

## Principal's Report for 2020

2020 was a tumultuous year for all concerned. We began the school year, coming together as a community to support those affected by the devastating bushfires that were sweeping the country; then had to deal with the storms that wreaked havoc across Melbourne leaving its mark on our own school with branches and debris left in its wake and the SES having to come in and clean up; closely followed by the Covid 19 pandemic and the impact that had (and is still having) across the world.

Our first, and last, community event for 2020 was the Welcome BBQ that was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020 which was very well received.

We also managed to complete our 4 year School Strategic Plan Review, hosting the second and final day with the panel, the week before heading into an enforced early term one holiday break.

Students finished school on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and staff had 4 days to prepare for the 'unknown'. Staff spent the time preparing hard copy learning packs for the first 3 weeks of term 2, in order to allow us time to get a 'remote learning platform' up and running, in the event we did not return to school. Which ended up being the case!

Victoria was declared a 'state of emergency' and the first lock down period began on Tuesday April 15<sup>th</sup>. This is when teaching and learning really hit a new level! Staff held morning webex meetings to check in on students and then spent time learning how to video themselves teaching the learning content, in the confines of their own homes, and uploading this content along with written instructions for students (and parents!) to follow from home. Parents had to support students in their learning and in uploading learning content for teachers to see/mark/give feedback on. The level of technology use went from zero to one hundred in lightning speed.

Our Prep to 2 students were able to return to school on May 26<sup>th</sup> – after spending almost 8 weeks at home. Our 3 – 6 students returned on June 9<sup>th</sup>, after nearly 11 weeks at home, but only two weeks before the end of term 2.

When our students returned to school we sought feedback from {students}, staff and parents on what worked, didn't work and how we could make the remote learning experience better if it were to ever happen again. Thank goodness we did!

Term 3 holidays were extended by one week to allow staff to prepare once again for remote and flexible learning with announcement of Stage 4 Restrictions (Lockdown #2).

Hard copy learning packs were the order of the day – with drop off and collection of new packs scattered throughout the term. Webex meetings were timetabled for the morning (whole class) as well as scheduled small cohort meetings throughout the day/week to work through learning content.

Our school captains and house captains set up challenges on the remote and flexible learning platform, to keep our students engaged, connected and motivated. Even so, as we neared the end of term 3, a full term of Remote and Flexible learning, attitudes and motivation was starting to wane – we were all itching to get back to normal.

For the first week of term 4 all students (across the state) continued with Remote and Flexible Learning to allow all Year 12 students to sit their exams onsite (creating an equal playing field across the state). The intention was that P-2 students would be returning to onsite learning in week 2 and Grades 3-6 would follow in week 6. Thankfully all students were allowed to return to school on Monday October 12<sup>th</sup>.

However, all extracurricular activities and community events, were cancelled – no Interschool Sports, no mid-year performance, no singing/choirs, no dancing, no music, no contact sports, no mixing of class cohorts, modified reports, no parent's onsite – everything was on hold – and yet we were all happy just to be back at school. As I wrote this I realise how crazy and disrupted the year was, but how quickly we forget, or is it that it became 'normal'.

Reflecting back on that time – I am equal parts surprised and proud of the work that was undertaken in that time frame. I am extremely grateful for the support and the feedback that our community provided us and thankful for the professional committed staff we have at Belle Vue Primary School. Mostly I am proud and impressed with how our students adapted and came out

stronger, more confident and much more independent individuals. This is without a doubt one of the toughest times we have all had to face – however the Belle Vue Community pulled together, worked together, supported each other and showed a lot of patience, understanding and kindness for each other. Something we should all acknowledge and be proud of.

The beginning of the 2020 school year saw Belle Vue commence with an enrolment of 173 students, spread across 9 classrooms. When at school we continued to provide a warm, safe and engaging learning environment for all our students at Belle Vue – catering for the many varied needs of our students. We worked together with the wider community to ensure that our children felt supported. Our staffing profile at the beginning of 2020 comprised of:

### **Staffing Profile for 2020**

**Prep W** – Ms Clare Woodhouse  
**1/2R** – Mr Andrew Robinson  
**1/2P** – Mrs Stacey Paterson  
**1/2D** – Ms Rachael De Prada  
**3/4G** – Miss Gemma Grimmond  
**3/4R** – Ms Brigitte Raymond  
**3/4W** – Mr Carl Ward  
**5/6G** – Mr Bryce Griesheimer (Mr G)  
**5/6D** – Ms Tanya Donaldson  
**Art** – Ms Leanne Anstee  
**Phys Ed** – Mr Carney Kucharski

**LOTE (Italian)** – Signorina Irena Gigli  
/Signorina Pomponio  
**Computer (ICT)** – Mr Ric Zalewski  
**Education Support Staff** – Mrs Loree Spong  
and Miss Jollene Chen  
**Groundsman** – Leo and Conrad Cooper  
**Out of Hours School Care Coordinator** –  
Jasnarinder Kaur (Camp Australia)  
**Business Manager** – Ms Annette Bruce  
**Principal** – Ms Cathy Caminiti

Half way through term one we said goodbye to Irena Gigli (LOTE Teacher) due to personal reasons and after the first few weeks of term 2 we managed to find a fantastic replacement with Stephanie Pomponio.

