

# Japanese International School Language Policy

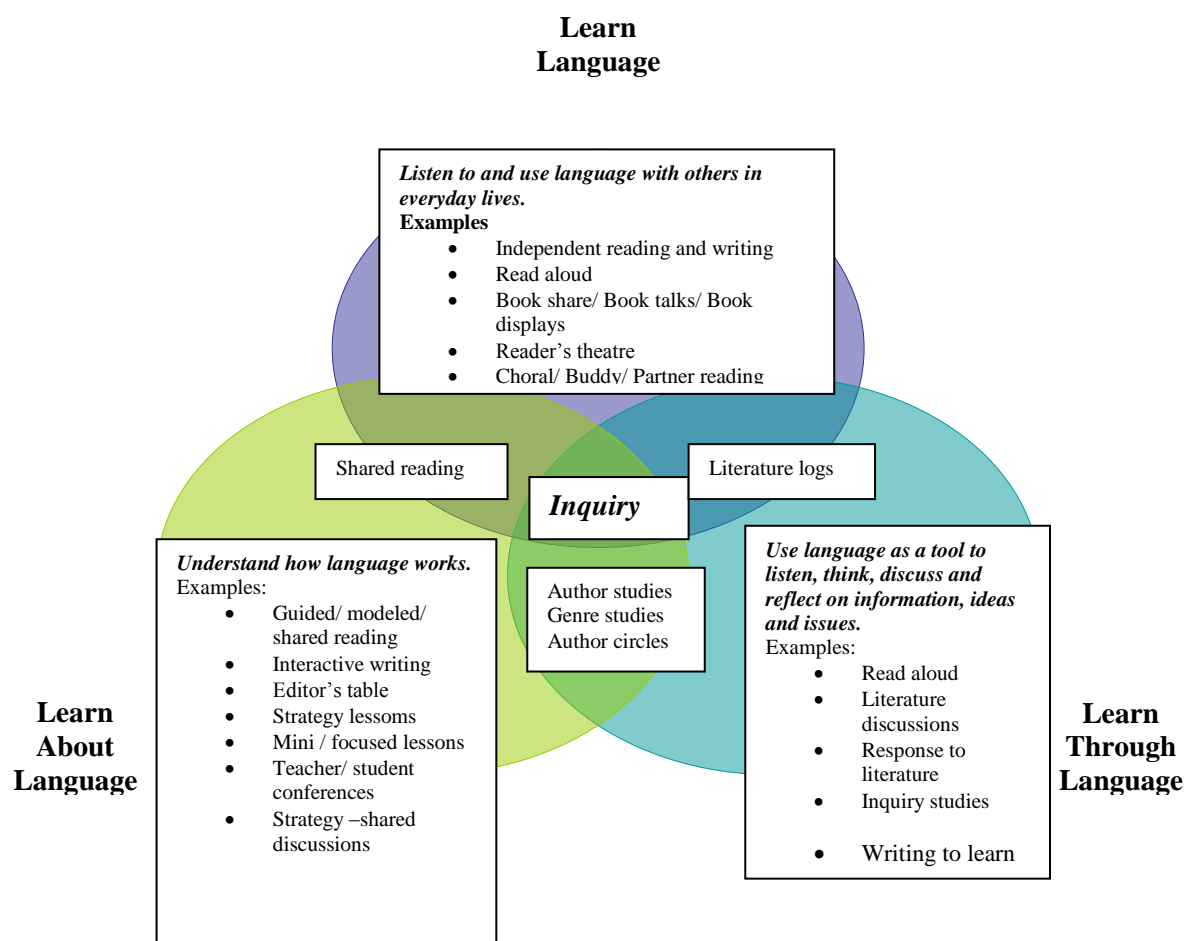
## 1.0 - Philosophy

At JIS, language is central to all learning. As English is the main medium of instruction, it is important that all our staff and students are role models and competent users of this language. In order to communicate and thrive as a learner, it is important that our students show progression and achievement in their understanding, use and application of the English language. All our staff members are language teachers and as such have a shared responsibility towards the development of language within our students.

As well as our focus on learning and development through English, we reflect our I.B. heritage by reinforcing the importance of learning other languages and the respecting of those known to our community but not actively taught within our school.

Language requires context for true meaning and function to be understood, therefore, at JIS we are committed to providing a range of purposes, situations and audiences for its development. At JIS, as an integral part of our commitment to the PYP, we plan for speaking, listening, reading, writing, viewing and presenting (media literacy) activities within our language programme.

At JIS we believe that development in language is best achieved by; *learning language, learning through language* and *learning about language*.



## **2.0 - Scope and Sequence**

Our Scope and Sequence uses the IB Scope and Sequence as its foundation and is collaboratively developed, using the best of international teaching and learning practice inherent in our multi-cultural staff. Our documentation provides guidelines for all our staff to follow as they plan and develop activities for their students. We believe the development of a Reception to P6 continuum is of paramount importance and that all students will be carefully monitored as they progress through our school. The JIS Scope and Sequence is used as a continuum to ensure differentiation within classrooms. Differentiation of learning and experience will be a key element of how we apply our scope and sequence documentation in order to truly offer a curriculum that is relevant, engaging, challenging and developmental for all our students.

## **3.0 - Additional Language Learning at JIS**

All students at JIS will be offered regular learning experiences in either Japanese or Mandarin. These lessons will be taught by specialist, native speakers of Japanese and Mandarin. Entry to these lessons will be the choice of students and their families with the guidance of JIS staff. The school reserves the right to advise students on their final decisions in the interests of their whole learning profile, not just their linguistic development. Japanese and Mandarin lessons will be taught in collaboration with both the JIS POI (Programme of Inquiry) and as stand-alone instruction. We aim to integrate additional language learning whenever and wherever it is of benefit to the students, using conceptual understandings as a framework for instruction.

