Dear Parents/Careers

Assessment And Learning In Our School

This week, for the first time, we had access to our 2014 NAPLAN results for the school showing students’ scaled scores which are those shown in students individual NAPLAN reports. Teachers are now able to review patterns of students’ results and individual student’s responses to assist in refining teaching and learning programs. In fact, this data from mid-term 2 is now a Term out of date as we have passed the mid-point for Term 3, but the patterns are still valuable for us.

In the media we find many comments about the stress on students and teachers about NAPLAN testing. In Queensland we have had a major focus now to improve Queensland results against the nation. This push for greater focus on higher expectations is an ongoing process, not just in Queensland, but nationwide. Last year, in line with Metropolitan Regional expectations, we placed a major focus on students when they may have been ‘coasting’, as they found school work comparatively easy, learning to accept greater challenges in learning, and more stamina in class to achieve higher performances. The results for us were spectacular. Students with greater needs in learning to standards also did not miss out, and their progress, statistically across the school, tended to show a reasonable balance in their outcomes.

In NAPLAN, though, the NAPLAN writing task asked students to consider a rule or law that needed to be changed. For many younger students, this also required a greater focus on individual students when we look at ‘distance travelled’ over the past two years. We can see that compared to our assessments conducted at the beginning of Term 1, our students in 2014 have made steady progress and some students quite significant progress. How we compare against other similar schools is of interest to us in terms of considering our rate of school and student improvement. This data is not fully analysed yet at a systemic level, but our results thus far suggest we have a wider range of student achievement ranging from those with high learning needs to those with high performance, than many of our local schools. We have a plan for our improvement and it is expected to take more than one or two years to reach our goals.

Parents may have heard there were concerns this year about the writing task, as many 2014 students in Australia did not do as well as students in previous years. To allow NAPLAN scores to be compared between Year 3, 5, 7 and 9, the task given students is the same for each year level. Students writing is then scored across several measures that are expected to develop over the course of schooling from Year 3 to 9. Thus, for example, on one of these measures Year 3 students may be anticipated to score 1, Year 5 may be anticipated to score 3-5, Year 7 may be anticipated to score 4-6, and Year 9 score 5-7. This can provide a very good measure of rate of progress in writing skills. If the task difficulty changes, it can affect the distance travelled from, say, Year 3 to Year 5.

In 2014, though, the NAPLAN writing task asked students to consider a rule or law that needed to be changed, and write a persuasive argument for such change. For many younger students, this also required a level of conceptual thinking and higher order thinking skills that may have been greater than the tasks from previous years. This can affect the basic score. How our students compared to other schools is still something we need more data to be able to consider. We know there were issues as soon as our students completed the test, and now we find this is a nationwide issue. It is a matter for the test designers and interpretation of results, but not a real concern over NAPLAN.

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At a school level, our challenge is to continue to raise expectations and have students learn to intensify their commitment to lessons so our staff and students together can “raise the bar.” Families can help in this, firstly by reducing school absences where non-attendance may not be needed. Getting students to school on time to start lessons with the class, and spending time explaining things and discussing what is going on with their children so our students learn to really “see” and think about what is going on, and not just experience life with limited understanding. Thank you to the parents who are doing all this. Your children, our students, benefit from this involvement in our students learning, caring and being part of not just our school team, but also family and community teams.

Curriculum Corner

National Literacy and Numeracy Week aims to raise awareness of the importance of literacy and numeracy skills for all Australians. The National Literacy and Numeracy Week will be held this year from 25th – 31st August. As a school community we are participating in different activities to celebrate. One of the activities will be Read for Australia. On Friday 26th August at 2pm, we will join with other schools across the nation and read Sunday Chutney written by Aaron Blabey. The activity will allow children to experience the social pleasure of reading with their friends and teachers.

Engaging In Your Children’s Education

As you are aware, parents play a major role in the development of their children’s education. Over 40 years of research tells us that how well children do at school, and being part of not just our school team, but also family and community teams.

Book Week

On Tuesday 19 August the school celebrated Book Week with a special assembly. The theme for book week this year is “Connect to Reading”, and a short video presentation showed some of the texts students have connected with at each year level. Certificates were issued to 18 students in Years 3 to 7 who have already achieved a target of reading 40 books for the year. Book prizes were awarded to students for costumes at the Book Week assembly, and a demonstration was given of a way to connect to reading using a tablet app called Aurasma. A big thank you to all those parents who helped their children with costumes for the Book Week Assembly!

In the weeks leading up to Book Week students have been reading CBCA short-listed picture books during library lessons. The winners in each category were announced on Friday 15 August. They are:

**Book of the Year Early Childhood:** Winner – The Swap by Jan Ormerod and Andrew Joyner
Honour books – I’m a Dirty Dinosaur by Janeen Brian and Ann James, and Babybug and Ruby Red by Libby Gleeson and Freya Blackwood

**Picture Book of the Year:** Winner – Rules of Summer by Shaun Tan
Honour books – King Pig by Nick Bland, and Silver Buttons by Bob Graham.

Alan Cockrell
Teacher Librarian

NAIDOC

We celebrated NAIDOC last Monday with students in every grade participating in activities. We started the morning with a Morning Tea for our Indigenous parents and our local elder Uncle Albert Holt. A craft activity about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags was enjoyed by all younger students. At first break our student Indigenous Dance Group performed a few dances accompanied by Joshua Walker. Jahmarley Dawson from Koomarri hosted two, hour long workshops about Aboriginal culture, music, art and language. Senior students also played the Indigenous game EDOR on the Top Oval hosted by Carrie from the PCYC. All students in Years 3-7 have their hand print on a large Canvas art work as a memory of NAIDOC 2014. It was a fantastic day for all, thank you to the parents and community members for their support.

Teena Zeitsch
Uniform Shop Manager

Sports Day Age Champions

Congratulations to the following students on receiving their Age Champion medallions on Parade this week.

- 9 Year Old Boy
  - Jackson - 4S
- 9 Year Old Girl
  - Georgia - 4H
- 10 Year Old Boy
  - Daniel - 5BM
- 10 Year Old Girl
  - Magdalene - 5BM
- 11 Year Old Boy
  - Jeryle - 6MB
- 11 Year Old Girl
  - Charlize - 6MB
- 12 Year Old Boy
  - Paul L - 7FG
- 12 Year Old Girl
  - Tomi -7FG
- 13 Year Old Boy
  - Shadrack -7FG
- 13 Year Old Girl
  - Jennifer -7FG

Ekka Excursion

Students from Years 5-7 attended the Ekka on the first day of the exhibition. Students and staff went through many of the Educational pavilions and saw the farm animals, quilting, art exhibits, and even met Justin Hodges from the Broncos. There was so much to see and do, the day ended with a quick trip to the show bag pavilion. Thank you to all the staff, especially Mrs Middleton for organising this excursion.

P & C News

Come along to our next meeting on Monday 22nd September at 9.10am in the Parent Room. We will be holding a Father’s Day stall towards the end of August with cool gift ideas for Dad at cheap prices. The stall will be held in undercover area outside Canteen on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings from 8.15am - 9.00am.

Uniform Shop News

The uniform shop is currently running a super special on hoodie jumpers all sizes are $16. That’s a saving of over $5. The special runs until sold out so be quick. The uniform shop is located in the Parent Room and open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 8.15am -9.15am. Sorry no credit can be offered however we do have 12 week layby.

We respectfully acknowledge the Jagera people, the Traditional Owners of the land on which this school stands.

IMPORTANT DATES

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