From the Principal's Desk

Every education curriculum is based on a belief system

What we believe about education is important. A common belief is that education is neutral. How to read, write or calculate doesn’t immediately appear to require any beliefs, a sense of right or wrong or impact upon how we relate to others.

Over time the emphasis of education changes. Certain subjects are considered more valuable than others. Deciding whether music is more important than art, drama, science or languages will determine how much time and resources are allocated to it.

Every education curriculum is based on a belief system. We seek to educate others about what we believe is most important for life. In the same way by not teaching some things we are implying these are not important. As society’s beliefs change so do the subjects being offered.

Education is the product of the beliefs of those who have written the current curriculum as well as those delivering it. The beliefs expressed in a secular school may initially appear tolerant and accepting of all ideas. In practice however they actively diminish or deny God’s role and plan in right or wrong or impact upon how we relate to others.

How to read, write or calculate doesn’t immediately appear to require any beliefs, a sense of right or wrong or impact upon how we relate to others.

The teaching of values and ethics isn’t limited to Christian schools. Values are learnt predominantly in families. All schools teach and demonstrate values and ethics. These values are our beliefs, our codes of conduct, our standards of right and wrong.

Secular schools claim to teach the values that are considered the basis of our laws and customs and how we treat others in our society. As parents the important question to ask is what are these values now based on. Are values decided by the majority? Are there any absolutes? Are values subjective and changing over time? Who determines what is important and what is not?

If a biblical worldview is not deliberately integrated into education then a humanistic foundation is usually laid. In humanism man, rather than God, is considered to be of primary importance. Where a school’s basis for values and ethics is inconsistent with those being taught at home conflict can arise. In contrast where teachers and parents share the same values, rather than undermining each another, they can provide a greater consistency for a child.

What a teacher believes is often considered irrelevant to what they do in the classroom. This stems from a belief that the teacher and the subject are separate and the knowledge they impart is neutral. However much of education is relational. A teacher’s beliefs will influence and shape how and what they choose to teach in a classroom - even within a set curriculum. The Bible urges us… whatever you do in word or deed do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ giving glory to God the Father Colossians 3:17

Whatever you do is a very broad statement. It includes education. What a Christian teacher does - in whatever subject - can give glory to God. Likewise whatever subjects a child may study, or careers they choose they can also give glory to God in it. This attaches a significant value, or meaning, to all of life's activities. It is no longer neutral. If God is interested in all of life then a Christian education requires a Biblical point of view through the whole curriculum. Merely adding a few courses in religion, or a Bible study or chapel services, does not make a school Christian.

For further information please visit : www.whychristianschools.com.au

Uniform Shop Opening Times

- Monday : 8.15am - 9.00am
- Wednesday : 3.00pm- 3.45pm
- Thursday : 3.00pm - 3.45pm
- Friday : 8.15am - 9.00am

Grace Notices
Open Night “Celebrating the Creative Arts”

By the time this newsletter goes to print, our annual Open Night will have come and gone.

The evening was a great success and offered a window into the excellent standard of work our children are encouraged and nurtured to produce.

We hope you were inspired by the works and efforts featured in the classrooms, in the library and auditorium.

Evenings such as these do not come about without the input of many. We would like to thank those who assisted with the set-up and clean-up, the sausage sizzle, sale of beverages, drama and music productions and the tremendous Creative Art works on display.

Senior School News

WACE Examinations

Our Year 12 students are in the middle of their WACE examinations and we trust and pray that these are going well for you. We look forward to hearing your results and watching as you progress to your next level of education and / or employment.

Grace will always be a part of who you are and what you become. Our prayer is that you will become all the God intended, all that He predestined, and all that can bring Him glory and honour and praise.

Year 8 - 11 Examinations

Examinations are looming and before they know it, students will be in the thick of recalling what they have learnt over the past 11 months to the satisfaction of the curriculum requirements.

Students are advised to start their preparation for these examinations early, both by prayer and dedicated study.

A letter detailing the examination process and requirements for students in the examination room and during the writing of their examinations, has been emailed home (or mailed to those without an email address).

Parents are asked to go over this letter and the requirements it details, with their son or daughter to ensure THEY know what is expected of them during the examination period.

Students are reminded that the point of examinations is to test their knowledge and to ascertain that they, and their teachers, are reaching the desired curriculum outcomes.

We pray you will face this time of academic testing with clear hearts and minds, leaning “not on your own understanding” but “acknowledging Him” in all your ways, so that He will “make your paths straight”.

Year 9 girls - SHINE camp

Our Year 9 girls will be on camp this weekend. All of the Secondary lady staff members have volunteered their time to sow into the lives of these young ladies.

The purpose of this camp is to build community within the year group and to provide opportunity for mentoring and guiding these young ladies. The Bible calls older women to be an example and good teachers of younger women, in both 1 Timothy and Titus and for younger women to seek out wise counsel from older women.

SHINE - is a Hillsong initiative

Why SHINE?

Many girls and women in our communities do not know or believe they are valuable and unique. A common mindset amongst young people is that ‘If I am not of much value then life doesn’t have much purpose’. This inevitably creates a sense of living for the moment with little regard for consequences or the future. The impact of this ‘meaninglessness of life’ and loss of hope is made apparent by the fact that Australia holds one of the highest youth suicide and heroin addiction rates in the world.

This lack of purpose instils negative mindsets in the lives of youth subsequently influencing the way they perceive their future. The break-up of the family unit and young people believing they have little worth or nothing to contribute can have far reaching implications – both immediate and long-term.

