

Sophia Mundi Steiner School
Annual Report
& Chronicle 2015

Principal's Report



We welcome you to Sophia Mundi Steiner School's Annual Report for 2015. Sophia Mundi continues in the core task of educating its students using the unique pedagogy of Dr Rudolf Steiner and the International Baccalaureate Organisation preparing them to take their place in contemporary Australian and world society. Our pedagogy is developmental: we value the foundation that a healthy childhood gives to a successful life.

Sophia Mundi turned 30 during 2015. There were many celebrations that brought our Alumni, parents, teachers and students from across Australia to our home at the Convent in Abbotsford to share what has been and to look to the future together.

Our vision continues to provide strength and confidence to all who strive to bring our learning community alive; to educate towards freedom of the human spirit.

Sophia Mundi enjoys a full compliment of classes (Prep to Year 12). Our community comprises more than 140 families and we belong to significant National and International communities with approximately

1,000 Steiner schools and some 2,680 International Baccalaureate (IBO) Diploma schools.

As the new Principal in January 2015, I came into the position with a clear vision of building transparency and trust within The College of Teachers, staff, students, parents and stakeholders to form the basis of a healthy learning community. The Parent College was strengthened, play ground development team re-ignited, mentoring and coaching programs commenced or re-invigorated and Professional Development opportunities created for staff and Board members.

We introduced mathematical enrichment in the Middle School for students searching to be challenged with breadth and depth. With more focus, Support Education improved outcomes for students with learning needs (support and extension) and our Welfare team provided guidance to families and students alike.

Student academic outcomes in the Senior School continue to grow in strength. This certainly validates the strong 'hand-heart' Steiner pedagogy of the Primary and Middle Schools. Our Class of 2015 IB result was outstanding. 100% pass rate 2 years in a row and above world averages now puts Sophia Mundi at the forefront, leading the Steiner and IB DP International interest. These results are all the more pleasing given our open enrolment policy and inclusive access arrangements. We continue to work closely with the IBO to investigate the International Vocational careers course (IBCP) for Victorian schools.

In 2014 we produced our first School Improvement Plan. This plan has been developed in 2015 in consultation with Sophia Mundi staff, parents and the Board of Directors. A comprehensive foreign language review with all stakeholders, students, recent Alumni, teachers and parents will also inform our future programs. In the 2016-17 plan we look to engage further, particularly with students and Alumni.

Student National Sporting Achievements

- Brigit Doyle – Women's canoe polo: represented Victoria/ Australia in Oceania Championships. "Local Sporting Champion" from the The Hon. David Feeney MP.
- Macgregor Doyle – Kayaking: represented Victoria- National Championships
- Jasper Hanna-Roberts – Lacross: Victorian Lacross Under 16 team.
- Daniel Kocjancic – Table Tennis: represented Victoria Under 12 State Championships
- Sebastiaan Top – Victorian Water Polo team

Artistic Achievements

- Piers Martin – Photography: 2014 Semi-Finalist Doug Moran Photography Prize
- Walter Bakowski – Photography: 2015 Finalist Doug Moran Photography Prize

I commend the 2015 Annual Report to you. Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

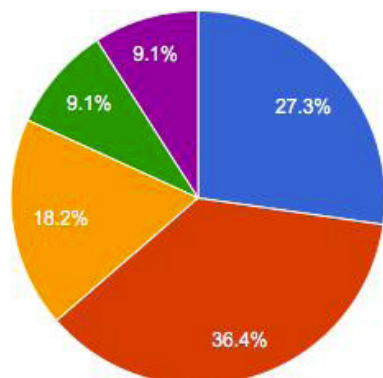
Fiona Cock
PRINCIPAL

Graduating Class 2015



The students of our graduating class 2015 are to be congratulated on their outstanding success in the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP). The class of 2015 is the third cohort to graduate from Sophia Mundi under the Diploma Programme pathway. We were thrilled to be able to continue to offer a wide range of subjects, including an online subject, Spanish B, through Pamoja Education. The class consisted of 11 students. Of the Year 9 2012 class, 83% continued into Class 12. We were excited to welcome one new student into the cohort in 2014 and another in 2015, both transferring from other Melbourne schools to complete their IB Diploma at Sophia Mundi.

2015 IB GRADUATE: TERTIARY COURSE DISCIPLINE



- Arts/International Relations
- Science
- Double degree Arts/Science
- Environments
- Nursing

The two-year IB Diploma Programme curriculum encompasses the study of six

subjects together with the core components of CAS (Creativity, Action and Service), TOK (a Theory of Knowledge course) and EE (a 4000 word academic research based Extended Essay).



The aim of the challenging and rigorous Diploma Programme is to develop internationally minded people who strive to display the IB Learner Profile outcomes of being inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective individuals.

