Foundation 2017 Orientation

Reuben with one of next years Foundation teachers - Steph
VCE Exams at MECS

This year for the first time, all MECS Year 12 exams are being completed on site, here at MECS. Michelle Smith has worked extremely hard over the last couple of years to ensure all elements of our facilities and procedures allow us to do an excellent job of hosting our Year 12 students for their end of year exams.

As anyone who has either been through Year 12 or recently had a child complete Year 12 can tell you, exams are stressful! They are the culmination of years of hard work; a final test of their ability in order to achieve a result that reflects their dedication, and maybe even a determining factor in being able to study the course of choice. Under the pressure of limited time, a vast amount of information to remember, and anxiety from a heightened sense of importance, many students approach their Year 12 exams with a certain degree of trepidation. It has been great to see the positive responses of students and teachers to us being able to minimise at least the stress of sitting these exams at another school.

It is a strange experience being a VCE teacher. Each year a new set of fresh faced Year 12s lay claim to the Year 12 study centre, step into the role of leaders of the school, and to an extent, find a special place in the heart of each Year 12 teacher. It is a new set of students that you pour your time, energy, support, knowledge, love of a subject, evenings spent marking, and encouragement into. There is a certain intensity to teaching a Year 12 class that seems more emotionally invested, and therefore draining, than most other classes. You ride the waves of the year with your students. The highs of excellent results that reflect hard work and dedication, and the lows of disappointing outcomes or debilitating stress. In many ways you are privy to seeing your students’ hopes and dreams for the future unfolding in a more immediate sense. The question “What do you want to do when you leave school?” suddenly becomes a confronting reality for them. At this time students start making decisions about who they are, who they want to be with, where they want to go, relationships, faith, values, and so much more. At times witnessing and being part of this journey can be heart-breaking, exhausting, frustrating, and challenging. It is also immensely rewarding. It is such a humbling experience and a privilege to be invited to walk alongside these incredible young people at such a formative time in their lives.

In the weeks leading up to exams there is a flurry of emails, of practice exams to mark, study sessions to attend and individual support to provide. When the day of the exam arrives you experience the flutters of nervousness alongside your students and embrace the anticipation of another year about to be finished. Immediately before the exam you meet with your students to check their stationery, organise the seating arrangements and pray for them. Then they walk in silence into the exam room, and you stand there, and watch.

There is an odd feeling of helplessness, a letting go of the reins when the moment of the exam finally comes. So much preparation and build up. So many conversations to calm, inspire or spur on. Yet as they walk into that room, it is time for them to step out on their own. A moment of independence that parallels their imminent departure from the security and familiarity of school. As I release them into the scary world of exams, and from there into the wide and wonderful world beyond, I think about what I hope the students have learnt from their time here at MECS.

While I obviously hope they have learnt the subject knowledge for their exams, I also dare to hope that it is much more than that. I hope the students have learnt the resilience to overcome adversity and setbacks. I hope they have learnt the value of community and friendship in supporting one another through the good and the bad in life. I hope they have learnt to strive for excellence, not that which is defined by a grade or the expectations of others, but a faithful application of the resources one is blessed with. I hope they have learnt empathy; to care for others beyond themselves, even when it comes at a cost. I hope they have caught a glimpse of the wonder of God's incredible creation and the immense value of each person within it. I hope they have learnt to be discerning and critical thinkers, equipped to sift through the plethora of ideas and worldviews they will be confronted with. Above all, I hope that they know that they are loved. By us, but ever more so by a good and loving God.

...I hope they have learnt to be discerning and critical thinkers, equipped to sift through the plethora of ideas and worldviews they will be confronted with. Above all, I hope that they know that they are loved. By us, but ever more so by a good and loving God.

Emma
Senior School Coordinator
Changes to our Senior School Leadership Team

As we move towards the end of this year and confirm our staffing arrangements for next year, we are keen to let you know of changes to our leadership group in the Senior School. After many years of serving faithfully as Year 11 and Year 12 Coordinators, Adam and Sharon will step down from these roles. We thank them for the way they have supported students over the years and have been instrumental in organising key events such as our Year 11 Formal and Year 12 Graduation. Whilst we are not replacing these roles, Emma, our Senior School Coordinator, Amelia, our Year 10 Transition Coordinator and of course, Roger, in his role as VCE Coordinator, will continue to provide excellent leadership in the Senior School. Alongside Karissa, our Assistant Principal Secondary, and our Senior School administration team, Val and Michelle, we are confident of a seamless transition into 2017.

