Dear Families

How can it be that Christmas is upon us so quickly? Your children however are becoming excited as they read, listen and write about this special time of year. I have even seen some rather large decorated trees adorning the tunnel area of the school and of course, some rather seasonal songs filtering from classes. I can’t wait to see what each class has in store for us at the concert this Thursday!

From the newsletters throughout the year, you will be aware of our continuing curriculum planning, implementation and review throughout the school in the areas of Literacy and Numeracy. Underpinning this work is our whole of school focus on communication. This semester we have further progressed our literacy program through the engagement of a Master Teacher - Kate Lonne - with a focus on writing. Whilst the Master Teacher role will not continue for our school in 2017, we will, within our staffing establishment, continue to enhance staff capability in literacy and numeracy for all year levels.

During the Easter break in 2017 further staff will attend a “Literacy Intensive” week. A number of staff attended this program during the June/July holidays this year. The 5 day program for 2017 is being planned by Rachel Dougherty and Jacinta Xavier (Deputy Principals Mitchelton & Red Hill Special Schools) on behalf of the Metropolitan North Special Schools. To fill all available spaces, staff from other special schools, including as far away as Mt Isa Special School, will attend this program. Jane Farrall and Dr Sally Clendon will again facilitate the Literacy Intensive program for participants.

By now you will have received information about your child’s class and teacher for 2017. It is anticipated that teacher aides will also be finalised early in the last week of term. This can be an anxious time for all. Great consideration is given in forming classes and determining staff for each class. For families who have had their child at school for some years, you will be aware that schools do not receive their final staffing until after day 8 in the new school year. Based on the number of students enrolled and attending school by the 8th day of school, teacher numbers and teacher aide hours are determined.
Known enrolments at this stage, indicate we will experience growth in our school. For the beginning of the 2017 school year we have therefore formed an additional class bringing total school classes to 12. Our Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP) will begin the year operating programs across four days of the week. It is anticipated that this will quickly grow to five days.

Growth has meant that, for a period of time, the school will be required to use our Multi-Sensory Room (MSR) as a class space. We recognise the importance of the MSR to our school and the programs that can support and benefit a range of our students. As soon as additional class space is available, we will return this room to its original function.

Whilst the Department has purchased 17 Lintern Street, which borders our school, development of the site for school use has not yet begun. Whilst initial concepts have been developed for this site around senior schooling programs, a first meeting with Architects will occur Tuesday December 6th.

Just as planning for the 2017 school year involves physically structuring the school it also often sees changes to staff. This includes some pleasant changes such as, Di Holland returning to Red Hill from maternity leave and Jess Wallace taking maternity leave as she and her family prepare for the birth of their second child. Sadly however, it is also a time where we farewell staff. Deb Wamsley, who has been with us for almost two years, is returning to a teaching position in Noosa. I know that it is with mixed feelings that Deb is leaving us to return to Noosa. I am sure that we will stay in touch as Deb has become an integral part of our community.

After 16 years, our community celebrates with Therese Campling her decision to retire from teaching at the end of this year. Therese has worked in many schools across Qld and in many roles. In each role Therese has always had as her focus “the student”. Therese, over the years, has engaged in many methodologies supporting education for students with disabilities. She has always been open to new theories/learnings and demonstrated programming to best extend each student to meet his/her potential. Therese’s calm manner and respect extend to all with whom she interacts - students, families, staff. Many younger teachers, throughout special education, have been fortunate to have had Therese mentor them. Whilst as a community we feel sad that Therese will not be working alongside us next year, we do celebrate this decision with her and wish her great happiness for the future.

To all families, thank you for your continued support throughout 2016. We rely strongly in our school on a team approach to implementing programs for your child. Families are integral to our teams.

Have a safe and Happy Christmas. Put away the school bags, lunches, uniforms etc. I hope you find the opportunity to slow down and relax over the next weeks.

Remember, school resumes on Monday January 23rd 2017. Our administration team will be available from Monday January 16th.

Pam Stack
Principal
Red Hill Special School
Communication - Christmas message

The Christmas holidays are almost here and we want to help you continue the amazing communication that the students have been doing at school. This will support the communication journey until we see you again next year.

Please chat with your child using their communication system as often as you can. We have attached a Christmas Aided Language Display (ALD) so that you can chat about all of the Christmas activities that you are doing. You will definitely want to have this on hand for Christmas Day. Print off as many ALD's as you like, you could even use them as placemats between now and Christmas to remind you to keep chatting!

You can be an excellent communication partner by using the Christmas ALD:

- Wrapping presents
- Decorating the Christmas tree
- Writing Christmas cards
- At Christmas parties
- Doing Christmas cooking
- Present shopping

After the holidays we would love to see photos of you and your child chatting using the Christmas ALD.

