

# PIN OAK

ISSUE 06: TERM 4, 24 October 2014



OUTBACK



NEW LEADERS



K-6

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### Pin Oak Team

#### Student Editorial Team

Emma Croker, Alexia Cheaib, Ruben Seaton, Evangeline Larsen, Evelyn Bratchford, Ryan Tan, Cameron Palmer, Cate Patterson, Kaarina Allen, Maddie Thomas,

Student Photographer  
Olivia Donovan

#### Design Team

Emma Croker, Conor Lynch, Dylan Whitelaw, Wil Golja

Head of Marketing and PR  
Emma Calver

Staff Editor  
Beattie Lanser

Oxley College  
Railway Road, Burradoo, NSW, 2576.  
Ph: 4861 1366  
office@oxley.nsw.edu.au



## COMMUNITY NOTICEBOARD



Oxley P&F Presents The Annual Trivia Night

### Black & White

Friday, 7 November  
First Question at 7pm

\$15.00 per person or  
Tables of 10 - \$150  
BYO Drinks and Nibbles  
RSVP by email to Gavin Low - [gavin.low@gmail.com](mailto:gavin.low@gmail.com)

Prizes for:  
Best Dressed Male & Female  
Best Table Decorations  
<http://www.trybooking.com/GEXT>



### PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Everyone Belongs

Wingecarribee Shire Council and the Access Committee invite entries into a photographic competition to celebrate International Day of People with Disability on December 3. Entries should be submitted electronically as a JPEG image of up to 2mb by :

- emailing to [social.media@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:social.media@wsc.nsw.gov.au) with the subject 'Everyone Belongs';

Entries close at 5:00pm on Friday 21 November 2014.



## HEAD OF K -6: Justine Lind

Justine is currently the Co-ordinator of the Preparatory School's Honours Program at Scots College in Sydney. She has previously been the Deputy Head of the Junior School at St Catherine's in charge of Curriculum and Deputy Head of St Andrew's School in Adelaide. She is just about to complete a Masters in Educational Leadership at the University of New South Wales. She will be moving to the Southern Highlands with her husband Andrew. She is already brimming with ideas to take the Oxley K-6 School into the next decade.



## ENGLISH and LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

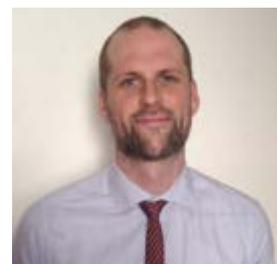
**Rebecca Liberto** - English Teacher and Year 12 Academic Master

Rebecca has spent the last twelve years teaching Senior English at Sydney Grammar School. Before this she was a Housemaster at Sherborne School for Girls in Britain and Head of English at Prior Park College. In the late 1980's she worked as a marketing executive and at the BBC. I offered her a position twelve years ago when I was Head of English at Newington, but she went to Sydney Grammar instead. I am delighted to have secured her the second time around. Rebecca will also be a key part of the Year 12 study centre as the Year 12 Academic Master.



**Alex Hayman** - English

Alex has spent the last four years teaching English at Sydney Boys High School. He is committed to invigorating, high standard English classes as well as being very involved in the Ethics components of Cornerstone. He is an outstanding Basketball coach- he has co-steered the Sydney Boys High basketball programme (with his brother!), including coaching the GPS winning basketball team and winning three National Premierships. He will be relocating to the Southern Highlands with his fiancée Annalise who is also an English teacher. Alex and Annalise will be married in January.



## HUMANITIES and SOCIAL SCIENCES DEPARTMENT

**Jason Simpson** - Legal Studies

After graduating from Law at University of New South Wales, Jason worked for just over 12 years as a litigation lawyer (including criminal law) before seeing the light and retraining as a high school teacher. He has spent the last four years teaching at St Vincent's Potts Point where his Legal Studies classes have been getting quite extraordinary results. He has begun writing an HSC Legal Studies textbook as well. He is also a keen sportsman, particularly rugby union. We look forward to Jason working with our Year 10 accelerated Legal Studies class as well as our Senior students. He and his wife Molly will also be Oxley parents with their son Alec in Year 2.



**Christophe Gauchat** – Humanities and Senior Economics

Christophe has spent the last seven years teaching at Cranbrook School. He was the co-ordinator of Cranbrook's Pastoral Care programme and is the Housemaster of Davidson House at Cranbrook. Christophe did an exchange last year to Raffles, Singapore's top academic school. He is a rugby and cricket coach and has co-ordinated Outdoor Education programmes. He had a previous career as a marketing team manager with Arnotts before he too (like Jason Simpson) saw the light and became a teacher. Christophe will be moving to the Southern Highlands with his wife Sarah. Christophe and Sarah are expecting their first child this week!



