In the early years of Primary School, students learn key elements essential to the basic skill requirements for success in Literacy and Numeracy. It is during Prep to Year 2 that students are required to develop the ability to be aware that a sound source is present in the classroom environment, to localise that sound and then to attend and respond to that sound for a length of time. Students need to also be able to understand speech stimuli in the classroom which may be compromised by background noise.

Auditory learning accounts for as much as 75 percent of a child’s school day. The teacher uses his or her voice to convey instructions, information, and other messages. The students must effectively receive and comprehend these auditory signals to carry out tasks and learn. As basic as this transaction sounds, children often miss up to one-third of what their teacher says.

The five levels of auditory skill development, from lowest to highest level, are detection, discrimination, recognition, identification, and comprehension. Comprehension is achieved when one can answer a question, follow directions, or hold a conversation. Each level is built upon the prior one, and the latter four levels are dependent upon the brain’s processing of auditory signals. In other words, you cannot comprehend if you have not detected and discriminated, or identified, a sound. Therefore all children need to attend to auditory stimuli in order to develop the next level of auditory maturation.

Mentone Girls’ Grammar School is an open entry school that has a commitment to assisting all its students to reach their potential. It has devoted considerable resources, funding, staffing and time to program improvement, including a Special Education teacher and Educational Psychologist in the Primary years, who assist teachers develop and deliver appropriate programs to students at all levels of the learning continuum.

We recognise that some children suffer from defined Central Auditory Processing Difficulties (CAPD); however the majority of all young learners experience similar learning hindrance because of the nature of their cognitive, physical and emotional development.

In order to address this issue, all Prep to Year 2 classrooms have now been fitted with an A Plus Auditory Processing Unit, through a program of integration that began in 2005. Teachers wear a device around the neck during group teaching times, which delivers their voice clearly to the students in surround sound through speakers placed around the classroom. This enables all instructions to be clearly heard by all of the students, therefore giving them more opportunity to develop their auditory skills.

Auditory issues will be more pronounced in a classroom environment compromised by distortion, competition and poor acoustics. The auditory processing units make the acoustic environment much more efficient in creating a positive and effective learning environment in the formative educational years.

In conjunction with:

- Auditory and Language Screening Assessments
- Speech Pathology Services
- Education Support Groups
- Auditory Training Programs
By utilising the A Plus sound field technology we have seen considerable benefits for all students, not just those with CAPD. Students who have had the assistance of learning in an acoustically optimal environment exhibit a range of improved learning outcomes:

1. More focused listeners.
2. Enjoy more on-task time.
3. Have improved language understanding.
4. Have fewer articulation problems.
5. Are better at carrying out instructions.
6. Have increased opportunity for optimal performance across the curriculum.
7. Are able to bring efficient learning behaviours to each learning situation.

Mentone Girls’ Grammar School is a leading school in meeting the needs of all students in the early years of schooling and the foundations of Literacy and Numeracy.