Our teaching staff, including Stephanie who had not had the opportunity to meet the students face to face, deserve to be congratulated not only on their planning and implementation of the curriculum in 2020, but in their ability to pivot and adapt in an ever changing covid landscape. It was tough – on everyone. They essentially had to learn how to teach online and put themselves out there for all to see – they had to be everything for their students and be readily available for parents, whilst also dealing with new technology, their own family situations and having to come in and supervise the students of essential workers. A massive learning curve for all of us.

### **Staff Professional Learning**

Most of the scheduled professional learning for 2020 was put on hold.

We started the year on a high – with a whole day professional learning with the 4 school in our Community of Practice (Greythorn, Deepdene and Balwyn North Primary School) – facilitated by Glen Pearsall – focussing on the High Impact Teaching Strategies. We also managed to complete School Strategic Plan Review.

Then all scheduled PL and the work of our Community of Practice was put on hold as we faced new challenges. Technology became the focus for all our Professional Learning.

Learning about Zoom, google classrooms and WebEx, weighing up pros and cons and deciding which would suit our needs.

Decisions around how we were going to teach remotely; what the remote learning platform would look like and how to differentiate work became the priority for our PL workshops. Ironically all staff meetings and PL were conducted via WebEx....certainly different times for all of us.

However, the teaching staff continued to work collaboratively in curriculum planning and delivery reflecting a strong commitment to teamwork. Parents and teachers worked in (true) partnership to support their children achieve their full potential.

Belle Vue continues to be recognised as a high performing school as evidenced by the Victorian Curriculum data in 2020. Belle Vue achieved well above both state and similar school averages in English and Mathematics Prep – 6. We believe our students were well catered for during the Remote and Flexible Learning period. Upon the return of students in early Term 4, and with the DET

focus on 'catching up' in English and Mathematics, our student's growth in these two areas, relative to like schools, was exceptional. Belle Vue is a highly effective learning community providing challenging and varied learning opportunities. It is our goal that individual talents, interests and skills are identified, nurtured and developed so that all students achieve success, engendering a high sense of self confidence and a love of learning.

(Please see Annual Report 2020 for an overview of data sets)

While catering for all ability levels and learning styles, the focus has been on students achieving the best possible learning outcomes in Literacy and Numeracy. Our capacity to provide high quality specialist programs in Phys Ed, Art, Italian and Robotics/Coding during the Remote and Flexible Learning period, provided every child with the opportunity to experience success.

### **Maintenance Works**

- The new fence was completed before the students returned at the start of the school year.
- General grounds maintenance – completed by Con and Leo Cooper.
- Ecodynamics (through NEL) – phase one planting of undergrowth along the Bulleen Road fence line. Sustainability students were given the option, whilst in lock down, to care for a tree and take part in a virtual 'repotting and how to care for your tree' lesson until they could return to school. Once we returned to school the students work with Ecodynamics to plant these trees in the school grounds. Ecodynamics have been maintain these low growing trees.

### **Before and After Care**

Throughout the lockdowns (both 1 and 2) Camp Australia continued to operate for those children of essential service workers.

Our contract with Camp Australia was due to end at the end of 2020. School Council opted to seek Expressions of Interest from other providers for the Out of School Hours Care contract. A 'School Council Committee' was elected and the process began in Term 3 of 2020. After quite a lengthy process, the new contract was finally awarded to TheirCare, whose core values were reflected with those of our own. We look forward to a strong partnership that takes care of the needs of our community.

### **School Council**

Last year the Belle Vue Primary School community was well served by a hardworking and supportive School Council. Thanks again to all Council members for the support and involvement in Council. It is a challenge to keep people informed and discuss the complex issues involved in school policies, operations and accountability when we only meet for a few of hours twice a term, throw into the equation the added challenge of a year meetings conducted via WebEx! Council members give of their valuable time and endeavour to assist the effective running of the school when faced with such a vast amount of information. We are fortunate that we have a council that works together for the greater good of our school community.

Whilst we recognise and value the efforts of *all* school council members, each bringing valuable skill sets to council - a particular thanks must go to Andy Olsen in his role as School Council President.

*Cathy Caminiti*

Principal