, analysing and understanding the characteristics of the places that make up our world, using the concepts of place, space, environment, interconnection, sustainability, scale and change. It addresses scales from the personal to the global and time periods from a few years to thousands of years.

Geography integrates knowledge from the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities to build a holistic understanding of the world. Students learn to question why the world is the way it is, reflect on their relationships with and responsibilities for that world, and propose actions designed to shape a socially just and sustainable future.

The concept of place develops students’ curiosity and wonder about the diversity of the world’s places, peoples, cultures and environments. Students examine why places have particular environmental and human characteristics, explore the similarities and differences between them, investigate their meanings and significance to people and examine how they are managed and changed.

Students use the concept of space to investigate the effects of location and distance on the characteristics of places, the significance of spatial distributions, and the organisation and management of space at different scales. Through the concept of environment students learn about the role of the environment in supporting the physical and emotional aspects of human life, the important interrelationships between people and environments, and the range of views about these interrelationships.

Students use the concept of interconnection to understand how the causal relationships between places, people and environments produce constant changes to their characteristics. Through the concept of sustainability students explore how the environmental functions that support their life and wellbeing can be sustained. The concept of scale helps them explore problems and look for explanations at different levels, for example, local or regional. The concept of change helps them to explain the present and forecast possible futures.

Geography uses an inquiry approach to assist students to make meaning of their world. It teaches them to respond to questions in a geographically distinctive way, plan an inquiry; collect, evaluate, analyse and interpret information; and suggest responses to what they have learned. They conduct fieldwork, map and interpret data and spatial distributions, and use spatial technologies. Students develop a wide range of general skills and capabilities, including information and communication technology skills, an appreciation of different perspectives, an understanding of ethical research principles, a capacity for teamwork and an ability to think critically and creatively. These skills can be applied in everyday life and at work.
Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Geography aims to ensure that students develop:

- a sense of wonder, curiosity and respect about places, people, cultures and environments throughout the world
- a deep geographical knowledge of their own locality, Australia, the Asia region and the world
- the ability to think geographically, using geographical concepts
- the capacity to be competent, critical and creative users of geographical inquiry methods and skills
- as informed, responsible and active citizens who can contribute to the development of an environmentally and economically sustainable, and socially just world.

Components of the Geography Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum: Geography is organised in two related strands: Geographical Knowledge and Understanding, and Geographical Inquiry and Skills.

Geographic Knowledge and Understanding

Geographical Knowledge refers to the facts, generalisations, principles, theories and models developed in Geography. This knowledge is dynamic and its interpretation can be contested, with opinions and conclusions supported by evidence and logical argument.

Geographical Understanding is the ability to see the relationships between aspects of knowledge and construct explanatory frameworks to illustrate these relationships. It is also the ability to apply this knowledge to new situations or to solve new problems.

Geographic Inquiry and Skills

Geographical Inquiry is a process by which students learn about and deepen their understanding of Geography. It involves individual or group investigations that start with geographical questions and proceed through the collection, evaluation, analysis and interpretation of information to the development of conclusions and proposals for actions. Inquiries may vary in scale and geographical context.

Geographical Skills are the techniques that geographers use in their investigations, both in fieldwork and in the classroom. Students learn to think critically about the methods used to obtain, represent, analyse and interpret information and communicate findings. Key skills developed through Australian Curriculum: Geography include formulating a question and research plan, recording and data representation skills, using a variety of spatial technologies and communicating with appropriate geographical vocabulary.

Geographical Skills are described in the curriculum under five sub-headings representing the stages of a complete investigation. Over each two-year stage students should learn the methods and skills specified for that stage, but it is not intended that they should always be learned in the context of a complete inquiry.
The five stages of geographical skills are:

- Observing, questioning and planning
- Collecting, recording, evaluating and representing
- Interpreting, analysing and concluding
- Communicating
- Reflecting and responding

Each year level includes key inquiry questions that provide a framework for developing students' geographical knowledge and understanding, and inquiry and skills.

