

## CURRICULUM 2011

One of the enduring characteristics of Liwara is the enhanced and enriched community identity we enjoy. It is a legacy from past generations of Liwara community members that we guard watchfully. A challenge around the theme of community is the cultivation of the fruits of collaborative partnership. The partnership has to be forged around a shared vision – shared understandings and hopes of what we are trying to achieve as a school. We engage in a comprehensive process of soul searching to continually renew our shared vision. We work hard at transposing this vision into classroom and school reality. If we look at some of the things we strive for these would include:

- Having Liwara recognised as a place of quality teaching and learning
- Having a commitment to all round development – mind, body, spirit and character
- Having breadth in the curriculum
- Having a focus on individual progress and provision for this
- Having a religious dimension to all aspects of the curriculum
- Having our school characterised by warm supportive relationships
- Having a high expectation of the conduct of our students
- Being family like and family friendly
- Being welcoming and inclusive especially to those who are new to the school.

For Liwara to continue to thrive we must collectively ensure the lived experiences of students, staff and parents is positive and rewarding.

There are many elements that combine to enable each of our students at Liwara to gain a quality education that provides a platform for success. Not the least of which is to experience their schooling with the full support of their teachers and parents. We are acutely aware of the challenges presented by the context, characteristic, values, learning styles, interests and personal experiences of our current generation of students. In building the learning power of our students we encourage our children to approach learning challenges with a core set of habits, interest and attitudes. All this is done in a school environment that promotes Christian witness through words and actions.

Through the myriad of educating experiences that include stories, imagery, Scripture, literature, symbols, art, music, drama and problem solving we endeavour to kindle the imagination of our students and nurture in them to meet their individual learning challenges.

## **EVANGELISATION**

The emphasis and direction of our Evangelisation priorities in 2011 will be enlightened and inspired by scripture. The use of a biblical passage as the base for the actions we are encouraging in our students is to reinforce that the way of Christ is 'The Way.' We are challenged through Holy Scriptures to respond to the call of the Holy Spirit.

Our Evangelisation umbrella question remains as 'Where is God in this?' but as guides for our journey we are adding 'Let love be without pretence' and after a process the staff have enthusiastically engaged in, our scriptural reference in 2011 will be taken from St Pauls letters to the Romans;

"Be joyful in hope, persevere in hardship, keep praying regularly'

Romans 12:12

We will go from the Mantra that has been used to focus our efforts in nurturing the values we would like our children to practice to the words of Holy Scripture as being ones that will touch and stay with our students.

One of the real features of what we do at Liwara is that the focus is on what matters. Staff discern and embrace the core work and manage the rest. Liwara is conscious of the need to guard against curriculum clutter, to clarify and simplify our fundamental objectives to create a children friendly learning environment and nurture a strong partnership with parents.

## **NATIONAL CURRICULUM**

All education sectors have signed up to the National Curriculum which will be trialled in some schools in 2011 and begin being implemented in all schools in 2012. The curriculum will outline the essential skills, knowledge and capabilities that all young Australians are entitled to access. It is interesting that the general capabilities having priority in the National Curriculum are Literacy, Numeracy, Thinking skills, Social Competence, Teamwork, Creativity, Ethical behaviour, ICT integration and Intercultural understanding – All key components of Liwara's school development targets.

How different is our curriculum to what is proposed? There will be differences but the extent of these won't be able to be established until we see the materials.

The first phase of the introduction of the National curriculum will have materials for English, Mathematics, Science and History. The second phase in 2013 will see a National Curriculum for Geography, Arts and Languages.

## **RAISe**

Part of our core work has been the investment as a school we made in RAISe. There is further evidence in our data that we can continue to have improved achievement levels in literacy. We have set spelling mastery targets for all our students and have looked closely at writing standards across the school. In 2011 the focus will continue to be on fluency as well as comprehension and spelling strategies. Literacy and the part thinking skills has in improving literacy levels will also be explained further in our programs.

Support a Reader and Supported Reader will be two programs that will be introduced. These programs rely on a pool of volunteer parents.

## **ACARA**

ACARA has taken over the management of the Literacy and Numeracy tests. From the reporting aspect ACARA will publicly report data from every school in Australia. This data accessible from a website will include the profile of the school, literacy and numeracy results and an overall teacher profile.

Parents are able to access the website to look at Liwara's data as well as see a comparison with like schools.