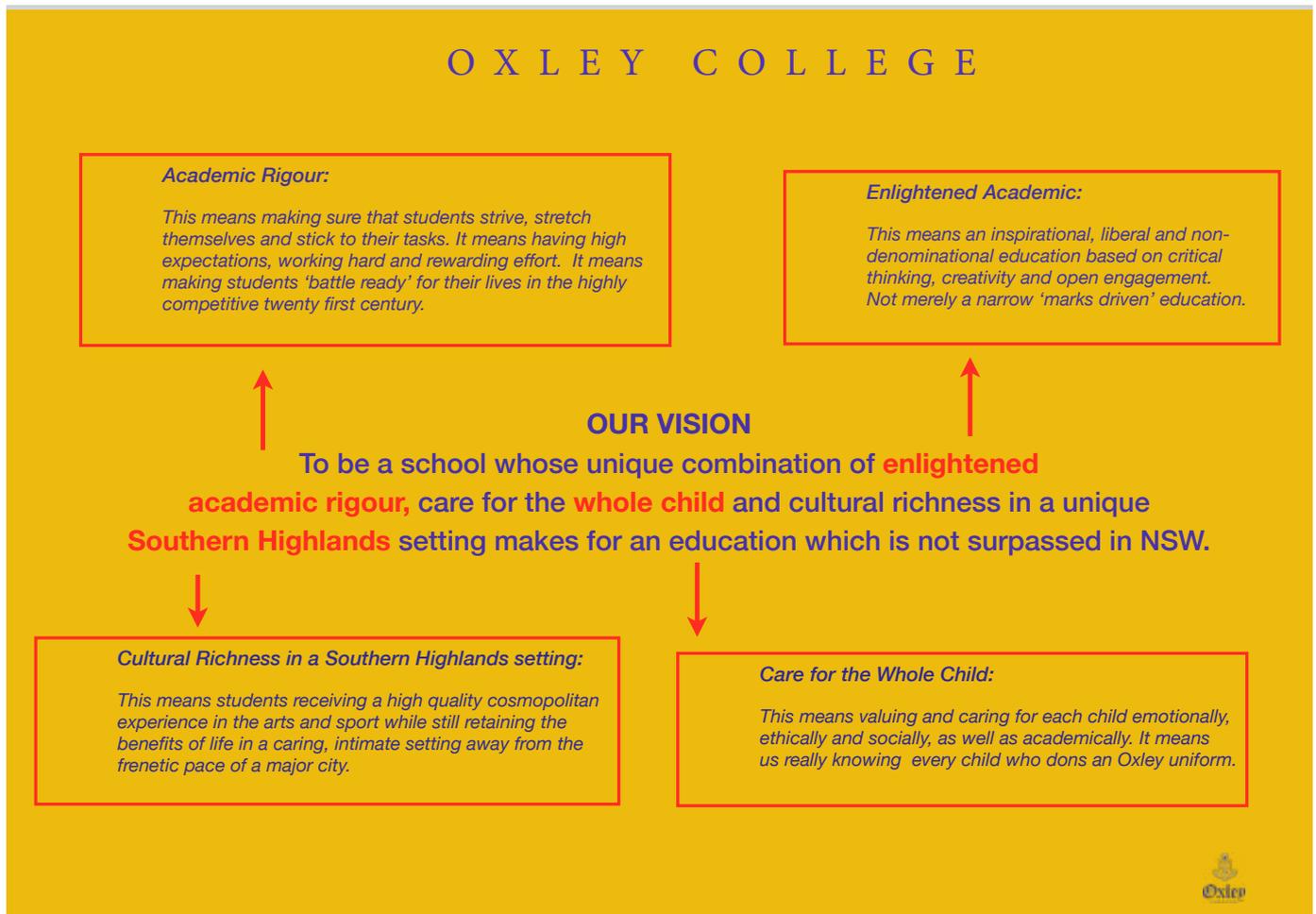
## MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT

**Catherine Dobner** - Head of Mathematics

Catherine is currently a teacher of Mathematics at Frensham and the Chair of a Teaching Learning Community (Gifted Education) group at Frensham. Before this she worked at the Glengarry campus of Scots College and Barker College in Sydney. Twelve years ago she was also Head of Mathematics at MacKillop Catholic College in the ACT, with a staff of 22. She completed a Masters of Education in 2010 and a certificate in Gifted Education this year. Catherine and her family are already locals of the Southern Highlands.



