

SOPHIA MUNDI STEINER SCHOOL

Steiner Education and IB World School

Chronicle & Annual Report 2018

Principal's Report



The beautiful land on which Sophia Mundi lives has a history stretching back to the beginning of the Dreaming. We are privileged to have the use of it now. I would like to acknowledge that our school is on the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and we pay our respects to elders both past and present. I acknowledge the contributions of Aboriginal Australians and non-Aboriginal Australians to the education of all people on this land and in this part of country.

*"To wonder at beauty,
Stand guard over truth,
Look up to the noble,
Resolve on the good.
This leadeth us truly
To purpose in living,
To right in our doing,
To peace in our feeling,
To light in our thinking.
And teaches us trust,
In the working of God,
In all that there is,
In the width of the world,
In the depth of the soul"*
~ Dr Rudolf Steiner

We welcome you to Sophia Mundi Steiner School's Annual Report for 2018. We continue in the core task of educating students using the pedagogy of Dr Rudolf Steiner which prepares them to take their place in contemporary society.

Our pedagogy is developmental: we value the foundation that a healthy childhood gives to a successful life. Sophia Mundi's curriculum content and pedagogy have been carefully aligned to children's developmental stages.

By having the courage to wait for and the wisdom to recognise the right time to introduce concepts, educational outcomes may far exceed traditional expectations. We value the developmental picture of human consciousness that has evolved through the ages: great world religions and traditions, through story-telling, drama and festivals based upon our spiritual response to seasonal changes.

Sophia Mundi is part of a global education movement of Steiner schools, currently numbering 1,200 across 75 countries and 2000 early childhood centres. Now nearly 100 years since the establishment of the first school, we continue our journey, which, during 2018 was marked by transitions and opportunities.

When I reflect on the last 12 months, I am struck by the importance of our work with young people in a time of increasing global insecurity and uncertainty. Our teachers, support staff and the school community have worked hard to create an environment where childhood is protected and our young people are nurtured in a rich teaching environment; a place where they are given the time and

space to develop the capacities they will need to step out into the future world. After a very productive and positive year, I take great pleasure in reporting on the school's performance in relation to each of the goals of our Strategic Plan.

STUDENT INITIATIVES

We began development of a Community Space in the gardens and created a meeting space for our Middle School students, in the 'maths room'. The long-awaited Monkey Bars are on hold due to space and safety concerns. Curriculum inspirations continued in Life Skills, Inspired Learning activities, 'tinkering tables', the Debating Club and Justice Collective, as well as purchases of computer hubs and the Library IT meeting space.

TEACHER and FACULTY GOALS

Engagement and Enrichment (boat building, Individual Educational Plans, Tobias and Welfare initiatives); Respectful Relationships and Rights and Resilience (RRRR Lead School responsibilities); Indigenous Consciousness (storytelling,

teacher professional development, Wurrundjeri Welcome to Country and Outdoor Education Connection to Country), Teaching and Learning (reimagining support structures) and Festival and Arts development. Review of the assessment and reporting practices from Prep to Class 10 – fruition planned for July 2019.

PARENT COMMUNITY

Community conversations were held on Information Technology and Information, Social Technologies and the Human Being. We offered workshops in Early Childhood, Parenting and Leadership (the Complete Leader).

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS REPORT

We recognise that child safety is the concern and responsibility of every member of our school community. We also understand that we must all work together to create a culture of child safety in our school.

“Sophia Mundi is part of a global education movement of Steiner schools, currently numbering 1,200 across 75 countries and 2000 early childhood centres. Now nearly 100 hundred years since the establishment of the first school, we continue our journey, which, during 2018 was marked by transitions and opportunities.”

Sophia Mundi has woven the Life Skills and Rights and Respectful Relationships curricula across the school and staff have been trained in Mandatory Reporting. We continue to monitor risks and work with local authorities in presentations and consultations.

As part of our reviews we have identified the need for further staff training in Mental Health. In 2019 we plan to offer a Mental Health First Aid training to staff.

A school wide challenge we faced

was around inclusive education. Sophia Mundi staff are well known for their incredible support and love for the children and students in their care. In 2018 we acknowledged that there is so much we are doing, but there are also times when we can do no more. This has led to a few families leaving our school. This year we will explore how Sophia Mundi can best extend the programs of support for students needing additional care. Madonna Holmes will lead this reimagining of what we call a Tobias Programme. Social renewal is vital for the future and Sophia Mundi has an important contribution to make in this realm.

Finally, thank you to my colleagues, the Board of Directors, parents and guardians but most importantly, the students who bring us laughter and joy. We honour and learn so much from you all.

Fiona Cock
PRINCIPAL



First Day of Class 1 in 2018 – Fiona Cock (Principal) with Ramana Dean (Class 1 Teacher)

Sophia Mundi Board of Directors' Report



The Board's role within Sophia Mundi is to maintain the vision of the school and ensure that the school complies with legislation and regulation, has sound finances and a well-steered strategic direction.

Our 2018 Board year commenced with discussions on Member engagement and a will to revisit our School Constitution. We engaged with the existing Members leading up to the Annual General Meeting, whereat the Member community expanded from seven (7) to ten (10) Members. The Board respects and honours the Members as the holders of the impulse of Sophia Mundi, and Constitution renewal works continue into 2019.

Sound financial management, sustainable enrolment levels and timely receipt of school fees are the main ingredients that contribute to the school's financial health and vitality. Positive financial outcomes were achieved with thanks to the due diligence and recommendations of the Finance Committee, chaired by Darren Scotti, and with independent advisory from Carlo Lacota. We thank our Principal, senior

management, and our school Business Manager, John Bradshaw, for sound budget oversight on a daily basis. We thank parents for their acknowledgement of shared responsibility and discipline in paying school fees in a timely way.

In summary, strong financial governance continued as a constant focus of Board works throughout 2018 resulting in key achievements:

- School fee affordability was analysed and through sound financial management, fees remain the same in 2019 as they were in 2018.
- 18 months ahead of schedule, we completed servicing a \$500K debt. This effectively left the school debt free at the end of 2018. We take this opportunity to thank our school community investors for their generosity and spirit in providing school loans.

