Research tells us that students achieve more when schools, parents and the local community work together. In our last newsletter we mentioned that we are currently drafting our school’s Parent and Community Engagement Framework with the aim of identifying strategies to increase opportunities for more effective communication, collaboration and shared decision making with our parents and the local community.

Our school already has developed effective strategies to engage with parents and community, however, with the overwhelming evidence that parent engagement has a positive effect on student achievement we are seeking to develop new strategies.

The research and our experience tells us that parent and community engagement is most effective when it:

- focuses on student learning;
- encourages genuine dialogues and shared responsibility for student success;
- builds the capability, and the confidence, of staff, parents and community members to engage with each other; and
- enables widespread engagement and sustains it over time.

Please contact the school if you are interested in helping to develop our framework.

**Student Achievements**

Our Student of the Week Awards are one way that we acknowledge student achievements. These awards are presented during fortnightly assemblies. This is always a highlight for the school community. Not only is it wonderful to see the delight in students achieving an award, but it is equally lovely to witness the students cheering each other. Parents and family members are encouraged to attend our assemblies.
Continued from the Principal

To further acknowledge our students we have now added photos of our monthly award recipients in the entrance of the administration building. Footage of one of our students proudly receiving her award can also be viewed on our school facebook page.

After School Hours Care

Sondra (P&C President) and I continue to make progress regarding after school hours care for our students. Further consultation with Multicap at Mount Ommaney has been very positive.

State Schools Nursing Service

State Schools Registered Nurses work in partnership with students, parents and school staff to safely manage the health needs of students with a specialised health need. This service includes an assessment of the student’s specific needs, development of an individualised and or emergency health management plan as well as training required by staff to feel confident and competent to perform procedures or interventions required during school hours. Please contact a member of the administration team if you have any queries regarding our school based nursing service.

Student Art Show Christmas Card Fundraiser

Did you know that we have just printed Christmas Cards using student artwork from our 2014 Art Show? These Christmas cards showcase the talent of our students and are a great fundraiser for our P&C. All proceeds go towards the purchase of equipment to support the learning of our students. Please contact Helen at hgilms@eq.edu.au or on 3717 6888 if you would like to make a purchase. Order forms will be emailed to all families and also placed in student bags.

Warm regards

Susan Christensen
**From the Deputy Principal**

**End of Semester Reports are on their way...**

It won’t surprise parents and carers to know that at this time of the year, teachers are busy reviewing the learning progress of all their students, having now completed all ILP reviews and well on the way to preparing second semester reports.

This planning, teaching, reviewing and reporting cycle continues through each school year. Sometimes, we need to change the format or content, but these are usually small alterations. Sometimes, the changes must reflect new departmental understandings or expectations.

*In late 2013, we sought feedback from our families around the format and content of our end of semester reports and your comments back to us were very positive indeed.*

**100% of those who replied said that:**

- They read and keep these reports.
- The “comment” style gives a clear sense of what their child has achieved.

**95% said that:**

- The reported learning areas made sense.
- They fitted with your expectations about your child’s learning.
- The current “achievement scale” provided you with useful information.
- They had no suggestions for improvement or specifically asked to leave it the way it is.

So, when you read your child’s 2014 Semester Two report in a few weeks, we hope that it will again be valued, clear, make sense and match what you have hoped for your child over the last 6 months.

Next year, all state schools, including Special Schools, will be required to standardize their student reports, in line with expectations around the Australian Curriculum. We will need to address this as well. But as always, we intend to meet this requirement in a way that gives you the information you need about your child and their learning progress. No doubt, there will be more opportunities for your feedback to be given. Until then, watch this space.

Cheers

Karen Walton
From the Head of Curriculum - Tracy Cronin

Literacy Blocks
The streamed literacy blocks for the Middle School and Early Years sectors have begun. Students have been very enthusiastic about working with their literacy block teachers. The literacy blocks are focussed around sensory stories and a system called ‘Reading our Way’. Reading our Way was developed by the Down Syndrome Association of Queensland and is a systematic, visual approach to the teaching of reading and pre-reading skills. It includes activities and games that the students participate in including choosing, matching and naming. There are also fun games around key words. Already we have students progressing through this approach from Foundation level to Beginner level. For more information on this visual approach please go to the Reading our Way website.

