LANGUAGES-CHINESE (SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNER)

Rationale

Through learning languages, students acquire:

- communication skills in the language being learnt
- an intercultural capability, and an understanding of the role of language and culture in communication
- a capability for reflection on language use and language learning

Language learning provides the opportunity for students to engage with the linguistic and cultural diversity of the world and its peoples, to reflect on their understanding of experience in various aspects of social life, and on their own participation and ways of being in the world.

Learning languages broadens students' horizons in relation to the personal, social, cultural and employment opportunities that an increasingly interconnected and interdependent world presents. The interdependence of countries and communities means people in all spheres of life are required to negotiate experiences and meanings across languages and cultures. Despite its status as a world language, a capability in English only is no longer sufficient. A bilingual or plurilingual capability is the norm in most parts of the world.

Learning languages:

- extends the capability to communicate and extends literacy repertoires
- strengthens understanding of the nature of language, of culture, and of the processes of communication
- develops intercultural capability
- develops understanding of and respect for diversity and difference, and an openness to different experiences and perspectives
- develops understanding of how culture shapes worldviews and extends learners' understanding of themselves, their own heritage, values, culture and identity
- strengthens intellectual, analytical and reflective capabilities, and enhances creative and critical thinking.

Learning languages also contributes to strengthening the community's social, economic and international development capabilities. Language capabilities represent linguistic and cultural resources through which the community can engage socially, culturally and economically, in domains which include business, trade, science, law, education, tourism, diplomacy, international relations, health and communications.

Learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages meets the needs and rights of young people to learn their own languages and recognises their significance in the language ecology of Australia. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, learning their own languages is crucial to overall learning and achievements, to developing a sense of identity and recognition and understanding of language, culture, Country and Place. For all students, learning Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander languages provides a distinctive means of understanding the country in which they live, including the relationship between land, the environment and people. The ongoing and necessary reclamation and revitalisation of these languages also contribute to reconciliation.

Year 5 and 6 Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 6, students use spoken and written Chinese to initiate and maintain interactions. They describe and give information about themselves and their preferences, their environment, experiences and interests, for example, 我很喜欢唱歌。我的学校很漂亮。我觉得澳大利亚是很好的国家. They use simple questions (for example, 请问...？你是哪国人？你会说汉语吗？) and seek clarification, for example, ... 对吗？ They access information from a range of print and digital resources (for example, 课文，菜单，宣传单，图样，地图，课程表，日历，行程表，天气预报) and summarise key points in order to inform others and organise activities, for example, 我们这个星期六去打球，好吗？ They engage with a range of imaginative texts. They use intonation and stress to engage audiences and participants. They translate everyday expressions (for example, 好久不见 or 不谢) and use context to assist with interpretation. They produce short informative and imaginative texts. Sentences include details of time (for example, 八点，十二月二日，星期五), place (for example, 在澳大利亚，在墨尔本，在家) and participants, for example, 我的朋友，小明的哥哥. They use prepositions and possessive clauses, including 的. They use a range of verbs, including verbs of identification and existence (是), and some modal verbs (喜欢、会) to express interest or ability; they negate with 不 or 没. They use simple connectives such as 和 and conjunctions to connect ideas.

Students explain the nature of tone-syllables, for example the role of tones in meaning making. They recognise the features of the Chinese writing system and apply their knowledge of the formation of characters in their own writing. They use Pinyin to transcribe spoken language. They identify how the relationships of participants and context affect interactions. They identify the features of familiar text types in Chinese and use these features to assist in interpreting meaning. They recognise that variations exist within the Chinese spoken and written language, and identify examples of this, particularly within their own community. They recognise and describe features of Chinese culture reflected in communication practices, and apply this knowledge to their own interactions with Chinese people.

Aims

The Australian Curriculum: Languages aims to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to ensure students:

- communicate in the target language
- understand language, culture, and learning and their relationship, and thereby develop an intercultural capability in communication
- understand themselves as communicators.