## **4.0 - Learning Support**

At JIS, we are fortunate to be able to offer learning support for students who will benefit from extra help. Learning support is given by specialist staff and trained assistants in collaboration with class teachers and the school's POI (Programme of Inquiry). The Student Support Coordinator is involved in collaborative planning in order to support differentiation within the classroom. Learning Support offers full screening to ascertain students' level of need. Where possible, support will be offered in class, though depending on circumstances, individual and group pull out sessions may be preferred.

## **5.0 - Mother Tongue Support**

Due to the huge diversity of languages within JIS it is acknowledged that specialist support may not be available for all students. It is the responsibility of the whole of the JIS community to support our language programme and if members of our parent body and wider community are able to support specific students, this is encouraged. At JIS we welcome adult volunteers to our classrooms and acknowledge that they may be an excellent resource for mother tongue support, in both formal and informal learning situations. As English is the language spoken by or known to all our students, it is our language of 'inclusion' – students are free to use any language within JIS but not at the exclusion of others. Language is used to communicate, not exclude. Please refer to the Inclusion Policy for more information for students who have English as an additional language.

5.1 - Our school library learning centre provides a range of texts in languages other than English which are openly available for students to loan. This process continues as part of our funding priorities. We also continue to encourage members of the JIS community to offer story reading sessions, within the library, in their own languages.

5.2 - We acknowledge the diversity and richness of experience that our students bring to our school and actively encourage families to continue the development of a high quality native language within their own home. Research indicates that this is the best platform from which to learn high quality English.

## **6.0 - Teaching Practices**

6.1 - It is important that, as a PYP school, the process of inquiry is an integral part of how we teach language. It is imperative that we explore language within the range of experiences and contexts written into our scope and sequence documentation. All staff are expected to create a print rich environment, be a role model for best

practice in the use of language and present a variety of texts and media which will allow for meaningful inquiry. Language must be created, appreciated, shared and critically analysed.

6.2 - Our students are entitled to a differentiated curriculum to best suit their needs. It is important that flexible grouping structures are adopted for all aspects of language instruction. It is our belief that a 'balanced' language programme would include but is not limited to exposure to and involvement with the following, regardless of the language:-

*Reading aloud to children, modelled writing, shared reading, shared writing, guided reading, guided writing, independent reading, independent writing, explicit skills and strategies teaching (taught through purposeful inquiry), critical appraisal, open ended creativity and reflection/self-assessment, speaking and listening and a variety of media forms.*

6.3 - We use Reading Recovery Guidelines and a range of differentiated texts to support reading. Groupings are flexible, accounting for different reading needs to be addressed. We use Get Reading Right as a resource for the introduction of phonics and pre-reading skills. A multi-sensory approach is used and phonics instruction is differentiated according to the children's needs. Phonics instruction is applied to authentic reading situations. Letter formation skills are taught starting in Reception and are then further developed in other classes. Students are encouraged to develop a legible, cursive style of handwriting in English as they progress through the school. The writing of characters is taught in Mandarin and Japanese lessons starting in P1 and P2. Spelling is taught through individualised and group programmes in all years, supported by word study inquiry and a variety of materials including 'Words Their Way.' The application of spelling into everyday writing and the understanding of how language works is the ultimate goal. For writing activities, we encourage a range of approaches and use 'First Steps' (Aus) as a framework from which to structure inquiries into purposes of writing and associated skills, comprehension and grammar.

## **7.0 - Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

In order to provide the quality of language experience we aspire to, it is important that assessment practices form a key role in our planning for teaching and learning. Assessment should be both formative and summative and must involve both student and teacher. Pre- assessment guides learning and quality assessment tasks provide the feedback as to whether learning intentions have been achieved. The development of a whole school set of assessment tools is the responsibility of the JIS staff. These include, quality staff and student formulated rubrics, samples of work, internationally recognized standardised tests and the use of Reading Recovery levels as a starting point for reading. First Steps Writing assessment tools are used as a resource to guide expectations in writing.

7.1 - All students have an entitlement to accurate, regular assessment in language to help them fully develop their learning. It is important that they reflect on their own learning through self and peer assessment as well as through the feedback of their teachers. The use of criterion based rubrics will be encouraged to allow students to know what expectations are and how they can best be achieved.

7.2 - All staff are required to keep up to date, accurate records of the achievements of their students. These records will be shared with students and parents and will be an integral part of the transfer process of classes.

(Please refer to JIS Assessment Policy for more details.)

## **8.0 - Professional Development**

Staff at JIS are expected to contribute to the development of language teaching and learning. They will be offered workshops from I.B. and within school. They will be encouraged to share good practice with others and have the opportunity to learn from speakers brought into school. The school will provide a clearly identified set of priorities for development and will create opportunities for staff to learn and develop in these areas.

## **9.0 - Implementation and review**

The implementation of our language policy is the responsibility of the whole of the JIS community. The promotion of the policy is the responsibility of the school Principal and the PYP Coordinator. The Principal and PYP Coordinator shall also be responsible for the monitoring, development and review of this policy. The policy will be reviewed in line with school priorities identified by the JIS School Development Plan (published bi-annually).

**JIS staff October 2007** (*revised October 2010 and March 2014 in collaboration with JIS staff*)