

Helen Blake's school visit January 2018

STAFF PREP WEEK

School at LCC for all of the staff started 22nd Jan with a week of staff training and going through the obligatory child protection policy and procedures and our CCSV volunteer Christian worker agreements. Julie was reappointed as the CPO.

Lloyd led the staff training with most of it consisting of Monica taking the teachers step by step through correct and better ACE learning, testing and student records procedures. Michelle took the staff through the CP and worker agreements.

Last week, the middle and senior classrooms were looking better than ever after the training and with Monica now in charge of most of the school's classroom management, including ACE procedures management.

I joined the ST for Thursday & Friday 25th & 26th and focused on we learn better by see-hear-do-think about-memorise, and comprehension exercises using the 'dear cards'.

This past 2nd week of junior staff prep, mornings I took the yr 1 teachers through the new yr 1 curriculum, step by step. I also spent some time with K and 2 teachers and the rest of the staff.

This year we staggered the school start, mainly because of the major changes I'll describe below. 5+ started 29 Feb and pre-4 will start today. There are 348 students enrolled this year.

NEW STAFF

We have a new teacher Jubilee, from Tanna Island, working in the Snr classroom. Jubilee has studied for 2 yrs at the USP, hoping for a scholarship to do medicine. He's a very nice, positive Christian young man.

Today Jon will show another prospective teacher applicant from Ambae Island around the school. Tiffany is an English and Social Sciences teacher qualified to teach in the Government schools.

Gloria from Malekula Island joined us at the start of 3rd term last year and has stayed on. She'll also continue USP Studies this year, just one subject per semester. She has been a very good addition to our middle school staff.

ED TEAM

The education direction team (started by Helen Lee in 2017) is functioning very well. Lloyd, Monika and Michelle work together constantly through a wide range of things. Elirose (Pre

& K teacher) joins them sometimes when things relate to her. They are hard and committed workers. I don't think Monika and Michelle had any holiday at all, through Dec-Jan, with the major changes and improvements we've been taking the school through! Monica's work included putting stars on every student's new 'star chart' (she wanted to do it!), and sewing 300 or so tiny yellow flags for the students' work stations (not my idea!).

CHANGES THIS YEAR - EARLY LEARNERS

In November the year before last, I studied the ACE K&1 programs that we adopted a long time ago. Since then, I've been working towards a change for our level 1 learning. The whole of last year, class 1's transitional program led into the change that's happened this year. Bit by bit, things became clear about what to do last year as the trainers from Australia came over. The key for me was discovering about Jolly Phonics (Aimee)! - a way of learning the sounds that enables reading words and simple sentences very quickly.

The new curriculum this year for yr 1 term 1 is a blend of Jolly Phonics (revising and new learning), new lessons and stories I created for every sound, with most of the familiar ACE animals but in the order of JP sounds, Fitzroy Readers 1, videos, Math paces, and printed sheet activities from some other paces. All of the literacy learning for term 1 aligns with where the students will be at with the Jolly Phonics sounds sequence. By the end of the year, they'll also have completed the paces they're doing (1-9).

The teachers have a term 1 weekly scope and sequence and a daily period by period lesson plan to work from. They like the new teaching materials and videos and are looking forward to it (with some trepidation)! I'll stay in contact with Lloyd regularly for a while until Anna and Judith are fully confident and their partners Tari and Sheila are working well with them. Their classrooms are both at maximum capacity - Anna has 38 students, Judith has 31. Lloyd is looking after an extra 6 yr 1 students who are nearly through. A result of allowing too many Kindy kids in last year, too many Kindy and year 1 repeaters, and the new level change!

If this term for level 1 works well, we'll do the same into the future, hopefully with only some minor adjustments.

Preschool and Kindy are also learning with JP from this year, and some other familiar ACE learning and activities as well. I think the new K-1-2 learning should flow well progressively.

The aim is for a much stronger English literacy, comprehension and thinking skills foundation for the students' school years. Lloyd and the others in the Ed team are very happy about this new program and approach. Lloyd has been telling me for a while, that the children should be able to read much more quickly than they have been with ACE.

This year, I added Creative Writing paces to the levels 2 & 3 students' learning (extra literacy paces).

CHANGES THIS YEAR - PACE AND CLASS LEVELS

Late last year after checking and wading through every step in the process with the Ed team and introducing the idea to all of the staff, I announced that this year we will change the ACE pace numbers & certificate levels for every class. This coincided with pace learning starting at yr 1 last year, instead of at yr 2. It was tricky working out the changes, especially with certificates last year and this year in mind - but thankfully it did work!

From now, our levels/classes 1-8 will learn from 9 pace books in each subject before going up a level (not the ACE norm 12 or our 4-year trial 10). Levels 9-12 will complete 12 paces before going up a level (9&10 will have hardly any Social Studies paces to study, only 2 per year). This is to give more time for enhanced learning with the paces (trainers, please note). It also aligns our Senior learning levels more closely with ACE Australia and ACE NZ (who themselves have different certificate levels) and with the level of learning needed for USP entrance.

CHANGES THIS YEAR - ACE SOCIAL STUDIES & VANUATU STUDIES

In Tanna, many years ago we culled irrelevant American, Australian and NZ Social Studies paces in some levels, but it's taken a while to get around to it at Prima. In late 2016, I did a major cull.

For many years we've tried to introduce bits of the Vanuatu curriculum subjects. Last year's serious attempt has led to the decision this year that some Vanuatu curriculum learning is now an obligatory part of our curriculum and for our school certificates.

From this year, our Social Studies curriculum is a mix of American, Australian, NZ, Fiji and PNG paces (mostly the American), and Vanuatu Agriculture (yrs 2 & 6), Vanuatu health & nutrition (yrs 3 & 5), and Vanuatu Social Sciences - society & human environments (yrs 4,7,8,9,10). Most of the Vanuatu curriculum subjects have a good collection of videos, PowerPoints, pics and documents to enhance the learning. Any help with sourcing or creating more AV aids would be welcome!

In the next few weeks, (now that I know there is such a thing!) I'll write a basic level by level scope and sequence for the Social Studies learning.

SENIORS

Late last year as you know with the help of John Phillips I worked on our yr 12 finishing level and subjects, for students who want to continue on and study at USP (or equivalent). We now have a package of information about our compulsory subjects and electives, and USP entrance requirements, ready for all students who are nearing year 11.

2017 SCHOOL LEAVERS

Lloyd told me that some of our last year's secondary students have joined the VIT/INTV, with just our 2017 year 9 certificate. With our new levels this year, they'll need a year 10 certificate to be at the same level of learning (specifically, year 10 will do 4 more paces than last year's year 9, in every subject).

CONCLUSION

We are all looking forward to having Cath Evans at school a lot this year, and Helen and Simon and their staff trainer teams in April, July and Sep!

I'm expecting to be able to step back a lot again this year, from being very hands-on last year. (We'll see!).

Helen