Introduction

Cobdogla Primary School is fast approaching its centenary in 2017. As I look back at our results in 2015, I am proud to report that we are on track to celebrate this significant milestone as a high achieving school with motivated students.

Cobdogla Primary School has a reputation for providing students with an outstanding education in a safe and supportive environment. Our focus as a school centres on powerful learning, high expectations and unwavering support for each student. It is our goal to provide a learning environment where your child can reach his/her potential and most importantly, enjoy their schooling. Kids matter at Cobby!

We continue to work hard on refining how we work with children in numeracy and literacy right across the school. We continue to analyse how best to support and extend student learning in the right way, at the right level.

A school isn’t a school without a strong community around it. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding passion, hard work and commitment of everyone in the school community.

This dedication has resulted in many fantastic experiences for our students which I have proudly shared in the newsletter throughout the year.

I firmly believe that the collective determination shown by our staff and community provides our students with the impetus to succeed.

The Cobdogla Primary School Governing Council once again provided terrific guidance in 2015. I thank all members for the time and energy they brought to the school. Our school values are alive and well thanks to the strong support offered by the Governing Council.

As always, I invite you to review this annual report and provide feedback.

Trevor Broughton
Principal
Cobdogla Primary School
The Governing Council was strongly represented with eleven parent representatives, as well as Rod Hanna (staff), Donna Gorman (community) and our principal, Trevor Broughton.

Our parent group has done an amazing job from informal meetings and welcoming new families into the school, through to coordinating a wide range of activities and catering for school functions. Through our Special Projects, Finance, Grounds and School Council committees we have had input on the direction of the school.

It has been an exciting year with the completion of the Multi Purpose room which has been utilised by the school community and our Playgroup. The mound, garden and chook corner continues to evolve and is definitely a place of interest for onlookers and students.

Thank you to our staff and SSOs for their commitment to our students. We are blessed to have such a stable and focussed group who really strive to make a massive difference in the social and academic development of our children. Besides the core business of teaching they give our students wonderful opportunities through KidsMatter, school camps, excursions, Pastoral Care, our Environmental Corner, SRC and SAPSASA.

Thank you to the parent group and our community volunteers. It is great to see the bonds and self esteem achieved through mentoring, class room assistance and reward days. Your help is appreciated and definitely makes Cobby Primary a great school.

Shane Nettle
Chairperson
Site Improvement Plan

In the 2014 Annual Report we outlined our desire to develop a whole of school approach and understanding to teaching reading, writing, literacy and oral language skills.

In 2015, we worked closely with Deb Platt from the Berri Barmera Partnership, to help us develop a whole school strategy and embed this in our everyday work. Our aim in taking this approach is reduce variation across the school. We want our classroom practices to be consistent to ensure students do not get confused as they progress through school.

In the 2014 Annual Report we also outlined how as a school, we would focus on data collection, analysis and individual tracking of students to ensure our learning programs are meeting student needs.

I am proud to report that in 2015 we implemented this program and the benefits are already evident. We will continue to evolve and build this program in 2016.

Reading skills have been a priority at Cobdogla Primary School for the past 12 months. Throughout 2015 teachers continued to strengthen reading outcomes for all students by developing fluency.

In our Junior Primary classes, Reading Recovery levels indicate that 50% of our students are at or above the DECD standard. This needs to be higher!

This figure emphasises the school focus of moving students to the next level only when they are able to demonstrate a clear understanding and comprehension of the text. It is expected that this approach will enable students to understand texts of greater complexity at an earlier stage in their education.

Data from the standardised PAT Reading test indicates that a significant percentage of our students are not demonstrating the complex skills required to be a capable reader. (See the NAPLAN section)
As a school we committed to developing a whole school approach to numeracy and the teaching of mathematics skills. Our goal is for all teachers to use consistent language throughout the school. This will ensure students maintain a coherent understanding of mathematical principles from Reception to Year 7. We committed to this goal in our 2014 Annual Report and we remain on track with our work and this will remain on our plan for 2016 and beyond!

You may have heard your child talking about Ann Baker Natural Maths Strategies. This is a whole school approach we have adopted to help students develop their problem solving skills.

There is no doubt that Cobdogla students require more explicit teaching on problem solving strategies and it is hoped that by adopting this approach we can assist students achieve in this area.

Initial results have been very positive and further resolves our commitment to developing problem solving skills. It is important for young people to be agile and dynamic to solve the problems they encounter in this globalised world.

