

**A DIFFERENT
LANGUAGE IS
A DIFFERENT
VISION
OF LIFE
-FEDERICO FELLINI**

This insightful quote from the famous Italian film director is inspirational in that it promotes an openness to learning about another language and culture. At St. Mark's, it is the Italian language and culture about which the students learn. What is also promoted is the hope that the St. Mark's Italian program might contribute to each learner gaining an appreciation and positive understanding of their own language(s), culture(s) and beliefs, and becoming a more interculturally aware citizen of the world.

The vibrant St. Mark's Italian language program, delivered in lessons once a week to all grades in the school, is a real celebration of Italy's literary, historical, artistic and musical heritage. The learning environment created in Italian class is one where the lessons aim to be enjoyable in addition to being purposeful. The focus is to always provide meaningful, relevant and authentic experiences for the learners - from the junior students to the senior students. The program offers all students the possibility to use the Italian language to communicate with each other during lessons, and the potential to communicate with other Italian speakers out of the classroom.

From Foundation to Year 6, through learning from books, stories, feast days, prayers, customs, traditions, songs, role-plays, puppetry, poetry, games, art, craft and more, pupils have the opportunity to work towards competency in their skills of listening, reading, writing, speaking and viewing (even reflecting). In order to assist with students' developing oral expertise in Italian, there is great emphasis on repeating and recycling frequently used words, expressions and phrases. Students are eagerly encouraged to experiment with pronunciation, intonation and responding appropriately with each other, following teacher modelling and prompting.



During lessons, as each learner is assisted to develop their oral and written vocabulary and grammatical capacity in Italian – for example, practising rules pertaining to spelling or the writing of simple texts - comparisons and contrasts with English are often drawn, allowing pupils to continue to improve their general grasp of this language as well.

To facilitate socialising right from the Prep year, students are provided with opportunities to collaborate with peers in an energetic assortment of shared action and drama activities related to the units of study, using a combination of the Italian language and acceptable gestures, facial expressions and/or movement to aid the communication.

The Italian language learning experience at St. Mark's (San Marco) endeavours to be enriching, positive, and confidence-building, striving to afford each learner a feeling of success in terms of communicating in and understanding the target language. To this end, a variety of additional opportunities are offered each year such as Poster Competitions, Poetry Competitions and the annual Italian Day festivities, to give depth and extension to the learning that happens within the classroom. This Discipline (Italian) also links in with other curriculum areas, in particular Visual Arts and Performing Arts, and because of Italian's strong visible connection to all learning within the school, deserving recipients are featured weekly in the "Learner of the week" awards at Assembly. These awardees are recognised for demonstrating their fine examples of the St. Mark's Learning Dispositions - so highly valued in its pupils - based on their participation during Italian classes.



(Article in IL GLOBO newspaper, 2018)