



**WILLIAM CLARKE  
COLLEGE**  
CHRIST OUR WISDOM

# WILLIAM CLARKE COLLEGE

PRIMARY CURRICULUM



# OUR PRIMARY CURRICULUM APPROACH

*“The depth and breadth of the Primary curriculum enables children to find areas of interest and passion, and excel in them to the best of their ability.”*

At the heart of our teaching and learning framework is the focus on our young children acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy skills so that they are well-positioned to experience success as extraordinary learners.

We know extraordinary learners engage in deep learning through meaningful and authentic experiences that develop Christ-like character, academic mastery and enterprise skills.

The depth and breadth of the Primary curriculum enables children to find areas of interest and passion, and excel in them to the best of their ability. The Primary School further supports the learning of the children using specialist teachers in subjects such as Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE), Music, Science and Technology, Drama and Visual Arts.

We also run an extensive Co-curricular and Sports program with pathways for the children to represent the College at a higher level in swimming, athletics, and cross country. The Primary School participates each week in the Hills Zone Sports Association (HZSA) competition competing against other schools in sports such as Basketball, Football, Netball and Touch Football.

Over the past few years, the Drama and Performing Arts program has flourished in the Primary School. Biannually the children have the chance to be part of a Primary School Musical. The Primary School also participates in the Independent Primary School Heads Association (IPSHA) Performing Arts Festival held at Sydney Town Hall, and is also a passionate supporter of Wakakirri National Story Dance Festival. Debating, Chess, Gymnastics, Young Engineers, Languages, Running Club and Christian CRU Club are just some of the other areas available for our children to participate in and find their passion.

We know some children can move through the curriculum at a faster rate while others require additional support. Our teaching and learning approach ensures every student's needs and abilities are fully catered for in a comprehensive manner.

To ensure our children have the best possible opportunity to experience success at school, the Primary school has nine additional, full-time teachers known as Literacy and Numeracy Specialists (LANS). The LANS staff work closely alongside the class teacher and the students in a small group approach to learning with an emphasis on explicit and direct instruction.

The data on the progress our children are making clearly demonstrates our children are making significant academic progress in all areas of their learning, especially in the key foundational areas of literacy and numeracy.

We firmly believe our nine additional LANS staff working alongside our class teachers implementing our small group approach to learning has been instrumental in the progress our children are making.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you would like to know more about the curriculum approach to teaching and learning in the Primary School.

Kind regards,



**Mr Dean Smith**  
Head of Primary School



**Mrs Sheree Griffin**  
Director of Teaching and Learning (P-6)



**Mr David Hall**  
Head of Curriculum





# OUR SMALL GROUPS EXPLAINED

The following areas of literacy and numeracy are delivered via our small group approach. All other curriculum areas are taught by the child's classroom or specialist teachers.

## K-2 Reading Groups

### *Learning Within Each Class*

In Reading Groups multiple teachers work daily with a strategically formed small group of students. Each individual Reading Group benefits from having a fully-qualified teacher lead the small group of students in their reading instruction. With a teacher on each Reading Group, we maximise student engagement and provide a personalised delivery of reading instruction to support all of our students to make great progress each day.

While Reading Groups are taking place in one classroom, the other classes on the grade are receiving explicit, direct instruction lessons in Phonics from their classroom teacher. When one class' Reading Group lesson concludes, the teachers rotate, and this intensive instructional Reading Group process takes place again in the next classroom.

Kindergarten to Year 2 students are taught to read by incorporating the systematic, explicit and direct instruction approach of Synthetic Phonics into our daily literacy program. Synthetic Phonics is the synthesising or blending of phonemes (sounds) to make a word, enabling children to read.

## Years 3-6 Spelling Groups

### *Learning Across Year Groups*

Years 3-6 Spelling is held at a common time where our students learn in vertically-streamed small groups. Students are strategically placed in one of six Spelling Mastery levels or spelling extension groups. Students develop skills in spelling, vocabulary and writing. At the end of the co-ordinated spelling lesson, all students return to their classroom.

**Spelling Mastery** – Year 3 to Year 6 students develop skills in spelling, vocabulary and writing in daily direct instruction Spelling Mastery lessons. These highly structured daily lessons develop student mastery in phonemic, morphemic and whole-word skills.

## Years K-6 Numeracy Groups

### *Learning Within Year Groups*

Learning in Mathematics occurs in smaller, strategically formed groups. Within each group are students from across the grade. Maths lessons occur at the same time within each grade and allow our students to benefit from personalised, targeted instruction. At the end of each Maths lesson, students return to their classrooms and continue learning in other key areas.