All eleven students who attempted the Diploma earned their Diploma, with the average score of 32 (out of 45). One graduate, who had been at Sophia Mundi since Prep, achieved a 41, the highest score in the history of the Diploma at the school. Overall, 50% of IB candidates at SMSS in 2015 earned an ATAR over 90.

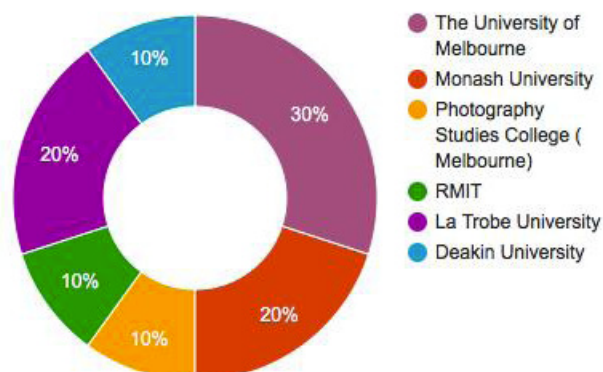
In addition, the class of 2015 bested the world average in eight subjects: Spanish B (SL), History (SL & HL), Biology (SL), Chemistry (SL & HL), Physics (SL) Mathematics (SL), Theatre (HL) and Visual Arts (HL). The cohort had several students

receive early entrance offers to LaTrobe University with other offers coming in from RMIT and Melbourne University after results were issued. Three members of the class of 2015 have taken a gap year to travel and work, while others have gone immediately into further study, working towards degrees in a range of areas, including Psychology, Law, Environmental Sciences, and General Science. We are excited to see how each student decides to use their unique talents and achievements to benefit the local and global communities in the years to come.

Ashley Duffy

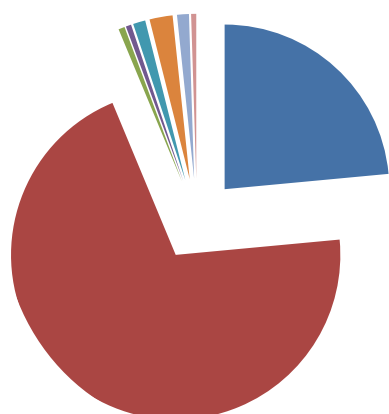
INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE
DIPLOMA PROGRAM CO-ORDINATOR

2015 IB GRADUATE: TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS



2015 Finances Report

2015 INCOME SOURCES
EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES



Government Grants	23.5 %
Student Fees	70.2 %
Fundraising	0.6 %
Donations	0.5 %
Building Fund Donations	1.2 %
Other Income	2.3 %
Income from Trading Activities	1.2 %
Deficit	0.5 %

During October 2014 the Board made a strategic decision to increase fees for 2015, continuing the use of the more transparent simpler fee system (introduced in 2014), which includes most fees within the annual composite school fee. Although Sophia Mundi had good control over its expenses during 2015, as it did in 2014, the increase was necessary in order to fund (i) an increase in information technology and telecommunication expenses, due to our educational need for fibre optic volume capacity and speed, and (ii) an increase in teaching and class materials; as well as an increase in our occupancy expenses.

During 2015 enrolment numbers remained slightly below the Board's target, but the budget was adjusted accordingly, and the necessary savings were found without negatively affecting the

quality of the School's educational offering. Nonetheless, the Audited Financial Statements (available on the SMSS Website) indicates a small deficit of \$19,979 for 2015 (Surplus of \$215,473 for 2014).

Although building fund donations are 1.2% of income (2014: 1.4%), we would like to specifically thank all those parents who have generously continued to contribute towards the building fund. These parents have made it possible for Sophia Mundi to submit a Building Grant Application (BGA) to the Commonwealth Government. These donations become Sophia Mundi's co-contribution necessary in order to assist in securing the building grant for our planned Mezzanine Floor in our library. The outcome of our application should hopefully be known by the end of July.

2015 STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENSES AMOUNTED TO \$24,793 AND HAD THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

Internal PD	24.2 %
Steiner Based	18.9 %
IB Based	19.6 %
ISV and Other	19.9 %
First Aid	17.3 %



2015 EXPENSE CATEGORIES
EXPRESSED AS PERCENTAGES

Employment	70.1 %
Occupancy (incl Depreciation)	13.7 %
Educational Expenditures	8.3 %
Discounts/ Bursaries	5.7 %
Bad & Doubtful Debts	0.3 %
Financial & Interest Expense	1.5 %
Expenses of Trading Activities	0.4 %



Sophia Mundi has also brought its accounting Chart of Accounts into alignment with The Department of Education and Training (DET)'s recommended Chart of Accounts for Non-Government Independent Schools, thereby assisting to simplify our reporting obligations to the DET. This has meant that we have a new reporting category, namely: Trading Activities. This category includes everything that is not related to the actual educational/teaching process such as Aftercare, Playgroup and Canteen. The full audited accounts are available on the Sophia Mundi website: <http://www.sophiamundi.vic.edu.au/community/school-structure-governance-and-strategic-plan/>

John Bradshaw
BUSINESS MANAGER

Happy Wanderings...