Over 2018, we farewelled three long term retiring Board members: Eleni Kondos (2013-2018), Robin Power (2012-2018) and Emrys Nekvapil (2011-2018). All parents within the school, these three members served the Board and the school community with determination and industriousness, motivated by warm goodwill and love for the school. Eleni has left a significant legacy in bringing together Alumni for Sophia Mundi's 30-year celebrations and is still remembered amongst the Board for her excellence and reliability in meeting oversight. Robin was central in manifesting the major building works in 2012, on time

and on budget, that returned the whole school together at the same site for the first time since 2006. Emrys has been a powerhouse in the school community (and other communities!), one of the longest serving Board Chairs and, amongst his many achievements, initiating and holding the School Improvement Plan process since 2013.

We welcomed two new Board Directors: Patrick Jost and Annette Batchelor. Although Patrick was only briefly on the Board, his time on the Board was characterised by active engagement, generosity, perspective and courage. Annette Batchelor joined the Board as an Independent Director. Annette works out of the frame of Anthroposophy in her current work at Mercurius Australia and in private practice as a Naturopath and Child Development Consultant. She has two children, a son in Class 4 at their local Steiner school and a daughter who has completed her Steiner education and is now at University. We will continue our Board renewal over 2019.

As Steiner Education heads towards 100 years of practice, it was timely for Steiner Education Australia to conduct a national survey of Steiner schools. Sophia Mundi was one of the largest participators in the survey, providing strong data for national and Victorian comparisons. Positive findings shown in Sophia Mundi's individual results included high satisfaction with school choice and teachers' knowledge of child progress; and comparatively strong agreement that your children achieve their best academically as a

result of the school. An interesting finding was that relatively more families are drawn to Sophia Mundi because it's a Steiner school. The survey also suggested several areas for improvement including effective response to issues raised, management fine tuning, and the enhancement and unity of the school community.

In 2019, we are exploring implementing an independent school survey, to provide a comprehensive, validated, and cross-referenced account of our whole school health. Together with the 2018 SEA survey, these results will provide a strong foundation for understanding our strengths and opportunities for improvement moving forward.

Overall, 2018 resonated as a stable period of school development with positive growth in enrolments and positive financial outcomes.

“In 2019, we are exploring implementing an independent school survey, to provide a comprehensive, validated, and cross-referenced account of our whole school health.”

Looking forward, the Board is committed to bringing head, heart and hands to our governance roles. Our priorities in 2019 include continued Board consolidation and renewal, building and maintaining our team to a minimum of seven Directors; healthy communication and collaboration between the Board, management, teachers and school community; and improved strategic benchmarking to help sow the seeds for robust long-term strategic planning.

The Board wishes to thank the teachers, management, Principal, Members, and Board advisors for their ongoing commitment

and contributions to educational excellence and community nurture at Sophia Mundi. We thank the school community for the vibrancy of their leadership and volunteerism in the school, whether providing advice to the Board, contributing to school meetings, active engagement in school and classroom activities and providing support and encouragement to your children; all contributing towards a resilient, respectful and rich school community. Finally, my personal thanks to my fellow Board Directors over 2018: the outgoing Directors who have left a strong and stable legacy; and our current Directors who bring integrity, collegiality, diverse experience and striving to their roles.

Kerry Laughton

CHAIR – SOPHIA MUNDI
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NAPLAN – Student Learning Outcomes 2018

In a comparative review of the 2017 – 2018 NAPLAN results it has been observed that in both years student participation levels were very low, with the result that we have a statistically insignificant sample group to draw on. Despite the small numbers, we have consistently had students who have produced results significantly exceeding the aggregate national results; other students' achievements are largely in line with or above the aggregate national results and in line with the national trend. This is excellent confirmation of the efficacy of our pedagogy and practices here at Sophia Mundi.

These results are corroborated by our 2019 in-school assessments, conducted in February.

We can report that, school-wide, we have implemented a number of strategies as interventions to both improve student achievement across the board and address the deficits noted in the assessments and are now offering:

- A range of targeted literacy support measures (either small group or individual) timetabled across the school on an as-needs basis to those students identified as at risk.
- Specialised Dyscalculia testing and individualised intervention

programs across the school to students in need of further support with the fundamentals of Mathematics.

- A broader range of targeted Mathematics teaching resources in the primary school aimed at supporting teachers to build strong foundation skills.
- Additionally, we are investigating extension strategies to meet the needs of those of our students who are excelling and are ready to dive deeper into certain aspects of their learning.

Madonna Holmes

LEARNING SUPPORT CO-ORDINATOR

Graduating Class of 2018



From left: Macgregor Doyle, Rosie Graham, Fiona Cock and Solomon Harvey

The Class of 2018 are our sixth cohort to undertake the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, which consists of six discipline areas and a Core of Creativity, Activity and Service (CAS), Theory of Knowledge (TOK) and Extended

and a natural curiosity. Their educational journeys through inquiry and research demonstrated independence in learning. Keen judgment and intellectual ability moves from judgment based on feeling to judgment based on observation and understanding.

“The Class of 2018 undertook the Diploma with courage and resilience. Students formed important bonds, leading the senior school, fostering compassion, and a natural curiosity, encouraging our cohort to continue their educational journey through inquiry and research to show independence in learning.”

Essay (EE): a 4000 word academic research based essay.

The Diploma Programme aims to develop internationally minded people, fostering inquiry, the pursuit of knowledge, thoughtfulness, communication, principled morals and ethics, open-mindedness, care, risk-taking, balance and reflection.

The Class of 2018 undertook the Diploma with courage and resilience. Students formed important bonds, leading the senior school, fostering compassion

As these students began to reflect upon the transition from idea to ideal, a capacity for knowledge tapped into imponderable moral questions and engaged ways to explore pathways and develop research methods, in planning for the future.

From Class 9 in 2105, 29% of our students were retained to Class 12 – an unusually low figure for the school.

