PRINCIPAL NASH’S CORNER

This routine is not new and has happened at this school since I entered eight years ago. This process ensures that our students are in the best possible placement to face the challenges of a new academic year.

Our three classes 2/3R, 1/2H and 4/5M were each sent a note home explaining how composite or cross stage classes work. Because Mrs McDonald has a cross-stage class, she felt the need to hold a parent afternoon last Thursday to explain her approach to teaching the class this year. Many thanks to the parents who took this opportunity to attend this information session to hear first hand before the upcoming parent teacher nights.

Some schools purposely choose to form composite and cross-stage classes across the school K-6. Stage-based classes is a style of classroom organisation with its basis in the educational belief that the individual child is important, learns at his/her own pace and should not have his/her learning restricted to a confined grade or period of twelve months. Legislation allows students to start school between 4½ yrs and 6 yrs. Some children start school having had no pre-school experience, not being able to write their name and still requiring toileting assistance. Others are quite mature, are able to read, write their name and some words and even do simple maths problems. So children have always been in multi-aged classes. This range of ages continues to be reflected throughout the schooling process.

STAGES NOT AGES

Last week I sent home the class structure for 2015. The positioning of each student into classes goes through a rigorous program during the last two days of term the previous year. Your child’s previous teacher and the new teacher meet and discuss each individual student for placement the following year. This may include such things as social needs, academic needs, the need for additional assistance or the need for additional extension to name a few. This may involve consultation with the Learning Support Teacher, Learning difficulties teacher or the Teacher of English as a Second Language. The Learning Support Team is also consulted in some cases.
Conventional aged-graded classrooms:

Research based findings note that the conventional age-graded classroom is based on 3 (false) assumptions: (that students of the same chronological age are ready to learn the same objectives, that students require the same amount of time, as in an academic year to master the same predetermined content and that students can master predesigned objectives for a grade level for all curricular areas at the same rate).

Single-age groups can create enormous pressures on the students and teacher to expect all students to be at the same place with their knowledge and skills. There is no evidence to show that a group of children who are all within a 12 month age range can be expected to learn the same things, the same way, the same day, at the same time.

Why Stages (multi-age)?

The key to understanding staged-based classes is realising that growth is determined in stages and not automatically by ages. In the classroom, students are grouped according to their progress rather than their school chronological year. Children also develop positive attitudes to other children of different age groups and relate well to them, similar to the way they do in 'out of school' situations. We feel this is more natural for them. It also allows smaller class sizes in the primary.

Strengths of Multi-Age Learning:

It acknowledges that there are significant individual differences in each child to be addressed regardless of age. The formation of classes can reflect and cater for these individual differences.

Board of Studies documents refer to "stages" of development and reflect the developmental nature of learning in young children. The organisation of classes should take into account current research on learning and best practice in teaching and learning.

The DET published the report Multi-Age Classes in NSW – 1997 which found that these classes based on educational principles do not disadvantage students academically and actually benefit them socially and emotionally (p 23).

It makes sense then to group children who are going through the similar stage so they can relate, help and experience together. Even within the same class, children will be at different levels. Teachers recognise this and usually extend the work of those who learn more quickly and give more attention to those who are slower. The class then becomes outcome based rather than competition based.

Multi-age classes allow students to learn from each other through peer tutoring and promote cooperation and cooperative learning.

This multi-age philosophy places each learner at the centre of the considerations of curriculum and classroom practice. Children are able to progress at their own rate without regard for restrictive 'grade' expectations.

Overseas research has shown that children become more confident, can operate better as part of a group, are more assertive, become more independent learners and better problem-solvers. They also make friends outside of their standard age-groups, develop tolerance & diversity.

Multi-age grouping creates an environment at school similar to that of home, resulting in greater continuity, thereby easing the transition to the school environment.

The fundamental difference between multi-age grades and straight age grades is in the way the curriculum is planned and delivered. In our multi-age learning groups we accept that different children learn at different rates. Our integrated curriculum is planned to reflect the developmental stages of the children.

