



# NEWSLETTER

February 2017

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## **From the Principal**

Welcome to 2017 and to what will be an exciting year for the school, with the student population increasing to 13. We welcome Trista Read (Year 1) and her brother Jesse (Year 3) who have joined us, previously being at Chinchilla State School. This year we will also have 4 Kindy students, and, under the terms of the Remote Kindy Pilot scheme, they will be located in the classroom, in contrast to last years' eKindy kids who were based in the foyer and library areas. This will make for a busy and dynamic classroom!

The teaching and learning of reading is a top priority at the school. This involves the development of many skills including oral language, phonemic and phonological awareness, comprehension skills, combined with fluency, accuracy and the development of a wide and varied vocabulary.

One of the strategies we will be using to develop phonological awareness is the Speech Sound Picture (SSP) approach. Students are encouraged to listen carefully to spoken words and to develop an awareness of the sounds they hear in each word. By encouraging oral language skills through focussed classroom talk in our literary activities, we are helping to develop the students' ability to become proficient readers.

On Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> of January, Brenda, Maddie and I attended a training course for the SSP approach. The day was presented by a specialised trainer in this area. Her expertise, coupled with hands-on experience, gave us a huge head-start in developing our teaching skills in this area. Liz Carroll (Principal) and Lisa (T/A) from Prairie also attended the day, thus enabling future collaboration with teaching early reading using some of the SSP strategies.

## **Welcome to Maddie & Raylene**

Maddie Sealy has joined us as a Teacher Aide for 4 days each week, Tuesday to Friday. She will assist Liz and Brenda primarily with the Kindy students, but will assist with other classes as well.

Raylene Herrod has also joined us as a Teacher Aide for 2 days each week. Raylene will be here on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Both Maddie and Raylene have already become much appreciated members of the school team.

We are lucky to have Chelsea returning as a Teacher Aide on Wednesdays, and for Lindy to be here on Thursdays. Chelsea and Lindy will be able to share their experience with others. Peter will assist Liz on Fridays, and also at some other times during the week for particular tasks, including intervention activities.

## **Pupil free days**

For the staff, the school year began with pupil-free days from Monday 16<sup>th</sup> of January. While the week was somewhat disrupted by wet roads after welcome rain, we still managed to meet to do planning, some training, and to prepare resources and organise the classroom. Brenda, and our new Teacher Aides, Maddie and Raylene, all demonstrated their dedication by pushing on through the mud at the limit of driveability to get to school.



*Raylene pushes through the mud from Dunrossie. Maddie made it from Ensay and Brenda pushed through from town.*

## **First day of school**

The first day of school followed some storms, giving welcome rain but turning the roads to mud. So our first day was a quiet one with only 4 students being able to attend. The others did not get a day off though, as Liz set them some work over the phone. The storms also took out the power, so the first few days we were without power. There is always something interesting happening at Cameron Downs School!

Nonetheless, we had a full complement on Day 2, and our happy and enthusiastic students began the 2017 school year.



*Cameron Downs SS students for 2017.  
L to R: MacKenzie, Daniel W, Hunter, Daniel M, Zoe, Brodie, Jesse, Jack. Trista is not in the photo.*

## **Remote Kindy pilot for 2017**

Kindy started at the school in week 2. The students will attend for 2 days and 3 days on alternate weeks.

This new Remote Kindy Pilot initiative from the Department of Education and Training for 2017 is a scheme for selected schools. Cameron Downs had volunteered, and has been selected for the scheme, so this year we will have our 4 year-old Kindy kids integrated into the classroom. This program brings with it some new facilities for the Kindy, and additional staff to deliver the program. Torah Larkin, Abbey McClymont, Jack Pensini & Hugh Hick have commenced in the program this year.



*Kindy kids on their first day:  
Hugh Hick, Torah Larkin, Abbey McClymont and Jack Pensini*

## **A hot start to the year**

As a result of fallout from recent power outages, we did not have any air conditioning in the classroom for first 2 weeks of the year. During this time we were experiencing temperatures of around 38 degrees in the classroom, although it was cooler near the evaporative cooler kindly loaned by Bernice and Toby, and brought to school by Stacey.