# HEADMASTER'S REPORT - PART 1 Vision and Mission



## a) How we got here

During Term Two the Staff, Executive, Board, and some senior classes discussed the heart, mind and soul of Oxley. We distilled what was important. We also returned to the foundation of the school and got back in touch with why a group of people would expend so many countless hours starting a new school that was not like others. Reading David Wright's (the first Headmaster's) writings reinforced again the vitality of a liberal, rigorous education delivered in a non-denominational way so that parents did not have to send their children away to the boarding houses of Sydney to get an education that was second to none. As a result the 'new vision' is not a new direction but a reinforcement of the school's founding vision.

The first drafts of the vision and the mission came from these meetings. We then spent all of Term Three refining, redrafting, and reworking many of the individual phrases. Two different phrases took four meetings each to hammer out! As a result everyone owns this vision and mission. We are proud of it and committed to making it work.

It is important to acknowledge too the excellent work done by Grant Williamson and all who worked with him over the last six years. They nurtured and enriched the spirit of Oxley to allow us to forge this new formulation of our founding principles.

## b) Why it matters and what next

We have crystallised what is special about Oxley and sharpened its focus. Everyone - the Staff, the Board and the students - is in no doubt about where we are going. Our strategies and priorities for the next months and years will spring from this core sense of who we are. Indeed the articles over the next few pages show how we have already begun in earnest. There will be more.

The mission is particularly important, I believe. All schools have visions, but no school has a mission like ours- a 'two sided coin' that expects the students to give as much as they receive. The students are the core of Oxley and its reason for being. The mission empowers them and makes them responsible too. It is fitting that they are at the very centre of how we all see ourselves.

## O X L E Y C O L L E G E

### Our mission to (and from) our students:

#### As your educators we will:

Excite you with the richness of what is known and inspire you with the possibility of what is yet to be discovered. Also help you think clearly, creatively and with passion.

Care for you emotionally so you feel that school is a safe harbour where you are secure and respected for who you are.

Engage you as often as possible about values, ethics and the biggest spiritual questions in life. This will be non-denominational, informed by the Christian tradition and will also draw from wisdom wherever it is found. Also give you opportunities to serve others.

Help you discover a rich variety of opportunities so that you can experience what it is to really strive and work hard at what is important. These opportunities will be inside and also outside the classroom – on the sporting field, in performance spaces and in the outdoors.

Help prepare you for your future in the exciting, dangerous and uncharted twenty first century.

#### As your educators, we expect you to:

Seize each day at school. Approach learning with enthusiasm, open minded curiosity and real wonder.

Care for the others within our school and respect their individual personalities and talents.

Seek to develop a well-founded ethical, moral and spiritual world view which will sustain you throughout your life. Also to 'give back' to others in our region, our country and our world.

Commit to stretching yourself and tenaciously finishing what you start. (To strive, stretch and stick).

Approach your life in the twenty first century with optimism, resilience, passion and wisdom.



# HEADMASTER'S REPORT - PART 1



## New Yr 12 Study Centre and Academic Master:

*The Heart of the School at the Heart of the School.*

The top floor of Elvo is a beautiful, graceful place; large nineteenth century rooms and a wide balcony with sweeping views of the school and the surrounding country. It is a place ideally suited to the serious academic business of preparing for the HSC. And so we are transforming it into a Year 12 Study Centre from the start of 2015.

What's more, we have created a new position- the Year 12 Academic Master- to mentor, monitor, cajole and inspire our Year 12s as they aim high. She will have an office in the heart of the Year 12 Study Centre. The position will be filled by Ms Rebecca Liberto, who is joining us in 2015. She has taught English at the highest levels at Sydney Grammar for the last twelve years and was previously a Housemaster at Sherborne School in the UK. She has exactly the right combination of warmth and exacting standards to get the most out of so many of our Year 12s.

The Year 12 Study Centre is not a Year 12 common room or a social space. Every second school has one of those. This is different. It will be a place to work independently or in groups on their HSC- a library dedicated to them. We will be furnishing it so that it has the turn of the century atmosphere, not unlike the 'Elephant Boy Café' that we all know so well. As well as Ms Liberto there will be a staff mentor rostered on every period to help students with their work. It will be open before and after school for study too.

It is a very exciting development in the life of Oxley College and I know that our Year 12s are keen to take up residence. It is part of our commitment to helping each student do as well in the HSC as they can.



