From the Principal and Deputy Principal

This week we say farewell to our graduating senior students – Briana, Matthew, Nathanael and Joshua. We wish you well in all of your adventures beyond school and we thank you for your leadership, resilience and strength of character – you have each taught us many lessons. The opportunity to be part of your graduation ceremony was an honour for us all and we will hold close to our hearts the memories of each of you as you walked the red carpet and accepted your graduation gifts.

As the 2014 school year draws to a close it is a great time to reflect upon all of the wonderful work at MOSS. Improving student learning outcomes and ensuring we meet all of our students’ health and care needs is our core business. Our teaching staff and our highly valued teacher aides have worked collaboratively within their sectors with the tremendous support from our Sector Leaders (Ben, Chrissy and Alastair), our Head of Special Education Services (Sandra) and our Head of Curriculum (Tracy). We would like to personally thank each of our staff members for their commitment, professionalism and flexibility.

Improving our student outcomes requires a strong team effort. Thank you to our Therapy Staff, our School Nurses and Health and Physical Education Teacher (Nicky) for working so closely with our teaching staff and parents ensuring that the high care needs, sensory and communication needs of our students are met. Without the support of these staff members it would be very difficult to ensure all students have equal access to school programs and activities.

Thank you also to our Education Program Officers (Jim and Bettina) who work tirelessly to ensure we build upon our family and community partnerships. Effective communication and meaningful partnerships with our parents is the single most important key to achieving the best possible outcomes for our students.

Our Vision Statement:
To provide engaging, relevant curriculum and innovative, specialised teaching in partnership with families and the community in a safe, supportive environment.
Class groups

Class groups have now been forwarded to all parents and carers. The process of allocating students to classes is extensive, however, it is made much easier through a highly collaborative process involving all staff members. Many factors are considered including: communication and sensory needs, learning styles, friendships and health needs. Should you have any concerns or questions regarding classes please contact the school.

Pfizer

Recently 17 volunteers from Pfizer Australia spent the day at our school beautifying our school grounds. It was wonderful meeting the Pfizer staff who were all so committed to the project. We look forward to a long lasting relationship with our new friends.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank some of our other important staff members:

To our cleaning staff and our services officer—thank you from the whole school community. We acknowledge the important work that you all do and also we appreciate the “extra duties” that you kindly volunteer for—most of which are behind the scenes.

To our wonderful bus drivers and supervisors—thank you for the care you take with our students who arrive at school feeling safe, happy and ready to learn. Thank you also for being involved in all aspects of school and for taking a genuine interest in the education of our students.

To Helen, Lyn and Sarah—thank you also. In your front of office roles you each play such an important role in ensuring MOSS is a welcoming and inclusive school.

To our volunteers—thank you for your ongoing support and commitment. We value your assistance which makes all of our work so much easier.

Wishing you all the blessings of the season and a safe and happy holiday with family and friends. We look forward to working closely with you again in 2015.

Karen and Susan

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From the Head of Curriculum - Tracy Cronin

A (Curriculum) year in review.

I am extremely proud of the capacity and enthusiasm of the teaching staff in our school. In particular how they collaborate to ensure that the curriculum delivery is relevant, authentic, challenging and engaging for all of our students. This collaborative knowledge of the students learning needs and individual goals is currently being used across all sectors in the planning of the curriculum goals, content and assessment for 2015.

Highlights and achievements 2014.

The visit from Dr Dave Hewett, the founder of Intensive Interaction, who influenced our pedagogical thinking and curriculum planning.

The advent of the sector leaders who took up their roles in week four, term one. This has been a hugely successful and influential step across the campus. Their knowledge of the specific teaching and learning requirements for their sectors has resulted in some creative curriculum implementation. It has been a great year working together on curriculum projects and we have lots planned for 2015

- Our Intensive Interaction sector leader presenting at the national Intensive Interaction conference in Melbourne.
- The drama program winners of a Regional Showcase award showing student learning outcomes through this creative program.
- The early years sector leader presenting her findings on Sensory Processing at the QASEL conference and the Intensive Interaction team presenting their information on Phatic Communication.
- The phenomenal effort by the ECDP team in putting together what one of the keynote speakers referred to as “One of the best international conferences on Early Childhood Intervention that he had ever been to”.
- The senior school team working with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority on a significant senior schooling project that will roll out in 2015 (more on this early next year).

The biggest achievement of all however, is watching the students learn and develop. I am privileged to be able to teach in many of the classes across the campus. It is here that I see the achievements of the students and how far they have come. It is here that I also see the fantastic work that the teachers have done. It is here that I see a student develop independence. It is here that I see students develop communication skills. It is here that I see students identify letters. It is here that I see students interact with each other. It is here that I see evidence of great student engagement.

