ENGLISH POLICY

RATIONALE
We at A.S.P.S. believe that Language learning is important in helping students to achieve success in school and in life generally. Through the use of language, students discover and convey information. They work through ideas, and use language to express feelings. They learn how language works and how it enables society to function. They learn to use language appropriately and we recognise that language will only be successfully learned through use. Teachers at A.S.P.S. have the responsibility of promoting competence in the four language modes: speaking, listening, reading and writing.

In order to produce a balanced education in English, oral language is central to learning and to the development of an individual’s personality. It is the chief means of verbal communication and it provides the foundation upon which students learn to read and write.

Writing is the central means by which thought, ideas and knowledge are preserved. Through writing, all students come to grasp ideas and the various ways of expressing meaning. Written language also provides a means for children to be imaginative, independent and critical thinkers.

Through reading students build on their knowledge by taking in new information. They come directly in contact with broad issues related to the world around them. Through literature, they can come to a better understanding of themselves through a new understanding of people and of our cultural heritage.

GOALS

The goals of the English Language Framework will be met through the areas of Reading, Writing, Spelling, Speaking and Listening.
POLICY AND PROGRAM EVALUATION

* The English Co-ordinator and team will facilitate and conduct a minor review of the policy and its implementation annually, and will present a report with any recommendations to School Council.

* The English Co-ordinator and team will facilitate the collection and monitoring of student progress by September (End of Term Three). An annual report to School Council should summarise and give commentary or recommendations on the data and trends within it.

* A major review of the policy and program will be undertaken every four years. It is recommended that a major review should include the participation of children, staff, parents and others with appropriate expertise, external to the school.

* An overview of the school's English program with any significant recommendations will be included in the School Council Annual Report.

* A major evaluation of the school's English program will be undertaken every four years. The next major evaluation will be for the year 1997.
ORAL LANGUAGE - SPEAKING AND LISTENING

RATIONALE

We at A.S.P.S. recognise that oral language includes listening and speaking and enables us to communicate immediately and efficiently. It is a social tool that helps us to relate to others. We value the wealth of oral language gained by children before they enter school and endeavour to ensure that the smooth progress of language learning is maintained and that the use of language continues to be as natural a part of life, as it was in the preschool years.

Teachers at A.S.P.S. aim to

* Promote language competence - the ability to use language appropriate to a wide range of audiences for a wide range of purposes.
* Promote awareness and appreciation of language and the profound role it plays in human affairs and relationships.
* Ensure that those who have a language other than English are provided with opportunities through which they can develop competence in English and participate in all areas of the curriculum.
* Create a classroom atmosphere conducive to oral language development, which allows students to build freely on their existing linguistic knowledge.

IMPLEMENTATION
Teachers at A.S.P.S. will develop and foster oral language by.

* Providing favourable conditions for language learning and development through:
  - expectations of high performance
  - demonstrations of varying language usage
  - a variety of methods and resources
  - encouragement and feedback to students
  - speaking and listening experiences which vary according to audience, situation, purpose and requirements of individual students.

* Providing resources and materials which support language usage:
  - through literature
  - in everyday life
  - for personal interests
  - in all areas of the curriculum
  - through a variety of media

* Encouraging discussion before, during and after tasks.
* Encouraging students to explore language through drama.

For more details, explanations and examples of the points mentioned above please refer to pages 49, 52 - 59 of the English Language Framework, Ministry of Education 1988 and the Oral component of the First Steps program.

RESOURCES

Refer to Resources Appendix.

EVALUATION

Refer to Evaluation section for details on how to evaluate the four areas of English, Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking.
READING

RATIONALE
Reading provides insight into values and understanding of others through written history and literature. It fulfils the need to understand and interpret information used in daily life and enables us to learn about the ways or expressing meaning. We at A.S.P.S. aim to achieve the following goals in reading:

* To develop in students a positive attitude toward reading through enjoyable, challenging and satisfying interactions with print.
* To foster in students flexible and effective reading strategies.
* To enable students to become fluent readers.
* To develop students ability to select appropriate materials.
* To develop students ability to choose a wide range of literacy materials: to read, write and experience a variety of literacy styles.
* To develop independent readers who want to read; enjoy reading; learn through reading; and who can justify and support opinions through reading.

NATURE
The staff of A.S.P.S. believes reading is the process of constructing meaning from print, and bringing meaning to the print. In order to do this, a student needs to know how to use information provided by all cues - the syntactic information (grammar), semantic information (meaning), and graphophonic information (sound/symbol relationships). It is very important children are taught how to use all three sources at information to bring meaning to print.

