



LOTA STATE SCHOOL

Newsletter

15 May 2015

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Families

I have been very excited over the last couple of weeks as I again go into classrooms and work with your children. The latest round of classroom visits focus on Guided Reading lessons, and how our teachers cater for the different learning needs of students within their class. The process involves me entering each classroom, each week, during small group guided reading lessons. At the conclusion of each five week block, I meet with each teacher to discuss my observations as we talk through how students are learning and achieving.

You would know from last year's newsletters that the teaching of reading is a priority area for us. Lots of professional learning for all staff, and school curriculum plans written and implemented within the classroom. Those of you involved in the Prep to Year 2 reading program would see firsthand the wonderful outcomes associated with this differentiated approach to reading. This arrangement of small group instruction is also evident in year 3 and years 4 to 6.

Part of our differentiated approach to learning (see Information Bulletin) is about modifying learning for students in the area of reading. Some students find reading and comprehension easy, some are doing well at grade level standard and some find it difficult. The guided reading groups ensure that learning is aimed at a level for students to increase their reading skills. Reading is not the only curriculum area we differentiate, but it is my focus area for this term.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the small groups, as I see firsthand the amount of planning and work the teachers implement in order to ensure that the learning needs of each and every student is catered for within their classroom.

Date Reminders

19 th May	Under 8's Day
19 th May	P&C Meeting
21 st May	Arts Council – Gizmo's Gadgets & Machines
8 th June	Public Holiday
16 th June	Rewards Day/Walkathon
24 th June	Sports Day
25 th June	Performance Parade
26 th June	Last Day for Term 2

It is unfortunate that I cannot mention every child within this newsletter, however I would like to provide families with a little snapshot of the wonderful things I saw and heard whilst being in your child's class.

Prep and Prep/1

Development of sight words and being able to remember these and recognise them within the stories they read, prediction strategies, being able to sequence the story using picture cards and identify the first sound in a word. I must make special mention of Aeon's wonderful growth in his reading this year, and Chelsea/Michelle/Bella H literally on the edge of their seat (and the desk I may add) reading year 1 sight words.

Year 1/2 and Year 2

Unrelenting focus on being able to retell the story after reading, using the pictures to predict the story and drilling down to predictions based on the setting and character facial expressions. Fluency is a big focus as students pause at commas, stop at full stops etc. The engagement of each group I have read with is inspiring.

Year 3

Students focusing on the strategies of comprehension. Reading a passage and using their inferring skills to answer questions. Do I need to Think and Search for the answer?

Year 4 to Year 6 students

Only once have I had the pleasure of visiting year 4 to 6 due to NAPLAN for year 5 students. However, working with Tristan, Murray, Angus and Coen on persuasive texts was a highlight. They engaged in high levels of questioning, discussion and reflection on how the author's use of words persuade us. Students in year 4 were also working on persuasive texts and drawing out the purpose of the text, the author's main idea and the language devices used to persuade the reader.

Year 5/6

Super engaged in their Reading 2 Learn lesson for 1 hour non stop. The sound of multiple 'yesss' when Mrs Clarkson said 'time to do our re-write' was a delight to hear.

Very very exciting. When you meet with your child's teacher they will talk to you about your child's progress in reading. Use this opportunity to talk about the small group guided reading program and how this differentiated curriculum is supporting and increasing your child's reading and comprehension skills.

Volunteers are great!

Thank you to our wonderful volunteers. Did you know that we have approximately 150 families at Lota, and we presented over 70 volunteer certificates to parents and community members who regularly volunteer at our school. On Monday afternoon, Mrs Cleary, organised an afternoon tea to celebrate and thank our wonderful volunteers. Councillor Cummings and local state member Joan Pease were delighted attendees. Thanks to Mrs Cleary for organising this event.

Family Information Session

The next information session is scheduled for Tuesday 19th May. The focus will be – *How do teachers teach Reading* – very topical given my statements above. I hope this session to be hands on. Hope to see you here on Tuesday night – the library is toasty warm.

P&C Meeting

At the P&C Meeting on 19th May, commencing at 6.30pm in the toasty warm Library, I will present the April Information Session - How does Lota State School differentiate (modify) the learning for my child? I will also table a

Data Profile report for semester 1. This report tabulates all data available for our school. Data I will present includes – attendance, data on report card grades, behaviour, opinion survey results, NAPLAN data and improvement over time. Let me just say, our data is pleasing, especially within the improvement over time domain. Come along and celebrate the success!

Green Jumpers

The weather has certainly cooled down and out come the jumpers and tracksuits. Students are only permitted to wear bottle green jumpers to school. These can be purchased, for a reasonable price, from larger department stores; or from our Uniform Shop for a gold coin donation.

Until next fortnight.