Best wishes for the silly season, enjoy your holiday and keep chatting.

Jacinta Xavier, Leisl Harper and Ian Healey
Deputy Principals
Red Hill Special School

Master Teacher News - Emergent writing

At Red Hill Special School, writing forms an integral part of our Balanced Literacy Approach. Each day, students are engaged in various writing activities, with the overarching goal being the development of proficient written composition. This was defined as ‘…composing a message independently that is understood by the intended audience and achieves a meaningful goal’ by Jane Farrall during her presentation to parents held at school on the 11th October. Writing therefore, is not only about the formation of letters and words. It is a complex task that requires the cognitive skills of generating ideas, selecting words and language to communicate thoughts and having an understanding of spelling and letters to write it all down.

In emergent writing instruction, the focus is on function, development of language, and developing the students’ perception of themselves as writers. Emergent writing is of variable length, sometimes long strings of letters and spaces, whilst at other times a few marks on the page can mean a whole story!

This semester I have had the wonderful opportunity of working with several classes in the area of emergent writing. The focus of my role has been to explore the links between the students’ development in independent writing, and their immersion in a literacy rich environment, with opportunities to observe and engage various writing tasks, including modelled writing (teacher writes for the students), shared writing (teacher and students write together) and independent writing (student writes by themselves).
Some of the activities that we have worked on have included creating books from our Predictable Charts, writing about our favourite pictures, books and activities during free writing, making lists and messages to remind us to do important jobs, signing in to school each day, and using our names to vote (for example, when deciding if the purple smoothie or the yellow smoothie was the best) writing letters to friends and different classes and creating journals of our learning.

It has been a wonderful learning experience for me to work in the role of Master Teacher this semester, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to work with so many of our amazing students. I am also grateful for the support and assistance I have received from the staff in the classrooms, who know our students so well, and whose dedication and desire to see our students achieving is awesome. I hope that everybody has a wonderful, safe and As we head into the Christmas break, I am starting to see a lot of tired faces around. I hope that everybody has a wonderful, safe and restful summer holiday. I look forward to seeing what 2017 brings for us all!

Kate Lonne
Master Teacher

**AAC Intervention - Signing in**

One of the many writing activities in which students at Red Hill Special School participate in on a daily basis is signing in. The following information is from Sally Clendon, an expert in the field of teaching literacy to students with disabilities, and co-presenter of the Winter Literacy Intensive which was held at our school during the June/July school holidays.
Why do we teach signing in?

Signing in provides an authentic context for children to learn about the alphabet. They can be signing in for school for the day, or signing in to receive a key for the art room - the important factor is that they are writing for a real reason and using their name (even if it isn’t spelled correctly) in authentic ways!

Signing in is not copying or tracing!

Traditionally writing instruction for students with disabilities has had a heavy focus on the physical act of writing (e.g., handwriting) and the instructional approach has often included lots of copying and tracing activities. As a result, many students with disabilities think that writing = copying. They don’t realise that writing is much more than handwriting; it’s about them sharing ideas and communicating with others. From the start, we need to show our students that writing is about them (not us) thinking and actively constructing print.

Signing in for some students will require the use of an alternative pencil.

When students sign in, it’s important to allow them to have a go at writing their name first. They can sign in using a traditional pencil and/or another writing tool (e.g., flipchart, alphabet board, iPad, magnetic letters - whatever works!). Once they have finished writing their name, you can provide a model: “Wow, you’ve written your name Sam, that’s awesome! Let me show you how I write your name” (use the same writing tool that they have used).

Where do we start?

Ideally, all students have access to the whole alphabet when signing in. Remember that the goal is learning about the alphabet and how it can be used to communicate with others. Occasionally, with students who have significant access or attention challenges, we have provided only the letters from their own name as a starting point. Again, they sign in first using those letters, and then we model the sign in underneath (using another set of letters). As soon as they look like they are starting to understand the way their pencils work and/or attend to those letters even briefly, we shift to the full alphabet (with lots of modelling).

Music Therapy

This term has definitely been a busy one in Music Therapy! Not only have your children been focusing on their individual class programs, but we’ve also put our creative hats on for the Christmas concert. The students (teachers and aides) have been super engaged and dedicated in practising their songs ready to shine on their big day!

Other news (big news) in Music Therapy is that I have recently been offered a Music Therapy position at Lady Cilento Hospital. Unfortunately this means that I will not be returning next year to Red Hill. The school and I have worked together to find another music therapist who will work well with your children and staff and enable a seamless transition for 2017.

I am able to introduce to you Miss Charé Walton, who will be undertaking programs with students and teachers of Red Hill in 2017. Like myself, Charé is a Neurologic Music Therapist and experienced Music Therapist. I believe that Chare will be an asset to the Red Hill Special School community.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to families, students and staff for the opportunity to work with you over the past two years. I look forward to hearing about the continued progress of students.

