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Principal: Tom O’Callaghan

School Council Chairperson’s Report

It was a busy and productive 2015 at Plympton Primary School, with the redevelopment of the two natural play areas as well as a lot of other behind the scenes work that was undertaken by the staff and council.  

It was with sadness that we wished a number of staff farewell and good luck from the school, including Principle Tom O’Callaghan. Under Tom’s stewardship the school has gone from strength to strength with enrolments at record levels. The council wishes him and all the department the best in whatever they are moving onto.  

We also welcomed Sallyann Geddes to the school from Blakeview and the whole of school community wishes her great success in the principle role.  

I think everyone would agree that they two new natural play areas are a great area for the children to explore and engage with the surrounding environments. Thanks must go to all the staff and council members who helped make the plans a reality. These types of projects are not possible without the time and dedication of the staff and parents who enable these type of dreams to come to fruition.  

Finally thank you to all the volunteers who help the school to function and support the teachers with educational activities of the children. To the students and parents who have joined the school community we hope you help the school community become even better then what it is today and your time at Plympton are some the best years of your life.  

Chris Fear  
Chair Person School Council
Who is at our school?

By year’s end there were 338 students enrolled (26 more than last year), from 234 different families. There were 18 more boys than girls.

- 11 of those students are Aboriginal
- 13 are students with a disability
- More than ¾ were born overseas and come from 14 different countries
- 37% speak English as an additional language or dialect
- ¾ of our student population was new to the school in 2015
- 21% come from a low income family.

2015 Highlights

Our Plympton Primary School community had many highlights during 2015 including:

- Harmony Day assembly and games
- Sports Day
- Japanese Games Day
- Senior Choir
- Easter Seminar
- Year 3/4 Spark Reading Mentors program
- SAPSASA events
- Year 6/7 Girls Football Carnival
- Super Heroes lunchtime activities
- SRC Onesie/PJ Fun Run Day
- Sports Clinics
- Premier’s Reading Challenge
- Premier’s Be Active Challenge
- Way to Go
- RAA Street Smart lessons
- Money Smart Financial Literacy lessons
- Swimming lessons Years R-5
- Tree planting for our new Nature Play area
- PALs (Play at Lunchtimes) Student Mentors Program
- Book Week, Science Week and Literacy and Numeracy Week
- Light Up Your Mind Science Show
- Oliphant Science Awards
- Remembrance Day
- ICAS competitions
- Open Mornings each term
- Excursions – Monarto Zoo, Adelaide Central Market, Woodhouse, Botanical Gardens, Migration Museum
- Whole School Picnic
- Celebration Night
- Year 7 Graduation Ceremony
What are our priorities?

In 2015 our priorities have been focussed on consolidating our 2014 priorities in order to make continual improvements in student achievement in English and Mathematics. We have also continued to sharpen our focus on Student Wellbeing and Engagement.

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum has continued to be a focus and teachers have been planning, teaching, assessing and reporting on student achievement in Science, Mathematics, English, Humanities and Social Sciences (H.A.S.S) and The Arts. Teachers have also been familiarising themselves with the new Health & PE, Technologies and Japanese Curriculum for implementation in 2016.

We have also continued with our year level Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) as part of our own ongoing professional learning and development and to ensure a continued focus on improving student outcomes.

**English**

What are we aiming to achieve in English?

Our priority for 2015 has been to improve the literacy standards for all students in Reading Comprehension and Genre Writing, as well as continuing our focus on Jolly Phonics, Jolly Grammar and the Words Their Way spelling program.

In our endeavour to achieve success we have implemented a variety of strategies from our whole-school English@PPS Agreement including:

- Supporting teachers to implement the English Australian Curriculum by providing professional development through staff meetings, staff-only days and collaborative planning
- Participating in a joint staff-only day with the West Torrens Partnership where staff attended professional development with Sheena Cameron, focussing on teaching reading comprehension strategies
- Purchasing a range of resources developed by Sheena Cameron to support the implementation of Reading Comprehension and Genre Writing
- Implementing our data collection schedule and setting aside times to enter, analyse and discuss the data through Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings, staff meetings and a staff-only data day
- Recording student data using an on-line data management system – MARKiT, making it more manageable for teachers to refer to and act on data
- Moderating student writing samples as part of PLCs and planning teaching and learning programs to target specific areas for development
- Providing additional support to students identified in our site data to best cater for their learning needs, including the use of SSOs in classes to support teachers in implementing their teaching and learning programs
- Supporting teachers to attend various professional development days through the use of TRTs.