A small, close knit group, the Class of 2018 never shied away from challenging questions and as communicators – they are able

to understand and express ideas confidently, acting with integrity and honesty. As thinkers, they exercise initiative and contribute to discussions in a meaningful way.

With courage and forethought, they have shown an independent spirit to explore the road less travelled by.

Sophia Mundi Steiner School congratulates the Class of 2018 students and wishes them well in their future endeavours.

Their passion for discovery continues as they leave the school and go on to explore concepts, ideas and issues that have local and global significance.

MacGregor Doyle is studying Engineering at Swinburne University, Rosie Graham is focusing on an international modelling career (and is interested in studying Outdoor Education) and Solomon Harvey is studying Arts at Melbourne University.

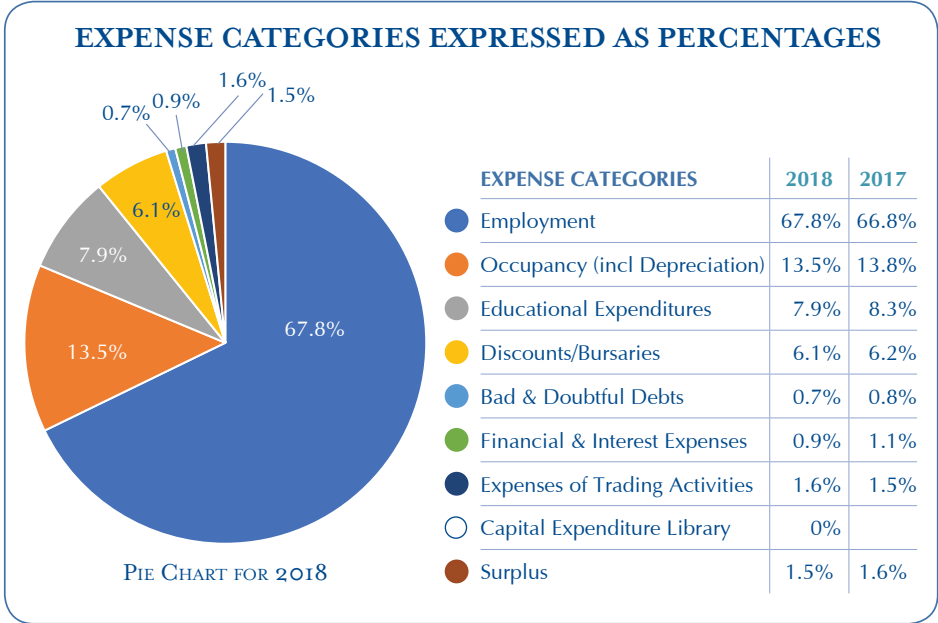
Raquel McConnell
ACTING INTERNATIONAL
BACCALUAREATE COORDINATOR 2018
STUDENT COUNSELLOR

Financial Report 2018

At the end of Term 3 2017 the Board of Directors took the strategic decision to increase fees by 2% for 2018 from what they were in 2017. This 2% increase was necessary despite Sophia Mundi continuously maintaining good control over its expenses each year. The simplified fee system, introduced in 2014, continues to be used, which includes most school fees within the annual composite school fee.

During 2018 numerous suppliers notified the school of increases in the cost of their services. Even with these increases the school's finances performed remarkably well during 2018, upon which trend the Board of Directors took the strategic decision at the end of Term 3 2018 not to increase fees for 2019.

Finally, the Audited 2018 Financial Statements (available on our website) have enabled the preparation of the following expense categories' pie chart for 2018 expressed as percentages. It also shows 2017 figures. As indicated (above right) the pie chart shows a \$69,590 Surplus

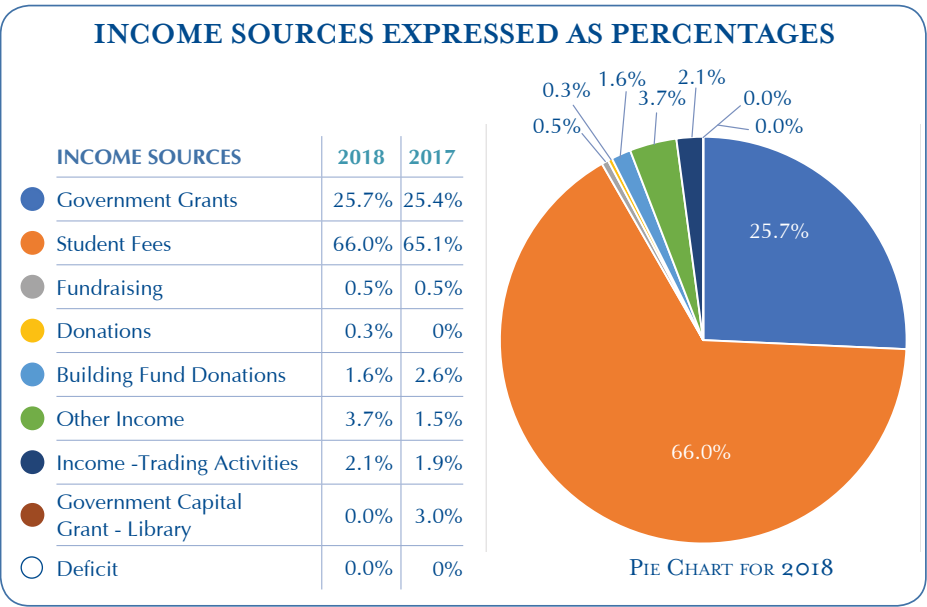


(i.e. Income less Expenses) or 1.5% of total income for 2018, compared with \$69,653 Surplus or 1.6% of total income for 2017.

The income source categories' pie chart for 2018 (below) shows the percentage distribution of income by category. As indicated, the one source of income that has reduced considerably is our Building Fund Donations, down to 1.6% from 2.6% in 2017 and 2.8% in 2016

of total income. We express our appreciation to those parents who continue making their \$250 voluntary donation per term to the School Building Fund. We also remind all parents and guardians that these are tax deductible donations and encourage parents who have ceased their donations to restart. The tax deductibility of your donation means that on average at tax assessment time it will only have cost you \$167. School Building Fund donations are crucial to all building maintenance and aesthetic improvements such as painting and carpeting which is needed. It is important to note that we were only able to secure the government capital grant for building alterations and refurbishment of the library, mezzanine floor, administrative offices and music/craft rooms, in September 2016 (Equivalent to 60% of cost) because the 40% balance came from building fund donations.