## Accelerated Yr 10 Legal Studies

We are giving our academically able Year 10 students a chance to start their HSC a year early by beginning accelerated Legal Studies at the start of Year 10 and sitting their final HSC exam by the end of Year 11.

*Why accelerate?* – Firstly it gives more shape and purpose to Year 10, knowing that they have actually started your HSC, even in a minor way. Secondly, it gives students practice at actual HSC style assessments and schedules a year before they take another five HSC subjects at once. Thirdly, our academic data-crunching shows clearly that students who take 12 or 13 units to the HSC do better than those who take 10 or 11. By accelerating in a subject, students get two units finished by the end of Year 11. They can thus carry 12 or 13 units in total for their ATAR and still have plenty of time to study their other subjects in Year 12.

*Why legal studies?* – Acceleration has been done before but usually only for Maths or sometimes Science. Legal Studies allows people who are not Maths/Science geniuses to experience acceleration too. As a social science, Legal Studies is a more generalist subject, more in reach of students with high levels of reading and writing. It also allows more people to experience the subject Legal Studies. Whatever walk of life students are going into, knowing how the legal system works is a great practical benefit to them. It helps them understand the way our society works. We also have an excellent new Legal Studies teacher, Mr Jason Simpson, who is very good at getting the most out of students.

*Who will be eligible?* – We cannot offer it to everyone. We need to be able to show the Board of Studies that it is being offered to students with a high degree of ability who would benefit from acceleration. To do this we will be looking at Year 9 marks across the board, but particularly in English and HSIE- the 'essay writing' style subjects. We will also be using students' NAPLAN scores, particularly in literacy. If students are interested but not eligible, they are still able to pick it as a regular elective in Year 11.

We believe that offering Legal Studies in Year 10 is another way of providing enlightened academic rigour at Oxley, and we look forward to starting it in 2015.

# How not to be Diplomatic

*A Step-By-Step Lesson In 'Shirtfronting'*

*By Ruben Seaton (Year 11)*

The hardest thing about having a political opinion at 17 years old is that nobody takes you seriously. The online age of 2014 means that you can skim-read an article on the history of Gaza and five minutes later you're a Middle East expert, ready to condemn any Israeli firing a rocket into harmless civilians. Partnered with this is another vital feature of teenage psychology: we love to have an opinion. We love to love, and even more, we love to hate.

Maybe that's why you'll brush off this article as another kid who read one Sydney Morning Herald article and now thinks he's able to criticise the government for every word they say. But maybe you'll consider this: I actually care about the world I inherit when I grow up.

That's why, for me, the comments by the 'Honourable' Tony Abbott made last week concerning the Russian President Vladimir Putin are disappointing – dare I say, embarrassing – to hear. In case you missed the news, when asked about how he would approach the arrival of Putin to the G20 summit in November, Abbott stammered: "Look, I, um, am going to shirtfront Mr Putin – you bet I am."

Surely, surely, this goes up in the already large Hall of Fame of Abbott's worst quotes. Move aside "Australia was unsettled before 1788", shove over "[Homosexuals] make me feel threatened" – this even challenges "[Liberal candidate] Fiona Scott has sex appeal". As Alexander Downer said, diplomacy is, at its core, the art of being sensitive and discreet in order to find the best way to obtain your objectives. Although a memorable quote or speech goes a long way, quotes like these show that Abbott has a long way to go before he reaches "I Have A Dream" status.

I, like any moral person, can excuse someone under the pressure of politics for muddling up his or her words. But this instance is inexcusable not only because this is the latest in a series of verbal slip-ups, but because he is turning the most tragic aerial disaster since 9/11 into a comedic 'word' war with the most intimidating



man in politics. Talk about choosing your battles, sir.

This is unfortunate (yes, that is an euphemism) not only on a national scale, but, more importantly, on an international scale. The G20 is an event that affects the whole developed world, and the decision to let Putin attend, although not ultimately decided by Australia, throws our country into the global spotlight. Hence, when the man in charge of the country decides to openly challenge the controversial (another euphemism) Russian President, one must consider how this reflects Australia's image on the world scale. It is distressing to see our proud Australian identity, which has been developed tirelessly over generations by our politicians, troops and athletes, being compromised to a level where the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev chose to reply with "Serious politicians should be able to choose their words carefully."

I mentioned earlier my primary concern: how the decisions made by today's government will affect the world I live in in the years to come. These poor verbal choices shouldn't be a reason for anger towards Abbott. For me, that time has been and gone; now I just feel concerned. Australia already has so much, and I have so much to be thankful for. However I believe that as a country we should strive to be as much of a positive influence on the world as we can. Looking at Mr Abbott's choices, that is not what I see.

