

## PRINCIPAL'S REPORT JUNE 2017

### 2017 School Year

Bethany Christian School's vision is to excel in Christian education and character, inspiring greatness, while serving communities and impacting nations. Our School has these core values at the foundation, directing our decisions and demonstrating how we are to relate to one another.

Each week we focus on a particular value and use a memory verse to explore what the Bible says about each of these values.

Term 1 - Love, Grace Forgiveness, Truth, Learning

Term 2 - Vision, Faith, Leadership, Accountability, Service

Term 3 - Respect, Obedience, Responsibility, Integrity, Excellence, Righteousness

Term 4 - Discipleship, Compassion, Humility, Perseverance, Generosity, Justice

Every Term, we hold a Principal's Tour in Week 5. This is an opportunity for families that are interested in enrolling at Bethany Christian school to attend during school time and see the school in operation. In 2017 they were held in Term 1 on the 6<sup>th</sup> March with 34 Families, Term 2 the 29<sup>th</sup> May with 34 Families, Term 3 the 21<sup>st</sup> August with 23 Families and Term 4 the 13<sup>th</sup> November with 47 Families. It is an essential part of our enrolment process to ensure that families offered an interview have attended a tour of the school and choose Bethany as the right school for their family.

Our future enrolments continue to be strong for Reception intakes and our Early Learning Centre.

We have maintained steady student attendance rates remaining at 92% with our indigenous students lower with 85% attendance which is up from 82% in 2016. Indigenous students make up less than 2% of our families. In 2016 our community had 57% English as first-language families which is slightly lower than 2016.

The Catchment areas continue to be located around the school with a few exceptions that particularly relate to the children of staff who travel to school from suburbs further away. The majority of our students are attending the school from Paralowie, Burton & Parafield Gardens, indicating that proximity is one of the greatest reasons people are attending Bethany Christian School.

The staff continue to work together in Professional Learning Teams and have continued on their own professional learning journeys. Through this year, we have continued to have a number of our teaching staff completing or continuing their Master of Education studies. We have maintained steady staff numbers with a slight increase in our part-time staff and maintained consistent numbers for our non-teaching staff.

We continue to support Hope Village and especially our sister school in Sumatra. Our main support is in providing teacher training. It is a privilege to have this strong connection that allows us to express our generosity, which is one of our core values at Bethany. Our Indonesian school has grown to 311 students from ELC to Year 6. This will continue to grow with our first Year as a Junior High school in July 2018.

In 2017 the work of the Rudolph Group was invited to be presented at the Futures conference in Hawaii. This group was also given the opportunity to visit High Tech High (HTH) in San Diego. HTH is an innovative school that is producing strong academic results but more importantly is building the 21<sup>st</sup> Century skills required for future jobs. They use product based learning to equip students with real skills that are very connected to solving real problems. WE have continued to work with a number of Independent schools to develop entrepreneurial mindsets, preparing them for the future. Our students decided to form a Media Team and with the help of Mr Mabikafola, have explored how they can develop their understandings and skills required. The project continues in to the future and there have been a number of students that will be a part of this exciting venture in 2018. We have continued to explore how this will genuinely encourage students to discover their strengths, and how to work together with others to solve real problems.

DEPUTY PRINCIPAL- Debbie Clifford

## **Administration**

The administrative component of the Deputy Principal role consisted of inducting new Temporary Relief Teacher to the school, updating existing relief staff details and managing teacher relief and release using Edumate. Publications such as the Staff Handbook, relief teacher folders, staff inductions, school calendars, regular Deputy's Corner newsletter articles and staff rosters were written and kept up to date throughout the year. As coordinator of all school events, all incursions and excursions, including the Year 5 and Year 6 camps were included in the administrative role. The school policies and procedures were all reviewed and updated in 2016 and stored for staff access on a public drive.

Volunteer inductions were provided to parents who applied for volunteer work within the school. I have also continued to monitor weekly uniform checks and classroom observations.

## **Student/Work Experience**

In 2016, we hosted 15 student teachers from state and interstate universities. These students ranged from 1<sup>st</sup> year student teachers starting their Bachelor of Education (senior years) to 4<sup>th</sup> year students finalising their Bachelor of Education (Primary). As in previous years, Bethany has a high rate of teachers who are very willing to mentor student teachers. Included in accepting and supervising the student teachers also comes with the additional role of liaising with the Universities and writing reports on each student teacher. High school work experience placements dropped this year, but Bethany still hosted Year 10 and Year 11 students from Tyndale and Temple Christian School. Work experience also extended to the Temple Christian School's Year 10 Child Studies programme who worked with our Reception and Year 1 students as part of their studies.

## **Parent, student and school community**

Managing and supporting teachers with their behaviour management continued this year. A large component of the Deputy Principal's role is to liaise with the school staff, parent body and students. Time is spent with parents and students in resolving issues or complaints, and very few required any further senior management attention with many of the issues being resolved.