Sophia Mundi Outdoor Education Program



If you were asked to justify the actions of your life to others, where would you begin?

If you were dedicated to making positive connections with nature, cultivating purposeful interactions and meaningful explorations in the field, could you explained that clearly?

My world finds the joy in ordinary things and believes in living simply. So what is Outdoor Education at Sophia Mundi and what does it take to create the magic and meaningful moments?

Sunday nights are turbulent times for students and parents, fumbling about packing and looking for lost sleeping mats or sorting out straight tent pegs. It's a time when butterflies of excitement unnerve even the most resilient of kids and the panic of anticipated events can derail one's confidence. This is usually compounded by a restless and sleep deprived night. Even when excited.

The trip has been planned, weather checked and supplies loaded. We are off. Any remaining pent up worries are released by the ever present camaraderie, the building of mutual trust and friendships amongst people who have grown together through

shared experiences. Like any happy family, arguments will arise and quarrels will percolate but you had better find a way forward because those people will still be there tomorrow. True contentment comes from recognising and accepting the social and emotional frameworks of the experience and working towards a world of harmony.

When the sun shines, people are happy but deeply unaware. Inevitably, the weather turns and the cold winds arrive. Rain pours and it is then that we become present. Cramped and restrictive tents challenge the psyche, there is nowhere to escape. Meals, although prepared lovingly, offer mostly sustenance above bliss. It is daydreams and quiet reflections are encouraged, rather than busy activities or continuous entertainment. These are the simple facts of any trip.

Education in the outdoors is however not an aimless affair. We wish to cultivate a quest of learning and exploration. Across the program, we work hard to weave together a journey that develops a caring consciousness within each spirit. Immersed in the vastness of nature's wisdom, we develop new perspectives in

new landscapes. It is beyond the valuable libraries of human intellect that the opportunities to observe and inquire into one's own understandings through Experiential Learning is possible. It is safer and easier to stay home, lock the door and turn on the screen but life is far more valuable when we truly live it. Life is greater than any teaching, greater than any teacher. So embrace the Journey and seek the moments of unscripted magic...

Amongst the mist and magpie song, it dawns breaking warmth that marks another beautiful day and all the while the resonance of children's play reminds us of an ancient truth...

Life as it has always been. Happy wanderings to you.

Ben Dupuche

OUTDOOR EDUCATION TEACHER





The Parents' College

The Parents' College is a welcoming space for all parents and carers where we can listen and learn together; offering support and finding inspiration. It is a mix of information, discussion and practice, with a new topic each week.

In 2014 the Federal Government introduced the requirement for schools to develop a School Improvement Plan (SIP) which was to identify areas of development the school would focus on each year. A whole school meeting, followed by a number of workshops with parents, teachers and Board members, explored possible directions for Sophia Mundi. From this emerged several initiatives. One that struck a chord with a number of parents was the idea of creating an opportunity to nurture the parents in a similar way to how the weekly College of Teachers meetings sustain the teachers. It would provide an opportunity for exploring themes of interest to the parents and to have open conversations that allowed thoughtful sharing and listening to each other. Thus the Parents' College was born.

To begin with, a group of 3 - 4 parents met beforehand so they could gently guide and navigate the conversation themes, but soon the parents were contributing their ideas and a format developed that has proven to be both highly satisfying and successful. We meet each Thursday from 9 - 10.30am in the Cottage (Aftercare room) and someone (who has volunteered the week before to host the morning) prepares a simple centrepiece, introduces the topic and presenter and keeps time. The week before we agree on a theme or question we would like to discuss. We also decide whether and who might make a presentation to introduce and open up the subject. Then there is good time for discussion and sharing among the group. After we close we can enjoy a cup of tea together.

Over the year and a term we have been meeting we have probably had at least 30 or more parents attend, but it is interesting that it is always around 10 or 12 people who are present on any one day, which is about the capacity of the room. We have few guidelines - themes are decided the week

before by agreement, we have a clear start and finish which usually includes a centering exercise that settles us into the room and there are various formats possible for exploring a theme. We respect each other's views and what is shared is confidential. We understand that work commitments and other situations may mean a person can only attend for a part of the morning.

We have ranged far with our conversations and it is remarkable to experience the collective wisdom that comes forth and also to get to know the diversity of interests and expertise among the parents. A link to our earlier sessions is on the website via 'Parents & Friends'. If you haven't yet experienced this incredibly nourishing group or have been away for a while, do feel welcome to join us when you can.

