



Important information for parents about student learning and standards

A new approach from Prep to Year 10 in Victorian schools

This booklet:

- contains examples of the new standards
- explains types of programs that young people will participate in at school
- describes experiences that Victorian students will have from Prep to Year 10



Introduction

Table 1: Framework

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Physical, Personal and Social Learning				Discipline-based Learning									Interdisciplinary Learning			
Health and Physical Education	Interpersonal Development	Personal Learning	Civics and Citizenship	The Arts	English	The Humanities	– Economics	– Geography	– History	Languages Other Than English	Mathematics	Science	Communication	Design, Creativity and Technology	Information and Communications Technology	Thinking Processes

What are the Victorian Essential Learning Standards? When will schools use them?

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (also known as VELS or the Standards) are being introduced from 2006. The Standards provide a new approach to curriculum from Prep to Year 10. They outline what is important for students to learn so that they progress in their learning from Prep to Year 10. Students' achievements in these years prepare them for their final years of study and the world of work.

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards include standards at six levels broadly associated with Years Prep to 10 areas of learning. All the standards are designed to engage students, build their confidence, offer varied approaches to learning and challenge them to achieve.

The priority is to give young people programs that provide them with opportunities to demonstrate achievement of the standards as they move from Prep to Year 10.

The Standards will be phased in over the next three years. In 2006, schools will begin reporting to parents on student progress in the standards in English and mathematics and may also choose to report on other areas of the Standards. For more information on reporting of your child's progress in 2007 and 2008 see page 16.

What remains the same? What is changing?

Students will continue to develop knowledge and understanding in the traditional subject areas of English, mathematics, science, the humanities, languages, health and physical education and the arts.

The new approach links traditional subject areas more closely to other important areas of learning such as the development of physical, personal and social skills and the ability to apply knowledge in workplace situations and future learning.

As part of this new approach, standards are also set in areas such as building social relationships and developing thinking and communication skills.

The areas of learning for which standards are set are listed in Table 1. Standards in these areas can be achieved in a variety of ways. Not all of these will appear as separate subjects on the school's timetable. Schools will plan the best ways for their students to learn the knowledge and skills in these areas and achieve the standards.

For example, personal learning and interpersonal development in secondary schools might be included in traditional subjects like science, history and woodwork. Many primary schools will integrate such subjects into their student programs.



How are students assessed against the Standards?

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards provide a clear set of standards for assessment of student achievement. Students achieve the standards by successfully completing a wide range of learning and assessment activities. The activities will include writing, performing, creating and responding to a range of tasks and tests.

Teachers are using resources prepared by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, the Department of Education and Training, the Catholic Education offices and others to develop programs relevant to the Standards. They are also working with colleagues in their schools and with networks of teachers to refine their understanding of what is required to meet the Standards.

How will the standards be reported?

A new reporting system based on state-wide standards has been introduced in Victoria. This will be used by government, Catholic and some independent schools. Reports to parents will be written in plain English.

Student reports will include comments on achievement in relation to the standards on a five-point scale of A to E. 'C' indicates that students are on track and at the expected level of achievement for the time of year. 'A' indicates that students are well above the expected level of achievement for the time of year.

Clearer standards and a commonsense approach to reporting help teachers plan the next learning steps for all children.

For more information about the new student report cards visit www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/studentreports

How do the Victorian Essential Learning Standards fit with other states?

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards have been developed in relation to standards in Australian states and territories and internationally. They are consistent with these standards. They will also make it easier for teachers to assess students who move to Victoria from overseas and interstate.

About this booklet

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards are set at the following levels: Prep, Years 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10. The standards specify the knowledge and skills students should be aiming to achieve at the end of these years, where it is essential and developmentally appropriate for standards to apply.

This booklet links these school year levels and the standards. It gives examples of the standards and how they work in the classroom.

You can use this booklet to look at your child's year of schooling and see how learning programs that address the Victorian Essential Learning Standards are developed in schools.

Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) Years 3, 5, 7 and 9

In Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 the AIM program tests the English and mathematics skills of students and how they are progressing against the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. The AIM results, together with the assessment tools used by schools, provide valuable information and guidance for students, parents and teachers. For more information on the AIM visit www.vcaa.vic.edu.au

Prep Year at School



Table 2: Prep

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Physical, Personal and Social Learning		Discipline-based Learning		
Health and Physical Education	Interpersonal Development	The Arts	English	Mathematics

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards make it easier for schools to create an environment for our youngest students to learn and achieve in their Prep year.

Literacy, numeracy, interpersonal development, physical wellbeing and the arts are important areas to develop in Prep. Table 2 shows where standards are set for assessment and reporting in the Prep year.

Standards are set in these areas only because these are the highest priority for learning at this level. Schools devote more time to these areas since they have been set as a priority at Prep.

Varied activities and a vibrant classroom are important for a growing child in Prep. It is here that students can develop positive attitudes to learning. Understanding what it means to be a good friend, have a good friend and care for and work with others is part of their development.

As students finish Prep they have learnt basic literacy and numeracy skills and mastered simple motor and coordination skills. They have started to learn how to work together in class. They have participated in physical activities building their potential and expressed ideas and feelings in their work in the arts.

The more children practise their skills, the more confident they become and the more they are likely to enjoy learning. There are opportunities for parents and schools to work together to encourage children's desire to learn, for example parents reading to their children and helping them enjoy books.

Standards for Prep in particular areas of learning are illustrated in the following examples.

English

Prep students complete activities in English that focus on learning how to write letters of the alphabet correctly. Students also concentrate on reading, writing, speaking and listening. For example, they start to understand the alphabet and that we read from left to right. They move from these skills to:

- writing simple sentences
- writing simple stories on topics such as family, pets, holidays.

At the same time they:

- learn the importance of listening
- develop confidence in sharing stories and contributing ideas
- learn how to ask questions for information

Prep Year at School



- learn to use simple punctuation such as full stops and capital letters
- self-correct by rephrasing when a statement or question is unclear.

Mathematics

At Prep in mathematics the standards concentrate on:

- number
- space through shapes, objects and location
- measurement, chance and data
- learning to work mathematically.

Students learn to use different sizes and shapes and understand how to put things side by side, in front or behind, under and over and use ideas such as larger and heavier. Students show achievement of the standards in a variety of ways including:

- putting items in order of size
- using numbers 0–20
- doing basic addition and subtraction
- recognising shapes such as triangles, circles and squares
- sequencing days of the week.

Interpersonal Development

Children develop their interpersonal skills as they interact with other students, teachers and other adults.

The standards describe expectations about how Prep children:

- develop friendships
- learn to share and take turns
- identify the qualities of a friend
- respect the rights and feelings of others.

The Arts

In the arts, Prep students create and make performing arts (for example, music and dance) and two-dimensional and three-dimensional visual arts works (for example, drawings and clay models). They:

- use a variety of elements such as colour, movement, shape and texture
- work with their voices and materials and equipment such as textiles, puppets and musical instruments
- talk about their own and others' arts works.

How Caroline learns about health and physical education

Caroline participates in a range of games and activities and experiences movement with a variety of equipment such as skipping ropes, hoops, bats, balls and bean bags.

She works towards achieving the standards in this area of learning by:

- developing a range of basic motor skills such as jumping, hopping, throwing, catching and balancing
- regularly participating in physical activities to promote good health such as brisk walking, active play, swimming, dance and games
- using words to describe her movements and emotional responses to physical activities
- following rules in physical activities and sharing equipment safely.

Years 1 and 2 at School



Table 3: Years 1 and 2

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Physical, Personal and Social Learning		Discipline-based Learning			Interdisciplinary Learning
Health and Physical Education	Interpersonal Development	The Arts	English	Mathematics	Information and Communications Technology

The basic knowledge and skills learnt in Prep are developed in Years 1 and 2. As children grow in confidence, their friendships are strengthened, they become more engaged in learning and are able to handle different types of challenging learning experiences.

