



Understanding how the curriculum is agreed to, developed, structured and taught in schools can be confusing for parents. At the end of every semester parents receive a Report detailing their child's progress in the Key Learning Areas (KLAs) using an A-E coding system with supporting comments and other school developed descriptions. The following information will assist parents to understand the links between the curriculum and the end of semester student Report.

Who's who in the development of the curriculum

The process of development of the Australian Curriculum content has taken 3 years to allow robust, independent and balanced consultation. Significant teacher professional learning, training, writing, monitoring and evaluating of programs has occurred during this period and teachers in our schools are now confident in their current implementation of the new K-10 curriculum.

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), in collaboration with states and territories, has developed an agreed Australian curriculum for English, Mathematics, Science and History.

In NSW, the Board of Studies has worked closely with teachers and key education stakeholders to further develop areas of study that include the Australian curriculum content and further detail that clarifies learning. As a result of this work, Kindergarten to Year 10 curricula provide teachers with direction to ensure greater consistency across all NSW schools.

Catholic schools as part of a broad educational landscape and by the nature of our funding agreements must teach the prescribed curriculum. In our diocese there are 45 different schools employing over 1000 teachers. Part of the Catholic Schools Office role is to support principals and teachers in understanding and implementing the curriculum materials. This has required considered professional effort and the allocation of resources and time during the past three years. It is an ongoing process and something we take very seriously.



Our implementation plan for Primary schools, supported by the Board of Studies, is as follows:

Kindergarten – Year 6

2011–2012	Curriculum and support material developed by December 2012 Diocese plan implementation support
2013	Familiarisation and planning
2014	English Science and Technology
2015	Mathematics
2016	History

So what's different for parents in K-6?

The new areas of study build on the strength of the existing NSW curriculum. Many features of the new K–10 English, Mathematics, Science (incorporating Science and Technology K–6) and History curriculum are retained. Literacy and numeracy remain important areas of focus in K–6, where essential foundation skills are developed.

The curriculum identifies essential knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes that students are expected to develop in each learning area. They are designed to provide flexibility so that teachers can develop teaching and learning programs to meet the needs of their students.

The table overleaf provides an overview of the important elements in each curriculum. Your child's report will have these same headings. All diocesan teachers use a special Board of Studies developed software package called 'Program Builder'. For the first time there is a consistent method of programing across all schools that ensures all the important elements are included.

English

You will notice in your child's Report and in school publications reference to students learning about **Reading and Viewing** and **Writing and Representing**. This broadening of the 'old' **Reading and Writing** reflects the importance of technology in our world today and the need for us to be able to 'read' and understand more than just words on a page if we want to fully engage in a technological society. In the same way, whilst writing is a common form of communication, it is not the only way that we can represent our thinking. Consider artists, cartoonists, musicians. They are able to represent their views through mediums other than writing. **Speaking and Listening** skills are also included in the teaching of English and as students progress in their learning they will learn how to refine these skills. So your child will certainly learn phonics, spelling, comprehension skills, handwriting and punctuation, editing etc. but they will also learn much more that will better equip them to function more fully in a multi-literate society.

Mathematics

✦ Students develop their mathematical knowledge, skills and understanding through a range of learning experiences across:

- **Number and Algebra**, eg whole numbers and fractions and decimals
- **Measurement and Geometry**, eg length, area and time
- **Statistics and Probability**, eg data and chance.

✦ They develop their problem-solving skills and mathematical reasoning and communication.

✦ Students in Stage 3 develop a deeper understanding of **Statistics and Probability**.

Science and Technology

✦ Students learn to think like Scientists and Designers. They develop their skills in using processes of **Working Scientifically** and **Working Technologically** to answer interesting problems and develop creative solutions to important 21st century problems.

✦ They develop their curiosity and understanding about the **Natural Environment** and the **Made Environment** through learning about the **Physical World**, **Earth and Space**, the **Living World**, the **Material World**, **Built Environments**, **Information and Products**.

✦ Students learn about the influence and relevance of science and technology in their lives now and in the future.

History

✦ Students investigate their personal, family and community history.

✦ They develop an understanding of Australia's **Indigenous** and colonial history and how Australia became a nation.

✦ Students learn about historical concepts, such as viewing an historical event from a different point of view, and historical skills, such as using historical sources for an investigation.

Reporting to you by the school

One of the most important tasks of a teacher is to report to parents on student progress. There are many ways for this to happen, formally and informally. As a parent you have every right to ask the principal or teacher about your child's progress at any point during the year. All schools formally report to parents twice per year through the end of semester report. The school will have an Assessment and Reporting policy which you can ask for at any time.

The report must meet the Federal Government requirements which the CSO monitors as part of our funding agreements. Each semester teachers assign an A-E grading against the different divisions in each KLA (for example in English: speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing and representing) and provide you with an overall A-E grade for the subject.

This style of reporting is called 'standards referenced' because the A-E code has a very precise definition. Teachers are supported with various resources so they can provide an accurate grade representative of an A or a C etc. The definition for each grade is on your child's report. Within the school, teachers cross check their grading to ensure consistency, and the system monitors consistency across the diocese. You can ask your child's teacher for a comparison to see how many other students received a similar grade to your child.

How do we support teachers with assessment and reporting?

The Catholic Schools Office plays an important role in the support of principals and teachers with the assessment and reporting cycle. It is a complex professional area that requires constant attention. As the system authority we run different professional development sessions, support networks of teachers, upgrade our own knowledge and skills by working with other dioceses and work directly with teachers in their schools. There is a team in the CSO that employs a number of consultants and officers who are responsible for the delivery and monitoring of this area of school life. In each school the Leaders of Curriculum are provided with time, professional development and resources to ensure teachers are able to translate the curriculum documents into class work and then report to you accurately on your child's progress.