Jennifer West
FORMER PRINCIPAL
DIRECTOR SOPHIA MUNDI

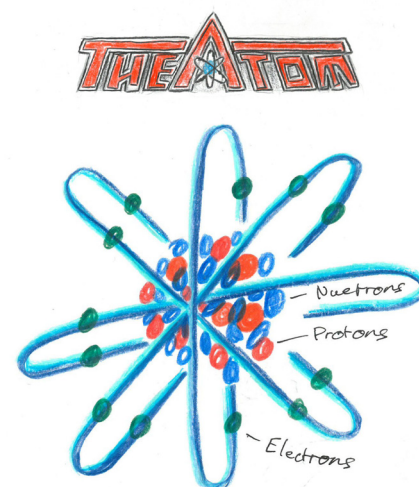
Class 10 Chemistry Main Lesson

The Acids and Bases Main Lesson demonstrates phenomenological observation of science, enabling a deeper comprehension of abstract and complex chemical concepts as a foundation for the senior and even the tertiary levels. During this Main Lesson, students are taken on a journey to truly experience the wonder of chemistry. From ancient alchemists and natural philosophers, through to modern chemists – throughout history people have been inspired to learn how different substances interact and why these substances behave in such extraordinary ways.

It is of the utmost importance that students truly experience the phenomena and the beauty of complex chemical reactions. By observing and being influenced by these interactions, students are allowed insight, and can relate to monolithic figures throughout antiquity, including the early atomists like Democritus; Alchemists like John Dalton, through to the more modern chemists such as Dmitri Mendeleev.

By participating in this Main Lesson, students are able to relate with how these inspiring historic figures were able to deliver such significant contributions to the development of science and how these contributions have had such an enormous impact on humanity.

In this Main Lesson we were dealing with a particular area of study in acids and bases, as an introductory practical exercise, students extracted their own universal indicator from organic matter. In this instance a simple red cabbage. By boiling red cabbage, students extracted a dark purple substance called anthocyanin, which gives the cabbage its colour. Anthocyanin is a naturally occurring universal indicator which will change colour in acidic or basic (alkaline) solutions. Acidic solutions will change from pinks to dark reds depending on the strength of the acids, whereas bases will change from yellows and greens for weak bases to bright blues for strong. After this initial extraction, students were able to continuously

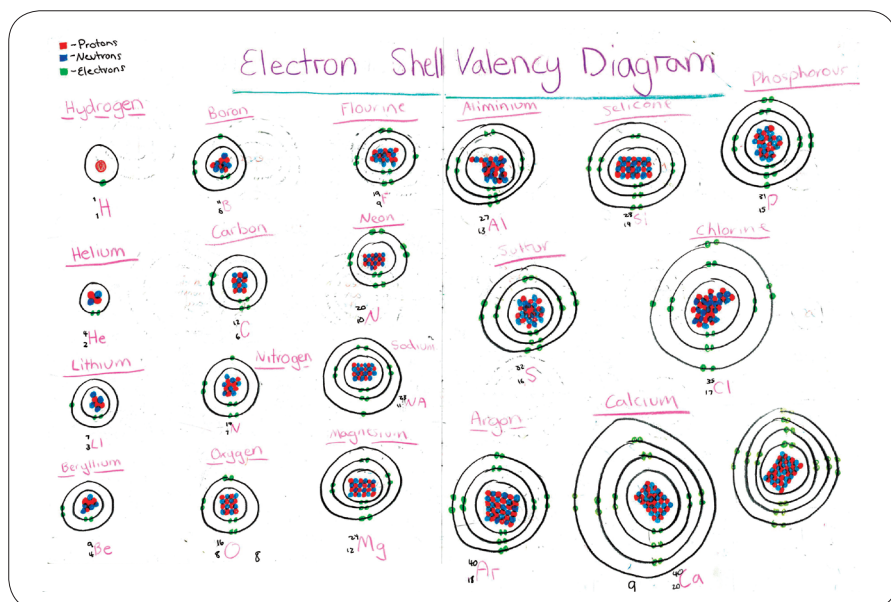


use this prepared indicator throughout the Main Lesson, as a means of detecting the strength of solutions and reactions. Particularly by performing acid base titrations and the effects that strong acids and bases have on pure metals.

This Main Lesson exposes students to extensive practical exercises where they are required to record accurate observations and results, which were to be presented in formal practical experiment reports. These reports require students to reflect on the phenomena they have witnessed and allows them the opportunity to critically assess this phenomena theoretically.

The Acids and Bases Main Lesson enables students to develop essential skills that are necessary for all IB sciences. These include writing formal practical experiment reports, collecting, analysing and discussing empirical data and further developing laboratory skills.