**Teaching for Effective Learning of Geography**

At St Thomas the Apostle School the key questions for each level will become our focus for effective teaching and learning using an inquiry-based approach. Decisions will be made around how to include curriculum over a two-year cycle and how interrelated content from other key curriculum areas may also form part of an integrative approach.

Teachers will use proformas for class programs that are based on the UbD format and stored in LAN P: The following teaching sequence of inquiry phases will form the basis for programs:

- Tuning In
- Finding Out
- Sorting Out
- Going Further
- Reflecting and Acting

A useful approach in teaching for effective learning will be to link skills and knowledge across core learning areas to depth key inquiry questions. The recent release of the Australian Curriculum: Geography will allow time for strategic planning and familiarisation in 2014.

**Assessment and Reporting**

Each year level in the Australian Curriculum: Geography has an achievement standard that describes what students should be able to know, think and do at the conclusion of a school year. The Geography samples of learning portfolios are yet to be released.

Teachers at St Thomas the Apostle will use a variety of summative, diagnostic and formative assessment to track and record student progress. Students will be able to set learning goals and be given timely and appropriate feedback regarding their learning.
Rationale

The Creative Arts play a significant role in how meaning is made in peoples’ lives. “Visual Arts, Music, Drama and Dance offer students and people of all ages opportunities for personal expression, enjoyment, creative action, imagination, emotional response, aesthetic pleasure and the creation of shared meanings.”

(NSW K-6 Board of Studies, Creative Arts Syllabus, 2006)

At St Thomas the Apostle, we believe students need to develop the capacity to create, present and appreciate a range of art forms. “Creating artistic works is a powerful means of self-expression for students to share and communicate their ideas, experiences, beliefs, feelings and views of the world.” (Every Chance to Learn, ELA 7, 2007) In creating artistically, students at St Thomas the Apostle have opportunities to be visual artists, writers, designers, composers, choreographers, filmmakers, architects and playwrights.

As musicians, dancers, actors, directors and performers, our students perform their own works and that of others for audiences. The curriculum should provide for opportunities to reflect on and talk about the creative processes and techniques involved in their performance. The students give and receive feedback in order to improve the quality of presentations of artistic works.

At St Thomas the Apostle we regard each student as a person who is unique and of infinite value. Within the Creative Arts curriculum, this finds expression in the belief that every child can learn and succeed across a range of art forms. Our rationale for the teaching of the Creative Arts is based on the 10 principles that underwrite the curriculum for ACT schools, as found in the ACT Curriculum Document, “Every Chance to Learn”.

Aims

At St Thomas the Apostle the Arts curriculum aims to:

- Involve the students as audience members, viewers and consumers of the arts.
- Develop in the students an appreciation for the Creative Arts.
- Inspire our students to describe, interpret, analyse and appraise a range of artistic works.
- Assist our students to develop understandings of the symbols, conventions and techniques of art forms in both traditional and contemporary practice.
- Provide students with opportunities to form opinions and develop their own artistic preferences and tastes.

Components of the Arts Curriculum

The Creative Arts curriculum is developed from the ACT Curriculum Document “Every Chance to Learn”. Specifically, there is one principal ELA that the Creative Arts Curriculum is based on:

- ELA 7: The student creates, presents and appreciates artistic works
CORE CURRICULUM: The Arts

The curriculum presents a series of forms including Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama. Whilst the forms have separate skill bases, they are inextricably linked, working hand in hand to develop creative thinkers.

Teaching for Effective Learning of the Arts

As the Australian Curriculum content is released the staff of St Thomas the Apostle look to ways that the Arts can be integrated as part of authentic inquiry-based learning.

Students have the opportunities to create, present and appreciate artistic work in:

- Dance
- Drama
- Music
- Visual Arts
- Media.

Students have the opportunities to understand the:

- Conventions
- Codes
- Symbol system
- Aesthetic qualities of each art form
- Value the role of creativity in self-expression and human experience.

Students use the:

- Forms
- Traditions
- Techniques of the art forms in order to organise and express their ideas.