Thank you to all our staff members who make these achievements possible.

To the students, I would like to say have a big rest over the holidays, I know what your teachers are planning for you next year.

Best wishes, Tracy
From the Early Childhood Development Program

**Graduation**

It’s the time of the year where we are going to say ‘farewell’ to a large number of our children as they move into full time education for 2015. On Wednesday 3rd December we held a special event to say ‘congratulations’ and ‘farewell’ to some of our 30 graduates from the Early Childhood Development program. Some of our graduates have been with us since they were in playgroup so it was a little ‘sad’ for us to say goodbye. But the teaching team are thrilled at our students’ progress over this year and we wish them every success in their new educational setting.

**Class groups 2015**

Our class groups are finalised for 2015 and most families will now know the date and times of their programs for the coming New Year. We will be starting the new school year with 52 families and we expect our numbers to grow to over 70 throughout the year.

**GymZOOnasium**

The ECDP students have really enjoyed the ‘GymZOOnasium’ program that was funded as a result of money secured through a grant by Jim Green (Mount Ommaney Education Program Officer). We have all enjoyed getting to know Emma and the different activities she has provided for us over this year. We have learnt how to make our bodies look like a giraffe, a lizard, a kangaroo, a gorilla to name just a few. This program also gave us the opportunity to try a wide range of yummy healthy foods.

**It’s time to say thank you and farewell**

This year we have had the privilege of having Stefanie Handley (teacher) and Julia Russell (teacher assistant) working with us.

Both ladies have been such an encouraging and caring teacher and teacher assistant for our Thursday/Friday programs and have provided their students with exciting and challenging activities. You may well continue to see Stefanie and Julie next year as they have agreed to be available to support classes in 2015. Thank you Stefanie – thank you Julia.

**Congratulations ECDP students**

The staff of the ECDP wish to congratulate all of our students for their amazing progress over this year. Every child has made gains throughout the year and this can be clearly identified within their individual education plan. We look forward to our continued work with our families and children.

We wish you all a happy and restful Christmas and look forward to seeing many of you again in 2015.

Sandra Schuptar
Head of Special Education Services
From the Early Years Sector

We Like to Move It Move It!!!!

As the year winds down the party season winds up and the Early Years team are enjoying spending the last few weeks with the children and reflecting on all of their hard work and achievements throughout the year.

Our Christmas cheer has been shared at class parties with our parents, showcasing the students’ hard work over the year, at the school children’s Christmas party where we viewed the schools drama production ‘Sensory Dispensary’ and at our school’s GymZOOnasium party where we celebrated and thanked Emma for all of her hard work teaching us yoga movements this year.

As the heat starts to beat us the Early Years have been getting wet as we immerse ourselves into our Science Unit of ‘movement’. The students have been exploring how our bodies can move and be still. We also explored how we can move different objects such as toys. As the days heated up we looked at how our bodies and toys move differently during water play.

This term we have also been busy socialising with our friends during ‘sensory play’ Fridays. We have provided a program for the students that was fun and engaging, while challenging and exploring their senses. The students have had the opportunity to:

- have their faces painted;
- explore different concepts such as hot and cold, colour and hard and soft;
- energetically immerse themselves in music;
- practise play skills involving dress ups and turn taking games;
- complete fine motor tasks such as cutting and creating art work;
- create art work with various and unique tools such as pine cones and tea bags, and
- experiment with goop, magnetic sand and soda bombs.

The students have thoroughly enjoyed each other’s company and the activities. It has been very exciting to see them develop new friendships.

It has been a jam packed year and we have had heaps of fun doing every little bit! As we reflect on the Early Years children’s progress, we are all extremely proud of what these little people have accomplished in one year.

The list of achievements is endless from making new friends, toileting, exploring letters and using new communication methods, to self-regulating, trying new foods, counting and exploring their senses. The Early Years team would like to thank the parents for all of their support and assistance throughout the year. Without the wonderful partnerships between parents and teachers the children’s achievements would not be possible. We wish you a Merry Christmas, a very safe and happy New Year and look forward to seeing you in next year. Until our adventures in 2015.

The Early Years Team ☺
From the Middle and Senior Years Sector Leader

End of year contributions to our newsletters are always a mixture of sadness that some children will be moving on, relief that we have made it to the end of the year and pride in the accomplishments of students and the hard work of staff.

2014 has been another wonderful year for our students in the middle and senior sectors. Throughout the year we have stuck to our mantra that school is a place where children come to learn and that children learn within a program where they are engaged, feel safe and are having fun. Our classes and lessons are designed to maximise student learning through differentiating units of learning to suit the capabilities of each student within the classes.

