



# play-based

## LEARNING

at

# Applecross Primary School

Across our school we are pursuing a culture focused on inquiry and cooperative play-based learning with student interests at the centre of all that we do. To support this whole school approach, we aim to plan and deliver an integrated curriculum encouraging critical thinking and independent learning. Visitors to our school will see children interacting and supporting each other in an inquiry approach to learning balanced with explicit teaching that supports the development of social, emotional and cognitive skills. We strive to produce a safe and secure learning environment that focuses strong relationships with children, parents and the wider community.



Play-based learning brings the benefits of play into learning. It is engaging, allows for different abilities, is enjoyable, process orientated, intrinsically motivating, provides some level of choice and/or decision making, and is often social.

<https://education.wa.edu.au/play-based-learning>

Staff at Applecross Primary School believe an investigative learning approach provides opportunities for students to learn through play in the instance of K-2 and through building on the skills developed in these early years to support each other in an enquiry –based, cooperative learning environment as they progress from year three through to year six. Ultimately we want our students to leave our school with an eagerness to learn and engage in the challenges that lay ahead of them. As such students will have the skills and opportunity to choose between independent learning and working with their peers to explore, engage and discover.

At Applecross Primary School we believe students learn best when these conditions are present.

- There is opportunity to learn; play opportunities are planned and guided towards learning
  - There is connection and challenge in the experiences; play allows children to relate to the learning and can be extended to create challenge
    - There is action and reflection; children are actively involved in play and naturally reflect on its success
    - There is motivation and purpose; play is intrinsically motivating and in itself purposeful
    - There is inclusivity and difference; play allows for all to be included
    - There is allowance for independence and collaboration; children can play by themselves or with others
- There is a supportive environment; playing with friends and with teachers



We have an investigative learning approach as a way of teaching and learning that provides opportunities for the students to learn through play-based activities.

As a result we observe many positive outcomes including:

- Children are enthusiastic about coming to school and engaged in their learning.
- Children develop social skills in play situations that are transferred to group work situations (cooperation, perseverance, resilience).
- Children develop oral language skills that are the foundation of writing narratives, descriptions, procedures, persuasive texts etc.
- Children use their skills and vocabulary learnt in lessons to develop interesting and successful play that represents real life

Across our school K-6 you will see:

- Classrooms set up as flexible learning environments to support independent and cooperative learning.
- Opportunities for children to tune in, investigate and reflect through play-based learning.
- Teachers sharing a common approach to flexible learning pedagogies.
- A balance of teacher-directed and guided inquiry.
- Explicit teaching in English and Maths with opportunities to apply Literacy and Numeracy skills in other learning areas and integrated activities.
- Outside play areas designed to stimulate co-operative & creative play.

Teachers use the benefits of play and co-operative learning in all areas to achieve results by planning and guiding activities



- Storytelling with puppets,
- Dramatic play
  - Construction
  - Tinkering
  - Sensory play with voice and instruments
  - Robotics
  - Topic based research
  - Scientific experimentation
- Multi-aged group activities

Inside the Classroom

**K-2:** Children participate in Investigations. Investigations complement the learning that takes place in teacher-directed lessons. Children are given the opportunity to explore an area of interest independently and cooperatively. Teachers prepare centres that link class learning with real-life activities. Teachers can then observe the children's ability to apply their skills and knowledge, and support their learning through feedback.

**3-6:** The skills students have learned in K-2 support them during inquiry tasks in Science, Mathematics, Humanities and Social Sciences, both independently and cooperatively. The development of perseverance and resilience are life long skills that are vital for success when tackling new challenges and problem-solving tasks.

Outside the Classroom

A variety of outdoor play spaces are available for children. The Early Childhood playground has sandpits, a bike path, climbing wall, peaceful garden, mud kitchen, cubby, footpath games, and nature play area. Staff add a variety of extra resources including sandpit tools, balls, and motor skills equipment. Children are given the opportunity to free choose to play in these areas with staff encouraging safe and fair play. Children can initiate interactions with staff to share their experiences or ask for help.

The Primary School playgrounds have sandpits, a cubby, loose parts, vegetable garden, natural objects basketball courts and oval. Some sports equipment is available. Opportunities to play Lego and chess, and use the Library are also available. Children are given the opportunity to freely choose to play in these areas with staff encouraging safe and fair play.