Ms Kim Schembri

FACILITIES

During the next School Holidays work will commence on painting around the school. Toilet verandas & ramps; Yr 4-6 building veranda's & ramps; Yr 2 outside window frames; Year ½ landing & veranda; seating around the shade cloth area. The staffroom & office will also be painted.

ITEMS FOR TENDER

Lota State School has 2 LG Televisions, 1 LG DVD Players and 1 Media Trolley that will be offered for tender. If you would like to view these items please see our School's Officer, Mr Mark Holder.



P&C Meets - 3rd Tuesday of month 6.30pm (Resource Centre) - Tuckshop - each Wednesday and Friday - Admin open 8.00am - 3:00pm



How does Lota State School differentiate (modify) the learning for my child?

PARENT INFORMATION

Differentiating, or modifying the curriculum, to support or extend student learning and therefore achievement, is a complex procedure. However, I will try my hardest to explain the process and trust that should you require additional information, you will either see your child's teacher or myself.

To 'differentiate' is to modify. Simply put, teachers have such an in-depth understanding of not only their year level curriculum, but the curriculum for years above and below. It is this thorough understanding of the curriculum, and your child, which allows teachers to modify, or differentiate, the year level curriculum so your child can seamlessly build upon the skills they have, experience success, and extend their learning.

Although differentiation may be a 'process', your child is not a 'process' and therefore this is not an exact art. There are many complexities that come into play when your child requires learning support, or indeed learning extension. It is these complexities that can sometimes hinder the process of differentiating. Therefore, the following sets out what we do to differentiate the curriculum for your child, it does not I'm afraid, guarantee an outcome that means all children will experience year level or beyond standard. What I can say is that we are employing a process which gives us the best chance, and puts us and your child in the best place, to move in that direction.

In order to achieve a differentiated curriculum, teachers follow a process, which I will now outline.

KNOW THE STUDENTS

KNOW THE CURRICULUM

MODIFY THE PATHWAY

HOW DO WE KNOW THE STUDENTS?

We

- spend lots of time with your children; getting to know the whole child.
- talk with the one group of people who know them more than all others - you, their family.
- assess student learning and collect data on their performance. The data we collect is collated into a whole school excel spreadsheet. We call this our *Whole School Tracking Data*.

The Whole School Tracking Data collects student achievement results in:

Reading	Maths
Spelling and Phonics	Behaviour
Sight Words	Attendance
Writing	NAPLAN Data
Science	

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HOW DO WE KNOW THE CURRICULUM?

- Teachers, and Support Staff, spend a great deal of time engaged in professional learning and reading of the curriculum. They understand what students must know and be able to do (curriculum) and how to teach these skills and knowledge to students (pedagogy).
- All teaching staff are aware of the curriculum expectations for year levels above and below the one they currently teach.
- The Australian Curriculum is sequential and skills and knowledge is built upon from year to year.
- Teaching staff have a clear understanding of the year level standards and expectations - they know what a 'C' level standard is; along with higher and lower standards of achievement.

HOW DO WE MODIFY THE PATHWAY?

Modify the Pathway - a fancy way of saying - we know what your student needs, we understand the curriculum and now we modify some of the year level curriculum to suit your child. Providing students with a curriculum tailored more to their level continues their trajectory of skill development. Providing students with some modifications can support their understanding and academic growth. It is with this differentiated curriculum that we hope to bridge the gap for our students.

The process for differentiating the curriculum includes:

1. Development of *Class and Student Differentiation Plans* including targets for student learning, learning goals, strategies and any key intervention programs (ie *Great Results Guarantee* and specialised programs)

These plans are written for each class and include each student within the classroom; whether they need learning support or learning extension. Teachers develop these plans with support from our Curriculum Leaders (Principal, Curriculum Coach and Special Education Coordinator).

Plans are developed for the key learning areas of English (Reading, Writing, Spelling) and Maths (Number). Families can view a copy of the differentiation plan - book in a time with your teacher or contact me.

2. Individual Education Plans and Individual Curriculum Plans. These plans are developed by our Special Education Coordinator, Class Teacher and Parent/Caregiver. Plans are developed for those students who are operating well below year level expectation, or students with a verified disability.

The role of our S.T.A.R process -

The Principal, Guidance Officer, Senior STLaN and SEP Coordinator meet once per fortnight to discuss individual students. Teachers can attend these meeting and refer students for additional or outside support. Parents are contacted prior to any referrals being made to the STAR committee.

Student referrals to this process could include:

- Referrals to Guidance Officer for further academic testing.
- Additional classroom support.
- Behavioural Support.
- Outside Agency Support - ie Occupational Therapist, Physio etc.
- Referral to Chaplain.
- Referral to Speech Pathologist.

I hope this information bulletin has assisted in your understanding of how we differentiate the curriculum to support or extend your child's learning. Look out for the next bulletin on The Teaching of Reading.