In Years 1 and 2, standards are set in six areas of learning (Table 3 shows areas in which standards are set for assessment and reporting in these years). Standards are introduced in information and communications technology (ICT) and interpersonal development in these years.

Student class work continues to focus on literacy, numeracy, health and physical education and the arts. They will also have learning experiences in other areas of learning. Student understanding of the world around them is further increased as they continue to be introduced to events, people, and ideas from science, history and geography.

In Years 1 and 2 children develop and take more control of their own learning, work with their peers and develop physical skills. They also become more aware of the world outside the school.

Standards in Years 1 and 2 in particular areas of learning are illustrated in the following examples.

English

As students work towards the achievement of standards they spend more time reading and begin to do so independently. In doing this they achieve the standards by:

- reading a range of books from story books to non-fiction titles
- starting to read poetry
- matching sounds accurately to a range of letters, letter clusters and patterns
- retelling ideas in sequence using vocabulary and phrases
- predicting plausible endings for stories and inferring characters' feelings
- developing a clearer understanding of words and their use.

Students also continue to share ideas with classmates and family, understand the need to keep checking spelling and develop confidence in group discussion.



Years 1 and 2 at School

Mathematics

Students continue to build on and expand their knowledge of mathematics. They develop a better understanding of measurement by using common items and measures such as money, length, time and temperature, both in the classroom and at home.

Numbers continue to be a focus and students learn skills such as how to count in 2s and 4s, and count to 1000 by 1s, 10s and 100s. Activities often involve simple multiplication, division and the relationship of these to addition and subtraction. Students are encouraged to enter and read numbers on a calculator. They do mental arithmetic and also check estimations and simple number sentences and equations with a calculator.

The Arts and Interpersonal Development

Students work with friends in arts disciplines, for example art, dance, drama, media and music. Drama activities may include those that use mime and masks to tell stories about real and imagined characters. In art, they may make a slideshow to accompany one of their drama works.

As students work towards achieving the standards in the arts they develop their abilities to:

- express ideas through performing and visual arts works
- use different materials, equipment and technologies
- make decisions with others.

Students may join music ensembles, prepare group dances and explore works from different cultures.

Health and Physical Education

Learning is not restricted to the classroom. Young people take part in a range of activities such as ball games, team games and swimming, which encourages confidence in physical activity.

Clear standards mean that they complete safe activities in which they learn:

- basic motor skills
- how to change speed and direction
- about safe use of equipment and rules of games
- about the relationship between physical activity and health.

How Mitchell learns about information and communications technology

Mitchell uses ICT to help acquire new knowledge and skills in all areas of learning and to present his understandings. In mathematics, for example, Mitchell uses ICT to construct and combine different two-dimensional shapes such as rectangles and triangles. Using ICT functions he copies and flips these shapes horizontally and vertically and fills them with colours to show original and transformed shapes together.

Mitchell also accesses a multimedia resource such as a website or CD-ROM to participate in a food pyramid game and then presents his understandings of food groups in a slide show that contains an image of a lunchbox filled with appropriate food items.

He meets the standards by:

- manipulating text and images
- saving and naming a file
- creating and formatting a product
- using ICT to locate information.

Years 3 and 4 at School



Table 4: Years 3 and 4

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Physical, Personal and Social Learning				Discipline-based Learning					Interdisciplinary Learning		
Health and Physical Education	Interpersonal Development	Personal Learning	Civics and Citizenship	The Arts	English	The Humanities	Mathematics	Science	Design, Creativity and Technology	Information and Communications Technology	Thinking Processes

In Years 3 and 4 children develop a deeper understanding of the relationships between school, home and the community. They are becoming more capable of concentrating on tasks for longer periods of time. Children are encouraged to be confident in discussing ideas, expressing opinions and listening to others at home and in the classroom. They understand that they need to work with others and be part of their class and school.

In Years 3 and 4 standards are set in twelve areas of learning (Table 4 shows areas in which standards are set for assessment and reporting in these years).