Literacy – The Four Blocks Model
Two of our teachers – Sue and Shubh – participated in an intensive week long training course in ‘The Four Blocks Model’ during one of the school holidays. Sue and Shubh have since implemented a whole school professional development session on the ‘Four Blocks’ during the October pupil free day. This was a great session full of creative ideas for the teaching of literacy in classes. Sue and Shubh are currently working with teachers in their individual classrooms and advising them of how to enhance literacy programs.

Numeracy Project
Hannah and Kate, two of our Early Years teachers, have recently taken on the challenge of leading the research and development of a whole school numeracy framework. The research component includes visiting other schools, consulting with experts and collecting locally based numeracy data around staff skills and beliefs. This is a challenging and complex project and I would like to thank them for their enthusiasm and commitment in leading this new venture.

From the Support Services (Chaplain)
Each Christmas, staff and students at MOSS like to present the Little Kings with some gifts which they give to St Vincent de Paul’s to be distributed. Through these gifts, St Vinnies can provide much needed assistance to individuals and families over the Christmas period – spreading the joy of the season!

You can participate by sending any of the following items to school with your child:

Cans or other preserved food items
Toiletries for men or women including: razors, shaving cream, shampoo, soap, deodorant, toothbrush & toothpaste
Toys for children including: plush toys, rattles, clothes, building blocks, books, board games, sporting equipment, movie vouchers.

All donations will need to be in by the 20th November as they will be given to the Little Kings at an end of year morning tea.

Look forward to sharing the joy and generosity of this season together,

Hollie Bailey, MOSS School Chaplain
From the Early Childhood Development Program

We are already half way through the term and everyone, both adults and children, are busy at the ECDP. This term staff are working hard to complete a range of reports for families including:

- End of Year Reports for children in Kindergarten and Pre-Prep.
- Person Centred Plans for those children transitioning to Prep, and
- Reviewing IEPs or writing new IEPs.

Playgroup News

Playgroup is busy with new families joining us each week. The parents and children have started accessing the MOSS pool which has been lovely. Emma, our Gymzoonasium teacher has also run a Pilates session for the mums while the children were being cared for by staff. The last day for playgroup will be Wednesday the 3rd December.

ECDP Garden

The children worked hard to plant a variety of seedlings in the garden in week 2. We planted sweet corn, tomatoes, lettuce, a passionfruit, paw paw, herbs, and capsicum. We would like to send a big thank you to Darren for building up the garden and making the pathway more wheelchair friendly – Thanks Darren!!

Graduation Evening

Our Graduation night will be held on Wednesday 3rd December up at the Mount Ommaney Special School Multipurpose Room. The evening will be a celebration of achievement for those children graduating from the ECDP to transition to Prep in 2015. A shared meal will be followed by a presentation and disco. Invitations will be placed in parent pockets next week. Please fill in the bottom section and return it to Lyn in the office as soon as possible. We would also like to give a BIG thanks to the MOSS P&C who very generously donated $200 to the ECDP to buy a special book for each child graduating.

Christmas Break-up Parties

Class parties will be held in the week starting the 1st December.

Guidance Officer – A BIG THANK YOU

Teaching staff at the ECDP would like to sincerely thank Kim Johnson for her tireless effort and time out of school hours providing much needed, and hugely appreciated, support to the families at the ECDP as they make decisions based around schooling choices for 2015. Kim, you go above and beyond for everyone; thank you so much for being such as wonderful Guidance Officer and listening ear.
From the Early Years Sector

“We may all be different but, in this class we swim together.”

The Early Years cohort aren’t just going through the year swimming together, we are making a team splash!! This quote has been referred to several times this year, and the students in our Early Years classes are exceeding its intention. Although it is getting close to the end of the year our energetic, bright and warm-hearted students are still diving into each day with big smiles.

Since our last adventure article the students have been busy exploring different aspects of the curriculum.

In English this term, the students have been focusing on retelling events, expressing likes and dislikes for items and exploring letters.