IMPLEMENTATION
Teachers at A.S.P.S. will develop and foster the reading process with students by:

* Sharing a range of books and materials which include both written and electronic texts.
* Reading to students regularly in all year levels.
* Allowing set times for students to select materials to read for themselves.
* Arranging for students to have access to books in the classroom.
* Interacting with students to provide feedback, encouragement and specialised guidance in order to build confidence and effective reading strategies.
* Providing appropriate literature and materials for students learning English as a second or other language.
* Encouraging students to read to each other, and to talk about what they read.
* Using literature for reading programs.

For more details, explanations and examples of the points mentioned above please refer to pages 49, 60 75 of English Language Framework, Ministry of Education and Reading component of First Steps Literary Program.
CHILDREN WITH READING DIFFICULTIES

The Inclusive Schooling Program states that all non-readers should be catered for within the structure of the normal classroom. Programs for the non-reader will have a strong emphasis on the children's own life experiences in language, and will be structured accordingly. For more details, explanations and examples on how to cater for the non-reader refer to pages 24, 25, 26 of English Language Framework, Ministry of Education 1988.

RESOURCES

Refer to Resources Appendix.

EVALUATION

Refer to Evaluation section for details on how to evaluate the four areas of English: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking.
READING RECOVERY

RATIONALE

Reading Recovery provides an early intervention program for Year One children who, after their initial 12 months at school, are assessed as "at risk" in reading and writing. All children who have access to Reading Recovery will be assured of every opportunity to develop competence in reading and writing.

NATURE

Reading Recovery is an accredited program which must be implemented in accordance with guidelines issued by Reading Recovery Tutors.

* All Grade one children will be eligible for consideration (children who have repeated Prep are not eligible).
* Selection is based on appropriate Diagnostic testing.
* Program consists of individual daily lessons of 30 minutes with trained Reading Recovery teacher until required standard of reading and writing is achieved (maximum 20 weeks).
* Further Diagnostic testing is given at the end of the program and re-tested at the end of the year.
* Continual monitoring of children by Reading Recovery teacher(s) will continue throughout primary school years.

IMPLEMENTATION

* The program will be taken by a fully trained Reading Recovery teacher or a trainee Reading Recovery teacher.
* Where staffing can be arranged Reading Recovery should be implemented.
* All children in Year One will be considered for the Program. Eligibility will be in accordance with Reading Recovery selection procedures (in consultation with Reading Recovery tutors where necessary).
* Children after completion of the intensive program will be monitored through periodic testing, observations in the classroom and consultation with class teacher and parents.
* Parents of children in the program will be kept informed of the child's progress and will be expected to demonstrate a commitment to support the Program in the manner discussed with the Reading Recovery teacher.
* Reading Recovery teachers will monitor and help maintain progress of Reading Recovery children throughout their primary school years.
RESOURCES

* Reading Recovery resources remain intact and are used at the discretion of the Reading Recovery teacher or tutor.
* Trained/trainee Reading Recovery Teacher(s).
* Books specific for the program implementation to be continually added to as necessary.
* Room and equipment.
* Funding from Reading Recovery budget.
* The Reading Recovery Room should only be used by the Reading Recovery Teacher(s).

READING RECOVERY EVALUATION

* Statistics collected from all testing, surveys, etc. will be kept and consideration of successes and concerns will be a continual process.
* Twice Yearly Minor Evaluation.
WRITING

RATIONALE

A.S.P.S. writing program will be built on and maintain close links with the oral language, reading and literature programs. It will embrace the handwriting, spelling and word processing components of the curriculum. It will also draw on the content of other subject areas as well.

Learning to write is an effective way of learning about language and learning to organise ideas. We as teachers aim to:

* increase students understanding and awareness of how written language works.
* have students use writing language proficiently for a range of purposes, and appropriately for a variety of audiences.
* develop students confidence and skill in the use of writing conventions.
* use computer technology as a tool for learning: reading, writing and problem solving.

NATURE

Students will be given a broad range of writing experiences that will focus on the following:

* The narrative form where writers recount personal experiences and create literary stories.
* The expository form where they describe, comment, explain or argue.
* The poetic form where they place the sounds of words side by side with their ideas.

The writing program should lead students to write in varied ways:

* For a range of purposes both personal and public
* On a range of subjects including topics from other subject areas.
* To a range of audiences using appropriate registers.