Christian Parsell
SCIENCE TEACHER



Handwork and Crafts: part of the Technology Curriculum



Handwork and the crafts, historically, involved the creating of everyday items, using skills passed down through generations, materials which were natural and sustainable, and tools – the most fundamental of which was the human hand. Skills, materials and created tools have all changed as humankind has evolved. However in Steiner schools we try to retain some of the values demonstrated by the artisans of the past. We are considering the purpose of the article or tool, and how it will be used. Do we have the most appropriate design and materials for the purpose? Are the materials natural and sustainable? Is there integrity and beauty in the finished article and also the way it is made?

Does the design of the article reflect and suggest its purpose?

To create articles with these questions in mind we use what is often called will-based intelligence which draws our thinking into the service of the will as well as our senses of integrity and beauty. The activity uses all of our human soul forces – willing, feeling and thinking – directing them towards creating items or tools which answer a need in our lives.

I see this process as the foundation of technology. More recently technology has grown to include digital technology which we now use daily and which we must remember is, or should be, a tool used by the human will, supported

by our clear and moral thinking and feeling.

In our schools, the crafts help develop the will-based intelligence as a balancer to the strong intellectual forces prevalent today which tend to deplete the will. The crafts of ancient peoples were part of everyday life. They were made with a disciplined attention to detail, loving care and artistry. Joy seemed to be in the making, and at completion, a sense of achievement was felt when the newly created article fulfilled the need.

Our children also find joy, challenges and a sense of achievement in their craft lessons.



The Craft curriculum has been carefully designed to gradually develop the skills and experiences of the children year by year and in relationship to the child's stage of development and sometimes, the Main Lesson themes.

Craft begins in the early years with the children consciously using their hands, and refining the movements of their fingers – improving fine motor skills. Finger knitting soft wool in beautiful colours and making long ties for dress-ups and a myriad of other purposes relevant to the children.

They weave fleece with their fingers using a simple weaving frame and they stitch using a thick blunt wool needle. Scissors and needles are usually their first tools in handwork. Finger knitting leads to knitting with smooth wooden needles. The children feel the warmth of the needles as well as the wool. They experience the qualities of the natural materials.

Finger knitting is the beginning of the knitting curriculum which develops to colourful fair-isle in Class 4 and moves to crochet as a new skill to challenge the Class 5 students.

Weaving develops in staged complexity in the primary school and culminates in the use of 4-shaft looms in the High school, where fine threads are used and great concentration is needed.

Sewing, started in Prep classes, is refined year by year. Cross stitch craft bags are made in early Class 4 to coincide with an important step in the children's development at that age. Later felt animals and dolls are designed and hand sewn in Classes 5 and 6.

The doll, representing a personality, requires most of the hand work skills learned in the lower primary school, especially when clothing is made for it. Later, in High School electric sewing machines are used by the students to make garments for themselves.

The students have progressively used more complex tools which make the Industrial Revolution more meaningful to them in their High School studies.

On the journey through the craft curriculum, we hope the students have imbibed the values and work ethics which have inspired us from the technology of the past and which we want to continue into the future.

Margaret Skerry
FORMER CLASS TEACHER AND
CRAFT TEACHER AT SOPHIA MUNDI.

CURRENT ADULT CRAFT CURRICULUM
COURSE CONVENOR



I was lucky enough to visit the Antarctic during the 2015/16 summer holidays, and was able to experience the majesty of the Antarctic glaciers and icebergs first hand. The iceberg here is illuminated by the rare spot of sun seen on a bitterly cold day, expressed by the dark sky and similar hue of the water. This scenario presented itself to me very opportunistically, for I just happened to be appreciating the enormous block of ice when the sun ignited it into a white, even more pronounced than it already was, force of nature. These huge blocks break off from the Antarctic glaciers further south, and as a result of increased global warming

and climate change, the breaking-up of ice has been happening far more frequently. My intention for this photograph was to capture the stunning and unique beauties of nature's ice sculptures, and to also show how for such beauty to remain in the world, we must seriously consider what effects our actions have on a global scale.

My focus is on the global issues surrounding the effects of climate change on nature. As studies have shown over the past few years the melting of ice has become an increasingly serious issue, with results of this phenomena being a raise in sea levels, to provide an example, and also the disappearance of many of the

world's most beautiful glaciers. This is most likely due to the effects of warming air and water temperatures, which may prove to be a diabolical situation for the future for all ice on earth. My photograph endeavors to explain the beauty of the earth that we will lose if we don't reconsider our current actions and provide better solutions to improve our environment, and to show that such beauty needs to be preserved.

Ireland Hall

2016 CLASS 12 STUDENT





These two photographs (above) were taken during a school camp at the Wangaratta ski club on Mt Saint Bernard, which is a short drive from the summit of Mt. Hotham.