As a result of our whole school approach to maths and problem solving we are seeing improved attitudes towards numeracy. Many students now understand the maths and the relevance it has to their daily life and are more willing to tackle the problems that Ann Baker calls the ‘sting in the tail’ problems rather than just the ‘easy peasy’ ones.
Student Achievement

The NAPLAN test is designed to assess a student at a certain point in time. We use the results from this test to compare our school against other sites, look at trends over time and more importantly identify students who may need more instruction or extension.

At Cobdogla Primary School we only have a small number of students who sit the test. As a result, over the past two years, we have focused on using NAPLAN results to diagnose individual needs for each student. Our objective remains to set realistic learning goals and plan effective programs for each child at our school.

Reading

2015 NAPLAN results reveal that 85% of Cobdogla students reflect on text and retrieve information from set reading really well. Our analysis has shown that most standardised tests, including the NAPLAN test, only have a few questions that elicit these skills.

Instead, the questions in standardised tests attempt to find out whether or not students can interpret and infer from text rather than just retrieving the key information. NAPLAN results associated with these more complex reading skills indicate that 65% of students do well which highlights it as an area we need to improve on.

Through comprehensive data analysis we have identified opportunities to help our students build their understanding of grammar. The data indicates our students have a very good grasp of the simpler aspects of grammar. The challenge is building the children’s understanding of the more complex aspects. For example, helping students to use more complex sentences with adverbs and pronouns.
Writing

Students at Cobdogla Primary School write extremely well. Results from all tests taken by Cobdogla students, in particular the NAPLAN test, reveal that when our students’ mean scores are compared against the national average, Cobdogla students shine.

Cobdogla Primary School outperforms many similar schools across the state and Australia. In addition to this, students progress at a rapid rate at our school if they are long term enrolments.

Nearly 50% of Year 7 students scored in the top 2 proficiency bands in numeracy, spelling and reading. This is a long way above the national average and is particularly pleasing. This result is just one more thing for the Cobdogla Primary School community to be proud of.

Our future actions will focus on building inferencing an interpretive skills of our students. We will seek and discover the latest thinking about these reading skills and implement relevant strategies in our teaching and learning programs.

To build inferencing skills we need to strengthen the vocabulary of our students by using more sophisticated words and delving deeper into the meaning of the word. We encourage all parents to assist us in this area by using a wide range of words in your everyday vocabulary. You will be amazed at what children will pick up!
YEAR 3

NATIONAL AVERAGE: 416.3
COBDOLGA PRIMARY SCHOOL: 442.7

YEAR 5

NATIONAL AVERAGE: 478.1
COBDOLGA PRIMARY SCHOOL: 485.5

YEAR 7

NATIONAL AVERAGE: 510.6
COBDOLGA PRIMARY SCHOOL: 531.4

NAPLAN WRITING MEAN SCORES
Student Achievement

Numeracy

For the last three years, Cobdogla Primary School results have been well above the average for South Australian state schools. Our mean scores are above the national average. A great result!

We know that some students in our school require additional help (and we are committed to providing this) but overall our students have demonstrated a good understanding of mathematics with their good progress between standardised testing.

Analysis of the results indicates that the ‘number’ skills of our students are good but when it comes to applying knowledge to solve a problem, about 30% of students are attracted to the wrong answer in multiple choice questions. This indicates that some students do not apply their number skills and use reasoning and logical thinking to solve a mathematical problem.

In 2016 we will seek to have agreements across the school to concentrate on approaches that build understanding of place value, subitising, renaming numbers and have a bias toward multiplicative thinking over additive thinking. We will also seek to move further away from ‘rote’ learning to ‘meaningful practice’. We believe by focusing on these approaches, we will underpin the development of ‘number’ across R-7, which is vital knowledge for students to be numerate throughout their school life and beyond. We know that students can’t ‘cram’ maths, especially if a concept is half understood.

We commit to regularly analysing your child’s progress in numeracy to ensure she/he reaches their full potential. Our comprehensive assessment across the school means we have developed detailed knowledge of your child. We welcome all parents to make time to talk to staff throughout the year about their child’s progress.

NAPLAN NUMERACY MEAN SCORES

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<th>Mean Score</th>
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<td>Year 7</td>
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NATIONAL AVERAGE
Better Schools Funding

We are always pleased to receive additional funding to support students at Cobdogla Primary School and in 2015 we received $23,475 of Better Schools Funding.

In 2015, the Junior Primary, Early Years and Better Schools Funding was directed to address learning gaps that were identified from our assessment analysis.

Students were assessed to determine what learning concept areas needed attention. If an area was identified, we established a personalised program with a dedicated staff member to assist the student.

An example of this in 2015 was our tailored MiniLit and MultiLit programs. These programs were conducted by our teachers and SSOs to address the specific needs of students.