Making a Contribution to the Wider Christian School Community

Last week, our Board met to discuss a range of matters. One of the key topics was the relationships we develop with organisations such as Christian Education National (CEN). It was pleasing to note that we continue to provide support and expertise in a number of ways. Jacqui, our Director of Teaching & Learning, continues to serve as an adjunct lecturer to support the professional development of staff right across Australia. Gerry, our Administration Manager, is presently the Chair of the CEN National Board, and is doing a great job serving in this capacity. I continue to serve on a number committees to organise professional development for Christian teachers across the staff and have just been elected as the Principals’ representative on the CEN Victorian State Council. It is important to us that as a Christian school community, we continue to share what we have with others where possible. Our positive relationship with CEN is just one way we seek to do this.

Australian Mathematics Competition

For a number of years, our Senior Primary and Year 7-10 school students have had the opportunity to participate in the Australian Mathematics Competition. Participating in such competitions is an excellent way to extend skills and gain confidence in exam like conditions. Results this year show that from the 58 MECS students that participated, 11 received a Distinction for their efforts which puts them in the top 20% of participants from around Australia. Congratulations to these students. Next year, whilst not compulsory, why don’t you encourage your child to participate?

Taking Community Relations to the Extreme

Over recent weeks, our Community Relations Officer, Nicole, has been busy doing her civic duty by serving on a jury in the County Court. The case she is serving on is likely to go for a 6 week period so quite an undertaking! Whilst we are missing Nicole in the main office, we fully support our staff being available for jury service. You only have to listen to the news each day, to be grateful for the democratic and peaceful country that we live in, and contributing to good order of our legal system is one way we can contribute to this. Good on you Nicole!

Busy Times in the Primary School

The last week and a half has been busy in the Primary School. As photos in the newsletter illustrate, our Middle Primary students enjoyed their three day camp last week and our Foundation students had their Big Day Out last Friday. This week, our Junior Primary students enjoyed two days of fun at the Oasis Camp site. All these important learning activities can only happen with the generous support of parents who volunteer their time, and of course, the extra time and effort of our staff. At this busy time of the year, we really appreciate this support. Thank-you!

Many misconceptions surround primary classroom music: singing the national anthem until perfection, laboriously practising musical scales, and of course… recorders (nothing personal). However, this cannot be said about primary music at MECS!

In the short time I’ve been teaching music at MECS, 3 main characteristics are becoming apparent:

• Fostering positive relationships,
• Celebrating diversity, and
• Reflecting a creative Father

Music is a subject that can unite individuals despite their differences. In the same way two complete strangers can be brothers in arms when singing their anthem at the football, music unites students of different genders, beliefs, age, backgrounds and friendship groups. Learning and playing music in groups is a very social experience, and is a powerful means to form new positive relationships and strengthen existing ones.

From singing Taylor Swift songs to playing African drumming beats, all students are encouraged to pursue whatever musical interests they have with an underlying respect for each other and their varying abilities. Celebrating the piano prodigy alongside encouraging a student to clap in time is a challenge and a privilege one often faces in classroom music. It is a treat to observe students celebrate each other’s musical advancements however big or small they are.

I’ve often noticed when classes have strong amounts of the characteristics above-mentioned, they can’t help but be creative. When students feel they are respected, and are in positive relationships with those around them, there is freedom for them to be imaginative and create something without fear of being judged. It is magnificent to see hints of God’s design in these moments, and reflections of his creative nature.

Scott
Primary Music Teacher
Last Thursday evening, our Year 10 students and their families gathered together to reflect on the Centre Trip. Each student presented a piece of poetry or prose that they had written in response to something that had impacted them on the camp.

Many students’ poems spoke of their empathy towards our indigenous people. Others were creative descriptions of places such as the town of Yuendumu, Uluru and the desert. Some students put together short films of the trip which was a wonderful way for parents to catch a glimpse into the life of the camp.

At the end of the evening, staff and volunteers who attended were thanked and a special mention was made of Roger Fernando, Peter Beams and Nicola Hewitt who have been leading/assisting for many years.

It was a very special night of celebrating a trip that will have been a forming experience for many of the students.

Amelia
Year 10, Careers, VET in Schools Coordinator

The Colours of the Desert
By Kate

Let me paint you a picture
Of an isolated land
Where dusty copper sand is consumed
By a sea of delicate silver green

Where icy blue sky contrasts
The rare raspberry red flowers
And the small ash brown shrubs are
Overpowered by honey yellow flowers.

For a desert
There is life everywhere.

Where to stand? (Response to Uluru)
by Joshua

Rock immense, cool, hard, towering a sight to see
An icon of our land a time traveller which has seen days, long past, a sacred sight
Beauty no one can deny but despite its beauty, trouble, controversy and clashes
Orange slopes tainted with black streaks, like tears of ink
Two sides where to stand?
This inside battle lessens the experience, like a red scar across a white canvas

Where to stand?