A power surge associated with the power outages had damaged the electronics in both AC units, so even after the power was restored, the AC units did not work. Shane Rogers kindly moved us on to his priority list, and did a stellar job in finding the faults, sourcing the parts and getting our AC back in action as quickly as possible.

When we had power outages in the first few days of school, the emergency generator for the school does not serve the classroom, and will only run one of the three AC units in the office/library. Consequently we moved classes to this building for a time, but the fumes from the diesel generator coming in through the louver windows made this very uncomfortable.

After much significant discussion with Education Queensland, our Regional Office has now forwarded our case to Central Office for the installation of a single efficient emergency generator to power all of the school and residence needs. This case will now be considered against other state-wide priorities.

Fingers crossed!!

## **Water treatment facility**

The contractors completed the installation of the drinking-water treatment system just before school began. The system provides for initial two-stage filtration of the bore water to remove fine silt, followed by passage through an ultraviolet light tube which will kill any organisms in the water. There have been a few teething problems, and we are resolving these as we go.

### **Playgroup**

*Amanda will facilitate the Playgroup this year. The first session is on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> of February at 9:00am. After that, Playgroup will be held every third Tuesday of the month. Come along and enjoy.*

## **Mrs Townley's Corner**

What a hive of activity the term has been! Is it really only week three? We've welcomed new staff; Maddie and Raylene have fitted in like they've been there for ever. Welcome Maddie and Raylene. We have also managed to organise and run a successful swim carnival alongside St Francis, we've been to Charters Towers to do an in-service training session about SSP (a phonics program) and integrated Kindy students into the classroom as part of a pilot program. The P and C have also been busy working on a new shed. Wow, what a community and team we have! This term we can also look forward to more training and lots of busy learning fun.

## **Visitors to the school**

Our Regional Director, Sharon Schimming, Lead Principal, Reid Thompson, will visit the school on Tuesday 14 February. While Reid is a regular visitor, Sharon is coming to the school as part of her efforts to visit all of the many schools in her region.

## **Swimming carnival**

In conjunction with St Francis School, the Small Schools Swimming Carnival was held at the Hughenden pool on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> of January. Thanks go to St Francis School for hosting the day.

Despite spirited efforts from our budding champions, Prairie deservedly won the day ahead of Cameron Downs and the Distance Ed competitors.

Daniel Wearing won the backstroke and brought home several placings which will enable him to compete at the next level. Jack represented us well in all events with an Age Champion win. Hunter swam so well in his events that he received Age Champion in his age group. Zoe showed her usual enthusiasm and put in a great effort to compete in every event, and gained good placings. For her efforts, Zoe won Age Champion in her age group.

Brodie determinedly competed in all events. There was no doubt that the stand-out performance of the day was Brodie's swim in the individual medley. Brodie swam the whole 4 laps, and refused assistance when he was flagging. Brodie finished to a deafening roar of appreciation from the crowd. For his efforts on the day, Brodie received the Sportsmanship Award.

Thanks to Mrs Townley for her efforts in keeping the day running smoothly, and for her detailed knowledge of the rules for the day.



*The crowd were on their feet cheering Brodie on*



*Well done Cameron Downs swimmers*



*Well done Cameron Downs Champions*



*Well deserved Sportsmanship Award for Brodie*



*Thanks to our in-pool helpers, Maddie and Amelia*

## **Swimming lessons**

*Swimming lessons this term will be held on Fridays at the Hughenden pool.*

*School will officially finish early on Friday afternoons to enable parents to take their children to the pool. At the pool, the children will be supervised by Rocket and the parents.*

*School hours will be made up with a later finish on Thursdays and an earlier start on Fridays.*



## **Newsletter contributions**

*Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome – just speak to Liz or email her an article. Let's hear from you!*

## **Are we missing anybody?**

*Please advise Linda or Liz of any additional recipients of the newsletter to be included in the mail-out list.*

*We don't want to miss anyone!*