A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

My Observations about School Improvement- Achievement and Engagement.

I have had a wonderful beginning to my appointment as Principal of Westgrove Primary School. Everyone has been very welcoming and helpful. I have started to get to know the community by spending time in the playground and attending classes with the students. I wanted to share some of my initial observations with you as there is much to celebrate and I look forward to building on the very solid foundation that has already been built.

In 2015 Westgrove PS began its four year Strategic Plan. Within this plan there are four main goals, two of which are:

ACHIEVEMENT- TO IMPROVE LEARNING GROWTH IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR EVERY STUDENT.

I have been pleased to see amazing growth in both these areas since the plan was established and look forward to continuing to build on the teaching and learning here at Westgrove PS. My observations over the past week, coupled together with analysing the data about achievement and student perception of school surveys over the holiday break, it is clear that Westgrove PS staff are working hard to provide quality learning engagements for the students, and that the students are appreciating the effort and are working to become self-motivated and more resilient learners.

The 2015 Year 5 NAPLAN results in Literacy and Numeracy continue to improve. The Year 3 NAPLAN results are higher than the previous year, with Writing and Numeracy levels above the State mean. The Intervention programs working at all year levels are working with a range of children to provide support for those who are struggling with areas of the curriculum and those who need to be extended. Although the teachers already teach these subjects well, the Instructional Leaders are working with the staff to continue to build staff capacity and skill in teaching and literacy and numeracy. Westgrove PS will continue to have a focus on staff professional learning and improvement.

The feedback from our parent teacher collaborations was very positive in terms of the academic and social progress of students and the relationships developed between the staff and families.

ENGAGEMENT- TO IMPROVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THEIR LEARNING.

I have been spending time in the classrooms with the teachers and students and have been pleased to see the students engaged in their lessons and becoming involved in robust conversation about their learning. The students have been eager to share their understanding and show their work. When asked about the work they are completing most are able to confidently share the purpose of the task and the success criteria outlined in order to complete it successfully.

Technology is being used purposefully with many students interacting with the programs whilst working on the floor as a whole class or in small groups. The 3-6 BYOD program is working well with the devices being used creatively and authentically to focus learning in some areas of the curriculum. I have heard reference to the 3Bs (Be Safe, Be a Learner, Be Respectful) in most classrooms with students responding appropriately and working hard to self-manage their own behaviour and to achieve their learning goals.
Other Observations:

**SPECIALIST PROGRAMS**

Again the feedback from parents about the Specialist programs has been wonderful. The PE program continues to develop students’ skills and the students are enthusiastic about participating in a variety of activities and sports. The Visual Art program is working to build skills in using a variety of media to create and respond to art works. The students’ confidence to speak in Spanish is growing enormously with the program offered in the P-2 classes and the 3-6 students are using the phrases that they are learning at assembly.

In Multi-media the students are actively engaged in planning, creating and evaluating a range of tasks using various apps, programs and equipment.

Westgrove has such a diverse and dynamic community and our EAL program is supporting those students with English as an Additional Language to access the classroom program as quickly as possible. It is also helping the students to establish relationships with others despite their language barriers.

**EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

The students have been quick to point out and take me to see the array of extra curricular activities offered at lunchtimes such as Chillzone, The Movie Club, Board Games group, Construction Club and the iPad club. They explained that these were offered at Lunchtime for those who may not want to be in the yard every day and to cater for a wide variety of interests within the school.

The students also talked enthusiastically about some of the other programs offered such as HoopTime, The Spelling Bee, the Student Leadership Program, Lightening Premierships, the Bulldogs Coaching Program, Active Kids and Better Buddies. They also spoke about the benefits of the Swimming Program in terms of building confidence and learning new skills. I heard several times about how lucky they were to have a pool right here at school!!

**LEARNING COMMUNITIES**

At Westgrove PS, teams of teachers are taking collective responsibility for the care, education and academic outcomes for all the students. This is achieved with dedicated planning time set aside where data about students and their needs and abilities is analysed and the appropriate learning tasks, intervention and extension programs developed.

The teachers are not focussed entirely on ‘grades’ but ensuring that learning is sequential, sufficiently challenging and tailored to meet the specific needs of all the students.

**PARENT INPUT AND COMMUNICATION**

The School Council here at Westgrove PS is an active one. The council represents the community to provide input into policies, facilities development and future planning. I have attended a meeting and was impressed by the way all members contributed and listened carefully to the views of each other.

The Helping Hands group is well established and continues to work hard to fundraise for the school. I saw them hard at work on Election Day at the sausage sizzle to feed a never-ending line of voters throughout a long day. If you have some time to spare please join this hardworking group of parents and carers from our community.

The implementation of Compass this year has allowed the parents to have electronic access to information about events occurring in the school without having to rely on the hard copy note coming home. The booking of interviews this week has been very successful. We hope in the future that this program will
allow you to track your child’s attendance, view reporting comments and progress throughout the year as well as pay for excursions and camps. I can see the school has a strong commitment to developing community and keeping the lines of communication open. This is apparent with the open door policy as you enter the front office and I have enjoyed meeting parents this week as they come through the foyer and whilst on playground duty.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT

Our PBS program is well entrenched in the school community. All students know the three underlying principles of Be Safe, Be Respectful and Be A Learner and these are reinforced throughout each day in the classrooms and in the yard. Students participate in various activities each week that reinforce positive behaviour, assist in developing friendships and develop resilience.

I look forward to learning more about the school community in the coming weeks.

Tami-Jo Richter
Principal