Thank you for the wonderful experiences.

Tara Shrestha
Music Therapist
Classroom News

ECDP

Term four has flown by in the Early Childhood Developmental Program (ECDP). We have welcomed some new students to the program and they have settled in well. Staffing has remained the same and the team continues to enjoy working with all the students and their families.

Our theme for Term four has been Under the Sea. The students have all enjoyed listening to stories about Sea animals and Pirates. Some favourite books have included, ‘Little Finn the Singing Fish’, which provided lots of opportunities for student involvement as the underwater creatures form a band. Another favourite has been ‘Way Down Deep’ where students had the opportunity to select sea animal pictures and match them to their names, providing opportunities to practise their developing reading skills. ‘Rainbow Fish’ and ‘The Pirate Who Wouldn’t Wash’ have also been popular.

The theme of Under the Sea has also provided lots of opportunities for new play experiences. Water play has been an absolute favourite, with some students also enjoying several changes of clothes during the day!! Mathematical concepts of floating and sinking, empty and full have been discussed while playing in the water tray. Students have had the opportunity to be successful fishermen with many different creatures caught in nets and with rods. Colour concepts have been reinforced as brightly coloured sea creatures have bobbed around in the water. Water play has provided lots of opportunities for communication with teachers modelling the PODD, students commenting and requesting and new words being introduced verbally. The students have begun to form some lovely friendships and we are excited to see lots more cooperative play and sharing from all the groups.

This time of the year we can look back and reflect on the huge progress all the students have made. Over the last few weeks we have been gathering evidence to write the end of year reports. It is always exciting to see how each and every student has developed and learnt new skills in communication, gross-motor, fine-motor, social and personal learning and literacy and numeracy. The early childhood curriculum allows for each child to learn and develop through play experiences and structured tasks and we are always excited and amazed at the progress and learning which occurs every day.

Term four is also a sad term as we have to say “Goodbye” to some of our students and their families. We wish all those students who are about to embark on their formal schooling in Prep the best of luck for the future. You are all amazing and we have been so lucky to share in your early childhood journey.

Thank-you to all the families for your on-going support of the ECDP program. We wish you a happy and peaceful Christmas and hope you get to spend time with loved ones.

We look forward to lots more fun and learning next year.

Teachers: Cathy and Caron
Teacher Aides: Shelley and Jess

Early Years 1

As the year draws to a close and we reflect on our time in Early Years 1, we are able to celebrate many successful moments achieved by Susie, Max, Zenon, Santi and Paw Moon. These are a few that we would like to share with you. Over the year, but particularly this semester, Susie has shown an increased use of her PODD book where she has begun to request to play the piano and request for a drink, with the help of her communication partner. Zenon has shown great progression in using P2GO to request and comment, as well as spontaneously talking in sentences to communicate his ideas and needs. Santi has demonstrated an increased ability to follow instructions and routines with less prompts and is showing more independence in routine tasks. Paw Moon has been enthusiastic to try new foods and has continued to show her improvement in understanding language by following instructions more independently. Max has learnt to initiate communication and request for his turn by either using his voice, or raising his arm in the air. As you can see, it has been a wonderful year overflowing with countless worthy achievements from each of our students. Well done everyone!

A highlight from our term has been our day trip to Underwater World to culminate our topic focus on under the sea. It was exciting to see sharks, fish,
stingrays, jelly fish and other interesting sea creatures that we had been learning about at school.

We also had a great time reading pirate books. When we were reading “Pirate Piggy Wiggy”, a map fell out of the book, so we all became pirates and followed the map to embark on a successful treasure hunt!

Horse riding has continued to be one of the highlights in our school routine. Over the year all of the students have shown considerable improvement. On separate occasions, Susie said “w” for “walk on” and “go” after “1,2,3” to indicate she wanted to go. Paw Moon is able to climb into the saddle independently after her foot is placed in the stirrup and Max is starting to hold the saddle and reins for short periods of time. Zenon and Santi have both demonstrated an increase in their language use during riding sessions as well as beginning to use the stirrups to steer and stop. All of the students love to trot and indicate this by bouncing up and down in the saddle!

Finally, we would like to send a massive thank you to all of the support staff that dedicate their time and energy in assisting our students reach their goals this year. We appreciate everything that you do.

May you all have a wonderful, safe and restful Christmas break and New Year filled with an abundance of joyous moments with your family and friends.