These three aims are interrelated and provide the basis for the two organising strands: Communicating and Understanding. The three aims are common to all languages

Key Ideas

Language and culture

The interrelationship of language, culture and learning provides the foundation for the Australian Curriculum: Languages.

In the languages learning area the focus is on both language and culture, as students learn to communicate meaningfully across linguistic and cultural systems, and different contexts. This process involves reflection and analysis, as students move between the new language being learnt and their own existing language(s). It is a reciprocal and dynamic process which develops language use within intercultural dimensions of learning experiences. It is not a 'one plus one' relationship between two languages and cultures, where each language and culture stay separate and self-contained. Comparison and referencing between (at least) two languages and cultures build understanding of how languages 'work', how they relate to each other and how language and culture shape and reflect experience; that is, the experience of language using and language learning. The experience of being in two worlds at once involves noticing, questioning and developing awareness of how language and culture shape identity.

Structure

Learner background and time-on-task are two major variables that influence language learning and they provide the basis for the structure of the Australian Curriculum: Languages. These variables are addressed through the specification of content and the description of achievement standards according to pathways and learning sequences respectively.

Pathways

In the Australian Curriculum: Languages, pathways for second language learners, background language learners and first language learners have been developed as appropriate to cater for the dominant group(s) of students learning each specific language within the current Australian context. For the majority of languages, one curriculum pathway has been developed for Years F–10, catering for the dominant cohort of learners for that language in the current Australian context. For Chinese, pathways have been developed for three learner groups: first language learners, background language learners and second language learners.

The Framework for Aboriginal languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages includes three learner pathways:
- first language learner pathway
- revival language learner pathway
- second language learner pathway.

Sequences of learning

The design of the Australian Curriculum: Languages takes account of different entry points into language learning across Foundation – Year 10, which reflects current practice in languages.

For the second language learner pathway and the background language learner pathway, there are two learning sequences:
- Foundation–Year 10 sequence
- Years 7–10 (Year 7 Entry) sequence.

For the first language learner pathway, there is one learning sequence:
- Years 7–10 (Year 7 Entry) sequence.

Content and achievement standards are described initially in a three-year band for Foundation–Year 2 followed by two-year bands of learning: Years 3–4; Years 5–6, Years 7–8 and Years 9–10.

The Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages is written in the bands Foundation – Year 2, Years 3–6 and Years 7–10. In the absence of pedagogical evidence across the country for all these languages, the broader band distinctions provide maximum local flexibility in curriculum development.

Content structure

The content of the Australian Curriculum: Languages is organised through two interrelated strands which realise the three aims. The two strands are:
- Communicating: using language for communicative purposes in interpreting, creating and exchanging meaning
- Understanding: analysing language and culture as a resource for interpreting and creating meaning.

The strands reflect three important aspects of language learning:

1) communication

2) analysis of aspects of language and culture

3) reflection that involves
   - reflection on the experience of communicating
   - reflection on comparative dimensions of the languages available in students' repertoires (for example, the first language in relation to second language and self in relation to others).

Strands and sub-strands

A set of sub-strands has been identified within each strand, which reflects dimensions of language use and the related content to be taught and learned. The strands and sub-strands do not operate in isolation but are integrated in relation to language use for different purposes in different contexts. The relative contribution of each sub-strand differs for described languages, pathways and bands of learning. The sub-strands are further differentiated according to a set of 'threads' that support the internal organisation of content in each sub-strand. These 'threads' are designed to capture (1) range and variety in the scope of learning and (2) a means for expressing the progression of content across the learning sequences.

Year 5 and 6 Level Description

The nature of the learners
At this level students are expanding their social networks, experiences and communication repertoire in both their first language and Chinese. They continue to need guidance and participate in structured, collaborative tasks that both recycle and extend language. Students are gaining greater independence and becoming more conscious of their peers and social context. They are gaining awareness of the world around them. Learners are noticing similarities and differences between Chinese language and culture and their own.