As an additional assistance to our English skills, this term has seen the commencement of Literacy Groups. Three afternoons a week, the Early Years cohort have been merging with the Middle Years to focus on our reading skills. The various groups are discovering reading through sensory stories, visual arts, letter focus, sentence development and interacting with the different aspects of a book. This has been a great opportunity for the students to meet new friends and staff in a fun learning atmosphere.

This term in Numeracy, our mathematicians have continued exploring numbers while diving into shapes. The students are investigating the different features of various shapes through hands on experiences and applying their knowledge through sorting and identifying them. This term in the Early Years it is “Hip to be a Square”!

The Early Years are currently exploring science through movement with our senses. We are investigating the different movements of objects such as rolling, bouncing and spinning while also looking at voluntary and involuntary movements with different parts of our bodies in different environments.

This unit of work has seen us adventure into the playground to take videos of how bodies move differently on the play equipment.

A large focus on social and emotional wellbeing in the Early Years cohort has continued in Term Four through ensuring our students are provided with opportunities to develop friendships and learn from peers through social experiences. These experiences have involved all-in-sensory play Fridays, shared music sessions and combined lunch and play breaks. More recently the students found their inner ghoul and celebrated Halloween. They had their faces painted through choice making activities, used fine motor skills to create lanterns, used their senses to sift through ‘eye-balls and brains’ and finished off the day with a witches hunt while trick-or-treating.

We are excited to see what the final few weeks of the school year bring and how big a SPLASH the children can really make!

Until our next adventure, keep smiling,

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

The start of term is always a busy time for staff and students. We are busy completing units of work, assessing learning and starting to prepare ourselves for the reporting phase of the semester. All the students are to be commended for the positive attitudes they have brought through the school gate each morning and their readiness to throw themselves into the day’s work. We are very conscious of creating a culture of learning within our sectors in which students are challenged to develop new skills and increase in independence.

Literacy

Communication is a central part of each of our classrooms. Senior students have been working on letter recognition along with using AAC devices and ASL charts to expand their expressive communication. Within the middle years we have been using the Four Blocks Model as an organisational approach to deliver the literacy programme. Time has been spent exploring texts, developing and extending letter and sight word knowledge and giving the children opportunities to write using predictable templates.

Numeracy

The Senior School has continued to work with currency using their snack shop as a means of achieving this. Students have also worked on basic number recognition and matching. Within the Middle School students have been exploring halves and quarters, dividing (and eating!) pizzas, pancakes, biscuits and fruit. We have been using specifically designed software displayed via the Interactive Whiteboard to consolidate and extend the learning.

Science

Science is a wonderful and enriching part of our programme which students love participating in. Make sure to go to the school Facebook page to see an example of a very engaged senior student investigating a reaction when two different substances are mixed. Each Friday in Middle School, the two classes combine to explore an aspect of science and increase their ability to comprehend and follow procedural text.

As we move towards the end of the year, staff have been involved in a number of meetings, planning for 2015. Last Thursday, the Senior Sector met to map out the curriculum content for 2015. There are some exciting developments in prospect as we look to prepare our senior students for life after school. One change will be an increased focus upon the ASDAN programmes and certification system. These bespoke programmes can be organised to suit a range of learners of different capabilities and will focus upon developing and monitoring life skills and independence in our senior cohort. Anyone wishing to learn more can go to the ASDAN website.
From the Intensive Interaction Team

Caffeine fuelled early morning screenings. The audience anxious to see what a year of work will bring.

This is not a scene at the Cannes Film Festival. This is real life with the stars closer to home.

Students in the Intensive Interaction group are regularly videoed, and twice a year staff watch examples of their work and map the individual’s communication journey. This process is called Moderation.

Sometimes our reactions to what we see are definitely not moderate.

There are tears of joy, laughter, surprise, and excitement. We see a student who has found emotional and physical contact challenging, reach out and take someone’s hand, and it is hard not to get teary. When film captures the moment a student shows anticipation for the first time and giggles, everyone is excited and happy.

First eye contact, first vocalization, consistent interest and initiating communication are ‘wow’ moments for the whole team to witness and celebrate.

Moderation is hard work, hours in front of the screen, discussions and note taking, but it deepens our understanding of our students and their needs. And it isn’t just the students who come under scrutiny. During the year, staff watch themselves on videos and their practice is critiqued by colleagues.

