



Board of Trustees Newsletter

JUNE 2015

From the Chair

Dear Parents and Caregivers

We are rapidly approaching the middle of the school year, and this Board update addresses a number of the items we've been focused on since the start of the year.

Review and Reflection

Through Term 1, the Board's focus was on preparation for our two external reviews – by the Catholic Schools Office and the Education Review Office. This preparation has required the attention of the Board, our management team and our staff. This preparation has also provided the Board with an opportunity to undertake self-review on our plan, our progress and ensuring these support your children to achieve.

We have received draft reports from both of these reviews – and with this newsletter we have published the Catholic Schools Office review report to the school website. A summary of the report is included in this newsletter – but the report itself is comprehensive and positive of the good work done within the school and within the community. Special thanks to Management and Staff, particularly Annette Wilson our Director of Religious Studies and our PTFA. We thank you for your commitment and ongoing contribution to making Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School a special place.

At our Board meeting on 3 June we reviewed the unconfirmed report from the Education Review Office. Once we receive the final report, we will share it with you in our next newsletter.

Trustees Changes

Since the start of the year we have also welcomed two new trustees, with Francine Corbett and Fr Rob O'Brien being appointed as Proprietors Representatives.

We also welcome Marilyn Tunncliffe into the role of Staff Representative, following the resignation from the Board of Carmel Williamson. The Board thanks Carmel for her service to the Board over the last five years and look forward to continuing to work with her in her role as Deputy Principal.

Coming Up

The Board focus now turns to consultation and what options you would like to see as part of your children's education over the next three to five years.

A key part of that will be continuing to extend our use of modern learning practices including blended e-learning strategies. This includes providing opportunities for your children to participate in varied learning experiences. This newsletter provides some thoughts and observations from Sarah Somerville who attended a session at The Mind Lab in Term 1. This is the first year our children have all had the opportunity to experience The Mind Lab. The cost of this programme is being met from a generous donation from within our community. The Board is thankful for this donation and the opportunity it provides our children.

Best wishes
Kevin and your Board

A quote from Catherine McAuley

How rapidly the days, weeks, and months are passing. Another month ended, that seemed but a few days begun. If we have not forfeited the friendship of almighty God, but have been trying to love Him more and more, and to serve Him faithfully, they were blessed days for us.

Catherine McAuley is the Founder of the Sisters of Mercy



"Ignite in our children the passion for limitless learning navigated by Catholic Values"

Special Character Review

The Catholic Schools Office (CSO) report published on our website reviews our Special Character – comprising our Catholic Community, Pastoral Care and Religious Education – providing feedback on how we are supporting your children in their development. As part of this review the team from the CSO met with the Board, management, staff, parish members, parents & students.

The report recognised completion of areas for development identified in their 2011 report, including continuing to embed our school values and deepening our relationship with the Mercy Sisters.

Strengths highlighted in the report included:

- child-centricity – noting the fact that children are at the centre of everything and that parents have ownership and are actively involved;
- leadership and stewardship of the school and its Special Character provided by Rosemary and her management team;
- enthusiasm of our staff and their professionalism and interaction with our children; and
- breadth and quality of our Religious Education programme, including broad integration across the curriculum.

The review identified one area for development – to better integrate online links between the School and Parish websites and to make each other's newsletters more accessible to one another.

The review concludes that we have a happy and successful Catholic School community.

The Board is thankful to the reviewers for their insights into our school and its Special Character. The report provides reinforcement of the work we are directing and the positive environment fostered by Rosemary and her staff – all of which supports your children to grow in their faith.

The Mind Lab – A parents perspective

In April I was lucky enough to go on a class trip to The Mind Lab with two of our Year 2 and 3 classrooms. The school has budgeted for each OLSH student to attend a Mindlab session once a term in 2015, with our teachers undertaking regular Professional Development at the facility.

The Mind Lab's website describes it as ***a unique education collaboration between a public education provider [Unitec] and a specialist education lab dedicated to enhancing digital literacy capability and the implementation of contemporary practice in the teaching profession.***

In my view what that means for our students is that visiting The Mind Lab allows them to build on their learning experiences with technology resources outside what we have in the classroom but which they take back to enhance their overall education and development. We frequently hear that our children will enter adulthood in an environment where the jobs they might do and the technology they may use have not even been developed yet, and The Mind Lab works on the skills they will need.

The highlights for me as a parent on this visit were:

- Partnering with other providers broadens our offering to children. The staff at Mindlab had been briefed on the current inquiry themes at school and wove this seamlessly into exercises on robotics and electricity conduction;
- The stimulation for the learners of being in a very modern, technologically up-to-date and flexible environment. I was interested in a teacher's observation that the most obviously engaged children were not necessarily those who naturally put themselves forward in 'ordinary' class time;
- The speed with which the children picked up instructions and concepts;
The energy required to be with year 2 and 3 students for an afternoon! Hats off to our amazing teachers for their energy every day.

I hope that all your learners have enjoyed their access to The Mind Lab so far – my view is that it will be a valuable resource in raising student achievement and preparing our children for the future.