Teachers: Caron and Amanda
Teacher Aides: Belinda, Helen, Ash and Michelle

Early Years 2

Well, we’ve made it to the end of the year! It’s been a great yet busy year, and we have not slowed down in term 4. In week 2 we had a sleepover at school on the Thursday night for our camp. We went to Southbank and had a swim, played in the sand, and in the playground. It was a wonderful day out, and we all loved the water, though at first it was a little cold. On the Friday we had a morning tea picnic in the park, then went ten pin bowling. Charlie knocked over the most pins against Charlotte and Fareed, and Indi won out over Kate and Max. We then had lunch at McDonalds. Everyone in EY2 gets excited about McDonalds... including the staff. Sending a huge thank you to all the staff that made our camp possible, both regular staff members, and those who supported as an extra hand on the days. You are much appreciated.

We have continued our ocean theme this term, and enjoyed reading some stories about Pirates! This fitted in nicely with our maths work on measurement. We went on some treasure hunts and then weighed, counted, and shared out our treasure pieces. We made treasure maps in art and put a big red ‘X’ to mark where we would bury our treasure. We have started working on our Christmas concert performance which will also have a pirate theme.
We have also read Little Fin the singing Fish and have loved playing some instruments along to the story. We even did a music session with EY3. We have also continued our music therapy sessions with Tara, and dance with Bust a Move. Our listening, following directions, and gross motor skills have really shown improvement this term, during these dance sessions.

We have had lots of fun throughout the whole year, and have made some great achievements, whether academically, socially, or with our communication. All the class staff are very proud of our students. It has been a pleasure to work with such a wonderful class.

Have a safe and happy holiday from all the staff and students in Early Years 2.

Teacher: Nicole
Teacher Aides: Tina, Aimee and Holly

Early Years 3

Wow, Term 4 already? What a term it has been! We have been very busy in EY3 but we are all looking forward to some well-deserved rest over the Christmas Holidays.

We have continued to work on all things ocean in our room, and we have worked on some beautiful books and artwork within the theme. It has been great fun reading about Ocean Animals, Pirates and the beach. It has been interesting finding out each other's favourite ocean animals and exploring them in our texts... Squid, turtles and swordfish are crowd favourites.

There has been lots of writing going on in EY3... We all enjoy free writing and getting to choose topics to write about. Kate has been working hard in our room with our Emergent Writing program and we are all learning to explore and use different aspects of the PODD and flip charts. We have created some exciting Predictable Charts about our books, sensory activities and excursions. We have spent a lot of time turning these sentences into class books and we enjoy reading them in our self-selected reading time.

This term we also had a great time on our school camp! On the Thursday we travelled to Sea World and got to see some of the animals we have been reading about, up close and personal. Some of the shows and enclosures we saw included the Penguins, Stingrays,
Polar Bears, Sharks and other fish, Dolphins (Corey nearly got wet by a Dolphin playing in the water) and lots of other shells and sea creatures. A big thank you to our Teacher Aide Nerida for helping us on the day, and Jason for driving the bus and helping get us around the park. Some of us also had a sleepover at school on Thursday night…but I wouldn’t say any of us got much sleep! We enjoyed getting to read bedtime stories and singing bedtime songs to our happy campers, Owen, Zoey and Hannah. On the Friday we ventured out to Southbank and visited the Deep Ocean exhibition and the Queensland Museum. We saw lots of animals in the exhibit and even got to have some yummy treats afterwards. There were some scary dinosaurs at the Museum and a GIANT squid that everyone loved. We were exhausted after two big days, but we had such a great time filled with great memories!

We have still managed to make time for other activities along the way, such as Music Therapy, visiting the Sensory Room and the odd visit to the playground when it’s not too hot! We have really enjoyed Music with Tara, singing lots of songs about the ocean and planning for the Christmas concert. We are more than excited to put on a show and showcase our beautiful voices and dancing feet.

A big thank you to our wonderful Teacher Aides; Nerida, Maureen, Megan, Ashley and Alex. We are always so grateful for the hard work that these ladies do. Our days wouldn’t run smoothly without them. Their affection for the students has been the stand out this term and year. We are truly so thankful! Kate and I have continued to embrace the team teaching, and have loved the extra hands to plan so many wonderful and exciting activities this term. A big thank you to the beautiful students in EY3 as well – it has been a wonderful way to end the year and we are forever smiling because of your beautiful and cheeky personalities. Wishing you all a wonderful holiday and a very Merry Christmas!

Teachers: Kate and Steph
Teacher Aides: Nerida, Maureen, Ashley, Megan and Alex.
Middle 1

Term 4 started with the excitement of being the last term of the year. It was full of fun and learning for Middle 1. We learnt about ‘Sea Animals’ through different stories, internet and videos. We did a lot of role-plays linked to the stories and made lots of sea-animals in art and craft. We also learnt new words and used those words in our sentences. We can tell time on the digital and analogue clock (hourly basis). We liked to dance and move our hands up and down, go left and right, backwards and forward. We also loved dancing to the song ‘The Number Rock’.