Chinese language learning and use
The systems of writing and speaking in Chinese are distinct. Because of the role of character learning and its impact on reading and writing, learners can accomplish a higher active use of spoken language than written language. As a result, engagement with Chinese language is primarily through speaking and listening. With teacher support, students begin to use Chinese to communicate their own ideas and participate in collaborative decision making. Learners engage in exploration of patterns and features of the language, talking about and making connections between known languages and cultures and comparing different ways of communicating in familiar contexts.

Contexts of interaction
Likely contexts for interaction are related to students' personal, family and local environments, and their everyday educational experiences. They communicate with peers, teachers, known adults, and with other students in their class. The settings for interaction move to a more public context and include more participants. Students begin to move from socialising in the here and now to planning and organising future events.

Texts and resources
Text types include print and online news and media, blogs, advertisements, catalogues, popular music and drama. Texts presented in characters are generally glossed in Pinyin. Students write in characters to correspond with others in letters, and use Pinyin input systems to generate a variety of texts in digital format.

Features of Chinese language use
Engagement with oral language includes active listening; observing interactions between speakers in everyday contexts; and using the spoken language in songs, rhymes, stories read aloud, and games. Learners ask and answer questions, describe people and objects, and recount events. They speak with attention to the sounds and tones of words, using formulaic language and applying their knowledge of familiar language structures in new contexts. Students map character forms onto their familiar oral vocabulary, and recognise and name characters in context. They record and learn new vocabulary by using word lists in Pinyin, and use Pinyin to prepare drafts of spoken texts.

Level of support
Chinese language use continues to be scaffolded and prompted by the teacher. Teachers' modelling of correct Chinese language use is the primary source of learners' increasing Chinese oral and written language acquisition.

The role of English
The use of English is necessary for discussion, reflection and explanation, and for the continued development of learners' knowledge base and intercultural capability.

Year 5 and 6 Content Descriptions

Communicating		Understanding

Communicating

Socialising
Initiate interactions with peers and known adults to plan and organise social activities.
[Key concepts: community, leisure, nature, recreation; Key processes: planning, organising, transacting]

Exchange correspondence and create simple written material to plan future activities and events and contribute ideas.
[Key concepts: friendship, community, recreation; Key processes: collaborating, exchanging]

Informing
Obtain and process specific information from multiple spoken sources, selecting and sequencing appropriate content for specific audiences.
[Key concepts: public, private; Key processes: comparing, collaborating, recording, identifying, describing]

Locate key points in written informative texts, summarising the points to report to known audiences.
[Key concept: information; Key processes: reading, viewing, summarising, analysing]

Creating
Engage with characters and points of view in short imaginative texts, express personal opinions and create simple spoken imaginative texts.
[Key concepts: character, viewpoint; Key processes: connecting, expressing, responding]

Create written imaginative texts, describing characters and sequencing events, using scaffolded models of texts, learnt characters or word lists for support.
[Key concepts: character, narrative, sequence; Key processes: connecting, expressing, responding]

Translating
Interpret and translate simple texts used for everyday purposes, identifying actions, words and phrases that do not readily translate into English.
[Key concept: equivalence; Key processes: interpreting, translating]

Create own bilingual texts such as signs, displays and posters.
[Key concepts: equivalence, idiom; Key processes: translating, identifying, discussing]

Reflecting
Describe aspects of own identity and reflect on differences between Chinese and English language and culture, identifying how this knowledge can help their intercultural exchanges.
[Key concepts: similarity, difference, culture; Key processes: comparing, contrasting]

Understanding

Systems of Language
Discriminate between similar or related syllables and words by listening with attention to intonation, stress and phrasing.

Identify how character structure, position, and component sequences relate the form of a character to its particular sound and meaning.

Form sentences to express details such as the time, place and manner of an action and to sequence ideas.

Notice how the features of text organisation vary according to audience and purpose.

Language variation and change
Understand that Chinese is characterised by diversity in spoken and written forms.

Examine how language is used to clarify roles and relationships between participants in interactions.

Role of language and culture
Explore the ways in which everyday language use reflects culture-specific ideas, such as the influence of age, gender and social position on language choices.