Students have the opportunities to:

- Present artistic works for an audience
- Reflect on and talk about the creative processes and techniques involved in performance
- Give and receive feedback in order to improve quality of performance
- Engage in and respond to traditional and contemporary works or visual and performing artists.

Some examples of student opportunities to participate in the Arts include:

- Footsteps Dance Lessons with school discos and assembly items to showcase skills,
- *Wakakirri* Specialised Performing Arts for Yr 5/6 students
- Specialist Music lessons for Yrs. K-2 involving singing, musical instruments, dance and drama skills
- Opportunity to become a member of the school choir
- Opportunity to learn a musical instrument (lessons provided at school for a variety of instruments)
- Excursions to the Art Gallery, National Portrait Gallery and Museums.
Assessment and Reporting

Teachers provide a variety of assessment opportunities for students to critically appraise their own art works and the work of others. Assessment should be based on skills and provide for elements of originality and creativity to also be a focus.
Rationale

Physical Education and Health focus on the development of the whole person. Sound Physical Health contributes to a child’s emotional, mental, cognitive, physical, social and spiritual well-being. Children need to understand, value and practise ways of developing and maintaining all aspects of a healthy, balanced lifestyle.

At St Thomas the Apostle we believe it is important that opportunities are given for students to develop and practise skills that encourage resilience, concentrate on conflict resolution, negotiation, problem solving and communication. We encourage all students to accept themselves as they grow and change and to promote their own and others’ worth.

The children participate regularly in active sports with the knowledge that everyone has the right to enjoy and improve their personal skills, values, attitudes and understanding of Physical Education. Children require support understanding healthy food choices, maintaining healthy relationships and understanding their own human growth and sexuality.

Aims

The Health and Physical Education Program aims to ensure that:

ELA 12 - The student takes action to promote health and well-being

Students have the opportunities to understand and learn about:
- Decision making
- Planning
- Risk analysis
- Problem Solving
- Health information and services.

ELA 13 – The students is physically skilled and active

Students have the opportunity to learn about
- Fundamental movement skills
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Active play through a range of games and sports.

ELA 14 – The student manages self and relationships

Students have the opportunity to learn about:
- Personal identity
- Positive relationships
- Enhancing resilience.
CORE CURRICULUM:  
Health and Physical Education

Components of the Health and Physical Education Curriculum

ELA 13, ‘The student is physically skilled and active’, and has been created to ensure the development of fundamental movement skills, sports and other physical activity. Fundamental movement skills development is essential to allow children to experience success in physical activity, whether it be in minor games or sporting activities. Without sequential development of these skills, children will experience little success and will be poorly motivated to continue with physical activity. A lack of physical activity can lead to health problems, including obesity and diabetes in childhood and adulthood. To this end the school has developed a Scope and Sequence of fundamental motor skills and games that develop these skills across the grades. This is located on LAN P:

In 2013 staff were re-trained in delivering the Protective Behaviours Program. This has given all staff specific skills and strategies in achieving ELA 14 and working with aspects of ELA 12. It is now agreed practice that all classes begin the year by revisiting and revising the Protective Behaviour themes and by ensuring all students have agreed language and understandings around classroom and school agreed behaviours. The MATES matrices are displayed in classrooms to provide visual prompts for all students. Each year the students participate in a gymnastics, swimming and dance programs which are organised and delivered by accredited teachers.