I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to the teaching staff in our sector. This year each staff member has been challenged to take on new responsibilities, to develop and apply new skills and to constantly monitor their performance in the context of student needs. I am extremely proud of our team and the professionalism, dedication and positive outlook with which they have approached their jobs this year. I can state with pride that your children are privileged to have had access to their teaching teams this year.

Just a note now on the real workers in our classrooms, the teacher aides. These wonderful people are integral to our teaching teams and are central to the successes your children have experienced this year. We have emphasised this year that the primary role of our classroom aides is that of educators, helping to facilitate and deliver the programs developed by the teachers. All our aides have spent time in professional development and/or with specialist staff enhancing their skills and their confidence in implementing these with students.

Our programs are also enhanced by the facilities we have access to. In this regard we are indebted to our cleaning and grounds staff who have ensured that every day we walk into a beautifully presented school and clean, tidy and appealing classroom. Thanks team for all your hard work.

Despite common perceptions our admin team are actually there to make our job easier 😊 and for this we owe them a big thank you. Our school is extremely well resourced and has access to a number of extraordinarily enriching programmes like GymZOOnasium, Song Room and horse riding. We have access to extremely well organised curriculum documents and receive a lot of support with their implementation. In addition, we receive amazing support with all our paperwork requirements including ILPs and the reporting process. As well there are a myriad of soul sapping administrative tasks vital to the running of the school which the admin team shield us teachers from, allowing us to concentrate on our core business of teaching your children.

Finally a quick word about your children. It is no exaggeration to say I have the best job in the world (other than opening the bowling for the Australian cricket team). I get paid to come to work every day and have fun with the world’s most inquisitive, humorous, loyal, tough and hard-working children. It is an extraordinary privilege to be entrusted with your child’s education and the enormity of this responsibility drives us to deliver the programmes that we do.

Here is wishing you and your family a safe and blessed Christmas and holiday period with your family.

Alastair.
From the Intensive Interaction Team

The Intensive Interaction team had a wonderful year and we look forward to 2015.

Staff have had opportunities to spread the word at conferences throughout the year and to visit other schools. We had staff from other schools come to MOSS to see Intensive Interaction (II) in practice.

There have been ‘wow’ moments in every class, from momentary eye contact to some sustained turn taking. Every student acquires communication skills at different rates and their reports will give you details of their successes.

Special mentions to Mason and his tolerance of listening throughout the year; Michael and his ongoing improvements of his personal bests at Fitness First; Raquel and her improved waking stamina; one of our determined young girls and her improved stretching and ranging; Quoc who has settled into a stable routine and is now back to demonstrating skills from 18 months ago; Ally who has progressed through the MOVE program with impressive skill and to Nathanael who graduates after many years at Mount Ommaney. Nathanael good luck for the future, we will certainly miss you!

One of our staff is on sick leave, and we wish her strength during her ongoing treatment. Thank you Lyn for your devotion to all the students at MOSS; but especially for your patience, generosity of spirit and warmth in B1 this year.

We will be implementing a broader approach with Intensive Interaction in 2015 with some staff changes to support this. While we have teams of teachers that work brilliantly with one another, we will be strengthening our cross team approaches with II trained staff working in other sectors. Rather than farewell, we look forward to the new ways of working in 2015.

Even though this is holiday time, we encourage parents to give your child every opportunity to practise the fundamentals of communication. And just to refresh your memory here they are:

- enjoying being with another person;
- developing the ability to attend to that person;
- concentration and attention span;
- learning to do sequences of activity with another person;
- taking turns in exchanges of behaviour;
- sharing personal space;
- using and understanding eye contacts, facial expressions, physical contact and non-verbal communication;
- using vocalizations with meaning and
- learning to regulate and control arousal levels.

Wednesday 4th February is our big day, when three wise people visit our school. There will be no star to guide you, so watch this space!
From the Guidance Officer

Dear Staff and Families,

It is with great sadness that I finished up at Mt Ommaney Special School and ECDP on Thursday. It has been an absolute pleasure working with such caring and dedicated staff who are always trying to improve the outcomes for our students.

I’d also like to say thank you to the Mt Ommaney families, who have allowed me to share in the delights of your children. They are incredible little people who I have enjoyed watching grow and flourish whichever direction they took. They constantly surprised me and would make my day by taking my hand, calling my name or just raising their heads as I entered the room.

Enjoy your Christmas holidays and have a fabulous 2015.

Regards,
Kim Johnson

From the Chaplain

Christmas greeting from the Chaplain

We can come to this time of the year expectant; looking forward with our families to Christmas Day, winding down at our workplaces and preparing to enjoy some time out. We can come feeling overwhelmed thinking about the tasks, the shopping and the cooking that needs to be done. We can come with anticipation and sometimes even anxiety around how everyone in our family is going to cope with the day and with the holidays.