This article isn't meant to be a crisis alert, nor is it meant to be a rant. Having said that, I've watched Mr Abbott over the past year in his power, and I don't think it's going too far to say I'm concerned and appalled by some of things he has said. Man Booker Prize Winner Richard Flanagan made headlines when he admitted, "I'm ashamed to be Australian", but can that be surprising considering the way we have seen our Prime Minister act? And if Mr Abbott doesn't like that too, I guess he'll have to shirtfront me as well.



# *Oodnadatta Aboriginal School*

*This is not your average school*

*By Maddie Thomas and Evangeline Larsen (Year 11)*

Just as it is difficult to get through two weeks without the comforts of home and the material items that create our identity, so too is it difficult to get through life without your own language, culture and identity. Travelling through the Australian Outback allowed Oxley College Year 11 a small glimpse into the world of remote communities and the difficulties faced in such circumstances. We are very lucky to live in a place where we have a choice in education and activities. Not so for places such as Oodnadatta, a stop in South Australia on our Uluru – Broken Hill leg of the journey. But it seems this doesn't matter to those who live there.

Oodnadatta has a reputation at Oxley. Here you will find the song-loving presence of Jeffrey and the incredibly talented basketball-playing students. We were lucky enough to camp on the oasis-like green oval and spend the night on the basketball court with kids of all ages. This was not your average school. Amongst the government housing, the dust covered streets and the iconic pink roadhouse was a school that screamed, "pride!"

Classroom walls painted in an array of bright colours, chosen by the students and Oodnadatta community, basketball net backboards covered with Indigenous artwork, not a piece of rubbish in sight and a well-kept oval. There was no doubt in our minds as we looked around that students and staff were proud of this place. Incredibly, we could tell this without a single person around, as it was holiday time and the school was quiet and empty. Come 6:30pm a few young faces began to appear. Young girls leant against the vivid building block, charging their phones

together in an alcove. A basketball was found and the sound of its bounce on the concrete and fits of laughter echoed. Everyone converged on the court at 7:00pm and the game really began. It soon was clear that the Oodnadattites were the masters of basketball, their athletic bodies showing that it is their passion, day in day out. We saw the striking bond between children of all ages and the strong sense of care for each other as a community. The students soon became open and enthusiastic towards us visitors and were cheering, laughing and playing with us like old friends. In an isolated community this sense of friendship and protectiveness towards each other appears all the more important as it generates a closeness we sometimes forget.

Within the Oodnadatta Aboriginal School it is clear that the students embrace it as a sanctuary and popular meeting place. The vibrancy of the school, as well as the pool, basketball court and large oval, offers the students a vast array of entertainment. It was easy to see why they love spending time there into all hours of the night. This is a quite different take on a school compared to what we know. Students had full access to its grounds at all times (holidays and nights) – a strange concept to us. It is not that Oxley is not an inviting place to spend time at, but rather we view our school differently. School is a place for learning, from Monday to Friday, for sport and for classrooms. Not for catch-ups, weekends, holidays or evenings. I had never realised a definition of school could vary so much between states and students. Although the attendees of Oodnadatta Aboriginal School view it as place for learning as well, to them school is more. On our walk around the town we could understand why. There wasn't a park or

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# “Amongst the government housing, the dust covered streets and the iconic pink roadhouse was a school that screamed, “pride!””

another place to hang out - school was the only option. As well as this, there appeared to be a sense of security - a safety amongst peers and these grounds.

Within a community of fewer than 300 people, 113 of whom are Indigenous, Oodnadatta Aboriginal School is comprised of 63 students and 16 staff. The school runs from a crèche all the way to Year 12 and on average, classes have around 18 students. Principal Mr Peter Loades has been at the school for nine years of the schools' 127-year history and told us that academic results have improved during his time at the school. As the students' passion for sport is obvious, we asked Mr Loades how the teachers evoke a similar passion for learning within the school. He explained that a sense of academic pride is encouraged through the laptops and iPads given to students. As well as this, the school has high expectations of the students and it is important that these standards are met, whilst the students also enjoy their sport and other activities. Students compete with Coober Pedy in football, and sports days with the regional schools in the area, the majority of which Oodnadatta emerges from victorious.