We liked to play different games like thinking about new words (if student ‘A’ says bag, student ‘B’ has to think about a new word from the letter ‘g’), guessing numbers in the correct sequence and telling time on the clock. We were very competitive and we all liked to win!!

Communication has been a major focus too. We said hello to friends and greeted them in the morning. We also used the magic words: Please, Sorry and Thankeyou.

Every Tuesday we enjoyed going to the YMCA Gym at Bowen Hills. Students worked on developing skills such as balancing on a raised wooden beam, swinging on rings and launching themselves into the foam pit below. They gained confidence in using the gym equipment more independently with limited support. They learnt to wait for their turns, follow instructions and have become physically more active. Thankyou to Jason and Aimee for driving the bus each week to the gym.

Music with Tara each week has been a highlight. Thankyou Tara for being an awesome music therapist.

We enjoyed celebrating ‘Halloween’ by dressing up as different characters. Our first ‘Swimming Carnival’ was a success and we all were excited to participate in it. A big thankyou to Jo Hennessey and Adam for organising it.

We also undertook ‘Water Play’ every Friday to beat the heat. It has been a great form of sensory exploration too.

This term we participated in some community visits.

We visited ‘Woolcock Park’ on some Wednesdays. It was good to go on the swings and play games. One of our favourite games was ‘Duck Duck Goose Goose’. We also visited the city library, the Myer Centre to see Santa Claus and the big Christmas tree at King George Square. We made a Christmas tree in the class along with other Christmas decorations.

In term 4 many activities took place and it was, overall, an outstanding term. It was lovely to have ‘Kadi’ join our class in the last few weeks of the term.

A big thankyou to Deb V, Aimee, Mary, Ellie, Jo H, Jo L, Nicki, Hilary, Melissa, Adam, Claire, Joan, Kym, Meryl, Ian, Liesl, Jacinta and Pam. A special thankyou to Amanda who has been helping us with the PODD. A big thankyou to Deb W (Middle 2 teacher), Tim, Megan, Jess and Maureen for their ongoing support. Thankyou to Rosie, our lovely volunteer, for consistently coming and spending time with us. We would also like to thank all the cleaners who keep the school clean. Thankyou Grant, Prakash, Blake and Susan. And thankyou to all the therapists who are so very helpful.
T’is the season to be jolly...and what a jolly good term it has been!

Our classroom became our ‘Under the Sea’ sanctuary in term 4. Students became octopus, sharks, jellyfish, crabs and eels and made quite a ‘Commotion in the Ocean’, as they danced, sang and acted their way through a number of popular sea books. They continued the sea theme and did an awesome job making a variety of ocean treasures in visual art, including their favourite; colourful dioramas filled with sea creatures and other cool artefacts.

As much as we enjoyed the sea, we did surface from time to time and numeracy exploration sessions enticed us out of the ocean classroom to navigate our way around the school, as we learnt and practised positional language. With catchy left and right songs in our heads and with L and R written on our hands, we were able to follow directions to walk forwards, backwards, left and right, as well as discover things, people and places along the corridors.

Communication and literacy was a whole school focus this year. In Middle 2 we used the PODD and Proloquo2go to reinforce ideas and learning pathways and help students express their opinions and feelings.
In literacy, all students used the keyboard as their alternate pencil. Their preferred writing program was Clicker 7 and they were particularly motivated using the voice option that read the letters they had selected. It was very exciting to see how much everyone progressed in literacy. Well done Middle 2!

An extra special event in term 4 included the swim carnival. It was an enormous success and we were incredibly proud of the way every student participated. The joy on their faces was priceless. A special mention to Marcus for very competently starting all the races with the signal gun. A big thank you also to Jo and Adam for organising this event and to Pam for the beautiful trophies received by each child.

Music therapy sessions have been a highlight each week. Our amazing music therapist Tara, has done a wonderful job designing creative classes that built on skills and themes we had learnt in class. Joshua and Harry particularly enjoyed the solo karaoke opportunities! Playing a range of musical instruments and making lots of noise were just a few aspects of music sessions as well as working on our Christmas concert item. Thank you Tara for all your hard work.

Water play has been a new and exciting weekly activity for term 4 and the students have loved it. Maddy, Flyn and Angus have been extra helpful in setting up! The starfish sprinkler has been a big hit, along with painting windows with wet rollers and paintbrushes, fishing in the giant water tub and accidentally (or maybe on purpose) soaking our friends! It has been lots of fun for staff and students.

Lastly, but most importantly I would like to congratulate Maddy, Angus, Harry, Marcus, Joshua and Flyn for a wonderful year. I am very proud of the unique progress made by each child and the caring friendships they have developed. It has been a great pleasure to be their teacher for 2016.