Videos don’t lie and they are an integral part of informing the evidence-based pedagogy of Intensive Interaction.

We want to thank Ben Holt our team leader for his technical expertise which allows us to Skype Dr Dave Hewitt the “father” of Intensive Interaction several times a year.

In the Intensive Interaction classrooms, every day is an opportunity for students to shine and we just hope we catch it on video!

We are delighted to announce that Dave Hewitt will be visiting our school again early next year. Dave will be working alongside staff with the aim of improving pedagogical practices. Dave will also conduct a parent information session. You can listen to Dave explaining more about what Intensive Interaction is in the video below:
Student Awards

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

Abigail…for displaying enjoyment with smiles during art activities (Personal and Social Capability)

Adela…for problem solving about how to make the wheelchair swing work in the big playground (Critical and Creative Thinking)

Adela…for spelling all of her sight words (Literacy and Communication)

Antony…for unpacking his bag and hanging it on the hook independently (Personal and Social Capability)

Archer…for using his “first….and then...” symbols to eat a piece of toast at each lunch break, before his choice of food (Literacy and Communication)

Archer…for learning the features of a circle (Numeracy)

Ben…for trying lots and lots of different foods (Personal and Social Capability)

Ben…for signing and vocalising “help” at meal times (Literacy and Communication)

Ben…for participating well and making great pre-writing strokes during the Peggy Leggo program (Literacy and Communication)

Brandon…for putting away his toys when asked after playtime (Personal and Social Capability)

Briana…for remaining calm in an unfamiliar social environment (Personal and Social Capability)

Buster…for excellent choice making abilities (Personal and Social Capability)

Camy…for independently using a BIGMack to show that she likes bubbles (Literacy and Communication)

Charlie…for recognising and spelling his sight words (Literacy and Communication)

Charlotte…for showing focused engagement during sensory activities (Personal and Social Capability)

Grace…for positive engagement with the native animals at Lone Pine Sanctuary (Personal and Social Capability)

Hadrian…for displaying enjoyment with smiles during sensory activities (Personal and Social Capability)

Isabel…for unpacking her lunch bag independently (Personal and Social Capability)
Izzy G...for using her Proloquo2Go independently to ask to play with friends in other classes (Literacy and Communication)

Joel...for working hard at learning letters and their sounds (Literacy and Communication)

Joel...for spelling the sight words of the week (Literacy and Communication)

Joel...for being a great friend (Personal and Social Capability)

Khalil...for engaging so well in a writing activity (Literacy and Communication)

Maryam...for great participation and pre-writing strokes in the Peggy Leggo program (Literacy and Communication)

Max...for independently asking to paint on his iPad and commenting “I like that” (Literacy and Communication)

Jordan...for independently playing a game “feed the caterpillar” and identifying key food (Critical and Creative Thinking)

Joshua...for being so calm with the animals at Lone Pine Sanctuary (Personal and Social Capability)

Reilly...for recognising the letter “R” (Literacy and Communication)

Riya...for completing a lap of the pool independently, with flippers (Personal and Social Capability)

Sarah...for her concentration, wonder and delight when completing a science experiment (Personal and Social Capability)

Sarah...for using good manners, remembering all her shops and walking so well up the steps on her paper delivery (Personal and Social Capability)

Sarah...for feeding the animals on her own at Lone Pine Sanctuary (Personal and Social Capability)

Tim...for being responsible for keeping his head in the right position during his community newspaper delivery (Personal and Social Capability)

T.J...for his wonder and delight when completing a science experiment (Personal and Social Capability)

T.J...for excellent interactions with the animals at Lone Pine sanctuary (Personal and Social Capability)

Zackary...for focused engagement during sensory activities experiment (Personal and Social Capability)
From the P&C

Baby & Kids Market
Thank you to everyone who contributed to making the recent Baby & Kids Market another great success! The market would not be possible without the assistance of the dads who put up the signs, the donations of baked goods and second hand clothes and toys, Centenary Rotary running the BBQ and the MOSS staff, parents and friends who donate their time on the day. Proceedings from the market will be used by the P&C to purchase equipment for the school.