Teaching for Effective Learning of Health and Physical Education

Each alternate year the students participate in the Life Education Program which directly relates to ELA 12. The Peer Support Program encourages the older students to take responsibility for assisting the younger children to develop sound social skills and maintain healthy relationships. The School Buddy system is also a way of building links across the school and supporting all students. Other ways the school promotes Physical Education to students include:

- encouragement to compete in the School Cross Country, Swimming and Athletics carnivals as well as participation in swimming lessons
- entering school teams into gala days and competitions for Rugby League, Touch, AFL, Soccer, Rugby Union
- actively promoting Tuggeranong PSSA sporting trials to students
- booking sporting clinics by outside sporting agencies to provide expertise and support skills development
- booking and organisation of Gymnastic (K-6) and Learn-to-Swim (K-4) Programs
- booking and organisation of Dance (K-6) and Multi-sport (5-6) programs
- provision of a variety of sports equipment at lunch times through class sports equipment
- rosters for the use of the playground equipment to ensure equal access to all students
- participation in the Catholic Schools Netball and Soccer carnivals.
Teacher Programs

Physical Education programs should include:
- provision for **2 hours** of physical exercise each week
- participation in **regular and varied** physical education experiences
- opportunities to **develop** the relevant **values and attitudes**
- systematic and explicit teaching of **fundamental movement skills**
- the opportunity to use learnt fundamental movement skills in **games and sport activities**.

The School Sports Coordinator with the assistance of Yr 5/6 teachers also develops a morning fitness program. This program is fully supported by the Yr 6 Leadership Team for Fun and Fitness. This allows older students to promote and organise physical activity in the school. In Term 4 of each year the Yr 5/6 students organise Aussie Sports, rotational activities run by the older students across grades to promote fun and fitness. Each week of the year, teachers have the opportunity to nominate any student for a fun and fitness award which is presented each Friday by the Fun and Fitness Team. Any students who participate in sporting carnivals or who achieve excellence in particular fields are recognised in a public way through assemblies and in the weekly newsletter.

Assessment and Reporting

Teachers are responsible for providing feedback to parents and students around student achievement and performance. Teachers at St Thomas the Apostle use a variety of methods to provide feedback and assessment around Health and Physical Education. Teachers create rubrics using specifically targeted skills, checklists involving fundamental motor skills and student self-assessment. Students participate in games designed to showcase a variety of fundamental skills. Teachers can observe the development of skills attained during game sessions.

Chess

Chess helps students to think creatively and as such is part of the General Capabilities section of the Australian Curriculum in the field of Critical and Creative Thinking. Creative thinking involves students in learning to generate and apply new ideas in specific contexts, seeing existing situations in a new way, identifying alternative explanations and seeing or making new links that generate a positive outcome.

In Chess games students integrate reason, logic, imagination and innovation to achieve outcomes. Chess involves creative planning, thinking ahead and predicting outcomes to solve problems or invent creative solutions. Students at St Thomas’ from Yrs 3-6 participate in one 45 minute Chess lesson per week. During this time they are taught the basics of the game and the etiquette involved. Students have opportunities to be involved in inter-school Chess competitions. Chess might be described as **Gymnastics for the Brain** and as such deserves inclusion in this core document as part of our focus on the development of the whole person.
CORE CURRICULUM: Learning Support

Rationale

As part of the Internal School Review Process, the Learning Support Model at St Thomas the Apostle has been undergoing review during 2012-13. This process has allowed staff to re-evaluate the purpose and direction of Learning Support in the classroom. The Learning Support Program forms part of the Strategic and Annual Improvement Plans. It reflects the ongoing commitment of the school to strengthening productive partnerships between all community members. All teachers are required to understand the legislative and system requirements that relate to accountability and compliance. A common language, regular communication, as well as opportunities for staff to engage in PD opportunities are all important elements in building a shared approach.

Effective intervention in the first three years of schooling lays the foundation for successful literacy and numeracy learning. Negotiated and thoughtful timetabling, planning and programming as well as rigorous assessment and reporting allow staff to develop best practice for supporting the educational needs of all students. Adaptations to weekly planners and documentation reflect our commitment to current research and legislative and system requirements. A successful model incorporates change, enriching all community members through the vision and mission of Catholic Education.