As we were ascending the mountain, heavy clouds moved in and it started snowing. It was windy and you could see the snow being carried in all sorts of directions making frantic movements. It was a magical experience approaching the lodge and seeing all the fresh snow covering the tops of the burnt trees and the regrowth.

The first of the photographs was taken shortly after arriving when the clouds were thick and rushing

by. The image is taken from the top of the hill looking out at the burnt trees from the February 2013 bush fires that burnt 27,000 hectares of land during a 55 day spell. The second image is from one afternoon while the fog was moving in and the sun was setting, it made the earth look grey in comparison.

These images represents the rejuvenation of the Australian landscape and how it thrives from the fires that once were lit by the Indigenous Australians to encourage the growth of new plants. In the current day areas of land can go years before a fire will travel through it. Most people are

glad, because fires cause so much damage to infrastructures, but should we be allowing controlled burning more often to preserve the beauty of the Australian land and the plants that live in it?

Peysa Charlwood
2016 CLASS 12 STUDENT

NAPLAN and Student Learning Outcomes 2015

In 2015 the majority of parents withdrew their Class 3, 5 and Class 7 students from all NAPLAN tests.

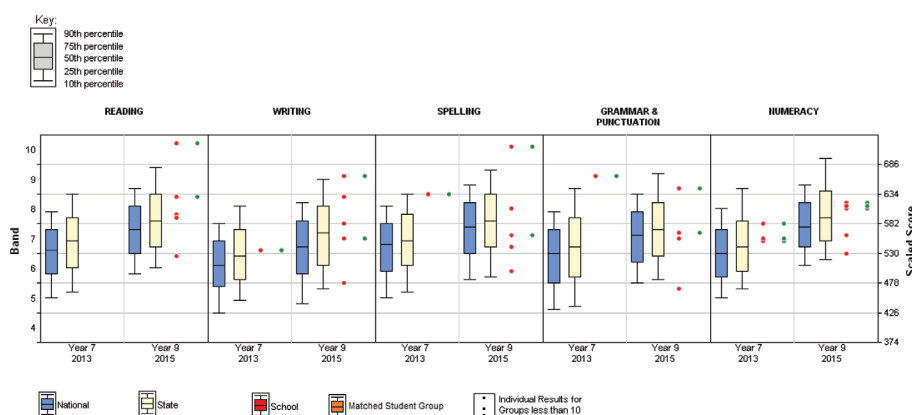
Seven students in Class 9 completed tests in all domains; this represented 71% of the class completing all tests.

Results for students who participated in NAPLAN were distributed to their parents at the end of Term 3. Class teachers noted their students' results as part of the ongoing assessment process in place at Sophia Mundi.

Since many parents at Sophia Mundi choose to withdraw their children from NAPLAN tests, insufficient data is produced from which to draw conclusive comparative results within the school, from class to class and from year to year. However, for those students who do participate, we provide the following 5 year comparison tables:

SCHOOL COMPARISON REPORT

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Tests 2015 Year 7 2013 to Year 9 2015



Our assessment process determines student performance and learning outcomes in a rich and broad curriculum designed to address the social, emotional, academic and artistic development of each individual student. Student progress in specific areas of numeracy, spelling and reading comprehension is assessed using information compiled from results of standardised tests which students complete in semester two at each year level from class 3 to class 10.

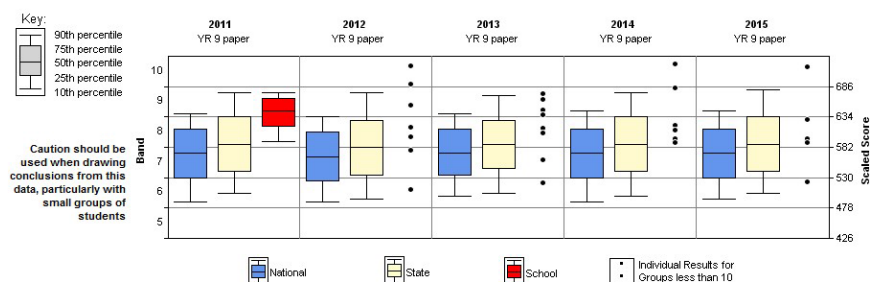
Relevant information from these tests and ongoing assessment of main lesson material, oral presentations, performances, class and individual projects, is regularly shared with our Support Education teachers and parents to maximize students' learning outcomes in all domains.

This ongoing assessment by Class and Specialist teachers using a variety of modes takes into account the multiple intelligences with which different students are endowed.