High levels of concern for young people are body image, mental health issues and alcohol and physical/sexual abuse. The statistics of those suffering from eating disorders in Australia are alarming with the mortality rate between 10-20%. Sexual abuse, major trauma and low self-esteem can contribute to the development of disordered eating. These concerns require recognition as priority issues for intervention.

ShineGIRL is an effective tool to help girls navigate the complexities of adolescence without being sabotaged by unhealthy behaviour patterns.

A similar programme for women is also available - ShineWOMEN!

Women with low value and self-worth, can allow too much of themselves to be negotiable, struggle to care for themselves holistically and experience life stress. Accordingly, this can be transferred through to families, communities and generations producing substantial consequences such as domestic violence, substance abuse, unemployment and social isolation.

To address these issues of personal enrichment, treatment needs to be placed on empowerment, self-esteem and spiritual well-being. ShineWOMEN seeks to address these issues through holistic personal development.

Acknowledgement and further information is available at http://myhillsong.com/shine/why-shine

Year 11 last Day - 5th December.

Prefect Camp - 6th & 7th December.

Middle School News

Easy Mark Tests

Our students in Years 2 - 7 have recently completed their Easy Mark testing in Reading and Mathematics. EasyMark Spelling tests were conducted at the beginning of the year, and further testing in comprehension will be conducted early next year.

EasyMark is a national testing programme which provides teachers with diagnostic and norm-referenced information about students’ attainment of some of the reading comprehension skills and understandings cited in the Student Outcome Statements of the Curriculum.

The Student Outcome Mathematics diagnostic tests provides teachers with assessment profiles of their students’
understandings, skills and knowledge of mathematics, and problem solving skills.

Acknowledgement: EasyMark Pty, Ltd, Perth WA.

SciTech visit
On the 14th November, the Middle School will be hosting SciTech for a fun-filled incursion. This is always a highlight for our students who love the experiments and hands-on interaction with the SciTech team.

Year 8 Orientation Day
Thursday, 15th December is Year 8 Orientation Day. All students (currently at Grace in Year 7) as well as students who will be joining us from other schools for Year 8 next year, will have a full day immersed in Year 8 activities to give them a taste of what Secondary school entails.

Information was sent home earlier this term, detailing the expectations for the day and students had the opportunity to order a “Canteen lunch”. If your child has not ordered their “Canteen lunch” and would like to, could you please contact Mrs Sandra Dinkelman - Student Services Officer, as soon as possible.

Uniform fittings have been scheduled for these students in allotted appointment times. If you have not yet secured an appointment time for your child’s uniform fitting, could you please contact Mrs Sandra Dinkelman, with urgency.

Junior School News

Kindergarten 2013 - Parent’s Dinner

Last week, our Early Childhood Centre hosted approximately 60 parents of students who will be starting their schooling years at Grace in Kindergarten in 2013.

The 2013 group of students is significant for many reasons; one being that this is the first year that Grace will have two classes in both Kindergarten and Pre-Primary.

Grace’s student number in 2013 will exceed the 500 mark and bring us a little closer to the vision of two classes in each year level. This increase in numbers affords us the ability to create more opportunities in all academic disciplines.

The auditorium Café was converted into a butterfly themed ‘restaurant’ and a sumptuous three-course dinner was served, including hors d’oeuvres and pre-dinner beverages (in the EC1 classroom).

Grateful thanks to those parents and students who assisted prepare for, and serve at this annual event. Special mention and thanks to Mrs Carol Turner for the delicious hors d’oeuvres and desserts, always beautifully presented and prepared. Thank you once again, Carol.

The main meal was supplied by “Garden City” Chinese restaurant and we would like to thank Jessica Wong and her team for their continued support of our school. Two of Jessica’s sons, Joshua and William, are past students of Grace.

Thank you
A big thank you to those parents and families that came to our Busy Bee and helped out with the Pre-Primary playground.

We are so appreciative of your time and the way in which you worked together to overhaul and create new play areas for our students. This week our students have enjoyed being challenged
and working together on the new equipment.

The staff have spent time teaching the children how to use the equipment safely and are only allowed to be on it under supervision. With that in mind, we ask that parents do not let their children play on the equipment before or after school, to eliminate the risk of students being hurt and also eliminate any confusion in regards to the rules that are established at school.

Mrs Donna Holman - Head of Junior School

School Community News

Booklists - Despite our very best attempts, the booklists for next year have been delayed. As soon as they are available, we will notify all parents.

Congratulations - past pupil : Jeremy Thompson

Ex-student Jeremy Thompson has now graduated from the Jazz Performance (Guitar) degree course at the Conservatorium of Music ECU, Mt Lawley, Perth.

Jeremy had his final third year recital on Tuesday night and received the award for highest overall marks for third year as well as getting the award for the best recital. He has also been recognised as one of the top 100 highest students at ECU (out of 25 000).

We congratulate Jeremy on a fantastic achievement, gained through determination and effort in following through on his ambition. We look forward to seeing his name in lights and hearing of his continuing success.

Mr Hugh Ryder : HoD Music

World Vision Fundraiser - tonight - Opening at 6.30pm

Lost Property

If YOU have lost clothing, jewellery or any other item, please come in to the office to check in the lost property box or speak to one of the office staff.

You will need to describe your jewellery or other valuable item, when claiming, as these have been put into safe keeping and are not in the Lost Property box.

We have plenty of jewellery, including necklaces, rings, earrings, watches etc. as well as reading glasses, cell phones and other miscellaneous items.

At the end of the term, all articles left unclaimed will be disposed of.

2013 Term dates

Term 1 : Monday, 4th February—Friday, 19th April
Term 2 : Tuesday, 7th May - Friday 5th July
Term 3 : Wednesday, 24th July - Friday, 27th September
Term 4 : Tuesday, 15th October - Friday, 13th December