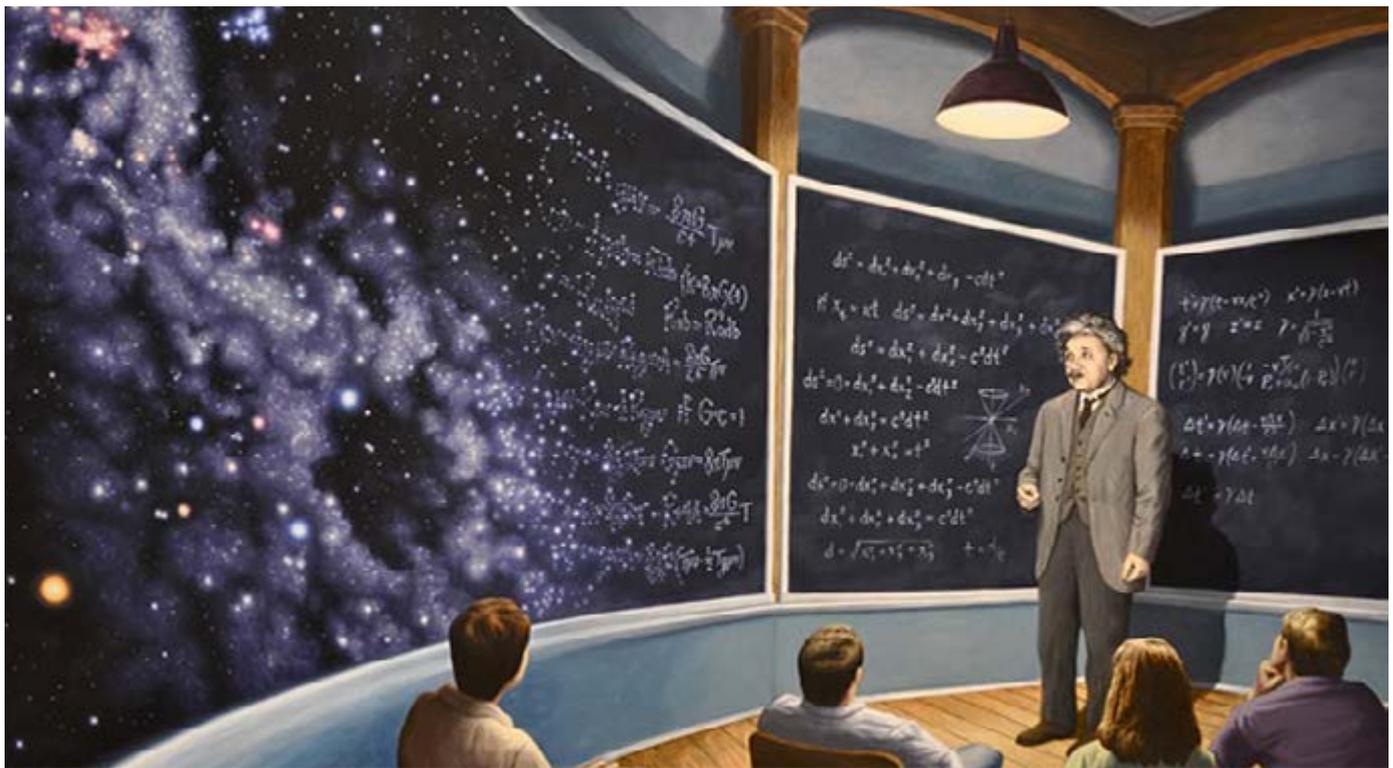
Oodnadatta Aboriginal School is one of the best academically performing remote schools in Australia, and according to state data, is on par with much of the district, and schools in Adelaide. Mr Loades hopes that increasingly more students will go on to tertiary education in universities in Whyalla or Adelaide while others will continue to enter into labour work.

He explained that “Oodnadatta Aboriginal School is all about creating a space that reflects high expectations, so that the students feel that it is not second rate to other schools.”

Indigenous schools all across Australia face problems such as low attendance and lack of either home, community or government support. Indigenous education is traditionally focused on kinship, land and dreaming – the connections between these develop an individual's identity. There is no doubt that this form of education is at odds with our national system and the two rarely seem to mix cohesively. Bilingual education is at the heart of the current Indigenous education movement. Ken Wyatt, an Indigenous member of the House of Representatives committees for health and human rights spoke on ABC TV's Q&A in August about bilingual education. He noted that “... if we want educational outcomes to change from where they are in this country then we're going to have to recognise that some of our Aboriginal communities have three or four language that are spoken by children and we've got to work from the known to the unknown and that is to transition them from their language into English so they can walk both lives but have the opportunity of being successful in broader Australian society.”

