



# What is happening at MEPS?

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## WELCOME BACK!

We hope your family has enjoyed a wonderful, safe and happy break. It has been lovely welcoming our students back to school, refreshed and ready for the year ahead.

This year is an exciting one for our school as we introduce a **Structured English Block** across all year levels, alongside a new **English Curriculum** and Teaching and Learning Model known as **VTLM 2.0**. This approach was successfully trialled last year from Prep to Grade 4, and the positive impact on student learning was clear and evident.

With a new timetable in place, we are now able to dedicate the **first three learning sessions of each day to English**. During this time, students will engage in all areas of English – **language, literature and literacy** – including reading, writing, and speaking and listening.

English skills are taught **explicitly and step-by-step**, with teachers modelling learning and guiding students as they practise. Each child will use their own individual whiteboard, allowing them to actively participate, practise new skills, and receive immediate feedback in a supportive way.

We know that children learn in different ways and at different speeds, so students receive support that best meets their needs – whether through additional support or extension. This starts with high-quality whole-class instruction, alongside small-group support and targeted intervention within the classroom. Our new English Block brings all three together, ensuring every child has the opportunity to learn, practise, and grow at their own pace. If your child is involved in an intervention program such as MiniLit or MacqLit, they will still take part in some of the core English learning in the classroom.



# STRUCTURED ENGLISH BLOCK

What does it look like?



## Daily Review

15–20 minutes

- P-2: Revisit sounds, words, spelling patterns, and sentences to practise and build confidence.
- 3-6: Review spelling patterns, sentences, vocabulary and comprehension to consolidate skills.

## Phonemic Awareness (Heggerty Program)

5–10 minutes

- P-2: Play with sounds in words (rhyming, blending, segmenting) to strengthen foundations for reading and spelling.

## Phonics / Spelling / Grammar (Jolly Literacy Program)

20–25 minutes

- P-2: Learn letters, sounds, spelling rules, tricky words and basic grammar.
- 3-6: Extending to complex patterns, morphology (prefixes, suffixes, root words), etymology and grammar.

## Fluency

10–15 minutes

- P-2: Practise reading aloud with expression and accuracy.
- 3-6: Practise reading with smoothness, accuracy and expression to support automaticity.

## Reading

25- 30 minutes

- P-2: Read and discuss texts to build comprehension, vocabulary, background knowledge and enjoyment.
- 3-6: Read and discuss texts to develop comprehension, vocabulary, background knowledge, critical thinking and engagement.

## Writing

30–40 minutes

- P-2: Learn to write sentences and short texts, practising spelling and grammar.
- 3-6: Write structured sentences and paragraphs, applying grammar, text structure and ideas.

## Handwriting

5–10 minutes

- P-2: Practise correct letter formation and basic handwriting skills.
- 3-6: Practise joined writing for neat, fluent and consistent handwriting.

## Please Note:

To ensure the block runs smoothly and children remain focused, **brain breaks are built in between each part of the block** (more frequent in the juniors), along with designated eating times such as snack or “brain food” breaks.





# JOLLY PHONICS

## What does it look like?

Our main **Phonics** program in the junior grades is **Jolly Phonics**. In Prep, students learn one new sound each day using a multi-sensory approach. Each sound is taught through a story and an action to help children remember it. Students regularly use mini whiteboards to practise forming letters and to strengthen the connection between saying a sound and writing it. Lessons are delivered through Jolly Classrooms, which provides clear, structured steps to guide learning.



From Grade 1, students begin learning alternative spelling patterns and the rules that explain why words are spelt in different ways. This learning continues to build in Grade 2. As Jolly Phonics is a fast-paced and structured program, students who are ready can move into more complex spelling patterns early and continue practising with decodable readers and tricky words at home. Students who need extra support receive targeted intervention in the classroom and may also have additional practice to support their learning at home.

# HEGGERTY

## What does it look like?

Our other program used to teach **Phonemic Awareness** is the **Heggerty Program**, which runs from Prep to Grade 2. Heggerty is a short, daily program that helps children learn to listen to, play with and recognise the sounds in words. Through fun and engaging activities such as clapping, tapping and rhyming, children build the strong sound skills they need for reading, writing and spelling. Heggerty works alongside Jolly Phonics to support children in connecting the sounds they hear with the letters they read and write.

## Term One Prep

Prep always looks a little different to the rest of the school. There is so much for our students to learn—not just reading, writing, and numbers, but also important social skills. They are practicing things like taking turns, sharing, making friends, and working out fair ways to decide who goes first in games. They are also learning school routines, like packing up, pasting in work and choosing games to play together. The first few weeks can be a big adjustment, and some children settle into routines faster than others (and that is completely normal). With so much happening each day, it is no surprise that both children (and teachers!) can feel very tired by the end of the day. It is all part of the exciting learning journey in Prep!



THANK YOU  
FOR READING

The more that you **read**,  
the more things you will **know**.  
The more that you **learn**,  
the more places you'll **go**!

- Dr Seuss

Mooroolbark East  
Primary School



## SUPPORT AT HOME

We believe learning works best when home and school work together, and we truly appreciate your support with reading at home. Any reading your child does makes a difference!

If your child is reading a decodable book, rereading the same text a few times helps build fluency and confidence, which supports their understanding. Once they have cracked the reading code, short chapter books are a great next step. Reading aloud together (at any age) is also incredibly helpful.

Please remember to record home reading in your child's reading log so we can celebrate their efforts. Thank you so much for your ongoing support!