Children broaden their knowledge and show interest in a wide range of events and people around them. Standards are introduced in additional areas such as personal learning, thinking processes, the humanities, science, civics and citizenship, and design, creativity and technology. Students may also have learning experiences from other areas of learning such as languages other than English. Students also continue to build on the knowledge and skills developed in earlier years.

Standards in Years 3 and 4 in particular areas of learning are illustrated in the following examples.

English

English skills are practised across all areas of learning and include:

- responding to a range of material including imaginative stories and informative texts
- expanding vocabulary as understanding of stories and informative texts increases
- strategies to locate, select and record using key information from texts
- expressing and backing up opinions with facts and evidence
- understanding how to structure sentences and use a range of punctuation, for example exclamation marks and quotation marks.

Mathematics

Standards in mathematics in these years include:

- recognising and naming common three-dimensional shapes such as spheres, prisms and pyramids; locating and identifying places on maps and diagrams



Years 3 and 4 at School

- estimating and measuring length, area, volume, capacity, mass and time using appropriate instruments; comparing likelihood of everyday events
- applying mental and written number skills to everyday contexts such as shopping.

Information and Communications Technology and Personal Learning

By the end of Year 4 children have built up skills in information and communications technology (ICT). Standards include being able to:

- create an electronic folder
- use email confidently
- use recommended search engines.

Children are encouraged to evaluate the information they receive electronically and reflect on its usefulness.

The Humanities

In the humanities students become more aware of the diverse range of people, cultures, nationalities and religions that make up their own school, community and the broader society. They develop a basic understanding of how our democracy works and where laws and rules fit. They describe symbols and explain events of special significance to their background, their community and Australian life in general such as Anzac Day.

The Arts

Learning in the arts can involve an arts discipline (for example, visual arts), or a combination of arts disciplines (for example, dance and music). All students will be assessed against standards in both the performing and visual arts.

How Sophie learns about science, and design, creativity and technology

In Years 3 and 4, science becomes a clear part of Sophie's learning program. She develops knowledge and skills that enable her to achieve the standards. Examples of standards in science include:

- exploring the structure of plants and animals
- investigating with others and reporting on experiments such as changes in substances
- learning how to classify things such as insects and birds
- examining forms of energy in everyday life
- considering how people influence their environment.

In design, creativity and technology, Sophie also learns how to investigate simple technological systems, design and put different items together to make a product, such as a pulley arrangement to lift a weight. She meets the standards by:

- drawing and labelling design ideas
- planning how to make a product
- safely making products using tools and equipment
- testing and evaluating the product.

Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM)

In Year 3 there is an additional focus on progress against the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. Students complete the AIM state-wide tests in English and mathematics which are based on the new standards. The AIM results, together with the assessment tools used by schools, provide valuable information about how students are progressing.

Years 5 and 6 at School



Table 5: Years 5 and 6

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Physical, Personal and Social Learning				Discipline-based Learning							Interdisciplinary Learning				
Health and Physical Education	Interpersonal Development	Personal Learning	Civics and Citizenship	The Arts	English	The Humanities – Economics	The Humanities – Geography	The Humanities – History	Languages Other Than English	Mathematics	Science	Communication	Design, Creativity and Technology	Information and Communications Technology	Thinking Processes

At school and at home, children are supported to ensure that the last two years at primary school are positive, challenging and improve their confidence about themselves and their learning.

In Years 5 and 6 all learning areas have standards. Table 5 shows areas in which standards are set for assessment and reporting in these years. Standards continue to be set in all these areas until the end of Year 10. The primary and secondary years of a student's education are linked through the Victorian Essential Learning Standards in this way. Primary and secondary schools are working together with a common curriculum framework.

This is a time when schools provide many opportunities for students to take responsibility for their learning and also to demonstrate their individual talents.

Children do not all achieve the same standard at the same time; some will find parts of their learning program more challenging than others. Teachers and parents can use the standards to help children achieve by working together to develop the most appropriate learning approaches.

Standards in Years 5 and 6 in particular areas of learning are illustrated in the following examples.