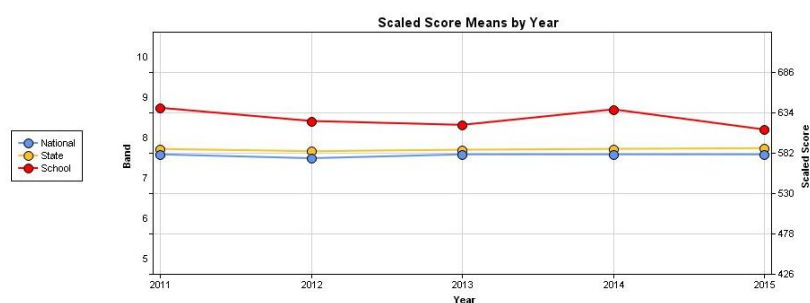
SOPHIA MUNDI STEINER SCHOOL - ST MARYS CAMPUS

Five Year Trend Data Report (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015)

National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy Tests 2015 Year 5 - READING



THIS REPORT USES THE NATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM SCALE



Parent Satisfaction Survey Results

This was the fourth year of parent surveys, so we can provide a comparison of results between years to assess the impact of strategies and targeted activities.

The email inviting participation in the survey, was sent to around 100 email accounts. 53 people completed the survey and this response rate is around the same as 2014.

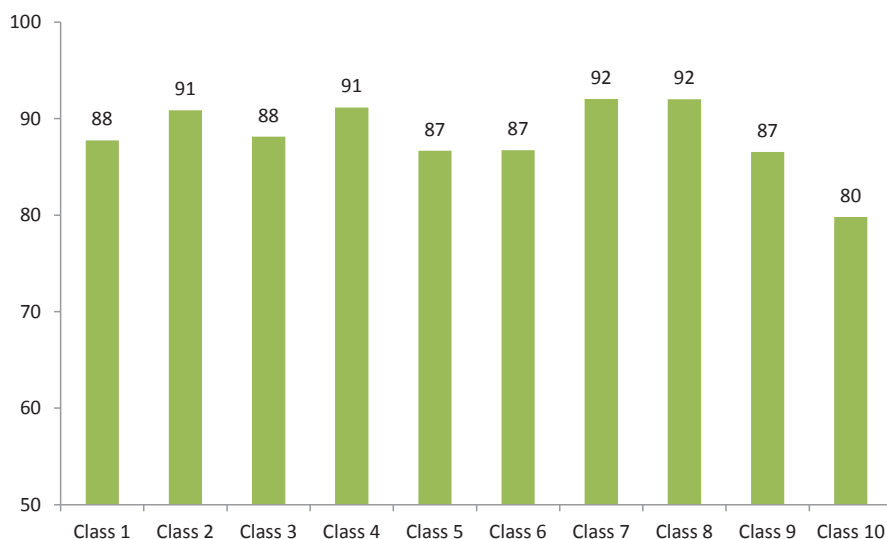
There were many helpful comments across all areas. There was a range of comments from the highly supportive to the highly critical. These are being considered by the school leadership and are informing plans for future improvements.

Our general findings on the comments are that there:

- is strong support for the Steiner curriculum and the commitment of the teaching staff;
- is satisfaction with the IB and impact on improving standards in middle school;
- is great improvement in the satisfaction with buildings and the future of the school, particularly with IB;
- is excitement at the plans for new play areas for early primary students;
- is general appreciation of leadership from principle;
- are generally positive responses about Teaching Staff, and the increased professional development and peer support;
- are mixed responses about Specific Curriculum;
- is appreciation of School Community initiatives – in particular from the Parents College and PFA.

The full survey is available on the Sophia Mundi website: <http://www.sophiamundi.vic.edu.au/community/school-structure-governance-and-strategic-plan/>

2015 STUDENT ATTENDANCE



Staff Retention

All Teachers	77.14%
Primary	78.57%
Secondary	76.19%

Staff Attendance

In 2015 we had a staff attendance rate of 97%. In addition, two teaching staff were on leave for significant periods.

Teaching Staff Qualifications

Qualification	Total
Doctor of Philosophy	1
Masters Qualifications	4
Master of Education	3
Bachelor of Education	10
Bachelor of Teaching	3
Eurythmy Qualifications	3
Graduate Diploma of Education	8
Diploma of Education	13
Steiner Education Qualification	13
IB Certificates	20
Post Graduate Diploma	1
Graduate Diploma Outdoor/ Environmental Studies	1
Bachelor of Arts	12
Bachelor of Early Childhood Studies	1
Bachelor of History	1
Bachelor of Music	4
Bachelor of Letters	1
Bachelor of Law	1
Bachelor of Outdoor Education	1
Bachelor of Visual Art / Fine Arts	4
Bachelor of Applied Science	1
Bachelor of Science	5
Advanced Diplomas	10
Certificates	2

10th World Steiner Teachers Conference: Goetheanum, Switzerland 28th March-2nd April 2016



Switzerland was just beginning to bloom into Spring when we arrived and the evidence was all around. Polyanthus, jonquils and daffodils emerging in gardens and paths while trees of all kinds were bursting with greenery. Each day we walked up the hill dominated by the Goetheanum, which looks across the countryside. There are so many anthroposophically designed buildings, large and small, in Dornach that often it seemed that we were in a wonderfully huge Hobbit village. Since our last visit in autumn the scaffolding (used for restoring the concrete structure) had been removed and it was no longer a gigantic building site. Architecturally this is one of the most significant and largest concrete structures in Europe and is regularly viewed by students of design.

