

English Version 1

At Toorak Primary School we work to instil a genuine love of the English language through explicit and integrated teaching and learning of Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening. The ability to read and write as well as receive and communicate ideas verbally underpins all learning.

Throughout the school, the children are involved in activities that help them to gain knowledge about how to improve their writing. As well as focusing on the writing features of different text types, they are encouraged to always focus on four core elements - Vocabulary, Connectives, Openers and Punctuation (VCOP) – as a way of improving their writing.

VCOP and Big Write are teaching approaches based on the research of Ros Wilson, an expert based in the UK. VCOP teaches children the skills to improve their own writing through self-assessment. There are mascots that represent each section of VCOP.

V is for Vocabulary: Vinnie Vocabulary is our vocabulary mascot. He assists students in the use of ‘WOW words’ (ambitious vocabulary) in their writing.

C is for Connectives: Connie Connectives is our connectives’ mascot. She supports students in using connectives (joining words) to change their simple sentences into complex sentences.

O is for Openers: Ollie Opener is our openers’ mascot. Ollie encourages students to use varied openers to ensure their writing is interesting to the reader.

P is for Punctuation: Penny Punctuation is our princess of punctuation. Penny is displayed with her punctuation pyramid showing the levels of punctuation.

Big Write: Big Write is a celebration of students’ learning, as students get the opportunity to showcase their author’s voice and use of VCOP skills by writing a piece of text inspired by a writing prompt. Prior to most Big Write sessions, ‘Talk Homework’ is sent home to allow the students opportunities to talk about their writing.

Toorak Primary School is dedicated to helping students develop strong reading and viewing skills, and to making quality literature a central and vital part of their lives, this includes digital texts. Teachers foster enjoyment and pleasure in reading, alongside explicit teaching of the seven comprehension strategies of Predicting, Clarifying, Questions & Questioning, Summarising, Text-Structure Knowledge and Thinking Aloud.

Speaking and Listening is integrated throughout the curriculum and is modelled explicitly within the context of ‘The Author’s Chair’ – a forum for students to both share their writing, self-assess and give and receive meaningful feedback to and from peers.