Annual Report 2015

mylor primary school

Building the confidence to thrive

Principal & Governing Council Report 2015

Firstly we would like to thank all of you for a fabulous 2015.

We'd also like to congratulate all Mylor students – not just those who've won awards and special praise this year – but the whole student body, for a fantastic year of enthusiastic, committed and creative learning.

Your levels of engagement and active participation have been absolutely wonderful throughout 2015, and we couldn't be more proud of you.

And although we'd, of course, be pleased to be able to say that in any year, we're particularly pleased that it's the case this year.

Because this has been a bigger-than-average year in terms of moving our school forward – of laying significant foundations for our kids' futures.

And it's this level of student engagement in learning that we're endeavouring to maintain, as the world around us – and the likely nature of the world our kids eventually step into as young adults – continues to change from the one we grew up with.

We're also delighted to say that this 'future focus' we've had this year has been just as enthusiastically embraced by our representative parent body – the Governing Council.

Matt and his fellow GC members have worked hand in hand with the staff team this year to help guide Mylor's direction, and have had significant and valuable input at every stage.

'The Governing Council definitely felt part of the team throughout the year, and really feel quite proud of what the School's achieved, with GC's underlying theme of the year accurately being described as a future focus.'

The Governing Council collectively took note of how the world was changing, and what the school could do to better prepare our kids for those changes, and support our families along the way.

The first step they took in that direction was to attend a workshop early in the year conducted at Birdwood High School by a visiting, highly regarded international researcher in education – the UK's David Price.

David's workshop was entitled, "What's an education worth having?".

He explained that research from Oxford University showed around half of all jobs currently available are likely to be automated by the year 2030.

So what schools should be focusing on, he suggested, was giving kids:

- a love of self-directed learning and research
- the motivation to follow their own paths and break new ground
- and the collaborative skills to involve and learn from others.

David believed multifaceted project-based learning could play a big role in achieving these goals, and he showed some amazing clips of highly engaged students in various UK schools to illustrate his point.

We also identified the need for enhanced student assessment methods, so as to provide you, our parents, with broader – and more frequent – indicators as to how your children were travelling.

GC was presented with a proposal to instigate rolling assessments for Maths and Literacy – updated and sent home twice a term – that would provide parents with an ongoing indication of how their children were tracking against the established standards for their year levels.

GC thought it was a fantastic idea – and worked hard over a few sessions to finalise the format – and then agreed to trial the Maths version in 2015, with a view to introducing the Literacy equivalent in 2016 as well.

It was also agreed that mini-reports would also be produced for students after each PBL unit, providing feedback on the students' key learning qualities, such as resilience, creativity, engagement and constructive use of feedback.

Keeping the school-to-parent communication enhancements rolling, we sought ways to improve and modernise the traditional Communication Book approach for two-way general correspondence.

A proposal was presented and agreed to trial an app called 'Skoolbag', which would allow the school to instantly, easily and affordably send all kinds of communications to parents' mobile devices, such as:

- alerts
- event notifications and reminders
- and notes home.

And similarly, it enabled parents to easily do things like fill in and send an official notification form from their smartphone if their child needed to be absent from school.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and the app was formally adopted.

Our attention was then brought to the need to improve the provision of information for parents and guardians at the time they first enrol, so as to set a high benchmark right from the outset.

The GC agreed to create a comprehensive, professionally presented new brochure containing all nuts-and-bolts information that a new Mylor family could possibly need to feel comfortable and ready for day one.

This has subsequently been developed and is already being distributed – with great feedback – to families who have chosen to join the Mylor community in 2016.

At the same time, of course, two ongoing school commitments were also progressing – our veggie garden, and the annual Mylor Bonfire Night.

The GC's Garden Committee oversaw fantastic progress in the veggie garden this year. An efficient, self watering and easy-to-assemble modular garden bed system was chosen. A well-spaced and manageable garden layout was designed to give the kids room to move. And with the school community's help, 15 beds were painted, installed and planted, with more to follow in the new year.

