

# Park Lake State School



## Japanese Excellence Program Framework and Guidelines

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# Park Lake State School

## Japanese Excellence Program

### 1. Rationale/Background:

Park Lake State School offers a range of activities to extend students with various gifts and talents. Extension programs such as Mathematics and English (taught by Pacific Pines SHS teachers), Choir, Instrumental Music and Robotics for students in a range of fields.

In Term 4 of 2015 Park Lake State School introduced the Excellence Japanese program with the assistance of a Languages and Innovation Grant of \$10,000. Students displaying high-level progress in Japanese, Mathematics and English learning areas were invited to join the Excellence Program, run as an additional class once per week during class time.

While the whole-school Japanese program caters for all students, and the teacher continues to differentiate and personalise learning during regular class times, the challenge remains to meet the diverse academic needs of higher achieving students. Across the year levels there is a number of students who continually demonstrate both high achievement and interest in Japanese language studies. The Japanese Excellence Program was introduced as a response to meet the needs of these particular students.

### 2. Policy/Research:

For gifted and talented students the curriculum is set at a level, pace, degree of abstraction and complexity beyond learning expectations for their age peers. Curriculum provision for Students who excel in Japanese addresses their specific learning needs such as:

- a faster pace
- processing more complex language and use of higher order thinking
- opportunities to engage in learning with students of the same or higher ability
- opportunities to undertake challenging work which enables them to develop strategies for persevering with difficult problems

### 3. Goals:

Communication in Japanese is the primary goal of the Japanese Excellence program at Park Lake State School, which naturally includes both written and spoken language. Students are introduced to approximately 100 Kanji characters as well as the Katakana and Hiragana script, and are expected to use it as much as possible. Tasks are designed to develop students' speaking and listening skills through using Japanese in socio-culturally appropriate ways for a range of real-life or life-like purposes.

As children participate in increasingly complex tasks, they become aware of cultural practices and develop skills in communication in many contexts. Learning to communicate in an intercultural context involves children developing:

- socio-culturally appropriate ways of communicating in Japanese ( intercultural competence)
- familiarity with the functions of language (language awareness)
- general knowledge according to their needs, interests and prior leaning (developing knowledge through language and content)

Broader goals of the Japanese Excellence Program include:

- providing opportunities for identified gifted and talented students to engage in more focused enrichment learning opportunities in a specific area of interest
- providing opportunities for identified gifted and talented students to extend their learning beyond the normal classroom parameters
- providing opportunities for identified gifted and talented students to assume increased ownership, self-direction and self-management in relation to their specific learning goals

#### **4. Identification:**

Data collected from within the school will be used to identify students who will be invited to participate in the Japanese Excellence Program.

Examples include:

- Report Cards (consistent “A” levels in classroom Japanese)
- A or B levels in English and Maths
- Anecdotal observations
- Year 4 Participation in Japanese Speech Competition
- Year 5 Language Perfect Annual Competition results

#### **5. Structure – Time Allocation:**

Japanese Excellence Program classes are held weekly for 30 minutes duration throughout the school year in addition to class time. The Program comprises students from Years 5 and -6, selected after Semester 1 report cards are finalised, and beginning the program in Semester 2 of Year 5.

#### **6. Learning Focus Areas:**

The Japanese Excellence Program will provide enrichment and extension learning in the following areas:

##### **Intercultural Communication:**

As students participate in increasingly complex tasks, they become aware of cultural practices and develop skills in communication in many contexts. Learning to communicate in an intercultural way involves children in developing:

- sociocultural ways of communicating in Japanese ( intercultural competence)
- familiarity with the functions of language (language awareness)
- general knowledge according to their needs, interests and prior leaning (developing knowledge through language and content)

##### **Language Awareness:**

Children will begin to develop an awareness of the role of language as well as culture within their world as they learn another language. An understanding of these roles helps children to become more conscious of the diversity of the world that surrounds them and to learn how to respond appropriately. Children will begin to develop an awareness of:

- the features of their own language and the language of others;
- the function of language in their everyday life;
- language as a system and how it works
- appropriate language for varying contexts;
- how language is learnt;
- how diversity is enriched through cultural variation

### Learning how to learn:

While the main focus is on meaning, discussions about strategies that assist internalising language are valuable. By participating in learning experiences in Japanese, children begin to develop an awareness both the skills and strategies required to take responsibility for their own learning. Through discussion teachers can draw children's attention to particularly useful learning strategies. These discussions help children develop their metacognitive awareness and explicitly learn the language required to talk about their own thinking and learning.

Some of the following strategies support children's development of cognitive abilities and metacognitive awareness:

- provide tasks that challenge children's thinking by varying learning and teaching based on a variety of thinking skills and on a variety of teaching and learning strategies;
- model and discuss critical and reflective thinking;
- encourage children to share with the teacher and other class members the ways in which they have solved problems;
- scaffold children's attempts to use new thinking strategies;
- provide opportunities for children to explore new ideas and apply prior learning
- discuss with children how to locate or access information and provide opportunities for children to access a range of sources of information

### 7. Program Evaluation/Assessment:

How we will measure success of the program?

- Regular attendance and active participation in extension classes
- Student self-assessment
- Ability of student to teach others about their new learnings
- Completion of assessment tasks requiring higher level thinking and application of more complex Japanese language and concepts
- Classroom data that indicates sustaining and improving on previous performance
- Speech Contest results and Language Perfect Contest results
- Homework data from Language Perfect

### Global schools through languages, the big picture

Learning a language is part of equipping young people to succeed in a globalised world.

Advancing Education: An action plan for education in Queensland

[Global schools through languages](#) is about helping students to become global citizens by building their confidence to interact with other cultures and become fluent in languages, with a focus on Asian languages. Learn more about [Advancing Education](#).

To build a global mindset, language skills and intercultural understanding:

- leadership is vital, with school leaders championing language learning and cultural understanding across the school community; and ensuring quality language programs
- teaching requires proficiency in the language and expert pedagogy
- language programs provide the time and continuity to enable worthwhile progress. The focus is on systematic curriculum delivery and authentic use of language so students see themselves as users of the language
- students are connected to the target language and culture through local and international contacts; and technology is used to provide a real purpose and audience for language use.

The need to prepare for a global future is recognised in the following key departmental documents, which guide schools in shaping how best to meet their students' needs.

[Advancing education — an action plan for education in Queensland](#)

Global schools through languages:  
Expand the study of culture and languages from Prep–Year 12 in state schools with a focus on Asian languages.

Develop new ways of teaching languages including using technology.

[DET strategic plan 2015–2019](#)

Globally connected students through languages and cultural experiences

[Every student succeeding — State Schools Strategy 2016–2020](#)

Create the next generation of global citizens and entrepreneurs by embedding STEM opportunities and expanding the study of languages.

[Languages in Queensland state schools](#)

Languages are:  
required in Years 5–8 strongly encouraged from Prep to Year 12.