A big big thank you to Tim, Maureen, Mary and Megan for all the help, support and humour they have brought to the Middle 2 team. Thank you also to the rest of the staff and families who have contributed to a wonderful year. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and a jolly good holiday!
A commotion in the ocean.

Teacher: Deb
Teacher Aides: Tim, Maureen, Mary and Megan

Middle 3

Way down deep, in the deep blue sea...that's where you would have found middle 3 this term. We've had a wonderful time swimming with the fishes, hanging 8 with our octopus friends, dodging sharks this term and talking all things under the sea. Term 4 has swum by quickly. I can't believe it's all over!

Louis, Isla, Fred and Darbi have continued to surprise me with their engagement and participation in all group and individual activities. They have continued to engage well with the PODD to communicate and make choices. Darbi really enjoys creating her writing on the computer and loves using the PODD to choose what she wants to write about. Water animals have conveniently been the flavour of the term and her favourite to talk about are DOLPHINS!

This term, Louis has continued to head along to the gym with his middle 1 friends and he is making tremendous progress. His favourite activity is to climb on the big mats and jump into the foam pit. Horse riding has once again been a success for Isla, Darbi and Fred. They have each continued to improve and make progress in their individual programs – giddy up!

Middle 3 has had a great year with Rebecca and Dave during our DIR program. As the weather has warmed up we have been able to enjoy some water play and interactions around that. Isla's favourite activity so far has been the big parachute – she counts along 1, 2, 3, GO and as the parachute goes up she runs and dances underneath giggling. It has been so lovely to see!

Each week we have made the trek down to Woolcock Park and we have had a great time being one with nature. Fred enjoys being free and having some running around time while Louis finds anything that he can climb, sit back, relax and watch on as his friends play. Darbi searches far and wide for anything that creeps and crawls – she was lucky enough to find a (safe, garden) spider on her shoulder to admire. And finally, Isla...she usually finds a nice sunny spot to soak up the sunshine or jumps in the roundabout for a spin with her friends!

As the term was quickly coming to an end and Christmas fast approaching, middle 3 got festive and had a wonderful time decorating our Christmas tree and making our own decorations. Louis in particular LOVED this very much and admires the tree and other festive decorations often – nothing goes unnoticed. We have also been getting pumped for the Christmas concert and practising our musical number each week with Tara in music. Fred always loves playing the instruments and has a big smile on his face!

What an incredible year it has been! I have had the best time teaching Louis, Isla, Fred and Darbi and am so proud with how far they have come. Each one of them has made my first year of teaching an exciting and memorable one! A MASSIVE thank you to our wonderful teacher aides, Alyssa, Amelia and Ash. The year would not have been the same without you! Your constant care, support and enthusiasm has not gone unnoticed – middle 3 loves you. To all my wonderful families, thank you! Wishing everybody a wonderful, safe and happy Christmas...See you in 2017!

Fun in the park
Wow, it has come to that time of year where we are wrapping things up (no pun intended!) and getting ready for our Christmas concert. It has been a very fun-filled term 4 for JS1 with the highlight of course being our wonderful camp in week 5. All our students attended camp with Nicki, Jess, Ian, Tim, Tat and Aimee being the carers. Day 1 saw us head off to Sandgate Pool for a very refreshing swim on what was a very hot day. Most of the students had a turn on the waterslide with some even going back for more. We enjoyed fish and chips for lunch before heading to the Independent Living Centre at Mackenzie Special School, where we (or some of us!) slept (?) for 2 nights!

On day 2, Ian drove us to Seaworld, which was an amazing day out. We all loved the shark tank underwater viewing area, where we also got to see the scuba man cleaning the glass. After Maisie said ‘hello’ to all the fish in the tank, it was time for Leah to pat the stingrays! And then it was rides time. Students were asked to show us which rides they wanted to go on, and of course the Merry-go-round was popular. This was Gus’s time to also have a ride. While students chose the roller coaster and some very tummy churning rides, we carers had to honour their choice! Nicki and George, Tat and Madi, Ian and Will all took on the roller coaster, while Aimee and Leah headed for the submarine ride. Maisie and Nicki liked the more sedate aeroplane bikes and banana planes. And no day at Seaworld would be complete without a play with the dolphins and a look at the jetski show.
Day 3 started off with a spot of Ten Pin Bowling - very much loved activity by the students and their competitive carers. Congratulations to Madi and George for achieving the highest scores! From here we headed back to school for lunch and to get ready to go home for a well-earned rest. Thanks so much to Ian and Tim for joining us on our camp.

This term we continued working hard with our literacy and numeracy, music, movement program, swimming, and horse riding. All students have made fantastic developments in their communication, thanks to an amazing effort on their part and the staff, with the constant use of AAC devices eg. PODD and Proloquo2Go. We are so very proud of them all.