The importance of building and developing a relationship with the parents of the school has been proved time and time again to be essential for a healthy school community. This has also proven true when liaising with our Neighbourhood Community Liaison Police Officer, Constable Steven Pike, who has gone above and beyond all expectations when helping our school with cyber safety issues and traffic problems. It has proven to be a very valuable exercise in being on duty on the turning circle after school each day to build rapport with the school community especially when I have been able to give a first-hand account of the issues with school traffic and parking.

## **Attendance**

Students who had a poor attendance record were followed up and parents were requested to attend a meeting with the Deputy Principal this year. This has been met with some success despite old habits being hard to break.

## **Student Leadership**

The student leadership programme continued to grow and develop in 2016. The student leadership ran weekly events such as Monday Morning Praise (whole school assembly), the Media Team, supported the Principal Tours, were involving in lunch time student run activities and peer mentor programmes. They even hosted and ran their own Year 6 Graduation Ceremony at the conclusion of the year.

A literature review of Student Leadership and an action research project was conducted around the topic of Student Leadership and it revealed that the current Year 5 students had a higher regard for the leadership programme than the students who were already in Year 6. This led a serious review of the current student leadership. In 2017 the programme has been adjusted to include all Year 6 students in a leadership role in order to release each individual to develop their strengths and talents.

ADAPTIVE EDUCATION- Melissa Symonds

## **Student Learning Support**

We have continued to invest in a range of Learning Support options that reflect evidence-based practice – using models of withdrawal for intensive support and also supporting students in the classroom. Assistance with planning appropriate curriculum for students and

adjustments to the way curriculum is delivered has continued to be a major focus. It has been pleasing to see continued growth in the capacity of staff to teach in such an effective manner. This year saw another increase in the availability of Macquarie University's Multiliteracy Programs due to new groups based formats and programs, with excellent results.

### **Professional Learning**

Staff have enjoyed the provision of on and off-site Professional Learning regarding learning difficulties, teaching students with learning difficulties, language development, phonological awareness, social skills, mindsets and an upcoming session on the science of cognition. We have been grateful for the support of AISSA in offering funding to cover the cost of several Professional Learning opportunities.

### **Nationally Consistent Collection of Data (NCCD)**

The school has continued to collect data from a range of sources in order to maintain an accurate database for the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data program. This involves collecting information regarding the number of students with disabilities (mild difficulties with learning through to severe) and the associated adjustments to teaching and learning that the school must make. Our numbers reflect a high level of learning disabilities compared to other schools and we have diligently ensured we collect evidence of adjustments, diagnosis and so on. It was a pleasure to provide feedback to Christian Schools Australia (CSA), regarding these statistics and comparison to other models of data collection regarding student learning needs that do not reflect the exact level of need in our schools. There has been some discrepancy in beliefs regarding the efficacy of this data nationally due to much higher than expected numbers reflected (as compared to the previous model), but a recent audit through Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC), ascertained that data was indeed highly reliable and a true indication of need. As a matter of professional and ethical integrity, Bethany Christian School engages in a comprehensive assessment process for students with learning difficulties to ensure that we provide appropriate curriculum and support, along with documentation of a diagnosed difficulty. Ministers appear to be considering the data in a more positive light as they comment regarding policy and associated funding.

### **Gonski**

Gonski funding has received much more political and media attention than the NCCD model of funding. This funding takes a school's socio-economic needs and statistics into account, which the NCCD data collection does not. If a child requires learning support or intervention due to a learning difficulty related to socio-economic factors, it cannot be counted in NCCD data. Gonski funding allows the school to provide a range of staffing, intervention, physical resources, buildings and so on in order to support students. It is heartening to work in a school where new resources, facilities, staffing arrangements and intervention reflect an understanding of the needs of our school community and research regarding best practice.

### **Assessments and Allied Health Support**

We have enjoyed working collaboratively with a variety of agencies and individuals. We invite these staff into our community due to the high level of positive recommendations they have received and their proven quality practice, as well as their genuine support of the ethos of our school.

Liberty Speech has provided on-site speech and language therapy for our students. Olivia Klemm has visited our school two days a week with much success. The clinic has been incredibly supportive in terms of the time given organising timetables, talking with parents and supporting families in accessing funding. Olivia has worked above and beyond her role to provide feedback to staff, meet with parents and also communicate with other therapists working with students.

Charles McGrath (Occupational Therapist) has supported our students weekly, along with assessments and a small parent group that work through the Circle of Security Program. His work with vulnerable families in particular has been a blessing to us. Charles has continued to offer our school time despite not taking on new clients.

Jan Hooper (Speech Pathologist) has continued to provide assessments, parent meetings and Professional Learning for our staff. Her work has enabled many families to access further funding and support. The Professional Learning she has provided has been very well received by staff due to a strong focus on practical application of evidence based practice and research.

Tim Dansie and Rochelle Hay (Psychologists) have continued to provide assessments and feedback. Tim has also provided intensive support, planning and observations for students with higher need through an AISSA –funded program. Rochelle has given her own time while working in a senior management role to continue to support us with assessment and also general feedback and advice.

Little Ears Audiology have continued to supply Hearing and Auditory Processing assessments and advice. Their manner with parents and students has been consistently reassuring and helpful – many of our students have had undiagnosed hearing loss and ear health conditions and Little Ears have supported with referrals and treatment.