Research shows that children in multi-age learning groups appear to be more caring and cooperative with each other. Diverse social groups provide opportunities for the older children to reflect on the needs of the younger ones and they are more likely to see the younger children to be in need of their care and help. Older children provide valuable role models for the younger children both socially and academically. Year by year as the classroom structure changes, all children gradually find more opportunities to develop and practice their own leadership skills.

Remember: the meaning of "composite" is to be mixed, blended, combined. So any class of more than 1 student is technically a 'composite', so the terminology is no longer appropriate.

Straight-age grades originated in the 1850’s in America and were then adopted by many countries around the world. This factory model for schooling was intended to prepare workers for the industrial society of the time.
Mandarin Stars Language Club continues here again this year at Oatley West Public School.

Classes commence on 3rd February until 31 March inclusive.

Tuesdays after school:
3.30pm to 4.30 pm Kindergarten to Year Two
4.30 to 5.30 pm Year Three to Year Six.

Cost $17.00 per one-hour class.

Enrol for 2015 or book in a free trial lesson for your child at iris@mandarinstars.com.au or visit the website at www.mandarinstars.com.au.

And here’s what it’s all about
Kindergarten S visited me on their pilgrimage around the school last Friday. It’s a great big wide world of amazing things to learn and experience. They learnt that my door is always open and inviting to share their work or to come in for a chat at any time!

Our new playground drawings
Have you noticed that our new playground drawings have been completed? Here are a few. Come up and have a look. All teachers have been given a set of rules, as each specific drawing is a game to play.
OATLEY WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL SWIMMING CARNIVAL
Our swimming carnival ran very successfully last Thursday and everyone—students, teachers and parents—thoroughly enjoyed the day. Congratulations to all students who swam in the races, participated in the novelty events and enthusiastically cheered on their team throughout the day. Well done to Cook house who won the carnival!!!

Ribbons for 1st, 2nd and 3rd placegetters in the 100m, 50m finals, breaststroke, backstroke and butterfly events (best three times) as well as relays, will be presented to the students at our assembly, in the hall, this Wednesday afternoon commencing at 2.10pm. We are now in the process of determining which students will qualify for the District Carnival which will be held at Roselands Pool on Thursday 26th February. Successful students will receive notes early next week.

If your child is interested in competing in the 200m medley at district level, please submit a qualifying time, in writing, to me by this Wednesday. Please note that this event is usually suited to experienced squad swimmers. Only the fastest 4 times from the entire District will compete in this event at the District Carnival. Anne Laurence

FRIDAY SPORT- SEASON 1 2015
A new season of sport will begin at Oatley West next Friday 20th February, 2015 (Week 4). Students were informed of sport choices available last week and trials/team selections will be taking place leading up to the start of the season.

PSSA sports available this season are Boys T Ball/Softball (Miss Ross), Girls Cricket (Miss Warren), Girls Basketball (Mrs Laurence) and Mixed Newcombeball (Miss Aravanopoulos). Students will take part in trials for their chosen sport and teams will be finalised as soon as possible. PSSA sport usually costs about $7 per week for bus fares.

If your child misses out on a PSSA team or doesn't want to be involved, the following sport options are also available.

Tennis—students are coached at the local tennis courts at Peakhurst by qualified instructors. The cost is usually about $12 per week for a 10 week period. This includes a coaching fee and bus fare. We can take up to two groups of 30 students if there is high demand for this sport. Miss Farah will be organising tennis this season.

School Sport—This option is free of charge as students will stay at school and participate in a variety of sports and health programs. This season Mrs McDonald will take a yoga group as part of
the school sport program. Students wishing to participate in yoga will need to sign up with Mrs McDonald.

Please discuss with your child (especially Year 3 students who are doing this for the first time) the different options and what you will allow them to participate in based on costs. Notes for particular sports will be sent out by the teachers involved once teams are chosen and students sign up for either tennis or yoga.

