

Literacy and Numeracy in our Junior School



ST PETERS
GIRLS



At St Peter's Girls' School, we place expert
emphasis on **Literacy and Numeracy**
during the Junior School years.

Mathematics

Our **Mathematics program** is carefully crafted to sequentially develop our students' knowledge, understanding and skills in all strands of Mathematics, with consistent approaches to learning delivered across Reception to Year 6.

In recent years, we have expanded our Mathematics offering with additional educators enabling enhanced teaching in smaller groups.

Students are encouraged to understand the important place Mathematics has in our everyday lives, and to notice opportunities where it is important to think like a mathematician. They become excited to learn Mathematics is a language that explains patterns and relationships and helps us to understand how our world works.

Using a consistent series of thinking routines when approaching tasks enables students to build competency and fluency as they advance through each year level. Vital reasoning and problem-solving skills are developed through explicit instruction, group investigations and individual study, with opportunities to experiment, explore and transfer learning to new situations. Making conjectures and testing theories are features of our program, helping students understand that Mathematics is not merely a set of rules and procedures to follow.



Gaining strength in numeracy takes time and practice. Providing parent workshops is one way we support the partnership between home and school to assist this aspect of our students' learning.

Our aim is to develop students who are competent and capable mathematicians with inquiring minds and a thirst for learning.

English

Our multidimensional **English program** features a robust base in phonics, opportunities for rich linguistic inquiry, a continual focus on reading, and a consistent approach to developing writing skills from Reception to Year 6.

In advancing students' understanding of the sounds and spelling of the English language, we integrate the tools of THRASS, which stands for Teaching Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills. Successfully applied in many schools worldwide for more than 20 years, THRASS elevates the standard of our phonics program.

THRASS Overview

A traditional phonics approach initially teaches that one letter makes one sound, i.e. there are 26 letters of the alphabet that make 26 different sounds. This method can become very restrictive very quickly. In contrast, THRASS is based on learning 44 speech sounds or phonemes of spoken English and corresponding spelling choices or graphemes of written English. For example, 'c' can make a 'cuh' sound as in 'cat', but also a 'sss' sound as in 'city'.



As students rise through the year levels, literacy learning rapidly advances. Our girls explore etymology - the study of the origin of words, and morphology - the study of the smallest units of meaning within words. Deciphering the roots of words, their affixes and their multiuse boosts comprehension, empowering students to grasp the most effective word use. For example, investigating the prefix 'para', which can describe the relationship of one element being adjacent or with another, can add context to words such as parallel, paragraph, paramedic and parachute.

Alongside spelling and vocabulary studies, students read often and widely. Written language skills progress as they scrutinise their own and others' writing, appreciating ways in which authors construct writing to best meet the needs of the reader, and setting goals to 'up-level' their own pieces.

Our rich and rigorous **English program** and holistic approach to literacy teach lifelong word-solving skills, joy for the language and opportunities to thrive in English.

The Power of an All-Girls' Education

Research shows the benefits of an all-girls' private education in setting your daughter up for success in Literacy and Numeracy and beyond.

Statistics from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA 2018) rank Australian independent schools 3rd in the world for Reading Literacy, compared with 18th place for all Australian schools. In addition, Australian independent schools rank 8th in the world for Mathematical Literacy compared with 31st place for all Australian schools.

At Saints Girls, it's not just our Literacy and Numeracy platform that sets us apart. In recent years, our Junior School has introduced a series of initiatives aimed at taking our teaching and learning to new heights.

The School has:

- Introduced a school-funded 1:1 iPad program for Reception to Year 6 students and banks of laptops for shared classroom use
- Established a ground-breaking Intensive Languages Program to enrichen the study of foreign languages
- Appointed Junior School Coordinators to support the development and delivery of our curriculum and wellbeing strategies
- Developed our bespoke #EMPOWHER wellbeing program for Junior School, incorporating evidence-based theory and practice
- Engaged a Coordinator for the EDGE Extended, Differentiated and Gifted Education Program to work with our girls
- Introduced Mind Lab hands-on strategy board games to support cognitive, social and emotional learning

As we drive the future of primary years' education, our Junior School also builds on many rich traditions, including the sense of community it creates. Our teachers are nurturing and supportive mentors who develop strong bonds with the girls that last throughout their schooling and beyond.



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