

ST OLIVER PLUNKETT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Promoting life long learning in a Christian environment

2015 Principal's Report

Dear Parents/Carers,

In addition to this report, please find inside this envelope:

- your child's Semester Two report card;
- your child's 2016 class teacher (except for Year 6 students);
- 2016 Staffing List;
- 2015 P & F President's Report, courtesy of Michelle Verna;
- 2016 Fee Schedule.

I would like to start by acknowledging the warm welcome, love and genuine support I have received this year from the St Ollie's community – both on a personal and professional level. I've come to learn that if there's something that this community does better than anyone, it's to support those in need. I've seen it across many different fields through the year – Mini Vinnes, the Caritas appeal and the Socktober collection amongst a plethora of other school events. I experienced this first-hand in Term 1 when my son Ben had his health issues. People barely knew me (I was in the role for all of two weeks before I had to take leave) and yet boot loads (yes boot loads!!) of supplies all arrived to assist us in our time of need. This was an amazing, and incredibly humbling, initiation to the St Ollie's community, and one that I will truly never forget. It reinforced to me, especially in the early stages of my time here, that this is the absolute strength of our place - what I believe sets the St Ollie's community apart from others – that we go above and beyond what we can to help those who are in genuine need. That strong sense of community permeates through all that we do and all that we are. It is a special place.

With that in mind, to say it's been a busy year at St Ollies is an understatement. We started the year with a building project (moving Before and After School Care back onsite over the Easter holidays) and on the lookout for new staff - a new Support Teacher, a new Student Welfare Worker and a new Teacher Librarian. We were blessed with Kylie Mead, Loretta Bennett and Di Wilson all starting in Term One – all being exceptional additions to the St Ollie's staff.

As the year has progressed, I have constantly referred to our theme for the year "*Looking Back, Being Present, Moving Forward*" and our four "Big Rocks" – key areas that have been our focus this year. I have included a little summary of each of these below:

1. External Review

- In BCE schools, this occurs once every five years and sits in partnership with our annual internal school review processes. Many hours were spent in the planning for this review, the surveying of students, staff and parents/carers and in the preparing of all the required documentation. In May we completed our Compliance and Accountability audit, while in August we completed the educational review component of the process. This was a highly successful venture, with commendations and recommendations being released to the school community in September. These will focus our conversations in planning for the future, especially around master planning and enhancing our teaching and learning opportunities for teachers and students.

2. Building Projects

- We have been busily planning two projects this year - upgrades to Camelia St pick up zone and the building of an additional learning space. The Camelia St upgrade began in Week 3 of this term with the demolition of the old toilet blocks. The upgrade will include an undercover waiting area, a covered deck coming off the new Year 6 classrooms (which are also getting a facelift) and a creative outside learning environment. The addition of a new 'floating' classroom outside the Year 1 classrooms is in the final stages of planning, and we are aiming on starting this project in early 2016. Both these projects are self-funded.

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- In other building projects, Centacare (Outside School Hours Care) returned to the school site after the refurbishment of the music/art rooms. This has been a great success – the kids, the staff and dare I say the parents are all happier to be back on the site – especially with such a great new facility.

3. Action Research Project – Spelling

- This was a big focus, especially earlier in the year. It formed the basis for a lot of our professional learning this year and was launched at the start of the year with the “BEE Keys” being implemented into classrooms. The implementation team presented at a BCE conference in September and the outcome was us taking on a whole school spelling program to be launched in 2016. This will be called “Words Their Way” – staff will receive professional development in our 2016 PD Days (prior to the students coming back) and there will be a Parent Information Night in Term 1 next year.

4. RE Validation

- This has been a major area of focus for 2016, being months and months in the planning, all in preparation to present to a panel to validate our Religious Education program. The implementation team presented earlier this term and they received many ‘highly commended’ comments based on their presentation. This is validation of our whole school RE program and occurs once every 5 years.

It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge our departing staff – all of whom have been incredibly dedicated in their support of the children while they have been on staff at St Ollies. We wish *Tim Cronin, Brooke Maguire, Michelle Ashford, Shannon Byriel, Geraldine Robertson, Vera Blake, Pam Jory, Yumiko Child and Eddie Murray* all the best as they finish up their time at St Ollies at the end of the year and wish them all the very best for a bright, happy and successful future in the various journeys they are all taking.

All schools experience change, and 2016 will be no different at St Ollies. We are excited to welcome the following new staff members to St Ollies: *Kate MacArthur, Peter Gibson, Chris McLaughlin, Katrina Kokoris and Andrea Borg*. A list of our staffing for 2016 can be found on an additional sheet located in this envelope.

I would like to extend a huge vote of thanks to our incredibly supportive P & F Association and School Board. Both of these groups go ‘above and beyond’ in their support of the school and enhance the already great work happening in our wonderful school. I look forward to these positive relationships continuing to flourish in 2016.

All in all, it’s been a pretty amazing year and one that I have enjoyed thoroughly. I love being a part of the Ollie’s community and look forward to continuing the journey into 2016 and beyond.

Warm regards,



Paul Blinkhoff