English

In Years 5 and 6 children read a wide variety of texts which include stories, novels and poems. Their ability to understand other materials develops as their English skills strengthen. They read tables, use diagrams and analyse computer-based information.

The writing and speaking skills being demonstrated in projects, research and stories indicate that students are becoming more complex thinkers and are consolidating their learning in relation to texts and language. Their English skills are used to present ideas and information in visual presentations and to edit, correct and speak about work, demonstrating standards achieved in other areas of learning.

Mathematics

Mathematics becomes more challenging and the standards indicate that students are expected to:

- describe and calculate using fractions, decimals, simple ratios and percentages
- understand and apply the ideas of size, scale and direction with coordinates and bearings to describe relative location and objects in maps



Years 5 and 6 at School

- represent different discrete and continuous data types using appropriate displays (for example, a pie chart for eye colour data) and calculate averages
- use words and symbols to form simple algebraic expressions and equations and manipulate and solve them
- construct and use rules for simple sequences
- use calculators including the memory function to solve set problems and in everyday situations.

The Humanities

Students learn about Australia: its history, geography, economy, government, traditions and cultures. They also learn about other countries in the Asia–Pacific region.

By the end of Year 6 students:

- understand the importance of freedom of speech
- understand how Australia became a nation and how its many cultures contribute to the Australian identity
- use atlases and street directories to describe location of places
- practise ways of caring for the environment
- participate in community activities
- learn about the need to be an informed consumer.

Communication

The communication area of learning assists students to understand that language and thinking differs from subject to subject. The knowledge and skills in this area supports students to convey information and understanding in other areas of the Standards.

Khai's learning experiences

In these years Khai continues to develop his thinking skills and his ability to reason and enquire about issues.

He is becoming more confident in thinking about an issue or topic and generating imaginative solutions in contexts ranging from environmental matters to improving a local playground.

He has developed the ability to build strong friendships and establish positive links with a range of people. He has an understanding of other people's feelings and is learning to manage conflict. These skills in interpersonal development will become more important as he grows older.

Khai learns more about different languages and cultures through the standards in languages other than English (LOTE). The standards in this area of learning are introduced in these years.

He is able to initiate and respond to spoken and written language using culturally appropriate expressions and mannerisms.

By the end of Year 6 Khai also knows:

- how to maintain his fitness
- the basic principles of healthy eating
- about changes experienced in puberty.

Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM)

As in Year 3, students complete the Year 5 AIM state-wide tests in English and mathematics. The AIM results, together with the assessment tools used by schools, provide valuable information about how students are progressing against the Victorian Essential Learning Standards prior to them completing their final year of primary education.

Years 7 and 8 at School



Table 6: Years 7 and 8

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Physical, Personal and Social Learning				Discipline-based Learning							Interdisciplinary Learning				
Health and Physical Education	Interpersonal Development	Personal Learning	Civics and Citizenship	The Arts	English	The Humanities – Economics	The Humanities – Geography	The Humanities – History	Languages Other Than English	Mathematics	Science	Communication	Design, Creativity and Technology	Information and Communications Technology	Thinking Processes

For most young people these years involve coming to terms with the move from primary to secondary school. In secondary school there are new friends to make, new rules and responsibilities to learn, new books to read, new uniform requirements and new challenges.

In Years 7 and 8 all learning areas have standards. These are the same learning areas as in Years 5 and 6. Table 6 shows the areas in which standards are set for assessment and reporting in these years.

Young people are now becoming more mature. The move to secondary school is often linked to a stronger sense of identity. Their approach to learning is more often linked to what they consider as important for their own personal goals. Parents can help their children think about what it means to be in this new environment and support them as they meet new challenges.

Standards in Years 7 and 8 in particular areas of learning are illustrated in the following examples.

English

The standards required in English include:

- writing an argument and defining a personal position
- using correct spelling, grammar and punctuation

- critically evaluating the spoken language of others, asking clarifying questions and identifying important ideas while listening to other people
- responding to a variety of texts that explore familiar as well as more challenging themes and issues.

