

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT, JUNE 2016 - P&F MEETING

Plenty has taken place since our last meeting, most recently the Cross Country, Pirate Day, Disco and of course, QUIZ Night! These activities are popular and most enjoyable and we thank very sincerely all of our parents and staff who give generously to make these things happen. Thank you very much.

I would like to refer in particular to one of the mid term activities. Several teachers were involved in a presentation to some 40 parents about the use of iPads in the classroom. They were very pleased with the attendance. The feedback was comprehensive, very good, and formative. Two issues a couple of respondents felt still needed to be addressed were

- a) the use of technology in the junior primary, and
- b) the iPad situation for Year Six students in 2017.

And they are fair requests. I believe that the issue of Y6 2017 has come about because more information needed to be made available to parents. Caroline Mullins has prepared and emailed a letter to parents of Year Five children outlining in some detail the history behind the implementation process, and we are seeking a response from parents as to their preference, with the majority determining the outcome for next year.

The use of iPads in the Years 1 and 2 looks to have been implemented with only limited information available. A paragraph in the newsletter in 2014 was the notification that the 1-1 programme would be extended to those grades. It included an invitation to respond with any queries, with a two week timeframe. None were received, but this may have been because people may not have been sure of the detail.

While the majority of responses post presentation have certainly been very positive about their use in junior primary, the questions and concerns expressed still need to be addressed. This includes more information about how they are used, why they are used, how often they are used, and their context in terms of the 21st century. In a recent meeting with our Year One teachers, I asked them for their honest opinion about the use of the iPads in the classrooms. Their response was clear – they are a valuable tool, are used often, and speed up the process in a number of activities. Their arguments for 1-1 were strongly in support of the technology.

Be that as it may, this information has not been communicated to our wider community. There may be several reasons for this - not least the building up of confidence in staff in the use of ipads. From my own daily observations there has been a huge increase in teacher confidence compared to this time last year, and a commensurate improvement in the way in which ipads are used. This confidence has been reflected in their willingness to present to parents about how this technology is used.

Whatever the reasons, it still needs to be addressed – extensively and in an informed manner. Caroline Mullins is including information regularly in our newsletters for everyone to read regarding the way in which this technology is

used and why it is important. There is also reference as to how the technology should not be used, which is clearly also important. There is plenty more to come. Caroline has been very keen to embrace this process and I thank her for doing so.

And in terms of further parent education, next term one of our support teaching staff, Cathy Tanham, will be making a presentation to parents on 'reading with your child.' Cathy's deep knowledge of literacy will I am sure be of benefit to many of our junior primary parents. This (following the IT presentations) is another step towards informing parents of how and why we do things. I appreciate the interest both of parents in attending, and of teachers in presenting. We will be looking to explore future opportunities for this to happen.

Staffing

Brother Stephen is thoroughly enjoying his time on long service leave. Pat Winton is taking long service leave for the first half of next term. Chris Baker will be taking over Pat's Year Five teaching responsibilities and Stephen, Geordie and I will take over Pat's leadership responsibilities.

Curriculum

In a recent newsletter I referred to the curriculum team meeting, which took place yesterday. The team plans the way forward in relation to our priorities, and that plan is much clearer this year. They are an effective group of leaders in our community.

Religious Education

Making Jesus Real is pervasive! Ample evidence of this philosophy can be found in our school. It is perhaps the most important thing we can do for our children at this time for it's effect is everywhere.

Thank you.