The conference began with an introductory talk by Claus Peter-Roh who is a member of the Pedagogical section. He outlined the theme of Overcoming Resistance: Courage for an Independent Spiritual

Life. The leaders of the section included Constanza Kaliks-Head of the Youth section and Florian Osswald. Also giving a presentation was Christof Wiechert, former head of the Education Sector and a recent visitor to Australia as dynamic keynote speaker for the Australian Steiner Teachers Conference in Byron Bay 2015. Constanza had also toured Australia recently speaking to staff and parents at Sophia Mundi and other schools. Over 850 teachers and teacher trainers, from 60 countries, gathered in the great hall each morning and began with singing; it was noticeable that so many people were younger and not all were oldies like us! There were a few other Victorian representatives present including two teachers from Little Yarra and Helen Cock from the Waranwood Seminar: Helen has been to all ten conferences since the 80's.

Each day after singing we were given a short talk by a class teacher. We heard reports from Africa, China and Israel. The Keynote lectures were inspiring and there

was an overall motif of not just understanding our education but courageously turning more to taking our work into the world and being a more definite part of the educational landscape. Steiner education is 100 years old in 2019 and in many ways it feels like we are still so young and the education is as relevant and more needed now than even in the past. Rather than being seen as old and Germanic there is an awakening reality that Steiner's impulses are timeless and 'of the future'. The main challenges facing the world at the moment are the influences of overwhelming technology (to be embraced consciously – the Goetheanum has a lightning fast internet service!) and the worldwide refugee 'problem' (requires among other measures 'emergency pedagogy').

Civic Engagement was the theme of the afternoon presentations and it resonated strongly with many participants, a few speakers were:

Nasreen Bawari was selected as one of the 10 distinguished women in the Arab world. She works in Northern Iraq and was the only female minister and in charge of reconstruction and public works. Her talk was totally inspiring and we learnt that she searched for and chose Waldorf Education as an effective and healing, holistic education system which she is developing there.

Daniele Ganser is an ex Steiner student and is the Head of the Swiss Peace and Energy Research Institute in Switzerland. He spoke of the Global oil history and battles and the potential for renewable energy.

Rolf Soiron, a leading Swiss economist spoke of the 4th Industrial era which he called the "cyber age", following steam, electrical and technology ages, and the necessity for us to understand it and what the future may look like. He has been a chairman of a number of major companies.

In the evenings artistic presentations were given by students from Steiner Schools in Europe and the Middle East. One particular performance was the Antigone Project, a performance by 23 Arab and Jewish Steiner students combining the Greek tragedy and the Middle East conflict on stage.

During the day there were choices of over 70 workshops to choose from. One Greg chose was Maths and Movement led by Dutch teacher Paul van Muers and another was Educating –Meeting Social Reality. This workshop included teachers from Europe, Africa, America, Australasia and Asia discussing how we meet the

outer world as Steiner teachers. It was co-chaired by Christopher Clouder from England who is a founding member of Alliance for Childhood which supports all Educational activities around the world. Greg learnt that Steiner schools were the first to have Catholic and Irish students together in Ireland, have black and white students in the school in South Africa, Jewish and Arab in Israel while in India some schools have students from Muslim, Hindu, Parsi, Christian and Jewish religions all together- they have a lot of festivals! There are now more than 1200 schools and hundreds more Early Childhood Centres around the world with a country such as China seeing incredible thirst for and the rapid development of Waldorf Education.

Elizabeth chose a world history workshop with the American anthroposophical writer and teacher Ted Warren. Ted lives and teaches in Europe and has a global approach to world events.

Of particular interest was the development of Chinese history and culture including a guest Tai Chi master who is studying the connection between Eurythmy and Tai Chi. Elizabeth's other workshop surprisingly linked in with this theme. The lecturer is a Chinese Steiner teacher Zewu Li and the topic was "The Silk Road-Holistic Teaching in Cultural dialogue."

In conclusion there was such a strong feeling of positivity and a desire to connect on a global level with all educators from any system as our common impulse is for the wellbeing of the world's students. The theme of strength and courage for the important work shone through.

Elizabeth Noakes
SCHOOL LIBARIAN

Gregorio Noakes
EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT AND MENTOR





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