The knowledge, skills and behaviour developed in the English and Communication standards are used in other areas of learning, for example in oral presentations and debates in science and history.

Mathematics

The standards required in mathematics include:

- using knowledge of perfect squares when calculating and estimating squares and square roots of numbers
- constructing two-dimensional and simple three-dimensional shapes according to specifications
- calculating the surface area and volume of prisms and cylinders
- solving simple equations using tables, graphs and inverse operations.



Years 7 and 8 at School

The Humanities and Personal Learning

In history, concepts of change and continuity are developed. Standards focus on the analysis of key events in ancient and medieval times, including:

- features of community life
- how societies were ruled and by whom
- strengths and weaknesses of sources of historical information.

Similarly, in geography, studies of the Asia–Pacific region increase students' knowledge of location, economics and social and cultural characteristics of communities and countries.

Students undertake integrated projects with a focus on, for example, sporting occasions or natural disasters and consolidate their knowledge of a range of areas of learning to make connections between them.

These studies assist students to:

- develop research and develop their thinking skills
- test developing opinions.

Students develop and implement plans to complete activities within short-term and long-term timelines. They describe their progress and achievements, suggesting how learning may have been improved. Students also develop learning styles that meet their personal needs.

Languages

At this point two pathways in languages other than English (LOTE) are offered. Students will take one pathway if they continue learning the same language they studied in primary school. They will take another pathway if they begin to learn a new language. Regardless of the pathway selected, the standards are organised to provide progressive and cumulative opportunities for students to develop language awareness and cultural understanding.

Josh's learning experience in design, creativity and technology and interpersonal development

Josh's class is focusing on the environment. Students work in teams to design, make and evaluate a bird feeder that includes recycled materials. The design process Josh follows involves meeting standards at different stages in the making of the bird feeder. The standards identify the stages Josh and his team follow.

In a team, Josh:

- develops research questions about local birds, bird feeders and materials
- shares the research with others
- draws labelled sketches of designs for the bird feeder
- develops criteria to evaluate the finished bird feeder
- makes a sequenced plan to produce the feeder.

When making the feeder, Josh:

- safely uses tools and equipment to make the product
- reviews progress and makes changes if needed
- prepares and presents to the class an evaluation of the bird feeder
- reviews how well the team worked and what could be improved.

Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM)

Students complete the Year 7 AIM state-wide tests in English and mathematics. The AIM results, together with the assessment tools used by schools, provide valuable information on how students are progressing against the Victorian Essential Learning Standards as students enter their second year of secondary education.

Years 9 and 10 at School



Table 7: Years 9 and 10

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Physical, Personal and Social Learning				Discipline-based Learning							Interdisciplinary Learning				
Health and Physical Education	Interpersonal Development	Personal Learning	Civics and Citizenship	The Arts	English	The Humanities – Economics	The Humanities – Geography	The Humanities – History	Languages Other Than English	Mathematics	Science	Communication	Design, Creativity and Technology	Information and Communications Technology	Thinking Processes

By Years 9 and 10 young people begin to focus more clearly on areas of particular interest to them and have some thoughts about where they may be heading after they finish school. This often involves testing ideas and getting a taste of the world outside the classroom. Students can have very busy lives.

In Years 9 and 10 all learning areas have standards. These are the same areas of learning as in Years 5 to 8. Table 7 shows areas in which standards are set for assessment and reporting in these years.

Young people start planning their directions for the final years of school. It is also a time when they concentrate on areas of learning where they know they are doing well. They focus on making sure that a number of areas of learning are well established as they weigh up their pathway options into Years 11 and 12 or the world of work.

These years are also about the balance of school, home, part-time work, sport and/or community activities, friendships and plans. In Year 10, students may have the option of undertaking Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) units or commencing a Vocational Education and Training (VET) program. Others may decide to wait and start their VCE or VET studies in Year 11.

By the end of Year 10, students are clearer about the pathway they wish to take in the VCE, or the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning (VCAL). They move into the senior secondary stages of schooling confident that they have the range of skills required for success.