Please see me or any of the teachers mentioned if you have any questions.

Anne Laurence- Sport Coordinator

LIBRARY NEWS

If any parents/caregivers are available to cover books this year could you please contact Mrs Fitzpatrick or Mrs Morris in the library? Your help is appreciated!

Thank you.

Mrs Fitzpatrick & Mrs Morris

CHESS CLUB- TERM 1 2015

Chess classes for Term 1 will begin next Monday 16th February, 2015. The cost for this term will be $52.50 and there are still places available.

Please Note: New Kindergarten students will not be able to join the Chess Club until Term 2 to allow them time to settle into school and routines. If you would like your child to join, please collect a form from me or download one from last week’s newsletter and return it with your payment.

No more new enrolments will be taken after this Thursday 12th February. There is a box in my classroom for completed forms and payment. Classes are held in 5L classroom on Mondays at lunchtime. Please see me if you have any queries.

Anne Laurence

SCHOOL PHOTO DAY
WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY

School photo envelopes will be sent home this week. These envelopes are to be completed and brought to school with the student on photo day.

WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY

Please do not send photo envelopes prior to that date as they are processed directly through the photographer and not the school. Each child needs to bring a photo envelope on the day even if payment is in a sibling’s envelope. If you wish to pay online, go to photography website www.theschoolphotographer.com.au and follow screen instructions. The completed photo envelope will still be needed to come to school on photo day.

If you wish to have a photo taken of siblings together please collect a special envelope from the office.

Don’t forget to wear your school uniform and a smile.
**MindQuest**
St George Girls High School
Victoria St, Kogarah
On Saturday 28 & Sunday 29 March 2015 the 74th NSW Talent Enrichment Weekend MindQuest will be held for Primary Students from Years 1 – 6 at St George Girls HS. These include gifted and talented students, gifted underachievers and students with above average ability with a special interest. Students will have an opportunity to participate in over 38 exciting, fast paced courses in the two day program. They include courses in chemistry, earth sciences, drama, lego robotics, art and much, much more. Many of these highly successful courses have been run in the past and students’ evaluations suggest that they have been challenged and enriched by the experience. The cost of the weekend is $180 (inc. GST). Contact your school for a brochure or Shelagh Poray Ph. 02 4232 2494
Closing Date: Friday 6 March 2015

**SCHOLASTIC BOOKCLUB**
Orders and payment for Scholastic Bookclub can now be made online by parents without the need to return an Order Form or payment directly to the school. All you need to do is go to the following link and follow the prompts. Simply order and pay online and your child’s book(s) will be delivered to them once received by our coordinators.


Please note Oatley West has been set up under two names, Oatley West Public School for Years 3 - 6 and Oatley West Infants School for Years K - 2. To ensure you can find your child’s class, please make the correct selection.

**UNIFORM SHOP**
Acting Manager – Sia Coelho
E-mail: scoelho@iinet.net.au

The Uniform Shop is open every Thursday from 9-10am outside the KB classroom in C Block.

**Summer Uniform:** All students should now be wearing their summer Uniform. All uniform requirements are outlined in the School Website and P & C Website.

**Thank You** – Many thanks to our wonderful parent volunteers, Rowena Shek, Lorrie Houssenloge and Carmel Sharples who gave up their time to assist at the Uniform Shop last week. Again, we have had a very busy week at the Uniform shop and your help was greatly appreciated.

**Uniform Orders:** If you are unable to get to the Uniform Shop on Thursday or do not wish to wait in a sometimes very long line, an order form can be completed and dropped in to the school office. Please note the preferred payment method for orders is by Credit Card or Cheque as we cannot be held accountable for lost cash/orders.

All orders will be delivered to your child’s classroom on Thursday when the shop is open.

