Welcome parents to Prep. Our teaching team consists of Ms Ali Browne (J16), Miss Bonnie Lewis (J17) and Mrs Jenny Storer (J18).

Your child may also be taught by Mrs Kerri Glowacki (Literacy) and Ms Kay Bridgman (Literacy).

We wish to build upon your child’s transition into school by providing further information about the Prep year and its programs.

In order to achieve the greatest impact on your child’s education, it is vital that school and home work together to help your child reach their full potential. We welcome contact with you to discuss concerns, successes and pathways to success.

Throughout the year, many opportunities will be available for assistance in the classroom, on excursions and with special events.

While this information covers the whole year, it is crucial that we elaborate on the important elements of the first term.

SETTLING INTO SCHOOL
During first term, our focus is on:

- A sense of home group – learning names of class members, developing a relationship with teacher, knowing where things are within the room.
- A sense of being a part of the school community.
- Establishing relationships with teachers, peers and buddies.
- Participating in the Better Buddy program. Establishing a supportive environment for Prep and Year 5/6 buddies.
- Establishing daily routine – unpacking bags, lining up, being able to discriminate between snacks and lunch.
- Establishing learning routines, eg take home books, working in different books, working in groups, collecting materials and getting ready to begin tasks.
- Developing friendships – role playing, how to ask someone to play.
- Resilience (problem solving), play, what to do when someone says “No!” Role playing and circle discussions about dealing with situations in the yard and the classroom, eg finding a yard duty teacher, solving issues.
- Social behaviours, eg sharing, turn taking, speaking nicely to others, developing classroom rules and appropriate social behaviours.
- Testing – English Online and Mathematics Online interview.

These skills and behaviours will continue to be a focus throughout the Prep year.

Following is an overview of the curriculum content and programs, as well as the organisational procedures for your Prep child in 2014.

WORKING TOGETHER ......
We would appreciate your help by encouraging your child and supporting our program in the following ways:

- Ensure your child has a clearly named bottle of water each day.
- Ensure your child has a clearly named school hat to wear from the beginning of school until April, and from September to December.
- Reading/sharing take home books daily, and caring for these.
- Sharing and displaying your child’s work.
- Teaching your child to tie shoelaces.
• Ensuring belongings and clothing are clearly named (please check regularly).
• Checking your child’s bag for notices/letters (found in front pocket of bag).
• Replying promptly to notices and requests.
• Carefully monitoring your child’s health especially once colds etc, become prevalent.
• Writing a note to explain absences unless you have spoken to the teacher.
• Prior to going on extended family holidays or cultural events/holidays, a note must be given to the classroom teacher for approval by the principal.
• Ensuring that we are notified of any change of going home arrangements and that students leaving earlier are collected from the classroom. (You will need to sign the “In/Out Book” at the office for this).
• Notify us of changes of address, phone numbers in case of emergencies.

It would be appreciated if your child had some fruit and vegetables as we have a ‘FRUIT AND WATER’ session after the lunch break.

ALLERGIES
As there are students with SERIOUS allergies, it is important that students do not swap or share food. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT STUDENTS DO NOT USE THEIR CANTEEN MONEY TO BUY TREATS/FOOD FOR OTHERS. If your child has a food allergy, would you please supply a container of treats so that they can participate in birthday celebrations, etc.
Also, some of our students are allergic to animals, so please check with the teacher before bringing pets for ‘Show and Tell’.

ENGLISH

Oral Language is part of every learning experience in the Prep year. Your child will be provided with a rich range of opportunities to engage with others, to experiment and practise with words, language and conversation. This will be delivered through the implementation of an Oral Language Play Program.

Early Years Literacy Program
Your child will be placed in a group for effective reading instruction and matched to texts which are appropriate to their stage of literacy development and their immediate learning needs. Lessons include both a whole group focus and small group work. The work in small groups includes:
• Guided reading groups where the teacher works intensively with students with similar learning needs.
• Learning centre work where students consolidate literacy understandings either independently or in small groups.

The Reading program will take the form of listening to and discussing stories, individual and shared experiences with big books, literature, poetry, rhymes and recorded class experience books. From these activities your child will develop strategies to match spoken and written words and gain meaning from text by:
• Using previous knowledge and experience to predict story lines.
• Using pictures to assist their understanding of the story.
• Learning to expect that text makes sense.
• Using their experience of oral language.
• Using their knowledge of the conventions of print (eg top to bottom, left to right, front to back).
• Using knowledge of frequently used words.
• Using sound/letter knowledge to attempt unknown words.