Our generation will be the first to have really grown up with an education that has exposed us to Indigenous culture, issues and ideas. I hope that this allows us to be more open-minded. Hopefully it will also enable us to be the supporters and instigators of policies and opportunities that create an education system that is wholesome. One that is both culturally and linguistically diverse, caring and encouraging, engaging and enriched, worldly and local. Schools more like Oodnadatta Aboriginal School for some and more like Oxley for others. Because no one system and school will fit every child.

# HEADMASTER'S REPORT - PART 2



*Illustration by Robert Gonsalves*

## CORNERSTONE

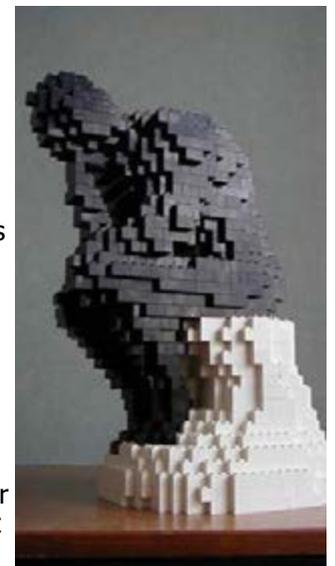
As I wrote during Term 3, Oxley is launching an exciting new subject that will be taught twice a week in 2015 to every student in Year 7-10. It is called 'Cornerstone'. It is devised and written entirely at Oxley. It is a subject that draws together all of the big, inspirational and ethical ideas from wherever they are found and funnels them into the one subject. It is also a subject that will teach kids how to think. This subject should be the cornerstone of an enlightened, rigorous education for the twenty first century.

I am writing the lessons, and it will be taught by a team of enthusiastic teachers from across all of the different subject areas. The topics include 'Eight Thorny Issues in Philosophy', 'Ethics in the Playground', 'How To Think Critically', 'Big Questions for Big Religions', 'All About Study for Year Seven', 'Business Ethics' and 'The Philosopher's Zone - Wise Men of Early Greece'.

Most of the lessons will be based on 'Community of Inquiry' discussions in the classroom. Ethics will be a particular focus. I have regularly asked the hypothetical question 'would you rather your child was smart or good'. I think most people, after a pause, would say 'good'. This discharges on schools, I believe, an obligation to teach ethics - something we will do with gusto. We will be doing ethics of the student world (lies+truth, cheating+honesty, ethics on social media), ethics in the wide world (wars, bioethics, business ethics etc), ethical thinking techniques (which is a lot more fun than it sounds) and ethical philosophies (ditto).

Cornerstone will not just stand alone, either. It will have branches that flow back and forth from each of the other subjects, knitting them all together. For example, when Year 7 History students are doing the accuracy of historical sources, that's when Cornerstone will ask how to separate a 'fact' from an 'opinion'. When Year 8 students are studying the film *The Matrix* in English, that's when Cornerstone will ask the questions about Descartes and solipsism, such as 'How do you know you are not in the middle of a dream?' When Year 9 Science are doing 'Our changing climate', that's when Cornerstone will ask the questions about when and how we can 'trust' scientific research. Any time in Maths, Cornerstone can ask the question 'Would two plus two still equal four if no-one in the world could count'.

As the students go on, they will learn how to discuss, how to listen, how to speculate, how to deduce, how to analyse and how to synthesise. In short they will learn how to think. This will flow back and forth between Cornerstone and all of their other subjects. The plan is that by the end of Year 10 Oxley students will genuinely have had an enlightened, liberal training that lays a foundation stone not just for their HSC but for their lives in the twenty first century.



# HEADMASTER'S REPORT- PART 2



## VISIBLE LEARNING - COMING BOOK RELEASE

As many of you know we have spent several years using the 'Visible Learning' programme of John Hattie to make our teaching more dynamic and enriching. Visible Learning is not just a new programme dreamed up in a research lab somewhere. Instead John Hattie and his team distilled the research done in over 1000 different metastudies to work out what got better results and what didn't. Then they took all the best practices, rolled them all into one complete and excellent programme, and called it 'Visible Learning'. John Hattie has become the Chair of the Australian Institute for Teaching, so we will be hearing a lot more about Visible Learning over the next decade.

We are lucky to be at the forefront of Visible Learning worldwide (it has since been taken on in thousands of schools in the USA and Britain) and indeed, Oxley's implementation of Visible Learning is a chapter in John Hattie's new book. It will be available in March 2015. We look forward to being able to share our journey with a much wider audience once the book is released.