What were our achievements in improving learning in English in 2015?

- The professional knowledge of our teachers around explicitly teaching reading comprehension strategies was expanded through ongoing professional development and access to resources.
- Jolly Phonics and Jolly Grammar has continued to be successfully implemented in our R-2 classes.
- Words Their Way in all Year 3 -7 classes continued to be successfully implemented and students are beginning to use meta-language with greater confidence when describing patterns in the English language (E.g. Long and short vowel sounds, syllables, prefixes and suffixes, Greek and Latin roots).
- Student data was collected and analysed to determine needs of students at year level, class level, individual and group level. This included PAT-Reading Comprehension Test: Year 2-7, SA Spelling Test :Year 1-7, Language and Literacy Levels: Reception to Year 7, Running Records: R-3, Phonological Awareness Test : Reception and Words Their Way Spelling Inventory: Years 3-7.
- Our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) met on a regular basis to discuss data and create detailed action plans to best support student learning in a range of areas identified for improvement.
- Student writing samples were moderated in PLCs as part of improving student achievement in the areas of word knowledge and sentence structure.
- Participating in the SPARK Reading Mentors Program for 8 of our Year 3&4 students.
What did NAPLAN tell us about our students’ progress and achievement in English?

Analysis of our 2015 NAPLAN data shows:
- All three year levels scored best in spelling, which reflects the whole school focus in explicit spelling teaching and learning programmes.
- All three year levels scored comparatively poorly in writing and this indicates direction for future staff training and development and pedagogical focus.
- Growth data for students in Reading from Year 3-5 and from Year 5-7 is pleasing, with less students showing lower levels of growth and more students showing upper levels of growth than is expected.
- Percentages of students in the upper 2 bands are also pleasing in most aspects for each Year level.
- Strengths in spelling and grammar and punctuation are noted, reflecting explicit teaching approaches in these aspects of literacy.

What are our next steps?

In 2016 we will continue to work together to identify the needs of students and to collaboratively plan, discuss and explore effective approaches to teaching and learning across the school.

Our main focus areas for 2016 will be:
- Reading Comprehension – explicitly teaching a range of reading comprehension strategies to develop deeper levels of comprehension.
- Writing – participating in a Writer’s Workshop joint school closure day in Term 1 with Torrensview Primary School, focussing on Genre Writing and the use of writing journals to engage and encourage all students.
- Spelling – Continue our focus of spelling using the Jolly Phonics, Jolly Grammar and Words Their Way phonics and spelling programs.
Mathematics

What are we aiming to achieve in Mathematics?

Our priority for 2015 was to continue to improve the numeracy achievement for all students R-7 and to develop rich mathematical knowledge and understanding.

In our endeavour to achieve success we have implemented a variety of strategies from our whole-school Numeracy@PPS Agreement including:

- Continuing our whole school focus on Ann Baker’s Natural Maths strategies, including implementation of a numeracy block, use of common language via the ‘Secret Code’ and ongoing professional development. This year six staff members were involved in the DECD Mathematician in Residence Project with the West Torrens Partnership where they attended 3 professional development days with Ann Baker, participated in after school meetings within the partnership and shared their learning with staff at PPS. A further three of our staff members elected to attend 3 full-day Natural Maths professional development days during their school holidays, making this a total of nine teaching staff who have each accessed 3 days of additional Natural Maths professional development this year!
- Supporting teachers to implement effective mathematics practices by providing professional development through staff meetings, staff-only days, collaborative and 1:1 planning
- Data collection and analysis through the use of PAT Maths tests Years 2-7, I Can Do Maths Years R-1 and NAPLAN results Years 3, 5 and 7 to identify areas for further development
- Joint planning in Professional Learning Communities to meet the identified needs of students and plan teaching and learning programs
- A 26 week mathematics intervention program implemented for 6 identified students
- Providing parents with ongoing information around Natural Maths strategies through 2 mathematics information workshop sessions (am and pm)
- Providing additional support to students identified from our site data to best cater for their learning needs, including the use of SSO staff in classes to support teachers in implementing their teaching and learning programs
- Supporting teachers to attend various professional development days through the use of TRTs
- Supporting the implementation of engaging and rich learning through purchasing a range of hands-on and teacher resources

What were our achievements in improving learning in Mathematics in 2015?

