

**Westgarth Primary School
Languages Working Party
Background Paper 2**

Introduction

In October 2013, before the first survey, the Languages Working Party (**LWP**) distributed the first background paper. It summarised our research work to date, which involved investigating leading research in the area of languages education in Australia, including Government publications. We also identified the legislation and policy that applies in this area. At the same time, a paper on 'Greek Language at Westgarth Primary School' was circulated.

This second background paper sets out information relevant to language preferences and preferred language learning models. The Parent Information Session scheduled for 27 May 2014 will provide more detail on models for languages education and opportunities for questions. The second survey will be distributed after the Information Session to measure the interest in the different language learning models.

What Language?

Preferred languages

The first survey indicated that the popular languages are: Mandarin, French, Spanish, Italian, Indonesian, Greek, German and Japanese.

These languages fall into the modern languages grouping and are among the 11 languages initially included in the Australian Curriculum (not yet applicable to Victorian schools).¹ This takes into account:

- It is a language of national priority (Asian languages);
- It is one of the most common languages currently taught in Australian schools (French, German, Indonesian and Japanese);
- It is one of the most commonly spoken foreign languages at home in Australia (Arabic, Greek and Vietnamese); and
- It is a language of 'global importance' (Spanish and Arabic).

At the local level, Westgarth parents might have indicated a preference for Mandarin, French, Spanish, Italian, Indonesian, Greek, German and Japanese because:

- It is spoken at home or reflects ethnic background (eg Greek)
- It will provide future career opportunities in international market (eg Mandarin)
- It is relatively easy to master (eg Indonesian)
- It is alphabet based and/or Latin based (eg French, Italian, Spanish, Indonesian, German)
- There is local cultural connection (eg Greek, Italian)

¹ The others are Korean, Arabic and Vietnamese.

The languages taught at local primary schools is also relevant because that will affect which languages are offered at the local secondary schools. This is contained in the table below.

Schools	Greek	Italian	Mandarin	Japanese	French	Indonesian	Latin	German
Westgarth PS	☐							
Northcote PS		☐						
North Fitzroy PS		☐						
Merri Creek PS		☐						
Carlton North PS		☐						
Carlton Gardens PS			☐					
Pender's Grove PS		☐						
St Mary's PS		☐						
Thornbury PS		☐						
Bell PS		☐						
Preston PS		☐						
Preston West PS		☐						
Brunswick South BS		☐						
Brunswick East PS		☐						
Reservoir PS		☐						
St Joseph's PS		☐						
Clifton Hill PS			☐		☐			
Spensley St PS		☐						
Fairfield PS					☐			
Wales St PS	☐	☐	☐					

Language Learning Model

Learning languages may occur through different types of programs: language-as-a-subject programs, content-based programs, and various types of bilingual programs (which sees the use of two languages in instruction). Extra-curricula language learning can also be facilitated through schools, eg by way of partnerships.

The various approaches to teaching languages can be usefully categorised as follows (but note, the categories overlap in terms of teaching methods and the degree of 'immersion' into the target language):

Language taught as a separate subject: The focus is on the teaching and learning of the target language and understanding the connections

between language and culture. This is the most common type of language program in Victoria.

Bilingual programs: These provide literacy and content instruction to all students through two languages, and promotes bilingualism and biliteracy, academic achievement, and multicultural competence.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL): These programs combine teaching content from a curriculum area with the explicit teaching of the target language. There is a focus on the vocabulary and structures required for the additional curriculum area. Content may include all or part of one or more curriculum areas.

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