Take home books support class work by reinforcing and practising skills taught.
Initially, the books are to be read to and shared with your child, helping them to tune into the reading process.
In the next stage, your child will bring home books they have made in class, which they will read to you.
Your child will then bring home books, which should be easy to read with little challenge. These books also give families an opportunity to share books together. This could take the form of discussing the book, pictures, content, etc before and during reading. This enables them to utilise their skills and strategies in a successful manner.
IF YOUR CHILD Chooses TO BRING HOME A BOOK THEY HAVE READ BEFORE, this will provide the opportunity to enjoy favourite books and at the same time, prove valuable for reinforcing skills and experiencing success. IT MAY HAPPEN THAT YOUR CHILD WILL OCCASIONALLY CHOOSE A BOOK THAT IS A LITTLE HARD. In this case, please make sure that reading stays an enjoyable and relaxed activity, with you either sharing the reading or reading the story to your child. Valuable learning could then be had by discussing the story briefly.

Your child may also bring home a library book each week. Library books are designed for sharing and enjoyment and it would not be expected that your child would read these books independently.

**Written Language**

In Prep, your child will be encouraged to record their thoughts in drawing then writing. As they progress through the year, written language will be developed through the use of teacher demonstration and shared writing about individual and class experiences.

Your child’s skills will develop as they refine their spelling and reading strategies, word attack and word knowledge.

Providing your child with frequent opportunities to write for various purposes will enhance your child’s writing skills and encourage them to take more risks with their writing.

**Word Study** will equip your child with knowledge of the sounds letters make as a basis for hearing and recording sounds in words.

Your child will also develop a core of frequently used words that they can spell correctly. Encouragement to practise these words at home will support your child's writing in the classroom.

**MATHEMATICS**

A wide variety of practical activities will be used to enable students to see Mathematics as part of their everyday world. Counting, problem solving, pattern and order, measurement, and spatial relations will be presented at a Prep level through songs, games, practical activities and application sheets. Please encourage your child to see Mathematics all around them at home too.

**INQUIRY BASED LEARNING**

*Inquiry Based Learning* is a student-centred learning approach in which the student is actively involved in the learning process. The aim of this program is to assist your child to develop skills and strategies to solve problems, test theories, and find answers through inquiries and explorations of concepts. Our inquiries cover a range of interests such as being healthy, staying safe, the needs of living things, and the technology process.

**PERCEPTUAL MOTOR PROGRAM (PMP)**

"PMP aims to teach the child perceptions and understandings of himself/herself and his/her world through movement/motor experiences." – J Bulluss & P Cole

PMP is a Perceptual Motor Program in which children rotate through a graded sequence of physical activities. PMP will be conducted weekly (Wednesdays).

For this program to be successful, we rely on your assistance during Terms 2 and 3. In Term 4, your child will attend the gymnastics program at the Macleod YMCA.

**PREP BLOG**

This year, you and your child will have access to a Prep Blog. The aim of the blog is to provide an avenue for discussion and collaboration. It is a powerful tool that opens up communication between students, parents and teachers. A blog can provide information about class events and calendars, school projects, home tasks, videos, photographs (of students’ work, class displays, etc), music and more. It allows you to ‘take a peek’ inside the classroom and get an idea of the incredible learning that happens each day. It also allows you to comment and share in your child's learning. The web address of the Prep blog is [http://wnpsprep2014.global2.vic.edu.au/](http://wnpsprep2014.global2.vic.edu.au/)
HOMEWORK
Take-home books will be sent home daily. Later in the year the students may be given tasks as per their Learning Improvement Plans. They may also be required on occasion to collect specific information or resources for classroom activities. Department of Education guidelines for homework states that students in Years Prep-4 spend up to 30 minutes on homework each day. At Watsonia North Primary School, we expect students in Prep to spend up to, but not more than 20 minutes per day.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES @ WNPS
Restorative Practices is .......

- A whole school behaviour management approach, designed to enhance student engagement and productivity.
- About relationships between people who make up a community.
- Practised by all staff and students.
- Maintains consistent language and strategies and follows well defined values as listed below.

Activities in the classrooms provide students with opportunities to model and discuss situations that may arise in a forum that allows all to be heard and acknowledged. Restorative Practices provides a caring, stimulating and dynamic learning environment which engages students, and supports and encourages them to achieve their personal best, in all endeavours.

Through Restorative Practices we aim to foster the school values ...

Excellence | Integrity | Respect | Responsibility | Understanding

Stop, Think, Do
The Personal Development component of our Health Program is STOP, THINK, DO. Within the Restorative Practices framework, we include ‘Stop, Think, Do’. This strategy encourages students to give themselves time to make considered judgements and decisions.

SPECIALIST PROGRAMS
At Watsonia North Primary School, we provide the following specialist programs which your child will attend on a weekly basis:

- **Monday** School Assembly – 8.50am to Prep courtyard | Music
- **Tuesday** Physical Education
- **Wednesday** Art | PMP
- **Thursday** Library/ICT
- **Friday** Prep Assembly

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)
This specialist session will be taken by Mr Trent O’Sullivan. The emphasis of the Physical Education Program is the development of skills, co-ordination, co-operation, enjoyment and healthy positive attitudes to physical activity which will prepare your child for future recreational pursuits.

