

## The real benefits of learning **LANGUAGES**

What do you want for your child's future?

Strong communication skills? Advanced literacy skills?  
Social and self-confidence? Well-rounded thinking?  
An understanding of the global community? The benefits  
from learning a language other than English (LOTE)  
are numerous.

### **Matt comes out of his shell in Japan**

It wasn't until his own family hosted a Japanese student that shy Matt (Grade 5) considered applying to go to Osaka for a 10-day student exchange program with Heathmont East Primary School's sister school, Shimaya Primary School.

"Matt's parents were really surprised that he wanted to be involved and sent in a written application," said Heathmont East Primary's LOTE teacher, Sue Fraser.

"In Japan he was required to attend classes and make speeches – he even met the Japanese version of the Premier. His class teacher said that he has noticed a huge difference in Matt's confidence and academic performance since he returned."

Matt has studied Japanese since Prep level. The subject was selected as part of his school's curriculum in 1992 following a survey and consultation with the school's parents.

"We recognise that it's important that the parents are involved," Sue said. "Every alternate year we conduct a crash course in Japanese for the parents. We even provide parents with a 'cheat sheet' so they can help with pronunciation at home."



In today's global society, learning a language other than English is an increasingly important part of any child's education.

If you require more information, such as what languages are offered in Victorian schools, the Department of Education (DoE) recommends that you contact the following resources.

### **Your child's school**

Your child's school should be your first point of contact regarding current and future language subjects available to your child. All Victorian schools have access to DoE resources in order to advise on the best language learning path for your child.

**Schools online:** [www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/schoolsonline](http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/schoolsonline)

### **DoE regional language project officers**

Language project officers are based in the Department's nine satellite offices across Victoria. These officers provide assistance regarding establishing quality language programs.

**Regional officers:** <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/teachingresources/lotte/default.htm>

### **DoE Multicultural Programs Unit**

The Department's Multicultural Programs Unit provides Victorian government schools with assistance and information on policies and programs to support the many different needs of school students.

**Telephone:** (03) 9637 2041

**Website:** <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/teachingresources/lotte/default.htm>

Contact information



# LANGUAGES build futures

**Building literacy,  
strong academic achievement,  
confidence and  
global understanding**

## Preparing today's students for the expanding global community

The future for our children will look very different from the world that exists today.

It will be as different as today's world is to our parents' world, to our grandparents' world. The global community will continue to expand its reach, most likely in ways we have not yet imagined.

Most people in the world speak more than one language. And most countries recognise the importance of language to overall literacy and getting ahead in a growing global society.

Despite the fact that around 27% of people living in Australia speak a language other than English at home, Australia is primarily still an English-speaking society.

Many of Australia's school children are missing out on the important benefits that learning a language other than English brings, the kind of benefits that increase with importance as the global society continues to evolve.

The Department of Education is committed to ensuring that all students attending government schools in Victoria have the opportunity learn a language other than English, to prepare for their roles as future global citizens.

### Did you know

*Of the six billion people living on earth, the vast majority do not understand or speak English?*

*"Language skills and cultural sensitivity will be the new currency of this (new) world order. Along with computer literacy they will provide the keys to participation in the global economy."*

Former Chief of Defence,  
Lieutenant General Peter Cosgrove  
Addressing the Australian Principals Association  
Professional Development Council (APAPDC), 30 May 2002

## Start early, reap the benefits

Like many things in life, it's best to start early when learning a new language.

The languages available for study depend on the school. A diverse range of languages are taught in schools across Victoria, some of which are offered from Prep level.

The most commonly taught languages are Italian, Indonesian, Japanese, French, German, Chinese, Auslan, Greek and Vietnamese. And the list is growing. Other languages include Spanish, Turkish, Arabic, Macedonian, Korean, Croatian and Khmer.



## The benefits of learning languages

Children who learn languages often outperform their fellow students who don't. Beyond higher academic achievement, the follow-on benefits from learning a language other than English are considerable.

### Enhancing literacy skills

Research has shown that language learning enhances a child's literacy. According to research conducted into community languages in secondary schools, language learning increases knowledge of word and sentence structure.

### Building confidence

The communication requirements of language learning often lead to increased self and social confidence. Languages encourage students to participate more actively in the classroom by asking and answering more questions, and can initiate new-found success for students who have struggled with English.

### Encouraging cultural awareness

Language learning significantly increases students' awareness and understanding of other countries and cultures, and therefore increases the ability to deal respectfully with others.

### Teaching students to be thinkers

Learning a language other than English is a key part of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Language learning is widely recognised as an important contributor to the development of problem solving skills that are beneficial across the school curriculum.

### Expanding job opportunities

Young people who learn languages other than English often travel widely after graduation, and have increased opportunities to work in exciting overseas jobs, or for international companies in Australia.