We are now spending time decorating our room with Christmas items to show off to you after our Christmas concert.

We would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the teacher aides that have worked with us throughout the year. Especially to Aimee, Tat, Jess and Helen – your affection, kindness and dedication to the students was very much appreciated.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Teachers: Jess and Nicki
Teacher Aides: Aimee, Tat, Jess and Helen

Junior Secondary 2

Hello from Junior Secondary 2 as we reach the end of a busy and very happy 2016. This term, along with our friends in Junior Secondary 1 and 3, we continued our investigations into how things move and change. As part of this unit of work we read books about travel and transport, and wrote our own stories about things we saw. We also sent lots of letters to our friends around the school and added their replies to our classroom News Wall. Many people wrote to us during the term and it was good to hear their stories while keeping them up to date with the interesting things we were doing. Over the past 10 weeks we’ve also interacted with each other while playing games on the whiteboard, explored Maths concepts during cooking sessions with our friends from JS3 and experienced the sights and sounds of the multi-sensory room.
A highlight this term was our visit to Archerfield Airport. At the airport we toured Archerfield Jet Base and were lucky enough to go inside a Cessna Caravan Commander Jetprop and a Cessna Citation CJ1 jet. Both aircraft had very comfortable seats and lots of things to look at including heaps of dials and displays in the cockpit. Sadly we weren’t able to fly away on the day, so we’ve made that our goal for next time! We all enjoyed our visit to Archerfield and would like to send a heartfelt thankyou to Tom White for arranging the visit, Phil Walker for showing us around the facility, Ian Townsend for helping us with transport and Principal Pam and DP Ian for their on-going support of our classes. Thanks too to Lisa, Danya, Sarah, Sonya, Tatiana and all the staff who supported this and other Junior Secondary 2 activities throughout 2016. Your work in helping our students engage with the wonderful world around them is a vital and invaluable part of what makes our classroom a successful and happy place to be. Your efforts are truly appreciated.

Finally, happy Christmas everyone. Have a safe and relaxing holiday. See you in 2017.

Teacher: Tracy
Teacher Aides: Lisa, Danya, Sarah, Sonya and Tatiana
Junior Secondary 3

We have reached the end of term but not without lots of fun, excitement and learning along the way. We have continued to work on our unit of ‘I like to move it move it’, and have read many books on planes, trains, rockets and even feet (they help us move too). We have been lucky enough to visit Archerfield Airport where we had the opportunity to get on and explore in the interior 2 small planes, one that uses propellers and the other that uses a jet to move. We had such a fabulous time. A big thank you to Phil Walker and Tom White for helping us to organise this amazing opportunity for all of our students. Also thank you to Dave and Mark from Townsend bus who have helped by driving us to and from our chosen destination.

Our weekly programs such as cooking, swimming, horse riding and music therapy have continued and although approaching end of term we were keen to participate in each of these in whichever way we could. Jo and Adam have taken swimming with all the students in JS3 and it is fantastic to be able to see the smiles on their faces as they work and enjoy being in the pool. Everyone loves cooking especially tasting...we use cooking for many different reasons - communication, sensory, mathematics and fun.

I would like to say a massive thank you to Steph and all who have helped JS3. Your time patience and expertise have not gone unnoticed and we are truly grateful to have you help us in every possible way that you do. Thank you also to a fantastic Junior Secondary team who have been and absolute dream to work - Tracy, Jess and Nicki. Finally, I hope that you all have a safe and restful Christmas, and come back feeling refreshed. Take care and be sure to spend time with loved ones and friends.

Teacher: Libby
Teacher Aide: Steph

Senior 1

Senior 1 students have had a busy and productive term 4. Communication has been the focus in all programs and there has been lots of progress on using our yes and no cards and conversing using the PODD or Proloquo2Go devices. Our Unit of Work for semester 2 was “Celebrations”. We celebrated ourselves and family, our class and our community.

We celebrated ourselves through exploring different activities, finding out what each student preferred and had lots of fun. We celebrated Luanna’s 18th birthday. She had a lovely party with her friends and enjoyed her...
yummy chocolate cake. We celebrated our families, making a very special book about each student's family - what each family member likes to do, and how we feel about our family.

We celebrated our community through exploring and having fun. There have been some fun and very special occasions this term. Firstly, we celebrated Halloween with stories and dramatic performances. It was lots of fun. The students participated in a trick or treat around the school. They raided the dress up box and Isabella enjoyed using the Big Mac to laugh like a witch all the way down the hall. Seth and Troy enjoyed the large creepy spiders. Will Henwood was a fantastic Ninja turtle and Will Brown chose to be Luigi from Mario Brothers. We also visited Shorncliffe, caught the public bus to the shops, enjoyed Woolcock Park, and our yoga session with Michelle McLeod.