At St Thomas’ we aim to provide differentiation in our school programs that improve the learning outcomes for all students. ‘The principle of differentiation in education programming applies quite as much to addressing the characteristics and needs of gifted and talented students as it does to meeting the needs of students with disabilities’. Westwood (2000)

Aims

In addition to the beliefs outlined in the St Thomas the Apostle Mission Statement, the Learning Support Program aspires to create an inclusive curriculum building the capacity and responsiveness of teachers to meet the needs of all students. The Learning Support Program aims to support all students, especially those with disabilities, to successfully access the Australian Curriculum. Achieving this outcome requires a commitment from all staff to:

- maintain a positive disposition of heart
- ensure the dignity of the child is maintained
- encourage student independence
- be flexible
- endeavour to find the key to unlocking students’ motivation and interest.
Role Descriptions

Classroom Teacher

The basis of the model of inclusion in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn is that the classroom teacher is responsible, at school level, first and foremost, for meeting the needs of all students in the class. This involves planning and programming for the learning of all students including writing matrices and Individual Learning Plans where necessary. This responsibility includes accountability for assessment, reporting and program evaluation.

Learning Support Teacher

The Learning Support Teacher (LST) plays an important role in the teaching and learning at St Thomas the Apostle School. The LST works with the Principal, classroom teachers, parents/carers and outside agencies to ensure that students with special needs access the curriculum in a way that develops their full potential. The LST is responsible for the Learning Support Team, ensuring that management processes are in place to provide effective and efficient Learning Support programs, resources, services and administrative procedures.

Learning Support Assistant

The Learning Support Assistant (LSA) works with the classroom teacher and the Learning Support Teacher to offer support at team, student, teacher, curriculum and school level as required. The LSA works with groups or individual students as directed by the classroom teacher and the LST within the classroom environment. The LSA supports the implementation of the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and may be required to provide feedback on aspects of student progress. The LSA may be asked to supervise the learning of students in work areas outside the classroom provided these are in line of sight of the teacher. The LSA is required to attend planning meetings and contribute to professional dialogue.

Definition of Special Needs

The Learning Support Team assists those students who require additional support to successfully access the curriculum and meet their full learning potential. The following categories describe students with Special Needs:

- Students with educational disadvantage - students with disabilities (SWDs)
- Students with educational disadvantage - other than students with disability
- Students with High Intellectual (or other) Potential
- Students with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D)
- Students identified through the school’s Formal Assessment Schedule as having specific/ temporary difficulties in Literacy and/or Numeracy
Identification Process

1. Pre-enrolment Screening Process
2. Continuing classroom monitoring and identification of student needs and development (existing enrolments of SWSN)
3. School-based Formal Assessment Schedule for students already participating in the Learning Support Program and for every other student in the school.

The development of a Formal Assessment Schedule for students in the program and for every other student in the school creates an expectation that the program is also fluid and flexible.

This organisation of the program also extends to the wider community, as parents are aware that students may need support at different times to enable independent learning in the classroom.

Students with Reading Levels not reaching a minimum target at the end of the year receive Learning Support as a priority in Term 1 of the following year. Students in the upper grades identified as experiencing difficulties with comprehension will also receive assistance if possible. Students experiencing difficulty in Numeracy are identified and supported.

Planning

Planning of the learning program is a collaborative process, designed to set achievable and measurable SMART goals for the student’s learning. The Learning Support Team delivers services in the context of the teacher’s program, standard curriculum goals and the ILP. Effective implementation of learning is focussed on SMART goals, as expressed in the ILP.

Prior to the ILP a matrix is written by the teacher to describe the impacts and strategies around student needs. The matrix document informs the writing of the ILP. Meetings for ILPs are conducted in a positive and supportive environment valuing and respecting the input of all parties.