The 2015 Bonfire Night, as I'm sure everyone's aware, was the biggest and most successful in the event's 18-year history. School, parent and community support was outstanding, with profits on the night rising for the first time over the $17,000-mark, providing a fantastic cash injection for the school.

But our biggest step forward was taken in the second half of the year, and it's resulted in a major diversification and modernisation of the education we'll be able to facilitate here at Mylor from 2016 onwards.

For some time now, a great deal of research into the future of education has been highlighting the need for schools to place greater emphasis in five key areas:

1. Flexibility of structure: the advance and spread of internet-connected technology has really made a mockery of the traditional concept of schools as the providers of knowledge, and always the most effective location in which learning can take place.

2. Collaboration: if our kids are going to eventually thrive in the so-called 'freelance economy' that's emerging, we need to give them every chance now to develop the skills required to work effectively in groups, and open their eyes to the benefits of working with people from outside their own community.

3. Self direction: thriving in the rapid-change future workforce will also require our children to have high degrees of proactivity – to be comfortable setting their own targets, making their own decisions and executing their own plans.

4. Creativity: our kids are increasingly going to need the ability to look at situations – whether social, environmental, political or commercial – and find creative, if not innovative, ways to make things better; even if that 'thing' is just one small part of a larger collective process.

And finally…

5. Digital literacy: as the relentless march of technology continues, our kids will need the skills and maturity of outlook to understand how digital tools can be effectively used to complement their learning, rather than simply distracting them from the timeless benefits of face-to-face human contact and direct, hands-on experience.

So we developed a strategy to enhance all these factors at Mylor, while maintaining our commitment to personalised learning.

The vision was for Mylor to become a specialist school in what's referred to as 'blended learning' – the combination, or blend, of traditional face-to-face tuition with the use of online and digitally delivered resources, such as websites and podcasts.

Small-group and self-directed project-based learning would bolstered.

We applied for a grant from the State government to put all this into action, and we're delighted to say that we were successful.

So in late Term 3 and early Term 4, a raft of new materials were developed to promote our new educational offerings.

These included three new brochures, updates to our website, and the filming of a professional new introductory video.

So as I hope you agree, 2015 has been a very fruitful year, and in 2016 – we're set to take it to another level again.

Ngari Boehm
Principal

Matthew Hardy
Governing Council Chair

Site improvement planning and targets

2015 saw the creation and review of our existing site improvement plan (2012-14), and the implementation of a revised plan than clearly articulates our 'big ideas' for improvement and the supporting programs and key priorities to be implemented in 2015-17.

Using the language embedded in our Learning Frontiers work, we were able to successfully umbrella our key focus areas for 2015, and present a document to staff, Governing Council and our wider parent community that was easy to understand.

With our 'Future Focused' agenda as mention in the combined GC and Principal report, we identified together our focus areas for the year and set about including all stakeholders in the process.

2015 areas of improvement included

Co-constructed – Co-construction of units of work, Rolling Assessments

Connected – PBL, Professional Learning Connections, Communication Strategy

Personal – Monitoring the improvement of every child, Enrolments (Futures Thinking)

Integrated – Grouping for Purpose, Speech Sound Pics

Student Achievement

2015 saw the introduction of an innovative approach to reporting on student learning. Working together, staff and Governing Council developed the idea of a 'rolling report' for Literacy and Numeracy. Whilst the Numeracy aspect was trialled in 2015, the feedback and support of parents will see the introduction of Literacy in 2016.

Underpinning our thinking was the notion that reporting should be ongoing, informative, relevant and timely. By developing a system by which information is shared between home and school on a regular basis, with identified achievement of outcomes and areas of improvement and extension, parents and staff could work together to ensure that each student at Mylor is receiving the personalised approach we are endeavouring to deliver.

Student Data Collection

As in previous years, the school continues to utilise two data weeks per year to help inform and influence both the grouping and learning of students here at Mylor. Students undertake a range of 'standardised' tests as a snapshot to the level of learning they have already achieved, and the key ideas and concepts still needing to be developed.

Pre and Post data collection is utilised at the beginning of a new unit of work, and a dedicated list of 'need to knows' is developed and aligned to the relevant achievement standards for each year level.