John Bradshaw
BUSINESS MANAGER



Staff Retention

All Teachers	79%
Primary	81%
Secondary	76%

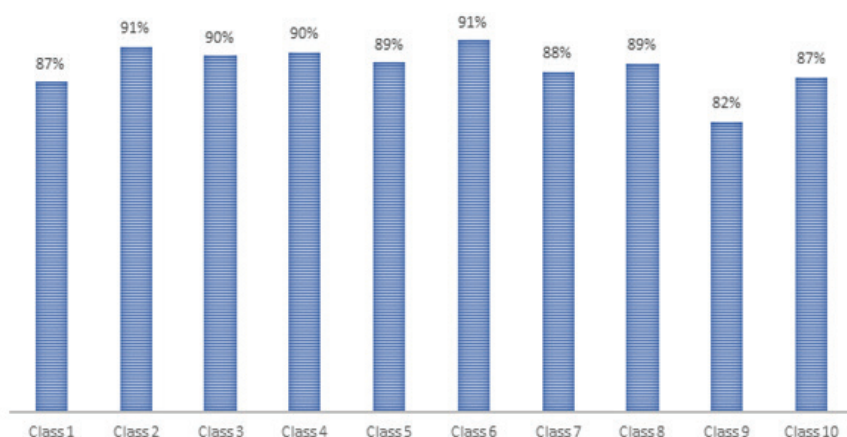
Staff Attendance

In 2018 we had a general Staff attendance rate of 97.7% and Teaching Staff attendance rate of 97.6%.

Teaching Staff Qualifications

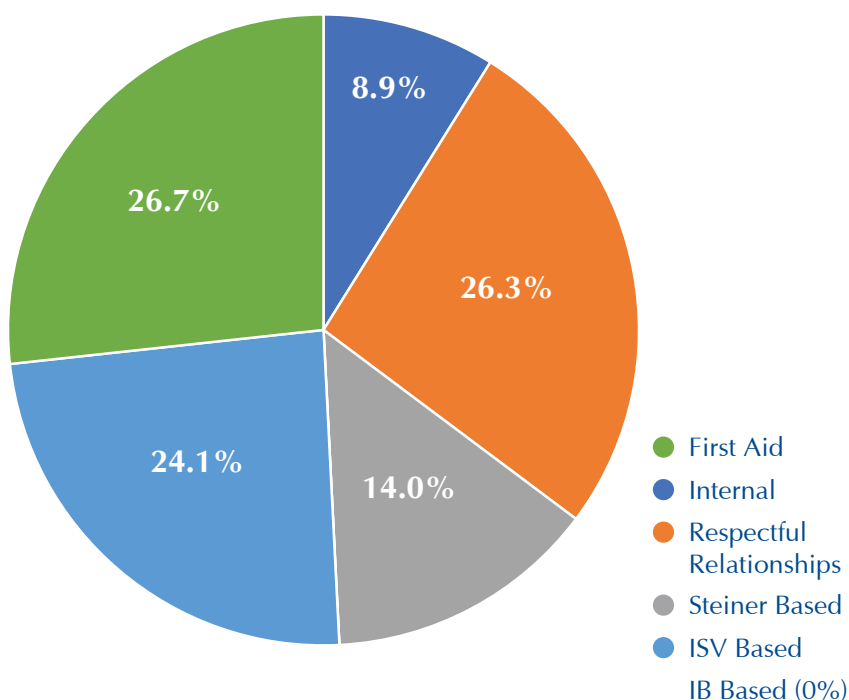
Qualification	Total
Doctor of Medical Research	1
Masters Qualifications	7
Master of Education	6
Steiner Education Qualifications	16
Eurythmy Qualifications	1
Bothmer Gymnastics	2
IB Certificates	15
Graduate Diploma of Teaching & Learning	1
Graduate Diploma of Education	15
Diploma of Education	10
Bachelor of Outdoor Education	2
Bachelor of Letters	1
Bachelor of Science	1
Bachelor of Applied Science	1
Bachelor of Arts	17
Bachelor of Education	4
Bachelor of Teaching	3
Bachelor of History	1
Bachelor of Law	1
Bachelor of Music	2
Bachelor of Environments	1
Bachelor of Visual Art / Fine Arts	4
Advanced Diplomas	5
Certificate in Training & Assessment	1
Certificates (Other)	5

TERMS 1-3, 2018 STUDENT ATTENDANCE



Professional Development Distribution

2018 STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENSES AMOUNTED TO \$22,467 AND HAD THE FOLLOWING PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION:



2018 Annual Music Concert

On Wednesday 5th September, on a warm early Spring evening, we returned to The Oratory at The Abbotsford Convent for our Annual Music Concert.

It was so wonderful to experience The Oratory filled once again with the school community and the richness and talent of our Class 6 to Class 10 music students. The sold out concert had many highlights and a soulful feeling throughout. Sophia Strings commenced the concert with a triumphant March from Wagner, followed by a shimmering contemporary piece about the Northern Lights.

Cello Ensemble delighted us with their deep harmonies and melodies with Bach and Holst. Our upper strings group Accelerando played a delightful piece from the musical La La Land, followed by a piece inspired by Bach's Brandenburg Concerti.

We heard from numerous bands with a range of musical styles from Schubert, to jazz standard

Autumn Leaves, to Contemporary Band's awesome versions of Confidence and My Boy. The Music Staff did a tribute to the late great Leonard Cohen with a rendition of Dance Me To The End Of Love.

The concert ended with a grand finale featuring all students and teachers from Class 6 to 10 with a modern piece called Adiemus.

