

Principal's Report, P&F Meeting Tuesday February 28, 2017.

Welcome everyone. Thank you for being here tonight. I echo Simon's comments about appreciating the number of people who have stayed on after the information sessions for this meeting. It is great to have good numbers.

We have had a great start to 2017. It has been smooth, calm and really enjoyable, and I thank everyone who has played a part in that.

The forward planning for our P & F led by President Simon Devlin, reaped the benefits of planning ahead with two events within two days of one another – the Sundowner and Maggie Dent! Both were successful, and underpin the role of the P&F – to support the school in its work, to build community and to empower parents and guardians in their role. Mark Nolan's Business Directory too underpins the importance of community. Our sincere thanks to them for such a good and worthwhile start! All but three classes now have parent representatives, and for the first time the three year old Kindy has parent representatives. This is a great initiative from our parent representative coordinator Felicity Kendall. It speaks volumes for the importance of ensuring as many of our community as possible are connected to what is going on here.

New staff Ana Johnson and Edel Waldron (Year Three) and Mel Bentley (Support – Year Two) have commenced well and we are pleased to have them join our community. Likewise our many new students!

Our focus for 2017 continues to be on Engagement, which on the part of parents being connected to the school and what is going on in it, as manifest in our class blogs, and regular and timely communication as to what is happening, and why. On that note we are moving to a new online version of newsletter, one of the reasons being it comes up beautifully on mobile devices. There is going to be a lot more flexibility with this software, and it gives us the opportunity to include a FAQ page where we can include answers to questions, published in a public forum. And that is great. Thanks to Michele Rowland who sourced this software.

Our student-centred approach in its many forms continues to underpin most of our school improvement priorities this year. Happy children learn best; happy staff teach and support best. Research and common sense will tell you that this is all about relationships.

In terms of our children, to quote the Archbishop, we are defined by our discipleship, Making Jesus Real has struck a chord and is getting stronger. MJR is in first place as it should be in a Christ-centred, child centred school.

We do have lovely children in our school. This is why it is of particular importance, as I stated last year, not to mistake compliance for engagement.

With our priority being Student Engagement, and then with explicit and differentiated instruction, Contemporary learning spaces, Making Jesus Real, Principals as Numeracy Leaders, Brightpath writing, and good and judicious use of ICT sitting

under that umbrella, we are on a well-researched way forward which will make a difference to our students.

On that note, several changes are forecast.

- The classroom changes to Year One, and next term, Year Six, is evidence of reflection in the belief that whatever we do, we do our best and we do the best, and we unload stuff that is not necessarily working for us as it is. Contemporary learning spaces work! Year One children have embraced their reconfigured rooms, and with the support of our P&F we hope to speed up that timeline.
- With the exception of Reading Recovery and Levelled Literacy Intervention, this year our Support teacher Kathy Tanham will work alongside class teachers to support children in the classroom. This change will give teachers the opportunity to learn from Kathy and her deep knowledge of literacy acquisition.
- Edudance has commenced a new programme for us. It is taking place for this term, it has started exceptionally well and it culminates in performances towards the end of term.
- MusicaViva is taking the place of our involvement in the term three performing arts festival this year. This is a music programme which is taught by Michelle Kirwan for the term and culminates in a concert by professional musicians, in which the children participate. This is quite a different take and can be an excellent experience, and is one where parents can witness the activities children are involved in.
- So with music lessons from three year old Kindy through to Year Six, and concerts in terms one, two and four, we are taking the opportunity to push our Performing Arts message out there, improving our community's understanding of what we are doing in our school, and, of course, to engage our children.
- This thinking is evident also in our revised assembly planning which started during 2016. This means that each class undertakes one assembly per year, and that Aussie of the Month and Merit Awards happen then too. That way we get increased teaching and learning time (fewer, shorter assemblies), and more parents and extended family attend each assembly. They may be there to see a child receive an award, but will also see the item, again giving them more of an insight in to the great things being done here. Assemblies will continue to start at 8.55 and finish at 9.30. We were a few minutes late starting and finishing last week, but for a first assembly and new seating arrangements for the children we were happy with that. We will eventually be using a new school prayer which Pat Winton is going to develop with our student leaders.
- The new model of student enrichment from Years Four to Six, introduced last year by Geordie Thuijs and supported by Br Stephen, has been very well received by the students involved, and their parents have also made

comment. It is in place of, and not in addition to, class work and has been really successful.

- In terms of maintenance, the painting has been touched up over the break and new doors with glass panels are scheduled to be installed and painted in some of the classrooms. A huge amount of work was done on the grassed areas – Dominican Playground and Oval in particular – and they look terrific. Garden beds have been refreshed as well. Untended areas of our grounds have been identified and you will see upgrading in these spaces as well. The Hall has now been air conditioned and is a much more habitable space! New TV screens are making their way in to more of the junior primary classes, replacing the ageing projector boards as part of our overall upgrade. New robots (Spheros) have been purchased to provide students with coding opportunities, and they have been very well-received. Improvements you can't see include paying to increase the size of the internet 'pipe' to ensure that our network doesn't slow down when many users are on it.

And this is just the beginning – thank you!