Christmas Party
The P&C looks forward to seeing all the MOSS families at the Christmas party on Monday 1 December.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)
Susan and I continue to liaise with Multicap regarding the proposed OSHC program. We will provide further information as soon as it’s available. In the meantime, please email me with any queries.

Vacation Care
UnitingCare Community is operating a vacation care program at MOSS over the summer holidays. Information packs and booking forms have been forwarded to families who have previously accessed the program. For further information, contact Ruth Ormond, Case Worker on 3270 6451 or Ruth.Ormond@uccommunity.org.au

Lord Mayors Suburban Initiative Grant (LMSIF)
Thank you to Cr Matthew Bourke for awarding the P&C $500 through the LMSIF who provides support for community organisations to upgrade facilities and host community events. The recent award will allow us to replace the ageing chairs in our multi-purpose hall, improving the quality of the facility for our markets and community groups who hire the hall.

The next P&C meeting will be held on Monday 24 November at 6:30 in the Staff Room. All Welcome!
Parent and Community Engagement

School Performance Filming

Students from Griffith Film School have completed their filming and editing for this year’s school performance ‘Sensory Dispensary’ based on our student’s explorations of the 5 senses. The drama team has had a sneak peek and we certainly have another wonderful showcase of student achievement on our hands. Thank you to Griffith Film School for such a productive partnership. This is very much a mutually beneficial partnership and we were delighted to receive the following message from the Griffith students:

“I just wanted to say thank you so much for letting us be a part of this project. I know that each one of us has enjoyed everyone moment of it and we have learned an awful lot. Thank you for your patience and your kindness. We’re so lucky that we were able to work with such wonderful people. Please pass on our thanks to the rest of the staff and students. This has been an incredible experience for all of us! All the best for the rest of the year ;)”

Greater Springfield Rotary Presentation

Jen McDonald (P&C Secretary) and I recently had the honour of presenting at the Greater Springfield Rotary club. It is always a pleasure to go out into the community and tell the story of our students’ challenges and achievements. Their members took a keen interest and asked some excellent questions. Thank you to club administrator Regina Balachandran for the invitation and we look forward to developing our relationship further. The club is always on the lookout to increase their membership and add to the impact of their tremendous work in the community. Anyone interested in attending a meeting should contact Regina at vim.regina@gmail.com

Baby & Kids Market

As a school we place a high value on parent and community participation and it is always wonderful to see so much support from staff, families and community groups for our markets. Following last week’s successful event we would like to thank the following people/organisations who volunteered their support in numerous ways to ensure a smooth, enjoyable and profitable school fundraiser.

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<th>Hollie Bailey</th>
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<th>Sondra Vandeuler</th>
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<td>Jen McDonald</td>
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<td>Apikali Modern Cloth</td>
<td>Bearhands and Feet Sculptures</td>
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<td>Rotary Club of Brisbane Centenary</td>
<td>Simone Perele, Jindalee</td>
<td>Bim Bam Boom</td>
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<td>Telstra</td>
<td>Tarnya Smith MP</td>
<td>Cr Matthew Bourke</td>
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Thank you also to the many families who donated items to the P&C table.

Jim Green, Education Program Officer
Imagination Station

Our Saturday morning drama program, Imagination Station, has continued fortnightly throughout the year with the last 3 sessions of 2014 set to be loads of fun. Imagination Station is an extension of the school’s multi-award winning drama program and was developed in response to a request from the P&C.

Data from parent feedback surveys has enabled us to assess impact and the feedback clearly demonstrates multiple benefits, including:

“Fun productive time out! It is activity that all siblings & peers can enjoy and interact together in an appropriate environment, (which can be very hard to find!) It is safe and there are no judgement looks.”

“Our daughter is having the opportunity to engage with typically developing children and try to play with them. It is an opportunity for us to play with our daughter.”

“(The positives are) Interactions between students and siblings, siblings and other students, siblings and siblings. Also seeing the happy smiles on faces of all children in attendance.”

100% of families have reported that this is the only time they have been able to access a program where their child with a disability has been able to equally access and participate in activities with their other children.

Here are some photos of a few of our adventures. We are currently seeking funding to continue in 2015. Keep your fingers crossed and maybe you and your family would like to come along and join in the fun.
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