Special mention and thanks to our Class 12 students Sheeda Ahrari and Solly Harvey for being such stellar MCs. Massive thank you to all the helpers - Brendan Martin, our German Volunteer Moritz Schoen, all Music Tutors and Teaching Staff who have helped in the lead up to this event and on the night. You are gold!

Myfanwy Hunter
MUSIC CO-ORDINATOR



"It was so wonderful to experience The Oratory filled once again with the school community and the richness and talent of our Class 6 to Class 10 music students"



Student Voice: Meeting the adolescent

The story of the Justice Collective, Sophia Mundi's student activist group

Steiner education emanates from the idea of deep immersion in a subject. The Main Lesson is an imaginative, interdisciplinary pathway into a topic that grounds ideas in their context. The beauty of the curriculum is that it arises out of the consciousness of the child at a particular age.

In Class One, their fairytale, picture-based consciousness is mirrored in the Grimm's stories and artistic introduction to the alphabet.

In Class Eight, student's study the Age of Revolution, the violent and bloody political upheavals for Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, as they themselves reach an age where they naturally rise up against the structures that hold them and awaken into their individuality.

The content is therefore matched to the innate unconscious interest of the human at that age of life.

"First, the children must be interested in the subject. Genuine interest is connected with a delicate feeling of pleasure that must always be present" ~ Rudolf Steiner, Education for Adolescents

Meanwhile, an education revolution is slowly gathering force around the world, as society realises that traditional schooling emerged out of an archaic industrial model of the child as a blank slate to be filled with information.

The new paradigm is that the child is not a vessel to be filled, but a unique individual with capacities to be discovered.

In a rapidly changing world, the focus should no longer be merely on content but on capacities – "soft skills" of social intelligence, collaboration, creativity, leadership, complex problem solving and critical thinking.

These have become buzzwords in a marketplace where schools promise an offering that is value-based and holistic, progressive and engaging. But with the parallel rising pressures of standardised testing, political manoeuvring, time and energy, few genuinely deliver on this promise.

"Students lead lives of crushing boredom. They sit 90% of the time, and sitting is exhausting. Most of their time is spent receiving knowledge, not discovering it. They act engaged, but they are not"
~ Douglas Reeves

The question therefore becomes, how do we craft learning experiences that are authentic and collaborative? How do we move away from teachers delivering dry content

in bite-sized pieces for students to regurgitate back at us? How do we teach young people to be active, ethical global citizens in a world in crisis? How do we incite passion, discovery and the "delicate feeling of pleasure that must always be present"?

Last year, I set about on a journey to answer this question in the particular milieu of the Middle School. There is a marked shift away from the warm, holding authority of the Class Teacher, towards a more democratic, participative approach. Characterised by a burgeoning individuality, a sharp yet unformed thinking, a volatile feeling life and a paradoxical sense of both adventure and sluggishness, this moment is ripe to develop student voice, agency and leadership.

The idea emerged of a student activist group, who would come together out of their own will to discuss issues, raise awareness and take action within their community. The thematic framework was around social justice, equality, the environment and school community, and I allowed the group themselves to define their priorities and areas of passion.

From the beginning, the students met out of their own freedom, and were personally enmeshed and responsible for setting the agenda. I learnt to find the balance between them taking initiative and allowing their ideas to form, and to scaffold and direct our energies. If I gave them too much rope, we would go off track and lose focus. If I took too much control, it felt like a stale



classroom. This likens to the fine balance of raising an adolescent – to give voice but also boundaries, to live between form and freedom.

Feeling

The environment emerged as a central focus of our discussion. The students were painfully aware of the crisis of our time and were incensed that we, as a humanity, were trashing the earth, choking the seas with plastic, clogging the air with fossil fuels.

There is a palpable heaviness in the mass consciousness that they had absorbed, a dark sense of jaded despair and cynicism.

“China has stopped taking our recycling!”

We had to fight and transform this apathy through concrete, positive action.

Thinking

The United Nations developed 17 Global Goals for the world to achieve by 2030. These goals cover life on earth and in the ocean, poverty and gender equality, education and health. We entered a competition to develop a local project to tackle one or more of these goals in our own community. We had to educate ourselves on the geography and issues of the local and global environment, brainstorm and investigate ideas and write reports of our progress.

They came up with the idea to coordinate a whole school Clean Up Day on the Yarra River (*pictured left*), to prevent waste from entering the waterways and oceans.

They wanted to connect with the Indigenous spiritual stewardship of the land through a ceremonial



element, and engage with research from environmental organisations.

Willing

All ideas had to be brought to reality through their own work and collaboration. They were responsible for emailing and liaising with stakeholders and their partners, the Wurundjeri Land Council and the Yarra Riverkeeper. They had to organise the run sheet and logistics, and make judgements and decisions together as a group. They learnt that group negotiation is a complex art. They realised through experience that organising an event takes hard work and a complex synthesis of different factors. They learnt that their ideas don't always work, and that they have to be adaptable. They appreciated that it takes will to change the world, not just empty sentiment.

The Justice Collective has been an experiment in how to bring authentic student-driven, project based learning, to channel this powerful adolescent energy for change in a creative, fulfilling way. Our task is to educate towards both individual freedom and social responsibility. We often underestimate the potential of young people to be leaders, and it requires us as adults to step back, so they can step forward.

And as the whole school gathered together, the coals were lit, the leaves both black and illumined and the smoke of eucalyptus grew through the air, these young people saw the fruits of their vision and work.

Tanya Rao

HEAD OF MIDDLE SCHOOL



Physical Education



In Physical Education we aim to give students an experience of a wide variety of physical activities, so they feel comfortable in their bodies and are equipped to meet any physical challenges that they may encounter in their lifetime. Working in the 'Fitness and Health', 'Social and Competitive sports', 'Body Awareness and Coordination' and 'Mental Resilience' are all areas of exploration in our program.

In 2018 students participated in The Inter-schools Athletics Day, Greek Olympics Day, Cross Country Run in the Yarra Valley, Circus Oz Aerial Classes, Soccer,

Ultimate Frisbee, Wheelchair basketball, Squash, Swimming, European Handball, Yoga, Martial Arts, Touch Football, Fitness Testing, Tennis and Fencing.