## **NAPLAN**

One of the forms we get the NAPLAN data in is a comparison between our children and the normative spread of students across Australia. That is of all students doing the tests 20% of students across Australia are considered to be in the lower bands of achievement, 60% of students are in the middle bands and 20% of students are in the higher bands. Liwara has decreasing numbers of students in the lower bands of achievement and the trend in our results show increasing numbers of students moving into the higher bands of achievement. It must be noted that there are discrepancies when comparing results between states because of the differences in when same knowledge and skills are taught.

It must be noted that any such assessments are a snapshot on one day and that the data that emerges should be interpreted in conjunction with rich sources of information on student performance that is conveyed through portfolios, parent/teacher conferences and learning journey nights. It is also to be noted that while we are doing as well as could be expected on average, we are also committed to raising our standards in areas that we think we could be doing better.

## **MATHS**

As in literacy we are seeing a positive trend in our results in Maths. A focus on working mathematically and problem solving will continue in 2011. While we profile our students in detail in Maths we continue to look for strategies which give us better diagnostic information on children's learning in this area.

The Maths interviews we are using to assess math's progress in Years 1 and 2 are proving to be effective. Our early intervention program called EMU is a successful intervention strategy and is closing the gap for those students who are taking extra time to grasp Maths concepts.

## **HOTS**

We aim for the children to have a 'thinkers toolbox' when they leave Liwara. That is to have a variety of thinking tools that they can select from and deploy to meet a variety of learning challenges. The aim is to establish a number of thinking skills that the children will become proficient with as they progress through the year levels. In this process we have been identifying a set of thinking tool we think our children need to have to be successful learners. We are finalising a Scope and Sequence of these skills to ensure all children graduating from Liwara have a set of thinking skills to apply across all domains of learning. We are aiming to give our Liwara children a set of opportunities that allow them to become creative/critical/caring thinkers. Alongside the 'thinkers toolbox' we are also focusing on the children having a thinkers inquiry toolbox. That is a set of competencies to be able to seek, interpret, organise and present information in an efficient and effective way. We are also more consciously identifying the thinking habits we need to have to be successful learners. We see the thinking strategies being woven into the day to day curriculum and integrated into all learning areas on a regular basis.

## **REACH – Gifted and Talented**

REACH or the G & T program is part of our intervention strategy that attempts to give each of our students an education that is suited to their particular needs and adapted to their ability. Clare Magee, who co-ordinates and facilitates REACH at Liwara, refers to the characteristics of the program as being the four D's Density, Difficulty, Depth and Diversity. That is there is faster pacing, open-endedness, greater complexity and real problems involved in the activities the REACH students tackle. Children are invited to be part of the REACH program in Years 3 – 6 after an independent assessment and identification process. We informally have

an enrichment program for students in year 1 and 2. We are not formally identifying children at these year levels nor are children in a program on a regular or on-going basis. Through our REACH program we are beginning to be recognised outside the school for the provision we are making for G & T students.

## **SCIENCE**

Science will continue to have a high profile in the school. Science days have become and will continue to be a feature of our program. We are currently involved in a Research study to explore the effectiveness of the science program in primary schools. We have been implementing a program called Primary Connections.

## **KIDSMATTER**

Kidsmatter has moved from a key initiative to being a program we are consolidating in our school. As a social and emotional learning program it provides opportunities for our children to develop care competencies in selfawareness, self management, responsible decision making and relationship skills. We have recently conducted a review of the components of this program and in the process identified some goals for improving our school environment. There are now three key components to our Kidsmatter strategy. We use PATHs in our junior years, Aussie Optimism in our middle year levels and Rock and Water in the upper year levels. We also integrate social and emotional learning in our Health and Religious Education programs. Our aim is to give our students the thinking skills and strategies to analyse and problem solve situations.

## **ICT**

We have Interactive Whiteboard's in all teaching areas. The staff continue to participate in regular PD in the ICT area. We continue to have an emphasis on teaching and learning with technology in integrated environments that cater for our digital natives. We have been building a new ICT platform at Liwara that encourages a greater engagement with technology. We still recognise the need to have a balance between on-screen and off screen activities. One of the areas we have identified as needing further attention is Net Alert education and responsible use of ICT tools. In 2011 the school will be investing in a wireless network that will encompass majority of the school buildings. This is to aid in the use of different mobile devices that will be available to all year levels. Liwara is leading the way in implementing this type of technology and we look forward to the benefit it will offer our students

## **CRUNCH and SIP**

We continue to use 'Crunch and Sip' in all classes. In short, it means children are given a break in the classroom during the morning session to eat fruit / salad or vegetables that parents supply and children bring in small containers. It is said to improve physical and mental performance and concentration levels. Students have also been able to access a drink of water which has been part of class routines. We reinforce the strict guidelines that do not allow for variations such as 'roll-ups', 'muesli bars' etc.