Artwork by Tiana
Artwork by Micah
Artwork by Jemma
Artwork by Josh
Artwork by Megan

MECS Notes
Term 4 PS GTs
Mondays 9am PUMP room on the following dates except the final concert which is at 6pm.
Week 6, Monday 14 November
JP Bandicoots (Fiona Murray)
Week 8, Monday 28 November
MP Green (Naomi Campbell)
Week 10, Monday 12 December
Primary Concert 6pm
Parents and friends welcome.
Foundation 2017 Orientation

Last Thursday was the first orientation session for all our little ones starting school next year! We had a mixture of children that know their way around MECS because they are currently attending the MECS Kinder, and some brand newies that are coming for the first time. While the children got to know the Foundation teachers, the parents had the opportunity to chat and get to know each other over a cuppa, while picking up some handy hints to get their little one ready for school!

This is the first of a few sessions that will be happening over the next few weeks to help the children transition well into school. What a great start!

Natasha
Enrolments & Office Manager

Middle School Art

Artwork by Skye
Artwork by Jaz
Artwork by Elise

BAKE SALE
FROM SWEET LIL THINGS
YUMMY TREATS FOR EVERYONE!
Including Nut Free, Dairy Free, Egg Free & Gluten Free.
From $1 - $5
ON THE 30TH OF NOVEMBER @ THE UNDERSTOREY
ONCE YOU BUY A TREAT YOU CAN CHOOSE IF YOU WANT TO DONATE THE MONEY TO...
R.S.P.C.A, R.C.H OR R.M.D.H
On camp we learnt that spinifex grass has long roots to adapt to the wind by not blowing away. My favourite part was building a village on the beach with Noah.

**Pat Weathers**

Something I learnt from visiting Coolart Homestead is that they bought lots of different types of plants from different countries, to remember their houses and countries. For example, the Death Lily. My favourite part was burying Bethany and myself in the sand in the shape of a mermaid, and sketching with Mr Coffey.

**Charlotte Armstrong**

I learnt how to draw flowers. I drew a fox glove. I also learnt that every animal and plant has its purpose.

**Kaitlyn Bruinewoud**

I learnt to draw plants and other flowers and my favourite part was playing games on the beach.

**Jet Wilson**

I learnt about the layers of a forest being Emergent, Canopy, Understorey and forest floor. My favourite part was seeing the Koala.

**Hannah Wallace**

On camp I learnt how the different plants adapted to different environments. But my favourite bit was eating hamburgers!

**Micah Ntim-Duodu**

My favourite part of the visit to Coolart was lunch and playing beach cricket.

**Jenson New**

On camp I learnt that plants can grow on beaches. My favourite part was playing at the beach with my friends.

**Emily Weekes**

---

**Oscar Stewart & Ben-Noah Schneider**

**Seth Leach**

**Micah White**

**Andrew Battams**

**Sam Town**

**Mia Fraser**

**Seb Maultby**

---

**Seb Maultby**

---

**Oscar Stewart & Ben-Noah Schneider**

---

**Emily Weekes**

---
On Friday November 4 we had the Big Night Out. It was very very fun and we were so excited. First we went to the park; it was very sunny and hot so we got an icypole! YUMMY! The park was very fun, it was called Montrose Adventure Park.

The bus was great. We saw lots of things from the bus. Thank you Mr Beams and Mr White for driving us. When we got back to school we went to the gym and the oval for some really fun games. We made a tent with the parachute by sitting on the edge. We frightened the other teachers by jumping out of the tent and saying “BOO”.

After playing we had a delicious dinner in the big staffroom, we even got icecream with sprinkles. When we had finished dinner and washed our own dishes we changed into pyjamas. It was a bit weird and different to wear pjs at school, but it was fun. To finish the Big Night Out we took our cute teddies up to the PUMP room for some stories and songs. We all had a brilliant time at the Big Night Out and it was one of the best days ever!

Special thanks to our Year 6 helpers Caleb Peet, Rian Sharp, Leah Baxter, Indigo Bowden, Jasmin Ammann and Amaya Town.

Written by Mae, Sam, Stella, Zoe and Miss Alison Holdsworth from the Foundation Geckos.
**Apple Man**

The Apple Man is coming tomorrow, Friday Nov 11 and the following varieties will be available: Granny Smiths, Fujis, Royal Galas, Pink Ladies and Green Pears. Apples $10 a bag, Pears $8. Please put the correct money in an envelope with your order written on the front, and hand it into the office before 10.30am on Friday Nov 11.

---

**Enrolments now open for 2017**