We are pleased to continue hosting the Growing Up Smiling Dental Program, which has allowed hundreds of our students to receive high quality dental care on site.

In every case, our visiting specialists have endeavoured to communicate with each other, other agencies and our staff in order to provide a high-quality service to our community that would otherwise have been inaccessible to our families. All practitioners have been very generous in considering pricing and arrangements that support our families and school.

CURRICULUM AND COACHING – Mrs Melissa Taylor

### **Supporting Vision**

Professional Development whole school focus on:

Designing Curriculum with an Understanding by Design Template

Biblical Worldview

### **Learning/ Teaching**

Weekly PLT Meetings supporting curriculum writing using a backward by design way of planning – backward mapping using the vehicle of a maths unit

Whole school rubric training that combines both consistent quality assessment rubrics and the EALD Scaling expectations

Staff meetings – Professional Development including Non Instructional Teachers (NIT), in how to use a Understanding by Design (UbD) template

Coaching of individual staff at request

Establishment of a Curriculum team to support curriculum improvement

Induction meetings and coaching provided for new staff members

Exploring where and how our curriculum will be recorded in the future

ICT – focus building teacher capacity/ using ICT in the classroom

### **Parents**

Parent Engagement Reading workshops – the importance of oral language, reading strategies, phonological awareness, phonogram knowledge, establishing a reading zone, general ideas for supporting your child

### **Library**

Training and equipping the library team in a broader range of skills including interest groups

Training of library leaders- leadership opportunity for Year 5 and 6 students

Book Week

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY- Mr Jeremy Graetz

In 2016 the future direction of ICT needed to keep in line with the future needs of students and the use of technology. To prepare for this, Bethany decided to look at staffing the ICT department accordingly.

**Employed a new ICT support Officer** - Tristan Crowley was employed to support teachers in the use of technology in the classroom, help teachers and students with helpdesk, to work on graphic design projects, and belong to the team ready to serve in whatever capacity best serves the vision.

### **Classroom ICT technologies**

Completed Interactive whiteboard upgrades - 8 Promise LCD 65 inch touch screens -

Replacing year R-1 and language and ELC Smart boards. Replaced Computer Room

projector with interactive Projector

### **Ipad Upgrades**

Deployed up to date teacher iPads for our teaching staff.

Installed a set of 30 iPads for our Year 3 teachers to implement in their curriculum programs, this is in conjunction weekly ICT support and training.

Distributed iPad sets so that all year levels have access to iPad sets throughout the school.

**Performing Arts Centre** upgrades for the technology audit carried out.

Upgraded D-Rack channel patching (giving consistency and less errors between groups using the PAC)

Upgraded the Wireless mic system with Shure QLX-D System

Finished A/V system upgrade: including side projectors and a complete replacement of all video equipment with an Extron Crosspoint matrix switcher. Greatly simplifying our video system for all users.

**Researching possibilities of fibre internet** – currently the upgrade costs are too expensive to be viable.

Completed wireless system upgrade. Installation of 10 Wireless access points for better WIFI coverage and reliability.

Set up Windows 10 SCCM deployment server in preparation to move to windows 10 later 2017.

SPORT- Mr Ben Hannaford

Bethany continues to offer a solid Sports Program.

There were a number of school based events held, Senior and Junior Athletics, Cross Country, Jump Rope for Heart, Mini Olympics. This meant that each student had the chance to participate in at least two different school based sporting events.

Bethany competed extremely well in the interschool arena;

The various Representative teams achieved; 6 Championships, 6 Runner-ups, and 10 Semi-Final appearances.

In 2016, the number of Sports Service awards received was the highest to date, with 28 students from across Years 4 -7 receiving the award.

Weekly Sports continued to grow, from 2016 moving into 2017 there is now close to 30% of the school student population participating in some form of Weekly Sports Program. Nearly a 10% rise within a year. This is a voluntary user-pay based program, so it is great to see some many students taking up what is on offer. Ben Hannaford

We have been planning and preparing to start an Early Learning Centre in 2017. This has required a large amount of research, reading, conversations and understanding of what is important in developing a philosophy for Early Years education. We have employed a new Director, Emily McCann, and are looking forward to offering enriched learning and language opportunities for our students in 2017, prior to their first year of school.

PARENTS AND FRIENDS- Mrs Monika Heida

The Parents and Friends of Bethany Christian School support through fundraising and providing opportunities for the community to connect together. The Autumn Fair is a biennial event that celebrates our community and brings the whole school together on a Saturday. The Parents and Friends, led by Mrs Monika Heida, were able to plan, organise and present a wonderful day for everyone to come together and enjoy. They also raised funds for a number of projects around the school and were able to be generous in giving to those less fortunate overseas. This year they participated in Mother's Day and Father's Day stalls, family photos, a 5c challenge, disco, Mini Olympics, Christmas Concert and Year 6 graduation.

I would like to thank all of the people who have chosen to be a part of Bethany Christian School. It is a wonderful community. It is as we continue to work together that we will see students prepared for their future in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.



Wendy Matear  
Principal

Bethany Christian School