A very special celebration was held on the 19th November. The Graduation of Luanna Woodford and Will Henwood. We met a lot of family there to celebrate this occasion. We want to wish Luanna and Will all the very best for the future. During the semester, Will and Luanna visited and trialled a variety of post school services and programs. Luanna will access Horizons at Margate, and Will, programs at CPL Ashgrove and UniCare. While we miss you, we know you are ready!

Lastly, we will celebrate Christmas with a very special Christmas concert. We focused this year on our family members and made them a part of our Christmas carol. The students communicated, using their communication systems, about what each member of their family likes to do. We chatted about things we might like to buy them and listened to Christmas carols while we were busy making presents and cards throughout the last 2 weeks of term.

Of course, we all enjoyed our regular programs of literacy and numeracy, choice-making, music therapy, games and movement, interactive stories, art and craft, swimming, sensory room, and Interactive whiteboard programs.

We would like to thank our amazing, energetic teacher aides whose skill, care and enthusiasm have seen each student come into our classroom with a smile. The students enjoyed your support.

With sadness we will say goodbye to Therese Campling who is retiring to focus on her beautiful family. Therese
Luanna at Horizons.

Will taking it easy at sailing.

Will chilling at the beach.

Isabella loves to splash in the swimming pool.

Claire happy in class.

Seth smiling at the beach.

Will enjoyed his visit to the RSPCA Adoption Centre.

is truly an inspiration to all who cross her path. We will miss her knowledge, enthusiasm and mostly her amazing ability to connect to staff and students. Good luck Therese.

We would also like to thank the many other people that support our students and programs – the whole administration team, Claire and Vanessa, Jo, Dave, Rebecca and Melissa, and Adam and Jason.

A big thank you to parents of the students for your continued support. We wish you a very happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you all next year.

Teachers: Therese and Erica
Teacher Aides: Jenne, Julie, Deb and Maureen
Volunteers: Faye and Jane
Senior 2

Term 4 saw the debut of Hilltop Snack Shop and it was awesome. Students and families have supported the program well and the Senior 2 students have really risen to the challenge of shopping, cooking, packaging, serving and making money. This term Kodey has been the greeter. He uses a switch to say hello, hands over the basket and moves the customer onto Jazper who takes the order and puts the food into the basket. The customer then moves to Lyam or Kyle who put the order into the register while Clay takes the money. Jordan uses switches to bid the customer farewell and invites them to come again next week. The students are looking forward to continuing the program next year.

Hilltop Pizzas continues to thrive and again we thank the students and staff for supporting the program. Senior 2 students are developing skills they can take home or into the community – using a knife safely, making a healthy meal, hygiene in the kitchen, following a routine, following instructions, standing up to work for a good length of time. The program is rewarding for all involved and again the students look forward to making pizzas for the school in 2017.

The students continued the Sailability program each Monday at Shorncliffe. It was a lovely way to begin the week – a bus ride to talk about the weekend events, a sausage and onion in bread for morning tea (some of us ate 2) and then a relaxing, therapeutic 30 minutes on the water. Lyam and Jazper were lucky enough to have a go at steering the boat on a few occasions.

The group continued to go to Kingfisher Recycling Centre on Thursdays – taking the lids of bottles, crushing cans and glass bottles and taking stamps off envelopes. The group has worked well and made their contribution to the environment.

This is another year finished for Senior 2 and we say a teary farewell to Jordan Akers as she graduates and makes the move to Post School life. On Saturday 19th November she joined fellow graduates Will and Luanna at the Broncos Club to celebrate with family, staff and friends. It was a lovely afternoon and Jordan couldn’t stop smiling. Her fellow classmate, Jazper joined the celebration as well as Braedy an ex-classmate and Red Hill Special School graduate from 2016. Clay, Lyam, Kodey and Kyle wished her good luck and we all enjoyed looking at the photos in class the following week. Jordan we know you will have a lovely time next year and we look forward to hearing about your adventures when you drop in for pizza every now and then.

Thank you to the staff who work incredibly well as a team to support students in programs to achieve goals – Jenni, Miho, Alyssa and Linda. It has been great working with each of you individually and collectively, thank you.

Thank you to the students and their families for their support and hard work this year. The students have matured and stepped up to the challenge of the new programs. We wish you all a very happy and safe summer holidays and hope you all have a Merry Christmas.
Jordan sorting.

Kodey making pizza.

Lyam making pizza.

Snack Shop.

Senior 2 at Railway Museum.

Teacher: Yolanda
Teacher Aides: Jenni, Miho, Alyssa and Linda

Kyle sailing.

Clay sailing.