- Natural Maths strategies have continued to be successfully implemented and teachers have reported that students are beginning to use a common mathematical language with greater confidence when describing their knowledge and strategies used (E.g. The Secret Code: Rainbow Facts, Doubling, Chunking, Landmark Numbers, etc.)
- The professional knowledge of our teachers around explicitly teaching Natural Maths strategies was expanded through ongoing professional development and access to resources.
- Student data was collected and analysed to determine needs of students at year level, class level, individual and group level. This included PAT-Mathematics Test Year 2-7, One Minute Maths Test (+, -, x, ÷) Year 2-7, I Can Do Maths Test Year R-1 and NAPLAN testing Year 3, 5 and 7.
- Our Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) met on a regular basis to discuss data and create detailed action plans to best support student learning in a range of identified areas for improvement.
- Six students successfully participated in a 26 week intervention program for mathematics with a focus on the development of automaticity of basic number facts through discussing, learning and practising a range of strategies.
What did NAPLAN tell us about our students’ progress and achievement in Mathematics?

Analysis of our 2015 NAPLAN numeracy data shows:

- 100% of students in each of the three Year levels achieved the National Minimal standard
- Growth data for students in Numeracy from Year 3 - 5 and from Year 5 - 7 is pleasing, with less students showing lower levels of growth and more students showing upper levels of growth than is expected.
- 23% of our Year 3 students achieved the top 2 bands in Numeracy
- 20% of our Year 5 students achieved the top 2 bands in Numeracy
- 13% of our Year 7 students achieved the top 2 bands in Numeracy

What are our next steps?

- Embed our practices around implementing Ann Baker’s Natural Maths strategies and attend additional professional development when possible.
- Continue analysing student data to identify learning needs and directions for teaching – at individual, cohort and whole class/school level.
- Continue to work collaboratively in our Professional Learning Communities to analyse data and plan units of work.
- Continue the moderation of student work samples for A-E reporting.
- Explore Numeracy across the curriculum and explicitly identify the transferable skills students need to participate in all curriculum areas (E.g. Science and Geography).
- Continue the Mathematics Intervention Program.
- Participate in ongoing professional development via staff meetings, staff only days and attending other various PD events.
- Continue to offer parent information workshops for the Mathematics Australian Curriculum and Natural Maths Strategies.
Wellbeing

What are we aiming to achieve?

Our priority for 2015 was for all students to be actively engaged in their learning and feel a strong sense of connection to the Plympton Primary School community.

The strategies we employed were:

- Teachers focusing on creating safe conditions for rigorous learning:
  - Developing democratic relationships
  - Building a community of learners
  - Negotiating learning
  - Challenging students to achieve high standards with appropriate support.
- Ensuring students participated in the DECD Child Protection Curriculum’s 4 focus areas: The right to be safe, Relationships, Recognising and Reporting Abuse and Protective strategies.
- Students to be supported by the Student Counsellor, Learning Support Teacher and DECD Learning Support Teams
- Providing opportunities for students’ voices to be reflected in decision making, through Student Representative Council.

What did we achieve in 2015?

In line with our Site Development Plan, Well-Being and Engagement has been a focus for our school in 2015. We recognise that positive wellbeing is the key to engagement with learning.

Lynn Johnson began the year in the role of Student Counsellor and Teacher Responsible for Learning Support. The liaison between the school and the DECD Support Services continues to be strong, with regular meetings and consultations at the school.