Goal Oriented Interventions Supporting Personalised Learning

By **Jo Telfer,** SSO

This year Mylor introduced an intervention approach to further support students in meeting their personal learning goals. This innovative approach, takes a short-term targeted approach to specific learning goals.

The strategy is based around small groups of students coming together to work towards a common learning goal, as nominated by their teacher, with support from an SSO. Each group works for half an hour, three times a week over a three-week period. During the sessions a range of learning activities are utilised, including explicit teaching via online tutorials or face-to-face explanation, hands-on learning activities, games based on the learning topic (e.g. memory, snap, bingo), individual and group problem-solving tasks or worksheets.

At the end of each three-week set of groups, evidence is collated of all the learning completed by each student and summary of their progress toward the identified learning goal reported back to teachers. Topics covered this year included areas like times-tables, understanding time, money, long division, algebra, SSP, fractions, use of capital letters and double-digit addition.

All students involved have worked really hard and we can happily report that pre and post-testing has shown every group this year has met their learning goal. It's also really pleasing that teachers have noticed this learning being transferred into the classroom. We have also noticed that the small-group, and sometimes one-on-one, learning opportunities have enhanced students' confidence and pride, which has been a great reward for their hard work.

This goal-oriented, short-term approach is an innovative use of SSO time and is proving to be a valuable part of personalised learning at Mylor Primary. It has been a privilege to be part of it, and to work with such a positive and engaged group of students.

Student Achievement *continued*

NAPLAN

Due to a high number of parental exemptions, the reporting of student achievement in NAP annual assessments cannot be undertaken as the total cohort of students who completed the assessments at each of the three year levels, does not exceed the required number to protect the information and identity of individuals.

In accordance with our personalised approach to learning, individual students and their families who chose to participate in the NAP assessments have received the relevant information, with teachers utilising the information to target future learning.

Attendance

Non-attendance at school is managed on an individual case-by-case scenario. The administration team works with the families and students involved to manage non-attendance as per DECD policy and procedures. A referral to the 'Attendance Officer' is completed for serious non compliance.

Attendance by year level 2015	
Reception	83.2
Year 1	97.4
Year 2	91.4
Year 3	89.0
Year 4	84.3
Year 5	81.9
Year 6	88.9
Year 7	80.6
Total all year levels	87.0
Total ACARA 1 to 10	87.4

Destination

9 students moved from Mylor in 2015. 6 students transferred to another SA Government School, 2 applied for Home Schooling Exemption, and 1 other.

Income and Funding

Reporting Requirements for additional resourcing

Additional resources are allocated annually as part of our Resource Entitlement Statement (Funding Model) and are targeted to meet specific intentions as per the Education Departments improvement agenda or State Governments funding priorities.

Better Schools Funding

A total funding amount of $2523.00 was received as part of the Better Schools funding initiative. This funding was targeted towards increasing the number of students achieving the 'national mean score' for their associated year level in PAT spelling.

Teachers were provided with relevant training to implement the 'SSP' approach across the school, pre and post intervention data was collected, parents were offered the opportunity to participate in a session and a website that provides all stakeholders with the relevant information was created.

Whilst the 'official' data collected for PAT spelling indicates there was only an 8% increase in achievement, teachers reported that for many students, it was evident to see the strategies and skills learnt being utilised across many other curriculum areas.

Junior and Early years scheme funding

In 2015 we received $8094, which was targeted to reducing the teacher/student ratios in the Early Years (R-3). This funding was utilised to offset the employment of a full time teacher whose primary focus was targeted to these students as per the funding guidelines.

2015 Income by Funding Source	
Grants: State	$635 133.15
Grants: Commonwealth	$5 459.21
Parent Contributions	$23 664.28
Other	$60 440.08

2015 *Opinion Surveys*

Parents

As in previous years, families were offered the opportunity to participate in our Annual opinion survey. 13 families chose to participate, out of a possible 30. Resulting in a 43% return rate.