A partnership with 'Sporting Schools' (an Australian Government initiative) provided students with opportunities to explore a variety of sports including; Gymnastics, AFL, Netball and Basketball. Many students are involved in sporting clubs closer to their homes after school. Recently two sisters in year 9 and 12 trained off campus and represented Sophia Mundi in the **'Victorian Beach Volleyball**

Championship'. Sophia Mundi are now 'Year 12 Victorian Beach Volleyball Champions!'

The program includes Bothmer gymnastics and circus skills, areas in which I have extensive training.

Students from Class 3- 10 tumble, balance and juggle creating a circus show in Class 6. Bothmer begins in Class 3 and works in line with Steiner's Curriculum providing students with imaginative games, roundelays, jumping rhythms, work with wooden staves and spatially conscious exercises appropriate to each child's developmental stage.

Other areas of movement in Waldorf pedagogy include Eurythmy, Woodwork and Craft, Outdoor Education and Folk Dances where students experience fine and gross motor skills connected to the cultural epochs and festivals.

From the diverse experiences of playing footy to knitting, or dancing, at the end of a student's education a child is able to move not only as an easeful athlete but to be confident and familiar with their own physical abilities.

Katherine Ellis

PE-CO-ORDINATOR, BOTHMER GYMNAST, ACROBAT & JUGGLER



Craft: Felt Peacocks

At the start of 2019 the Class 5s began work on beautiful felted peacocks.

Declared the National Bird of India because of its rich religious and legendary involvement in Indian traditions, the peacock fits in well with the epoch of Ancient India, a Main Lessons taught during Class 5.

We spoke to a few of the students to find out more about the creative process of the project.

Saskia, Radha and Scarlett took me through the craft making process.

Firstly, each student drew pictures of different parts of a peacock, cut each picture out to make patterns, then placed each pattern piece on top of their felt pieces and cut out the shapes. The felt pieces of the peacocks' bodies and tails were then sewn together and gussets inserted to ensure the peacocks remained upright. Fly stitch was used to give the impression of textured feathers on the tail. A variety of decorations was available for students to choose from, to embellish the tail further as well as their peacocks' crown and eyes.

What Radha (pictured above) has enjoyed most about the process is

“Declared the National Bird of India because of its rich religious and legendary involvement in Indian traditions, the peacock fits in well with the epoch of Ancient India, a Main Lessons taught during Class 5.”



the fun she has had sewing the body of the peacock and connecting the tail to the body.

Saskia liked the fact that she could choose from a lot of different kinds of decorations. She chose to work with sequins- although she admits that it is not that easy (they come loose quite easily), she thinks they add to the beauty of the felt peacock.

Scarlett (pictured above) has enjoyed sewing the wing and liked choosing different colours and decorations for the tail.

Primary Craft Teacher Nikki Fletcher is pleased with the progress of the peacocks. In the past, Class 5s have created felt elephants during their craft lessons.

The felt peacocks are something different – not only do they blend in well with the epoch of Ancient India but they are also ablaze with colour and attractive embellishments.

Peacocks are also familiar to the students – they have had a long history with these mystical creatures

“The felt peacocks are something different – not only do they blend in well with the epoch of Ancient India but they are also ablaze with colour and attractive embellishments”



at the school. Peacocks often walk around the grounds of Sophia Mundi, flying onto the roof and can be seen from the classrooms while students are being taught!

The felt peacock project was inspired by craftswoman Jill French, who is based in the Dandenong Ranges. Jill creates a range of birds from fabric and her love of nature extends to a love of natural materials.

Colleen Bate

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Diversity in Prep at Sophia Mundi

Australia has one of the most culturally and linguistically diverse populations in the world, and Melbourne boasts the largest proportion of international overseas immigrants in the country. Over the years Sophia Mundi has attracted families from many different nationalities, and in 2018 and 2019 this continued to flourish.

Of the 2018 Prep group of 22 children, there were Arabic, Czech, Chinese, Polish, Chilean, German and Tagalog (Phillipines) speaking families.

Of the 2019 Prep group of 15 children, there are New Zealand-born Chinese, Indian, Brazilian (Portuguese), Iranian, Mandarin, Russian, New York/Spanish, Farsi (Persian) speaking families, as well as those of Russian descent and German descent.



Rene McKay, Prep Teacher enjoys the diversity within the group, encouraging families from different cultures to share their traditions and festivals.

“As the diverse group of young children form bonds in their Prep year, they begin to form the foundation for future years to build on – through the primary years and beyond. Surrounding the children are the families which create the ever-loving boundaries for the healthy life of all the children in the class,” says Rene.

There have been many New Year celebrations – Chinese (Lunar), Persian, Marathi: Gudhi-Padwa and Nowruz (Iranian/Persian). There has also been acknowledgement of the festival of lights – also known as Diwali, Deepavali or Dipavali. It is celebrated by Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and some Buddhists every autumn in the northern hemisphere.

Above: A number of children from the Prep class of 2018

Right: Prep parents Deepali and Ameet Shah, together with their children Arjun (Prep) and Devikaa in traditional dress.

Left: Prep parent Fereshteh Zamani visited the Parents and Friends meeting in her attire to celebrate Nowruz



Cultural diversity is also celebrated as part of daily life in Rene’s Prep classes – children count and also sing in the different languages in their group. Rene also encourages the class to offer their languages while she teaches.

At the Prep Midwinter Festival children sing songs from respective languages in their group, while walking with their lanterns.

“Everything in Steiner education is about developing a social human being. We want and crave social relationship,” says Rene.

And what better way than to have a group of diverse friends!”

Colleen Bate

MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Rene McKay

PREP TEACHER

Personality Profile:

Ramana Dean, Class 1 Teacher (2018)

Class 1 teacher Ramana Dean joined Sophia Mundi at the beginning of 2018. A graduate of The University of Melbourne's Melbourne Graduate School of Education, he had a previous life in building and construction.