This means that students should learn to develop a sense of audience and be able to control the structure, tone and final form of their writing. This also includes the following:

* Proper use of writing conventions, including spelling and grammar, taught in a meaningful context through the children's own writing.
* Appropriate presentation including, where appropriate, attractive and legible handwriting.
* Respect for the reader by ensuring clarity of expression.
IMPLEMENTATION

Teachers at A.S.P. will develop and foster the Writing process by:

* Using writing skills throughout the curriculum.
* Providing feedback at each student’s point of need.
* Exposing students to a wide range of written materials which demonstrate different literary styles and genres.
* Providing real purpose for Writing.
* Encouraging co-operative learning for students to explore, share, discuss and respond to tasks in pairs or small groups.
* Allowing plenty of time to write, and experiment with a variety of written forms.
* Using the word processor to assist students to:
  - develop writing process and style
  - improve spelling
  - explore and manipulate ideas in the development of texts.

For more details, explanations and examples of the points mentioned above please refer to pages 49, 76-89 of English Language Framework, Ministry of Education 1986 and to the Writing component of the First Steps Program.
HANDWRITING

Teachers have a duty to teach handwriting systematically until a pleasing and legible style is developed. This will be done through modeling by the teacher, and as often as possible, in an incidental way in the context of student's own writing. Specific advice teaching practice in handwriting can be found in The teaching of Handwriting (Education Department of Victoria, 1985).

RESOURCES

Refer to Resources Appendix.

EVALUATION

Refer to Evaluation section for details on how to evaluate the four areas of English, Writing, Listening and Speaking.
SPELLING

The First Steps Spelling Program will be used by all teachers to teach children spelling skills and to evaluate their progress. This program is linked in with the levels of the English C.S.F. (see Appendix) and to the Kidmap computer program.

The First Steps Spelling program supports the view that learning spelling is not learning a list of words, but is a developmental process of learning to apply different strategies appropriately in order to spell written words correctly. **Spelling is a thinking process, not a rote learning task.**

Strategies include sound sequences, knowledge of graphophonic relationships, visual patterns and meaning.

Students must be taught spelling in a purposeful language context. **The major context will be their own writing.**

Students need to be encouraged to become as independent as possible and to take responsibility for their own writing and spelling.

They need to develop their spelling skills through:

* word study activities (derivations, origins, morphemic units)
* visual patterning
* identifying critical features of words
* using resources such as word banks, dictionaries, pocket spellers thesauruses and glossaries
* word sorting
* use of personal lists
* proof reading
* a range of strategies

Teachers will also be expected to use teaching strategies which are related to the particular phase of the continuum on which the student is placed, ie

* letter name activities for those children in the Preliminary phase
* phonetic activities for the Semi-phonetic phase
* visual patterning & discrimination activities for the Phonetic phase etc.

Examples of lists of words and suggested sound/letter combinations are to be found in the appendix of this document and can be used as a basis for a classroom spelling program.
SPELLING JOURNALS

As a further aid to developing spelling skills and encouraging spelling independence, Spelling Journals will be used in each grade in accordance with the First Steps Spelling program. The Spelling Journal approach has an in-built testing procedure at both individual and class level) and together with the student's writing provides an excellent indicator of the progress made throughout the year.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORD KEEPING

Teachers will be expected to keep First Steps individual records showing the student’s progress on the developmental continuum. These will be collected in May and September each year, by the English curriculum team and the results will be collated and evaluated by the Assistant Principal.

SUMMARY

Therefore the expectation of Albert Street staff will be that the classroom spelling program will be firmly set within the context of children's' writing and will include the use of First Steps Spelling Journals and a combination of individual word banks, topic words, high frequency words and appropriate spelling strategies including the teaching of graphophonics. The First Steps Spelling developmental Continuum will be used to record the progress of individual children.

Classroom spelling programs will be supported by the whole school planning and policy and the presence of a First Steps focus/support teacher who will ensure that teachers are provided with information about and assistance with the First Steps Spelling program.

RESOURCES

Refer to Resources Appendix.

EVALUATION

Refer to evaluation section for details on how to evaluate the four areas of English, Writing, Listening and Speaking.
CHILDREN AT RISK IN THE AREA OF SPELLING

Children who are experiencing difficulties with spelling and who are considered to be at risk

(policy regarding children at risk to be added later - as part of a whole school plan dealing with children at risk and incorporating the special needs program - needs to be whole staff discussion on this issue - but give it some thought anyway!)