NAPLAN results give first year on year comparison

For the first time Little Yarra is able to compare NAPLAN results for the same class over time. The results should be interpreted cautiously. The sample size is small and the validity of such testing is questionable. It is none the less a reassuring picture.

In 2008 the class was well behind the national average in spelling and numeracy. By 2010 the class was not only ahead in these areas but had increased its lead in every other category. This is consistent with our experience over many years. Our gentle approach to academic learning means that students typically start slowly but finish strongly.

More details can be found on the Myschool website: www.myschool.edu.au

Where are they now?

There is a tradition among graduates of Little Yarra to take time out after Class 12 before continuing with further study or training. This often involves a period of travel. The graph to the right comparing the current activity of students from the last three years clearly indicates this. We have former students studying Arts Degrees at Monash and Deakin; Science Degrees at Melbourne and LaTrobe. We also have students of Psychology and Outdoor Education at LaTrobe. At RMIT we are well represented in Communications and Engineering. We have a student of Chinese Medicine at the Southern School of Naturopathy and two students of Nursing at the Australian Catholic University where we also have a student of Social Science.

Little Yarra
Steiner School — 2010/11

Anyone visiting Little Yarra over the past year could not fail to notice that the school is undergoing significant change. The building program is the outward manifestation of that change. Yes, we now have a full-size oval for the Upper School, a magnificent language centre and a gymnasium under construction. All this is a result of the Commonwealth Government’s economic stimulus package.

Yet this outward change could distract us from a deeper and more significant process of change within the school.

Our seventh Class 12 graduated in 2010. This might have been a mark of consolidation when there is ample evidence that our current model (VCE, main lessons and a Class 12 project) is an academic success. And those who chose to go on to tertiary education have done extremely well.

Nevertheless, the school is failing to hold enough of its students into the final years. Smaller classes in 11 and 12 are not sustainable over time, not only financially, but for the social and academic interests of students. The need for change is recognised. We may come to see 2010 and 2011 as a watershed for Little Yarra.

At the same time the school has unprecedented levels of demand for places in the Pre-School and Primary years. A newly built room in the Primary School will be used for early childhood programs until a purpose built kindergarten is achieved.

We are also exploring ways of accommodating larger numbers in the Primary School. We aim to continue the close bonding that ideally happens in a Steiner School by maintaining a single class. However, by appointing a second teacher the class would have a lot of flexibility for splitting and combining in creative ways.

A similar approach will be applied in Class 7 next year where we are starting to enrol students as a second stream for the beginning of the new year. The biggest challenge is in the Upper School where we have a program that serves some students very well, but leaves a significant proportion of students seeking elsewhere to meet their needs. The Sophia Mundi School in Abbotsford abandoned a very similar model in order to introduce the International Baccalaureate.

We are happy with our current program but could give students a choice between the current model and the IB. This is under active consideration. There is also some prospect that the school will be able to offer ATAR scores (tertiary entrance ranking) for students completing our current program successfully.

Change is necessary and happening. The school, as it develops, needs appropriate structures in place, and to this end a thoroughgoing review of all levels is underway. An interim report has already been presented to the school’s Board of Directors with follow-up action from next term.

Student Destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gap/Travel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeking work</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
School keeps financial balance in a difficult year

The school ended 2010 in a sound financial position following a year of modest cuts and strict spending discipline. We fell short of making a full provision for depreciation (allowance to cover the cost of refurbishing or replacing buildings and capital equipment) but we did operate well within the available cash needed to run the school.

However, on the capital budget we were kept busy spending more than $2 million in grants, mainly a result of the Commonwealth Government’s Economic Stimulus Package. At the same time the Capital Levy, which is raised as a part of fees, was used to pay interest and reduce the outstanding capital on loans raised to finance earlier building programs. Illustrative details drawn from the audited accounts are outlined below.

Recurrent Account

- Total revenue from ordinary activities: $4,175,600
- Total expenses (less provisions): $3,842,535
- Depreciation, Trade Debtors, Long Service Leave: $491,888
- Net Cash Profit: $333,065

Capital Funding & Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capital Funding &amp; Expenditure</th>
<th>Received 2010</th>
<th>Spent 2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium (BER)</td>
<td>904,723</td>
<td>480,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Centre (BER)</td>
<td>1,179,654</td>
<td>1,288,661</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School (BGA)</td>
<td>328,624</td>
<td>381,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Pride *</td>
<td>62,500</td>
<td>18,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Water Grant</td>
<td>3,502</td>
<td>3,502</td>
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<tr>
<td>NSSCF (computer on-cost) §</td>
<td>30,341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest Subsidy Grant</td>
<td>7,640</td>
<td>7,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,519,984</td>
<td>2,180,471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Formation of Upper School Oval
§ Funds spent in 2009

This is where the money went: most to salaries and the rest as detailed . . .

Appointment of a New Education Administrator heads staff changes

Being appointed Education Administrator when the school is initiating a structural review might be daunting for some, but Jean-Michel David has embraced the challenge with energy and vision.

Without forestalling the outcome of the review, the school has already committed to a second stream Class 7 in 2012. There has also been investigation into providing choice for senior students and their parents by exploring an alternative to supplement the already successful year 12 program.

Jean-Michel’s appointment follows the resignation of Matthew Cunnane during 2010 and an interregnum ably managed by Liz Fritzlaff. Mathew Cunnane has gone to Noosa Pengari Steiner School for the challenge of developing the Upper School there. Francis Glasspool also resigned from the Upper School to take up a position at the Noosa school.

During 2010, Mike Frayne resigned from the Primary School and was replaced by Tania Neil in what is now Class 3. There was also change in the Music Department with Tom Fitzgerald, Melchior Martin and Rohan Anderson all leaving.

These departures made way for appointments in the Upper School of Poh Kim Ng as mathematics and physics teacher, Libby Evans teaching history and other humanities subjects and Vicky Basdeo teaching English. Louise Horgan, Hue Blaines, Heather Wright and Alejandro Espino Aldana have been appointed to the Music Department.

In the Primary School, Rachel Mager is the new Class 1 teacher with Rachel Baum-Cheong as assistant. Pat LeemBruggen has taken over as class teacher for Class 6 while Naomi Jarvie has transferred into the educational support group. Jean-Michel’s appointment follows the resignation of Matthew Cunnane during 2010 and an interregnum ably managed by Liz Fritzlaff. Mathew Cunnane has gone to Noosa Pengari Steiner School for the challenge of developing the Upper School there. Francis Glasspool also resigned from the Upper School to take up a position at the Noosa school.

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Details of qualifications held by staff at Little Yarra

- Bachelor of Arts – 18
- Bachelor of Science – 5
- Bachelor of Education – 10
- Graduate Diploma of Education – 22
- Bachelor of Theology – 1
- Bachelor of Music – 1
- Miscellaneous Diplomas & Certificates – 23

Student attendance

- Attendance rates: Class 1 to Class 10
  - Males: 92.3%
  - Females: 91.6%