Six years prior to joining Sophia Mundi, Ramana taught the Prep year at the East Bentleigh Primary School's Steiner Stream. One of his fondest memories at the school was when he worked with a team of dedicated teachers and parents to create a beautiful kitchen garden replete with flowers, edible plants and fine composts!

"Biologically Dynamic farming and gardening are passions of mine and, after working on farms in the Otway Ranges and Morning Peninsula, I have always had a desire to work on a farm of my own."

"I really enjoy working with the children in the veggie patch at Sophia Mundi; and the Collingwood Children's Farm is just the tonic for my love of farming!" says Ramana.

Over the course of 2018, Rama was actively involved in tending the veggie garden and helping others to do the same.

The Garden Club, held three days a week at lunchtimes, saw the the children enjoying planting, weeding and watering. Playgroup have also been very industrious and continue to support many aspects of the veggie garden.

A goal for 2019 is to plant herbs, Salvias, Vines of Passion, Kiwi Fruit, Blackberry and Raspberry bushes along the school courts' fence.

Ramana lives in Elwood with his partner and four children, three of whom are at Sophia Mundi. He feels incredibly fortunate to be able to share in such a vibrant community of committed parents contributing towards the growth and education of children at Sophia Mundi.

He is concerned about the state of childhood globally and feels that parenting is becoming more and more challenging as our world becomes more and more contracted.

"For me, meeting children with conscious presence and love is a primary task," concludes Ramana

Colleen Bate

MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

Ramana Dean

CLASS 1 TEACHER (2018)



Personality Profile:

Kelly Papas (Eurythmy)



“I began dancing at the age of nine years old. My mother took me along to weekly classes at the local Calisthenics Club, which then led me to start ballet classes to correct my overextended posture. After competing with the South Australian State Championship Team for calisthenics at age 11, I decided to focus on ballet only. By the age of 14 I was participating in several classes a week of ballet and other forms of dance. I continued seriously with my dance training and began studying Year 12 Dance as a subject whilst in Year 11 at school. The full-time classical ballet course consisted not only of daily ballet classes, but other forms of dance - anatomy, dance history and dance notation. By the end of Year 11 my parents and I decided that I would leave school to pursue a career in dance, and study classical ballet full-time,” says Kelly, explaining that during this time she was not only able to complete Year 12 English by correspondence, but also weekly piano lessons and additional academic studies.

“After two years of full-time ballet training, I left Adelaide to pursue my dance career in Melbourne. I was 17 years of age. I danced and worked professionally in the

Sophia Mundi’s Eurythmy Teacher, Kelly Papas has held a passion for dance and movement for many decades. A passion that has taken her on a journey of discovery and evolution and through the ‘vehicle’ of eurythmy. In this article she shares with us how her path continues to unfold.

field for several years, however, at around the age of 24, I realised I had detoured from my chosen course in life thus far and found myself making coffees and serving in cafes and restaurants to pay my rent. This led me to search anew for the direction I planned to head towards.” she adds.

Questioning and searching within herself for a new course in life, Kelly was drawn to modes of alternative healing. She had already developed an interest in alternative and, at that time, ‘new age’ outlooks on life.

“My search led me to enrol in the Rudolf Steiner Teacher Training Seminar which consisted of many of my interests all in the one course. This is where I first met

eurythmy as an art of movement,” she explains, admitting that after studying many facets of dance in her life, she was at first a little bemused and then intrigued with this new form of movement.

“After one year of the Teacher Training course I had a strong feeling to deepen my understanding of eurythmy. I felt this form of movement would heal me in some way and help direct me to my new path in life. Off I went to enrol in one term of Eurythmy, to check it out and see how I’d fit with the current group of students who had already been together for one year. I found myself in a full-time training of Eurythmy, which I eventually completed over four years, graduating in 2000.



Class 11 and 12 Eurythmy (2018)

“Throughout my training I recall many moments of being overwhelmingly moved and touched to the core of my being by eurythmy,” Kelly continues. “I felt that this is what I had truly been searching for through my years dancing, and that eurythmy was naming that deep connection of what it is to be truly human. I always felt alive and somehow more understood when I danced and performed. Eurythmy brought this experience to the depths and heights of my being in the world and I began my exploration of movement on a soul spiritual level for the first time.”

Kelly contributed to an article on eurythmy, featured in *Sophia Mundi's Open Day Chronicle 2016 edition. There she wrote that: “In eurythmy it is the human body that is used as the instrument of expression. Coming from a background of professional dance, I found eurythmy unique in that every gesture is a conscious experience of the true archetypal forms that exist within the human being and within the world of music and nature. I will never forget the moment when I was shown the simple arm gestures for the tones of a musical scale. It was a revelation to me that the human body could become an instrument in itself to express and play a piece of beautiful music. My eyes were also opened to the many pure and beautiful geometric forms and patterns to be found in nature, that could all be embodied through the art of Eurythmy. I had never pondered the origins of speech and language until I discovered how to move and shape a sound with my whole being in a way that truly

reflected the forms made when we speak. In all my years of dance I had never moved in this way!”

At the end of her eurythmy training, Kelly had offers to join eurythmy groups overseas but stayed in Melbourne and found eurythmy teaching positions in schools across Melbourne. During this time she met her husband, completed a Bachelor of Education and started a family.



Kelly has been focusing on teaching eurythmy for many years. In the article mentioned*, she explains the importance of eurythmy in education: “Artistically presented, the aim of eurythmy is to stay true to the elements of the music piece rather than interpret and put personal feelings into it. Having said this, it is of the utmost importance that in making speech or music visible, the artist however needs to be inwardly active and able to engage fully with feeling for the verse or music piece. In this way eurythmy is a conscious form of movement that strives to bring about visible speech and music through the human faculties of thinking, feeling and willing.

“This is predominantly what eurythmy is working with as a core subject in our curriculum, the engagement

of the whole human being and the capacities of thinking, feeling and willing. The pedagogical goals are the same for every class level in that through eurythmy we aim to bring about a harmonious integration of these faculties as a healthy foundation for learning and for life. It is an art form that requires discipline to execute particular gestures or forms within a group. Nimble feet and hands are developed which not only benefits the body but also the mind. Through the interaction of moving geometric forms and eurythmy forms, students meet each other in a way that promotes and awakens a healthy social feeling within the class. Concentration, observation, attention and the ability to listen are all cultivated in a eurythmy lesson. Exercises with copper rods are also part of the curriculum and are used to develop precision, co-ordination, posture and sensing further into the space within which we move,” Kelly wrote.