Planning Timetable

1. Gathering Assessment and Planning Information upon enrolment
2. Completion of Catholic Education Office Educational Impact Statement
3. Teacher preparation of a Matrix document in preparation for ILP meeting
4. Teacher preparation of ILP with SMART goals listed
5. ILP Team Meetings (February/March and July/August)
6. Ongoing teacher evaluation, revision and review of the ILP goals
7. Hand-over time for teachers to plan with colleagues

Implementation

The Learning Support Program at St Thomas the Apostle reflects the recommendations of the Catholic Education Office Learning Support Plan and legislative requirements listed in the Disability Discrimination Act.
The Learning Support Program focuses on the following key areas:

- Vision for Inclusion
- Building Teacher Capacity
- Accountability and Compliance
- Inclusive Practices
- Understanding of Legislative and System Requirements
- Appropriate Resourcing of Students
- Partnerships with Parents and Outside Agencies
- Reporting Student Achievement

The School Internal Review Process allows for ongoing planning and evaluation within each of these areas to set goals and develop strategic management plans. The Learning Support Program is implemented in conjunction with school Literacy and Numeracy programs. The Learning Support program is truly inclusive and effective because it is aligned with whole school agreed practice in Literacy and Numeracy. The Learning Support teacher is responsible for the Learning Support budget. The Learning Support Teacher in consultation with the staff and Leadership Team purchases equipment and investigates assistive technologies that allow all students, particularly those students with disabilities or special needs, to access the curriculum.

**Timetabling**

Teachers and assistants follow timetables that are devised according to student needs. Timetables are structured so that Literacy support is given within the classroom during the Literacy or Numeracy block wherever possible. Communication between the classroom teacher and the Learning Support Team is vital in planning timetables. Students with Special Needs are given first priority.

**Assessment and Reporting**

Common Grade Scale (A – E) Reports are issued at the end of Terms 2 and 4. Upon receipt of both the Term 2 and Term 4 report an opportunity is provided for parents to discuss these reports in a formal interview. Students with disabilities receive the Common Grade Scale Report. Accompanying this report is a modified report which addresses the SMART goals and indicators listed on the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). ILP Meetings are held in February/March and July/August. At these meetings teachers and parents set goals for future growth. The Read On Document (Catholic Education Office, 2010) sets a System Guide to Benchmark Levels which relates to students’ reading achievement over the early years; it is as follows:

- Level 8 by the end of Kindergarten
- Level 15 - 17 by the end of Year 1
- Level 20+ by the end of Year 2

The classroom teacher programs a unit of work using the Australian Curriculum and other related resources. The program provides evidence of modification or differentiation for all students including students with disabilities. The ILP forms part of the class program. Within the class program there is reference to the learning goals targeted in the ILP. The Learning Support staff work alongside the teacher to assist in the achievement of these goals. Progress in achieving these learning goals is then communicated to parents via the interview process.
Documentation

Inclusion and Wellbeing Matrix

An *Inclusion and Wellbeing Matrix* provides an initial overview of the characteristics and impacts that pertain to a specific child’s disability or special need, and the strategies that can be used to address the impacts. The Matrix is completed before an IIP is developed.

Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

An *Individual Learning Plan* (ILP) is a crucial part of a school's response to meeting the very specific needs of students with disabilities. The ILP addresses three to four specific smart goals, unique to and of high priority for the student. The ILP is formulated using a team approach including parents, teachers, the Learning Support Teacher and outside agencies and specialists where necessary.

Educational Impact Statement (E.I.S)

An *Educational Impact Statement* (E.I.S) is a document prepared by the classroom teacher in conjunction with the Learning Support teacher regarding the student’s ability to access the curriculum. It is required by the Catholic Education Office (CEO) in order to begin the process of identifying a student with a disability. Support pages attached to the Educational Impact Statement describe the procedures for processing external assessments received by schools.

Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System (ABAS)

An *Adaptive Behaviour Assessment System* (ABAS) document is completed by the parents and class teacher and is used by the CEO to classify and determine student behaviours.

Student Centred Appraisal of Needs (SCAN)

*Student Centred Appraisal of Needs* (SCAN) is a document completed by the parents and class teacher with a follow-up meeting. The SCAN document provides a picture of student needs with regard to key developmental areas.

SCAN meetings are held to determine student needs and to provide documentation for disability funding. SCAN sessions include parents, the Learning Support teacher, the class teacher, a CEO representative and a member of the School Leadership Team.
Rationale

The Library exists to support the teaching and learning of St Thomas the Apostle Primary School. It provides a wide range of resources to meet the needs of its two main user groups: the staff and students of the school.

