

Welcome to Week Seven – the term closes in on the end but there is plenty of teaching and learning taking place between now and then.

Pat Winton has returned from long service leave, just as Deb Tanham has commenced hers. Pat enjoyed his and we wish Deb the same! Gilly Joubert continues her leave as well. She is away for all of this term.

School Priorities

Literacy (Brightpath), Numeracy (Principals as Numeracy Leaders), IT and Making Jesus Real sit under the umbrella of Student Engagement – the ‘E’ in LEAD. Making Jesus Real is clearly also connected with Discipleship - the ‘D’ in LEAD. Such initiatives, if they are going to be done well, take considerable time – years - to embed. And the journey is interesting, challenging, exciting and rewarding.

Kathy Tanham was going to make a presentation to parents on literacy this term, but has fractured her arm and is out of action, so we will reschedule.

I thank Caroline Mullins who has diligently sourced current articles on the thinking – positive and negative – about the use of IT, and has been posting it in the newsletter on a weekly basis. These articles and presentations signify the journey we are on.

We are getting good feedback on class blogs, which is really heartening. They are being updated more and more regularly, providing parents and guardians with easy and secure access to their children’s learning environment – more than at any other time in the past. Indeed access is provided to all class blogs. This mode of communication has played a big part in reducing the size of the newsletter as well.

Teacher confidence in the use of technology has increased exponentially and the use of IT across the school has improved accordingly, which is particularly important in light of the curriculum focus on digital capabilities, and I quote:

‘In the Western Australian Curriculum, students develop ICT capability as they learn to use ICT effectively and appropriately to access, create and communicate information and ideas, solve problems and work collaboratively in all learning areas at school, and in their lives beyond school. The capability involves students in learning to make the most of the digital technologies available to them, adapting to new ways of doing things as technologies evolve and limiting the risks to themselves and others in a digital environment.

The Melbourne Declaration on the Educational Goals for Young Australians (MCEETYA 2008) recognises that in a digital age, and with rapid and continuing changes in the ways that people share, use, develop and communicate with ICT, young people need to be highly skilled in its use. To participate in a knowledge-based economy and to be empowered

within a technologically sophisticated society now and into the future, students need the knowledge, skills and confidence to make ICT work for them at school, at home, at work and in their communities.'

In terms of the quality and number of devices, as a school we are better placed than most other schools for this journey. We accepted the invitation to be a trial school for both the Bishops Religious Literacy Assessment, as well as NAPLAN, both of which involved students in Years Three and Five. Thanks to the quality and reliability of the devices, and our bandwidth, and our wifi, and an incredible amount of preparation by Geordie Thuijs, we were very successful with both. It is certainly important to acknowledge that we do not fall in to that very large group of schools struggling with outdated technology, and limited bandwidth and wifi. And we never intend to join them!

We learned a lot from the children about these assessments. They provided significant feedback, which will be taken seriously by the developers of these assessments. We understand NAPLAN online is due to take place on line across the country from 2019. Knowing now that we are well-placed is good news. We conducted our own online assessments in first term with Years One through to Year Six – a first for us. The assessments - in reading writing and numeracy - provided us with immediate feedback which manifested itself in teacher planning to meet the children at their point of need and plan from there. We will conduct the tests again in term four as additional data source to gauge student progress.

Assessments aside, the type of use the devices are getting now is far more productive than in the past, with the result that more is done within a limited window of screen time. In the end each device is a tool used to aid in achieving student outcomes. An important part of that role is in speeding up certain tasks in order to be able to do more in a limited time – and this really is happening. We can be confident that the journey of improvement will continue.