

Junior School on the Move

Our Pre-K to Year 6 Junior School is growing in every direction. An increase in enrolments, additional classes, a new timetable, an exciting building project and the continuing inquiry learning journey sees the Junior School poised to add another wonderful chapter in the life of this corner of the School.

Over 150 new students began their Barker journey in February. A fresh faced and excited Pre-Kindergarten of 18, 14 new Kindergarten students, a handful of Year 1 students, a new class at Year 3 and Year 4, 70 new students in Year 5 and six in Year 6 has seen the Junior School expand to 430 students and 21 classes. With only a handful of places still available in Kindergarten and Year 1, the Junior School is in a strong position.

In planning for the future, we have determined that the Junior and Prep School need to be together. As a result, plans have been submitted to Hornsby Council for a building development on the corner of Clarke Road and College Crescent to house the youngest members of the School community. A state of the art facility in keeping with the Copeland Building will begin construction towards the middle of the year with completion in the second half of 2018.

These classrooms have been designed with the learner in mind. Flexible and engaging spaces will provide the Prep students with every opportunity to begin their Barker journey in the best possible learning environment.

Bringing the Junior School together provides wonderful opportunities for improved pastoral care and student well-being. It allows the community to be together and learn from each other in a safe and supportive environment. It also allows greater access to the vast resources on the main campus. We look forward to construction beginning and the excitement this will bring to learning. Stage Two of the development will see additional classrooms for the upper primary years.

A new timetable in 2017 has been developed with learning as the key motivator for change. The ability to provide hour blocks of literacy and numeracy in each class, every day, is an important factor. The introduction of Inquiry over the last 18 months has provided the opportunity to think about the best structure for the day and how we can maximise key blocks of time for learning. Lunchtime is now consistent across the entire School providing greater opportunity for student mentoring and staff collaboration. Sport has moved to the morning when conditions are more suitable (especially in Summer) to the acquisition of skills and the development of game sense.

There are a number of focus areas for learning in 2017.

During 2016, we identified the need to develop Writing skills. The 'Seven Steps to Writing Success' program was introduced and there has already been a marked improvement in the output of our young writers. This will continue in 2017, as we focus on the last couple of the seven steps and look at the application of writing skills throughout all areas of the curriculum.

In addition, each year group will be incorporating additional units of inquiry into their teaching and learning programs. These units will focus on the development of knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and action, particularly in the areas of Science, Geography and History. Developing students who are able to question, investigate, analyse and synthesise information, and then communicate their understanding is a key learning goal.

The importance of language acquisition, the development of competent and transferable reading skills, and the understanding of language and its use, are critical in the early years of learning. In 2017, we will implement a consistent synthetic phonics program in Pre-Kindergarten to Year 2. Jolly Phonics has been chosen as the umbrella program and staff

have undertaken specific training prior to implementation. Parent workshops and further staff training will be provided this term.

Knowledgeable, caring, open-minded, balanced, principled, reflective, communicators, thinkers, risk takers, inquirers. It is these ten attributes of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile that we hope will develop in each of our learners. Each learner will be working towards an understanding about the attributes and how they are an important aspect of their learning journey providing a strong foundation. Our path towards IB Primary Years Program accreditation has begun and over the next few years you will see learning in the Junior School "on the move". **IB**

Martin Lubrano
Head of Junior School