**Number Sense** – each daily Mathematics lesson for Kindergarten to Year 6 students begins with the explicit teaching of number sense. The intentional teaching of number sense develops students' ability to process numbers and flexibly and efficiently make calculations.

## Progress and Support

### *Student Progress*

Students are placed in strategically formed groups so that each child's specific learning needs can be directly catered for. Classroom teachers regularly review individual student progress to identify areas for growth and improvement.

We believe that student progress is fostered through our:

- in-class differentiated groups
- vertically-streamed groups in Spelling
- laterally-streamed groups in Mathematics.

### *Student Support*

Students who require additional support with their learning in literacy and numeracy receive targeted intervention. Targeted intervention practices are implemented using effective research-based programs to provide 'booster' sessions for children with the goal of further moving them along their individual learning journey.

Our Enrichment Program, led by our Gifted and Talented teacher, provides those students, learning at a quicker pace and at a more advanced level, with additional support and resources so that they continue making great progress in their learning.

By adopting our small group approach led by qualified and highly trained teachers, our goal is to develop foundational skills that will support your child in their journey of becoming an extraordinary learner.

# THE PRIMARY CURRICULUM

## PREPARATORY

Preparatory School offers a 3- and 2-Day School Readiness program. This program seeks to build on the learning experiences our children have encountered in these precious early years so as to support them to learn in a more formal environment.

Children are encouraged to investigate, explore, observe and respond to new experiences and situations. Preparatory classes are influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach to Early Childhood Education. This approach is based on strong relationships and views each child as a curious and capable student, whose learning is greatly enhanced through discovery and play.

Our Preparatory children receive explicit teaching each day in:

- Core lessons
- Early Literacy skills
- Early Numeracy skills.

Developing the children's social and emotional skills is also a key focus.

The Preparatory program also provides an opportunity for all children to begin their Christian journey at the College. Children will learn about God's love for them and how we are all unique, special and precious to Him. The children also engage in learning experiences through specialist lessons in Music, Science and Technology, and Physical Education.

The Preparatory School is a supportive, nurturing and engaging environment for young children's curiosity and sense of wonder that ultimately seeks to enable their love for learning to flourish.

## YEARS K-6

At William Clarke College, we prioritise the building of foundational literacy and numeracy skills in our youngest students. We believe this foundation is best established in small groups. The College's strategic decision to invest considerably in additional Literacy and Numeracy Specialists, enables all students to be supported so as to make great progress in these important early years. In addition to a main classroom teacher, students work with additional LANS staff who have been specifically assigned to deliver literacy and numeracy in a small group context. Our data clearly demonstrates that our students are making significant academic progress in the areas of literacy and numeracy, and the College's Small Group Model approach has been instrumental in enabling this progress.

Our staff have been trained in explicit instruction, a well-researched method that supports students' ability to understand new content. By prioritising additional teaching staff, we structure learning in small groups so that we can:

- Provide targeted instruction
- Enhance student engagement
- Promptly identify gaps in knowledge
- Foster meaningful one-on-one relationships
- Collect relevant data and closely monitor and track student progress.

Children who are able to move through the curriculum at a quicker pace are extremely well supported and catered for in the Primary School. Through our small group approach, children are streamed from Year 1 in Mathematics and from Year 3 in Spelling. Selected children

are also withdrawn to work with the College's Gifted and Talented teacher. The nine additional LANS work closely with the Diverse Learning team, delivering targeted intervention practices.

In addition to our targeted Literacy and Numeracy Program, our Primary School curriculum provides specialist staff to deliver lessons in subjects such as Science and Technology, Music, PDHPE, Visual Arts and Drama.

Equipping all children to learn about the love of God and about His word, the Bible, is a core focus of the Primary School. Students attend Chapel each week and participate in daily devotions, prayers and Bible Foundations lessons.

The Primary School staff work tirelessly to support each student to be known and well cared for. The College's House system further complements the small group and pastoral care approach embedded in the Primary School.

The Primary School seeks to ensure students have the opportunity to develop agency over their learning and have a voice in many aspects of the school. Developing students as leaders is a vital part of our approach. Furthermore, students are encouraged to develop a servant heart, and love and care for others.





# PRIMARY SUBJECTS

Students in Kindergarten to Year 6 students undertake subjects in the following Primary key learning areas:

- Christian Development
- Creative Arts
- English
- Human Society in its Environment:  
History and Geography
- Mathematics
- PDHPE
- Science and Technology

To enhance the learning experience of our Primary students, we have Specialist Teachers in:

- Library (K-6)
- Music (K-6)
- PDHPE (K-6)
- Science and Technology (K-6)
- Drama (5-6)
- Visual Arts (5-6)







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