Despite her focus on teaching, Kelly says her passion also lies strongly in performing and striving to be a part of keeping this “new and unique art of movement alive in the world”. As her children grow, she feels the time opening for her to pursue this even more.

“The art of eurythmy continues to intrigue as I grow ever more passionate about its need in the world. Eurythmy is a shining and guiding light for humanity to remain connected to our true self, each other and the world. An art of movement that moves body, soul and spirit. It awakens a new way of thinking and doing – from the heart,” she concludes.

Kelly Papas

EURYTHMY TEACHER



In conversation with Nicolas Andreatta (Outdoor Ed)

Nicolas Andreatta joined Sophia Mundi in 2018 as Outdoor Education Teacher. His role at the School is particularly interesting as he was once a student here! In this article he talks to us about what he likes about working at Sophia Mundi, explores the joys and challenges of Outdoor Education and shares a highlight of 2018.

What brings you to Sophia Mundi?

I was a student here and always felt drawn to return in order to give back to an education system that gave so much to me.

What is the biggest challenge of being an Outdoor Education Teacher?

From a personal level it's disruptive to my personal life, being away for 90 plus days of the year. There's also the weight of taking children away from their families, to the outdoors and making sure its done in both a safe and educative way!

What is the biggest joy of being an Outdoor Education Teacher?

So many! Being able to see the progression and growth of students - physically and emotionally (both in the outdoors and within the context of their class community) and seeing the spark on their face when they engage with the natural world.

Whether it is admiring a tree, watching the river flow, cooking at sunset, enjoying each other's company and sleeping under the stars!

What is a highlight of 2018?

The Class 9 final hike in Fitzgerald's Hut, Fall's Creek in the Australian High Country - where we knew we had foul weather coming in and spent a big day getting to the safety of a hut only to have that foul weather not come in! This allowed us to lounge around in a beautiful environment on a sunny day where we shared stories, food, made arts and craft and then in the morning we woke up to 25cm of the purest white fresh crispy snow I've ever seen in Australia!

What's next?

We are currently working on the Class 5 camp to Mount Kooyoora in North West Victoria. The focus

of this trip is Geography and Australian History.

The students will get to explore the local environment there, while learning Indigenous History as well as the tale of Captain Melville, the legendary bushranger who hid in the caves!

What do you like most about working at Sophia Mundi?

The location; the students (SMSS students have a high level of curiosity and maturity and constantly strive to be the best they can be on camp); and the staff who I find very supportive.

They are very curious about our program and are always finding ways to work together to create the best learning environment for the students.

Jonathan Shaw

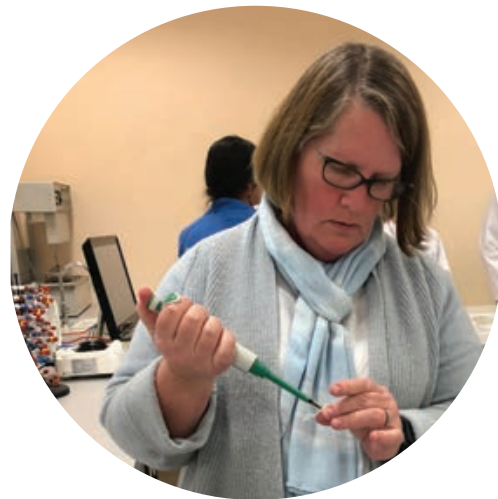
CLASS 7 TEACHER (2019)



In conversation with

Dr Amanda Colebrook (Biology)

Dr Amanda Colebrook joined the Sophia Mundi staff in 2018 and loves her role as International Baccalaureate (IB) Biology Teacher! She has four degrees (Graduate Diploma of Education, Bachelor of Science (Hons), Master of Science (Research) and a PhD) and has experienced a fascinating career so far. Prior to her employment at Sophia Mundi, Amanda held positions of leadership and governance for four years. In this article she talks to us about her teaching career, the highs, lows and highlights of her role and shares advice for aspiring Scientists.



How long have you been teaching for?

My career kicked off at Melbourne University 22 years ago where I initially held the position of Senior Professional Officer before advancing to the role of Research Fellow. During my career at Melbourne University I was involved in teaching (Parasitology and General Biology) as well as research and laboratory management tasks, which provided a strong background in research science work. After leaving Melbourne University I did a Dip Ed and began teaching Secondary School. This is my third official year of teaching at school.

What is the main difference between teaching at University and High School?

University students are there to primarily learn and get educated and are choosing to be there– so there's a whole different attitude and atmosphere. But really teaching is the same whether you are at University or High School. The primary objective is to engage students and foster enthusiasm for the subject.

What do you like most about working at Sophia Mundi?

I love the diversity of students you don't see in other places. The IB itself brings different dimensions

to learning so it's an education system for the whole human being which sits well with Steiner philosophies.

What was a highlight of 2018?

Certainly working with the 2018 graduates. The general enthusiasm of students and their engagement in Biology is a highlight. We also went to the Gene Technology Access Center in Melbourne High, near Royal Parade. Students were able to stretch themselves by experimenting with recombinant DNA technology.

What's the biggest challenge of being a Biology Teacher?

Probably getting through all the material the students need to learn, while maintaining interest and engagement! It's a big course.

What's your advice for aspiring Scientists?

Stay curious about the world! At the risk of sounding cheesy, the most important thing for a scientist is maintaining the desire to contribute to advancements in knowledge and human progression. Sustainability and working with the natural world are all enormous challenges for us and areas of great possibility.

Jonathan Shaw
CLASS 7 TEACHER (2019)



*“To truly know the world, look deeply within your own being; to truly know yourself,
take real interest in the world.” ~ Rudolf Steiner*



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