Using the Better Schools Funding were were also able to employ an SSO to provide significant individual support for literacy development across the Reception to Year 2 classes.

We expect to use the Better Schools Funding in a similar manner in 2016. It is no doubt that this extra funding has allowed Cobdogla Primary School students to achieve good progress in 2015.
Attendance

Cobdogla Primary School’s attendance rate was 92.8% which falls slightly below the DECD target of 93%.

Over the past few years we have focused on improving our processes and communication with parents. As a result our attendance rate has grown, especially with students prone to regular absenteeism.

We thank all of our parents for their assistance in improving school attendance. We can’t reach the target of 93% without working together. It truly is a joint effort to get kids excited about coming to school.

Our emphasis in 2016 will be on improving school attendance in our Junior Primary classes, in particular our Reception class. If your child is absent we will be in touch to seek a valid reason. We want to personalise school attendance and understand how we can help parents get their kids to school.

Destination Data

Students leaving Cobdogla Primary School fall into three categories: *Moving interstate, transferring to another South Australian government school or transferring to a non-government school.

As a small school we often find families look for more diversity and wider curriculum opportunities that are offered by larger schools. However we pride ourselves on the personalised program and close monitoring of student progress we offer at Cobdogla Primary School.

Students moving interstate, overseas or within the state is reflective of the community profile where employment opportunities may take families away from the local area. The Riverland has experienced vast changes over the last decade with many schools experiencing lower enrolments.

We are very pleased that our enrolment at Cobdogla Primary School has increased in light of the lower enrolments across the region. We believe this is as a result of our positive culture and reputation for achieving strong academic outcomes for our students.

Behaviour Management

The strong values of Cobdogla Primary School create a safe and secure environment for your child to learn in. A strong adherence to protocols and processes has helped new students become immersed in our positive culture where kids matter. This has helped with behaviour management and as a result minimised incidents.

We are the same as any organisation and do have some behaviour issues. Thanks to a joint effort from parents and staff, we are able to focus on the issue and develop a solution quickly.
Client Opinion

Parents

We were thrilled that 20 parents completed our Parent Opinion Survey in 2015. Results from the survey were extremely positive with all statements scoring above 4.3 which affirms our goals at the school. Schools with scores above 4 in all categories is rare!

We received a high ‘strongly agree’ response for the following questions:

- The school is well maintained - 70%
- My child feels safe at this school - 75%
- I can talk to my child’s teacher about my concerns - 70%
- Teachers at this school expect my child to do his or her best - 65%

Students

The Student Opinion Survey received 44 responses from our students. We were very pleased with the feedback with the majority of questions receiving a score above 4.

Analysis of the data reveals that our students feel very safe at school and know that the teachers have high expectations of them. We noted that six children raised concerns about fair treatment and eight students gave a neutral response.

Student voice is something we are working on across the school, in the classroom and through our Kids Matter initiative. We certainly want all children to feel they are treated fairly and are listened to respectfully.
Client Opinion

Staff

Ten staff members completed the Staff Opinion Survey. Staff strongly endorse the quality of teaching and learning with 100% agreement for 13 of the 14 questions relating to teaching and learning.

One response from the survey quotes, ‘The students are so lucky to have such a dedicated staff who provide a wide range of learning opportunities.’

The questions relating to ‘Support of learning’ received 100% agreement from the respondents. One staff member noted, ‘Being a KidsMatter school means teachers are inclusive of all learners and encourage students to do their personal best. Staff take a restorative approach to dealing with behaviour issues. The school values are a reflection of the staff expectations.’ Another staff member said, ‘There is excellent student support and all behaviour issues are dealt with immediately and handled fairly.’

The ‘Relationships and Communication’ section of the survey was also very positive with 100% agreement from staff. Staff wrote, ‘I find it a great privilege to be a member of staff at this school. The staff have great respect for one another and you are made to feel part of the school community.’ A different respondent quotes, ‘We have a fabulous staff who all work well together, help each other out, support and respect each other and generally all get on extremely well.’

The ‘Leadership and Decision Making’ component of the survey also received 100% agreement. Comments included, ‘Our leadership team is always very supportive, understanding and cooperative. They are always willing to listen and help out with any issues.’
Staff Qualifications

I am extremely proud to publish that all staff at Cobdogla Primary School are fully qualified professionals who commit their time and energy to educating your child.

Cobdogla Primary School staff are continually learning and attempting to find out more about how to support individual students. A big focus in 2015 has been working in groups to learn more guided by the Teaching for Effective Learning framework. As a result, we now know more about how the brain works than ever before.

It is our intention to always maintain a safe and secure environment at our school. We screen all volunteers and casual staff and comply with all regulations in this regard.

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Finance Report

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