Standards in Years 9 and 10 in particular areas of learning are illustrated in the following examples.

English

In English the standards are achieved through:

- reading and analysing classical and contemporary texts that explore issues of personal and social significance
- writing about complex ideas, themes and issues using accurate punctuation, a range of sentence structures and effective language techniques
- effectively using the features of spoken language to deal with complex subject matter in a range of situations.

Mathematics

Mathematical skills are refined and include:

- mental, written and technology assisted computation with natural, integer, rational and irrational numbers



Years 9 and 10 at School

- applying functions, algebra and graphs to model situations and solve problems
- using technology for sophisticated computations and constructions in day-to-day work
- calculate and interpret summary statistics for samples from a population.

Helen's learning experiences

Helen's school is offering an integrated unit called 'Make Us Laugh'. This unit brings together history, drama and health and physical education using the theme of comedy, performance and issues facing society.

The unit develops achievement in:

- research and group work
- writing, editing and presentations.

It is quite demanding and teaches many skills. Integrated approaches such as this and other learning opportunities give Helen a range of ways to display leadership.

Helen also shows an increasing interest in science where she explores a topic on the characteristics of a group of elements in the periodic table. She gains a better understanding of the big ideas of science and considers issues such as ecotourism and stem cell research.

Her interest in a range of areas influences her study selection in Year 10. It also has an influence on where she does work experience and what vocational education programs she explores. During this time Helen chooses a tailored pathway but makes sure that she keeps her options open.

Justin's learning experiences

Justin is leaning towards the humanities and languages.

He examines local and global issues and researches information to argue points of view. Justin builds on others' ideas, presents his ideas to others and defends his position in small groups and to the whole class.

Having shown real interest in Chinese since he took it up in Year 7, Justin:

- has demonstrated a good understanding of grammar in Chinese
- can read short selected texts with fluency
- has confidence to read the text out loud
- can communicate about himself and his world in Chinese.

His interest in economics has now started to show. He learns more about markets, government policy and economic growth. He has a good sense of what is meant by a cost-benefit analysis. He can use his knowledge of historical events to support his ability to investigate an economic problem like unemployment. He uses his information and communications technology skills to demonstrate his understanding and engage others.

Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM)

Students complete the Year 9 AIM state-wide tests in English and mathematics. The AIM results, together with the assessment tools used by schools, provide valuable information about how students are progressing against the Victorian Essential Learning Standards before they commence their final years of secondary education.



How can parents obtain more information?

- Contact your child's school.
- Visit the Standards website at <http://vels.vcaa.vic.edu.au>
- Call the VCAA on (03) 9651 4544 or 1800 134 197 (regional callers).
- For further information on:
 - Blueprint for Government Schools visit www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/blueprint/
 - Achievement Improvement Monitor (AIM) visit www.vcaa.vic.edu.au
 - student reporting visit www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/studentreports/

How can parents be involved?

- Ask your school council or principal to explain how your school is implementing this important change. For example:
 - How are the Standards being used to develop school programs?
 - Have subjects been reorganised?
 - Have there been any changes in school organisation?
- Attend information sessions on the Standards and discuss the ways in which they have changed approaches to teaching, learning, assessment and reporting.

- Read your child's school and AIM reports and:
 - talk to the school about your child's progress
 - provide feedback to your child and the school.

Which standards have to be reported against in 2007 and 2008?

In 2007, schools will be required to report on your child's progress in relation to the standards in: English; mathematics; health and physical education; personal learning; civics and citizenship; the humanities; economics; geography; history; communication and information and communications technology.

In 2008, schools are expected to report against all of the standards. Additional standards to be reported against are: interpersonal development; the arts; languages other than English (LOTE); science; design, creativity and technology and thinking processes.

© Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2006

This publication is copyright. Apart from any use permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968*, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission of the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Photo credits: Altona Secondary College, Carlton North Primary School, Melbourne Girls' College, Mt Eliza Secondary College, Overnewton Anglican Community College, Seaholme Primary School, St Monica's College, Epping

ISBN 1 920992 92 8