The results were extremely positive with almost all responses scoring in the agree or strongly agree sections. What was most pleasing was the level of annotated responses, providing us as a school with greater detail about things that are working well, or concerns that may have arisen throughout the year.

Three additional questions were asked outside of the generic primary school initiated questions and were responded to well by participants.

77% of respondents indicated that the Numeracy rolling reports were working well, with 85% of respondents intimating that their continuation in 2016 would be well received.

We also asked families whether they would be supportive of a 'Kitchen Program' to be introduced in 2016. 86% of respondents were in agreement. Further investigation surrounding the possibilities of this will occur early in 2016, with an invitation to interested families to be involved in the discussion.

Students

At regular intervals throughout the year, students are asked to contribute feedback on a range of topics and whole of school agenda items. Towards the end of the year, they are invited to participate in a review of the current years teaching and learning program using the SA Tfel student feedback tool. Student responses are collated according to year levels (R-2 and 3-7).

Reception - Year 2 Highlighted Responses
100% of students agree with the following statements

- I am listened to and the teacher answers my questions
- We are encouraged to question what we know and to look at things from different angles
- We are given time to talk and explore our thinking and ideas together
- I use computers, or other technology, for learning

Areas for identified for further investigation include
- I rate how well I think I have learnt against goals and standards we set
- I learn about myself as a learner – my strengths and how I can improve
- I have clear goals and standards to aim for
- We have some choice about what and how we learn

Analysis / Action
Information collated from the student surveys will be analysed by the whole staff team at the beginning of 2016. In general it appears that students are feeling the need to be better informed about their learning goal, and have greater choice in co-constructing the learning they are involved with. Both of these ideas appear on our Site Improvement Plan and will be further investigated in 2016.

Year 3 - Year 7 Highlighted Responses
100% of students agree with the following statements

- I felt comfortable to have a go and to ask question
- We listen respectfully to each other's point of view
- I feel part of this class
- The teacher makes sure we understand what we are learning before we move on

Areas for identified for further investigation include
- Students organise and run aspects of what we do
- We learn how to work with each other as a team and how to work independently
- I feel comfortable thinking aloud and sharing my thinking
- The teacher understands how my background influences how I see things
- I rate how well I think I have learned against goals and standards we set
- We demonstrate our learning to a variety of people and receive constructive feedback

Analysis / Action
It is pleasing to see that the whole student cohort responded to 45% of the questions asked in the survey positively. This demonstrates consistency and validity in the processes and pedagogies being used to support learning across the Magpie Unit.

Where a greater span of answers were given, students felt comfortable to articulate the reasons for their responses, many which were personal to their own learning style or circumstance and reflected the way the learning has been personalised for them.

Behavior Management

At Mylor, we believe in giving our students as many opportunities as possible to be involved and contribute to areas of the school that directly relate to their wellbeing and learning. During the course of 2015, the student leadership group and the whole student body undertook at review of the current Behaviour Management approach. This was due to an increasing feeling that the current system 'wasn't working' and that inconsistences across the school were starting to appear.

The student leadership group met with the Principal to review our existing policy, and together drafted a 'student' friendly Behaviour Management system. Once the first draft was completed, the student leadership group presented their ideas to the rest of the student body to gain feedback and critique about how they could make improvements. Information and copies of the system were set home to parents to inform them of the changes that had occurred.

A formal review of the system will occur in week one of 2016, where students will be able to recommend any changes or tweaks needed.

Information related to incidents of bullying and harassment were recorded using a 'whole of school' system that allowed for students to nominate when incidents of bullying occurred, and follow up or teacher intervention was required. This system will continue to be used in 2016.

Staffing Levels and Qualifications

Teacher qualifications

Qualification Level	No. of Qualifications
Graduate Degrees or Diplomas	6
Post Graduate Qualifications	0

Workforce composition

Workforce	Teaching Staff		Non-Teaching Staff	
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Full-Time Equivalents	0.00	3.70	0.00	0.71
Persons	0	4	0	1

Relevant history screening

All necessary audit recommendations were actioned to ensure compliance with the DECD Relevant History Screening Summary for site leaders document.

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