In the chaos and busyness that this season brings, I hope and pray that you can take some time to make some fantastic memories with your family, reflect and be thankful on what the year has been and prepare for the year that is to come.

Have a wonderful Christmas!

Thanks and blessings,
Hollie Bailey

Please click on the images to view more photos from our 2014 Student Graduation ceremony
Student Awards

Below is a list of the students who have received special ‘Student of the Week Awards’ at Assembly recently…

Archer... developing independence when following daily routines in G2 during 2014 (Personal and Social Capability)

Aviv... for good clearing the table after meals (Personal and Social Capability)

Ben... for acquiring independence throughout 2014 in G2 and developing a love for coming to school (Personal and Social Capability)

Bernard... for great drumming (Intercultural Understandings)

Camy... for having a fantastic attitude to coming to school all year and being a valued member of G4 class (Personal and Social Capability)

Camy... for using her left hand to push a “light ball” in the water (Personal and Social Capability)

Chris... for initiating social interactions with other students and being a good friend (Personal and Social Capability)

Dan... for exploring different elements in the Sensory Room (Personal and Social Capability)

Student... for beautiful table manners (Personal and Social Capability)

Izzy H... for being a responsible role model in G2 throughout 2014 (Personal and Social Capability)

Joel... for independently walking 2 steps (Personal and Social Capability)

Jordan... for increased attention and participation during table top activities (Personal and Social Capability)

Lara... for independently spreading paint on the paper while on her wedge (Personal and Social Capability)

Max... for developing his confidence to let go of the rail and swim to a helper (Personal and Social Capability)

Matthew H... for proficient use of a head switch to activate electronic devices (ICT Capability)

Michael... for independently asking for a tissue (Personal and Social Capability)

Nathaneal... for showing his friends how it’s done on the treadmill.

Student... for enjoying every moment of every day (Personal and Social Capability)

Zen... for initiating a game with a friend during free time (Personal and Social Capability)
From the P&C

The P&C had another very successful year in 2014 and I’d like to thank you all for your ongoing support. Our fundraising in 2014 was directed towards the purchase of new equipment which the therapy staff had identified as being required by students. As a result of our fundraising efforts, as well as grants we were able to obtain, we were successful in purchasing all the equipment on the therapists’ list. We hope you are all seeing the benefits of this equipment when you visit the school.

A special thank you from the P&C to Jim Green who has, once again, gone above and beyond with his assistance and support.

Thank you to the other members of the Committee – Jen McDonald, Liza Raggatt and Shabnam Rigg – for the contribution you have made.

The P&C would like to welcome Susan to MOSS as our new Principal and we look forward to working with Susan in 2015.

Our first meeting for 2015 will be on Monday 16 February at 6:30pm in the Staff Room.

Merry Christmas and enjoy the holidays with your children.

Sondra Vandeleur
President
MOSS P&C

Click on the image to view our 2014 school performance ‘Sensory Dispensary’. A big thank you to the students of Griffith Film School who captured our children’s achievements and personalities beautifully!
Parent and Community Engagement

Schools do not exist in isolation. They are often the central hub of their community. Schools should leverage their position in the community to work together with other community members, for the benefit of all. Effective schools actively seek out relationships with the community.

Thank you Pfizer Australia!

Pfizer staff from all over Queensland visited our school on Thursday 4th December for their annual Community Engagement day. Their hard work, planting, fixing & painting has made such a difference to our school entrance. We believe that first impressions will play an important role in cementing strong relationships with our new families enrolling in 2015. Thanks to Pfizer Australia, the school entrance is so much more welcoming and aesthetically pleasing.

Thank you from the entire school community and we look forward to a wonderful ongoing relationship in the future!

School Performance evening

We had a record 185 RSVPs for this year’s children’s Christmas party/school performance evening! As always, it was wonderful to see so many parents, children and siblings interacting and socialising in the playground. One of the highlights for me is watching our students’ faces as they see themselves appear on the whiteboard during the presentations. The joy and pride at their achievements is obvious as their faces light up and they are able to share the moment with friends and family. Thank you to all who came along and to the students of Griffith Film School for their amazing production. Our 2014 school performance ‘Sensory Dispensary’ can be viewed on our school’s Facebook page by following the link.

Thank you to the P&C, who show tremendous support to the school each and every year and to all the families, businesses and community groups who have partnered with and supported our school in many ways throughout 2014. Have a wonderful holiday season and we look forward to working together again in 2015!

Jim & Bettina, Education Program Officers
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