This term, Physical Education will cover the areas of movement, safe space, rules and the fundamental motor skills of ball handling/bounce/kick/strike/throw/catch and minor games. The program will be supported this year by:

- Perceptual Motor Program (PMP).
- YMCA Gymnastics Program.
- Sporting Clinics as offered, eg Tennis lessons/Cricket lessons/Rugby clinics.

**Time Allocation**
Each class will have a Physical Education specialist session per week, running for 50 minutes.

The basic outline of each session will involve a warm up, skill based activities, a game or activity and a cool down session.

A fun House Tabloid Sports morning is held at the end of term 4 for Prep students.
How Can You Help Your Child?

- Show your child you believe physical activity and sport to be important for one’s physical and social well-being by playing a game in the backyard with your child or going to the park to throw, kick and catch a ball and encourage using a skipping rope.
- Encourage your children to be active rather than passive during spare time.
- Ensure your child presents for PE and Sport properly attired, especially footwear.

ART/CRAFT

Our aim within the Art room is to provide an imaginative and creative program, which engages students in stimulating and challenging art experiences, so that they learn to work with ideas, develop artistic skills and respond to art works.

- Each grade will attend one session of Visual Art per week with Art Specialist, Ms Clare Meehan.
- Children should provide a clearly named art smock to protect their clothing.
- Children’s artwork will be promoted imaginatively and positively within the art room and around the school.

Prep students will:

- Create ideas.
- Investigate sources of information.
- Explore materials.
- Manipulate techniques and processes.
- Arrange art elements.
- Draft designs.
- Develop visual awareness.
- Include the use of technology.
- Work individually and collaboratively.

Forms undertaken will include Drawing, Painting, Printing, Collage, Modelling, and Textiles. Artworks will incorporate 2D and 3D pieces.

MUSIC/PERFORMING ARTS

The emphasis of the Music program is the development of skills including spatial awareness and movement, sense of pitch and rhythm, and a pleasant singing voice. Whole body movement is used as the basis for the majority of most activities in Prep Music, in accordance with their current stage of development. The program draws on two approaches devised by European music educators – the Kodaly and Orff Schulwerk approaches. The Kodaly approach uses the melodies of children’s songs taught in class to develop a deep understanding of pitch and rhythm. The Orff Schulwerk approach uses song, dance, body percussion and other media to learn material that is developed in a number of ways.

In Term 1 Music, students will be learning about the different resources available in the Music room and how these can be used in various activities. Students are taught about the difference between their “singing voice” and other “voices”, moving in response to changing sounds, and starting and stopping in response to given cues. Movement activities including Musical Statues and Follow the Leader, are used in conjunction with songs and circle games.

Time Allocation

Each class has one Music specialist session per week, running for 50 minutes conducted by Mr David Perry. After the roll song, singing, movement and game activities are alternated in order to maximise student engagement. Each Friday, all Prep students gather in the Music room for the Prep assembly, where songs, games and stories are explored.

How can you help your child?

- Remind your child that classroom Music is for all children, not just those that are “good at music”.
- Encourage them to participate fully in all classroom activities.
- Ask your children to sing you the songs learned in Music, or to recount the stories heard in Prep assemblies.
PREP ASSEMBLY
Music will be an integral part of the student’s work encouraging them to sing, play, perform and listen in the classroom. On Friday mornings, the Prep grades have an additional Music Session (Prep Assembly) with Mr David Perry.

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)
Prep children have access to the wonderful world of computers both in the classroom and in the Computer Lab. Children attend sessions in the Lab with Miss Rachel Mercuri, and the programs that are used in the Lab will also be available in the classroom.

During the year, your child will have the opportunity to:
- Learn to use the hardware efficiently.
- Use Kid Pix and Paint to develop their graphical skills.
- Use a number of programs, websites and apps specifically designed to aid their knowledge in the content areas in their classroom.
- Develop basic word processing using Microsoft Word.
- Design simple animations.
- Learn to save their work and print it.

Prep students also have access to laptops and iPads in their classroom and an Interactive White Board in a shared space. Classroom teachers will plan and incorporate these technologies into all learning areas where appropriate.

LIBRARY
During Term 1, Prep students have a 50 minute library lesson, with Miss Rachel Mercuri, each week. During this session, ICT as well as library skills will be taught. Students will also have an opportunity to borrow library books. In Terms 2-4, Prep students will have a 50 minute library lesson with their classroom teacher and a separate 50 minute lesson of ICT with Miss Rachel Mercuri.

The aims of the Library Prep Program are:
- To develop an interest in literature.
- To introduce a range of reading material suitable to the students’ stage of development.
- To teach the student how to look after our resources.
- To teach the student how to find the resources they want to borrow.

Preps can borrow two books at a time, either a picture story book or an easy non-fiction book. The loan period is for one week. Books should be returned on or before the day of the library session.

Named library bags are a compulsory item for Preps to help protect library books from damage and to help the students to keep track of their books.

We trust this information will be useful and we welcome your involvement in your child’s Prep year. We will discuss any concerns we have with you and we encourage you to do the same.

Thanking you, Bonnie Lewis, Ali Browne & Jenny Storer