The Library is crucial to the development of student literacy. The provision of quality recreational and curriculum resources encourages students to enjoy reading and stimulates further learning. St Thomas’ Library provides a literature collection which is of high quality. There is a focus on Australian authors, but significant international authors are also included. There is a focus on contemporary works while at the same time celebrating classics of value.

The term 'literacy' has expanded in recent years to encompass not only the ability to read and write, but also the skills of information access and management. The Inquiry Model of learning is used in the classroom as the basic tool for teaching and learning. This method depends on the acquisition of information literacy skills and hence they form an integral part of the library program for all students. The development of information literacy skills is recognised as one of the most important steps towards efficient and independent learning.

Integration and development of ICT is also a key component of the library Program. The Teacher Librarian assists staff to create, select and use a wide range of resources, including ICT, to engage students in their learning. The library is a hub where students are welcomed daily to engage in a variety of activities. The ICT team is currently supporting teachers in developing the LIFE learning platform, a digital meeting point where staff and students can share teaching and learning. Library lessons teach students how to use the internet safely, how to analyse and evaluate the information they find and to understand about copyright laws. Each year all students will be directed to Cybersmart http://www.cybersmart.gov.au/ websites encouraging the use of safe internet practices. Library lessons include discussions with students around the issues of cyber bullying and online privacy.

Aims

St Thomas the Apostle Library lessons aim to:

- meet the curriculum needs of students and teachers with quality resources which are appropriate to the needs of the user
- promote recreational reading through the teaching program, an attractive and stimulating environment and the provision of quality resources
- extend the skills of students in information literacy using electronic and print resources
- maintain an effective system for the care and management of resources.

The Role of the Teacher Librarian

The Teacher Librarian is a resource specialist who applies this knowledge in a teaching role. Therefore the Teacher Librarian must be at the forefront of advances in both resource development and teaching strategies. The responsibilities of the Teacher Librarian fall into two categories – Teaching for effective learning and Library Responsibilities.
CORE CURRICULUM: Library

Teaching for Effective Learning

The Teacher Librarian provides learning activities that will expand student ability to access information in both print and electronic forms, this involves:

- Co-operative planning with classroom teachers
- Teaching specific skills as part of a planned program
- Linking skills with current classroom programs
- Providing an atmosphere which encourages student confidence.

The Teacher Librarian promotes Literacy in the school by:

- Providing good literature which is easy to borrow
- Promoting literature in both formal and informal ways
- Creating an interesting and attractive environment
- Providing opportunities for students to respond to literature
- Alerting students and staff to new developments in literature
- Promoting community aspects of reading e.g. Book Fairs, Children’s Book Council Book Week, Chief Minister’s Reading Challenge and visiting authors.

Library Responsibilities

The Teacher Librarian maintains the collection so that it meets the resource needs of the school curriculum by:

- Regular consultation with staff
- The careful selection of resources
- Ongoing evaluation of the collection
- The maintenance of an efficient circulation system by:
  - Processing materials promptly
  - Ensuring the database is functioning efficiently through correct daily shutdown procedure and back up.
- Protection of the collection against damage or theft
- Adequate budgeting
- Regular stocktaking
- Participation in school wide curriculum reviews or discussions
- Knowledge of advances in teaching strategies or methodology.

Teaching and Learning Program

The Teacher Librarian works in consultation with the teaching staff to support the class teaching program and to provide information skills to students that will assist them in their inquiry learning. The Teacher Librarian develops term programs and stores these on LAN P:

Teachers maintain open communication with the Teacher Librarian around student engagement, performance and completion of Library tasks.
Rationale

The study of languages contributes to the general education of all students. It operates from the fundamental principle that for all students, learning to communicate in two or more languages is a rich, challenging experience of engaging with and participating in the linguistic and cultural diversity of our interconnected world.