**Parent Volunteers:** Uniform Shop is run by volunteers. I am currently in the process of preparing a roster, so if you have an hour to spare weekly, fortnightly, monthly or even just once or twice a Term, your help will be greatly appreciated. Please contact Sia Coelho at scoelho@iinet.net.au

Sia Coelho

**RECORDER GROUP**
New Recorder times for this year! Recorder will be meeting in 2R’s classroom at 8am on Fridays (new day!). There will be two sessions:

8am – 8:45 Advanced Recorders (this is last year’s Thursday morning group)

8:45 – 9:15 Beginner Recorders (last year’s Year 2’s who were meeting on Fri lunch) Any Year 3 children who would like to join this group are welcome.

Thank you.
Dear Oatley west Public School families,

Welcome to Term 1 2015. We are looking forward to another great year with your children when we re-open on Monday 2nd February. The canteen receives hundreds of orders each day and we’d love to fill all those orders with the support of volunteers from our school community in order for our wonderful canteen to stay open everyday offering the fresh food and variety that your children are used to.

We understand that families these days are busier than ever but we urge you to consider volunteering. Even if you could spare one hour, this can make a huge difference and the look on your children’s faces when they see you is priceless.

Laronne and Christine would love to see some new faces in the canteen along with all our existing volunteers. Please help us by volunteering some of your time, it really is a lot of fun and lunch is on us. It is a great opportunity not only to see how our canteen operates, the types of items we sell but to meet some other parents too.

If you have volunteered in the past we still need you to return this form with your availabilities.

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CAN YOU VOLUNTEER IN 2015

(Circle day, week and time preference)

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Morning: 10-12  Afternoon: 12-2  All day: 10-2

Name:____________________________________ Phone no:____________________

Childs name:___________________________________Class:____________

Drop this in to us at the canteen or into the canteen letterbox in the office.
Visit the P&C Website for what's on this week.

**Term 1, Week 3 highlights:**

**Position Vacant:** If you would like to do the P&C Highlights please email Julianne via julianne@kennardconsulting.com. They only take about 15 minutes to prepare each week.

**Art and Craft Show:** The show is only 5 weeks away - on 20-22 March! Keep a look out for the Art and Craft Highlights this week.

**OWPS School Club:** Meeting this Wednesday 11 Feb at 2.15pm at Edmonds and Greer. All welcome especially new parents to the school.

**Intermediate and Concert Band:** Rehearsals start this week **Monday 9th February**.

**OWPS Cook Book** still available for sale. Cost is $30 per book or $50 for 2 books. A copy is available for viewing at the office. Please reference your child's name and class so the book can be delivered to their classroom. If paying by EFT use child's name as reference and place the order form in the school club box found at the school office. Cash or cheque may also be used to pay. Order form on next page.

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**U6’s to Over 35’s Male and Female Teams**

**All players welcome!**

**2015 Registrations**

[How Do I Sign Up](#)

Go Online:


and visit registration page and select Junior or Senior Rego

Under 6’s fees: $125.00 includes Shorts, Socks, and Training Ball.

Visit Website for more Info or contact

Alan Comrie 0410 579 263
The Oatley West Valued Recipes cookbook has arrived and is now available for immediate delivery. The cost of the book is $30 or 2 for $50. To purchase simply complete this form and place it in the school club box in the office, where a book is also available to be viewed. This is a great way to support your school!

Please reference your child’s class and your book will be delivered to them as soon as payment is received.

**Payment**

I would like to order _______ at $30 each or ________ (2 or more) at $25 each

Cheque made payable to: OWPS School Club

EFT your payment to: BSB: 062218  Account number: 00902102  Quote ref: Child’s Name

If payment is made by EFT, please ensure this order form is also returned.

This cookbook contains over 150 OWPS community, family favourite recipes. It features tried and true favourites from Grandma’s kitchen as well as simple, quick evening meals, delicious sweet treats and fun recipes for kid’s to enjoy time in the kitchen.

With photos showing school life and kid’s cooking, it will make a treasured memento for all children and family members.