- Early in the year we introduced our ‘Thank You for Being Good’ programme. This was introduced to recognise, reward and encourage appropriate behaviour on the playground at recess and lunch. Duty teachers often find themselves having to deal with problems when they are on duty and this was a way to catch children making good choices. The awards reflect our values of Care, Honesty, Effort, Respect, Resilience and You taking responsibility. The lucky dip at assembly is always looked forward to by the children with a ticket in the box.
- To give children an alternative space to socialise and play at lunchtime, we now have Construction/Colouring Club on 2 lunchtimes a week. This is very well attended with a regular attendance of around 25, through to days when we have more than 40 children building and colouring.
- The SRC were instrumental in planning and organising a range of events. We had our Paddle-Pop Stick Fun Run/Walk. Each class ran or walked around the oval in their pyjamas or onesie, to raise funds for our new Nature Play area. We have held casual days, a Halloween Disco and a Food Drive supporting The Salvos as part of their Christmas campaign. All of these events have been very well supported across the school and encourage a sense of community at our school.
- We keep our school community informed through our school newsletter to parents with a column written by Lynn, on the theme of wellbeing and social & emotional development.
- We carried out a whole school wellbeing survey, where children were asked a range of questions about themselves, their learning and their teachers and other students at school. Overall it gave us very encouraging feedback:
  - 90% said they were a happy person
  - More than 80% felt it was easy to make friends at school
  - 90% have a least one adult that they feel cares about them

There were some areas that gave us food for thought:

- 30% felt they didn’t have a chance to decide things at school
- 33% felt they were given a chance to solve problems at school
- 21% felt they were often or usually asked what they want to learn about.
- 37% only sometimes or never felt proud of their achievements

- In response to the needs of children in our school, the teaching staff have undertaken SMART training looking at brain development, the impact trauma can have on its development and strategies for supporting children who have experienced trauma.
- We signed up to the Safe School Coalition; making a commitment to make our school safe and inclusive for same-sex attracted, gender-diverse and intersex students and their families.
- In line with DECD guidelines we have begun a cycle of RAN training for the volunteers in our school, in an effort to ensure the safety and well-being of children that they may support.
Other information about our school

Attendance

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<td>Year 2</td>
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<td>Average</td>
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Minor fluctuations can be seen in our attendance figures from year to year. Significant effort has gone into monitoring attendance and punctuality with little change over 6 years.

Anti Bullying

Our school’s Anti bullying policy was reviewed, publicised and explained again in 2015.

Over the year there have been 2 separate complaints made of cyber bullying. In each case the students responsible were suspended from school, a restorative approach employed and the parents of those responsible and those who made the complaint were involved in resolving the issues.

Other Anti Social Behaviour

Over the year there were 32 incidents of students hurting or threatening to hurt others reported. These reports concerned 18 students, 4 of whom demonstrated this behaviour on 3 or more occasions. Restorative Practices continue to be employed to help students manage incidents of personal conflict.

Our strong program in teaching students to recognise and counter and report bullying, and in building assertiveness and empathy continues.

PALs @ PPS 2015

The Play at Lunchtimes (PALs) program was introduced this year and it involved 30 of our Year 6&7 students being trained as leaders to organise games and activities for younger students in the school yard at lunchtime. Students nominated themselves took part in a full day training day early in Term 2. Andy, our PALs trainer, sent the following email after our training day:

“I just wanted to email you to pass on my thanks to all your fantastic students who took part in the PALs training this week. I was really impressed by their application in the morning session and their enthusiasm in the afternoon session when putting the program into practice. I look forward to hearing about the success of PALs at your site, thanks again.”

Our Year 6&7 mentors were excellent this year. They were creative and engaging in the games they organised at lunchtimes. The PALs program was a great opportunity for our older students to develop their confidence as well as their leadership, decision-making and organisational skills and we hope to have Andy back next year to train more PALs leaders.

Staff

In 2015 Kerry Briggs were appointed to the teaching staff in an ongoing capacity, and Shane Rowe joined the ancillary team following Tony Statton’s retirement.

There were many temporary appointments made throughout the year to cover a variety of staff leave and other appointments. At year’s end we farewelled the following staff, and thanked them for their contributions to our school: Peter Brown, Merryn Jones, Sandra Starkey and Stewart Perkins.

Workforce Composition

In 2015 there were 26 Teaching staff at our school (18.9 FTE). Between them they held 38 Bachelor and Diploma qualifications and 7 Post-graduate qualifications.

There were 7 non-teaching staff (4.29 FTE).
The Profit and Loss report shows a surplus of $114,527 as at the 31st of December 2015. The school budgeted for a surplus of $52,698.

The Balance Sheet shows a closing cash balance at the 31st of December 2015 of ($47,681), with investments totalling $121,604, leaving us with a closing cash balance of $73,923.