The Australian Curriculum recognises Australia’s distinctive and dynamic migration history. Language learning builds upon students’ intercultural understanding and sense of identity as they are encouraged to explore and recognise their own linguistic, social, and cultural practices and identities as well as those associated with speakers of the language being learnt.

Learning languages develops students’ overall literacy, strengthening literacy-related capabilities that are transferable across learning areas.
The Indonesian Program at St Thomas the Apostle Kambah is developed from “Every Chance to Learn” Curriculum Framework for ACT Schools, in particular;

- ELA 15 – The student communicates with intercultural understanding

The Indonesian Program at St Thomas’ is developed from this document and is also based on the NSW Board of Studies Indonesian K-6 syllabus. St Thomas the Apostle School has a unique relationship with Indonesia as the school has been part of the Bridge Project (Australia, and Indonesia School Partnerships). Funding from this project has provided intercultural opportunities including teacher visits to Australia and to Indonesia. Students have been fortunate to share many experiences in Indonesian lessons such as puppet performances, dance, playing angklung, games and sports.

The Indonesian Program at St Thomas the Apostle gives a high priority to the spoken language and intercultural understanding. Students learn to listen and respond in Indonesian and the spoken language is used as much as possible in the classroom – for example, in classroom commands, reciting prayers, singing songs and role-plays. Students are also given the opportunity to share their learning on special occasions such as class assemblies.

Participating in Indonesian classes at St Thomas the Apostle is an enjoyable and meaningful experience, which builds self-confidence and self-esteem in every child.

Organisation

- Students from K-6 attend Indonesian lessons once per week throughout the school year.
- The Indonesian Program is delivered by a specialist Indonesian teacher.
At St Thomas the Apostle we are proud of our commitment to provide a quality education which allows the full potential of all in the community to be developed. We focus on continuing to embrace change in a spirit of optimism guided by our vision and mission. We value the traditions of our school community and continue to ensure our school is a professional learning community that values high standards, professional goals and collaborative learning. Together we build the Kingdom of God by being the Way, the Truth and the Life.

As we continue to develop our school and curriculum we have identified many tasks that remain ongoing or are part of our future focus, some of these include:

- Continuing to support parents and students in family faith journeys via Sacramental Programs and participation in the prayer life of the school
- Providing staff with opportunities to enrich their personal spirituality
- Providing staff with PD in Shared Christian Praxis, with an emphasis on the use of scripture and rich assessment
- Continuing to promote a professional learning community where staff receive feedback and support around the professional standards, learning goals and quality teaching
- Completing the Year A and B Cycle for English and Religious Education to allow for Multi-age classes
- Continuing with the introduction of the Archdiocese of Canberra/Goulburn Mathematics Framework as best practice for the teaching of Mathematics
- Introducing ‘Write On’ as it is released to inform best practice in this area of English
- Continuing to update English resources in the school with a focus on Critical Literacy
- Ensuring staff are skilled in using a UbD model for developing teaching and learning programs
- Rejuvenating the Pathways Integrated Curriculum approach to cater for the Australian Curriculum as it is released
- Continuing to build teacher pedagogical skills around the use of Web2.0 technologies, ipads and the LIFE learning platform
- Updating and implementing the ICT plan to include the purchase of hardware that will continue to create opportunities for individualised and collaborative learning using educational apps and Web2.0 technologies
- Revising program documentation in line with all aspects of the Australian Curriculum
- Providing professional learning around assessment and reporting including formative assessment, targeted feedback and student self-assessment
- Analysing and reflecting on NAPLAN data to improve student learning outcomes
- Implementing KidsMatter to promote awareness of and tools for, mental health and wellbeing for all members of our school community
- Further developing our links with Indonesia and Indonesian teachers and students through our Bridge Project partnership
- Increasing our sustainability practices and teaching and learning to support this important cross-curriculum priority
- Further developing the role of the School Community Council (SCC) particularly in the development of annual school improvement plans in their areas of advice and responsibility
- Continuing maintenance and review of fixed playground structures and school buildings and equipment