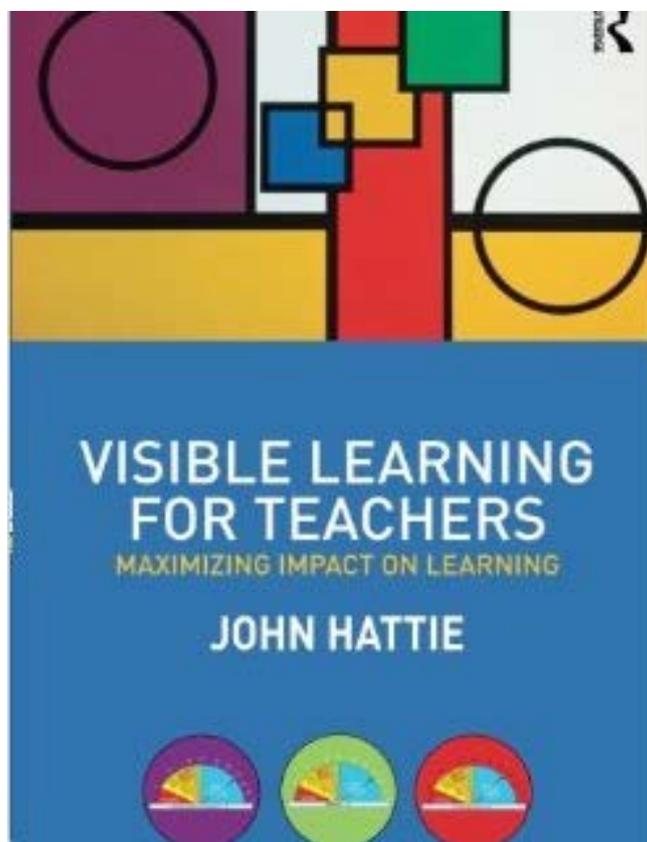
## HOUSE AREAS AND MIND MATTERS

We are already very good at providing excellent quality care for the whole child through our pastoral system and through the relatively small size of the School. However, we think we can do even better.

So from 2015 we are dividing the secondary school up into six House areas. The Head of House will be in the middle of their own area instead of in the general staffroom. The House Tutor rooms will all be in the House area instead of scattered around the school. The lockers will all be in the House areas too. It means that students will go to their House areas (to their lockers) in the morning, at recess, at lunch and after school.

This offers far more opportunities for the younger students to mix with the Year 11s and 12s in the House, in particular the House leaders (and vice versa). It means that each Head of House will be far more available each day to guide, monitor, and simply be a pastoral presence. It will allow Houses to give their buildings a distinctive House flavour. It will create more House loyalty and make for an even better pastoral environment.

In addition we are introducing the Mental Health programme Mind Matters into each pastoral group. This excellent programme is tailored to Oxley and was devised by a series of groups, including Beyond Blue. In the time when 20% of teenagers in NSW report some form of mental health issue, it teaches mental wellbeing and resilience. It is a form of a large scale preventative programme. Mind Matters will be delivered in the safe and caring environment of each House.



# HEADMASTER'S REPORT- PART 2

## NEW HOMEWORK POLICY

From 2015 we are mandating and regulating homework more consistently. Independent work at home has always been a part of a good education and will continue to be so at Oxley. As well as allowing students to reinforce concepts at school, it gets them 'battle ready' to take on the rigours of the HSC. As schools become more dynamic, it also becomes increasingly possible in some areas for students to learn content at home on a TED talk or similar, and then use class time to debate, discuss and process it.

As a guideline we expect:

- Years 3 and 4: Thirty minutes each night plus reading.
- Years 5 and 6: Forty five minutes each night plus reading
- Year Seven: One to one and a half hours each night plus reading (four times a week).
- Year Eight: One and a quarter to one and three quarters hour each night plus reading (four times a week).
- Year Nine: One and a half to two hours each night plus reading (five times a week).
- Year Ten: At least two hours each night plus reading (five times a week).
- Year Eleven: Whatever is needed to get through the work, but at least three hours each night (five times a week with additional weekend work).
- Year Twelve: Whatever is needed to get through the work, but at least three hours per each night (five times a week with additional weekend work).



We will be creating a homework 'timetable' for Years 7 to 9, in which approximately three subjects will need to set homework each night. This will be given to students in the same way as their class timetable from day-to-day. The homework may be day to day work (e.g Maths exercises), preparation work (reading an article or watching a TED talk) or longer range work (e.g. a project for History). Closer to the examinations it will include study.

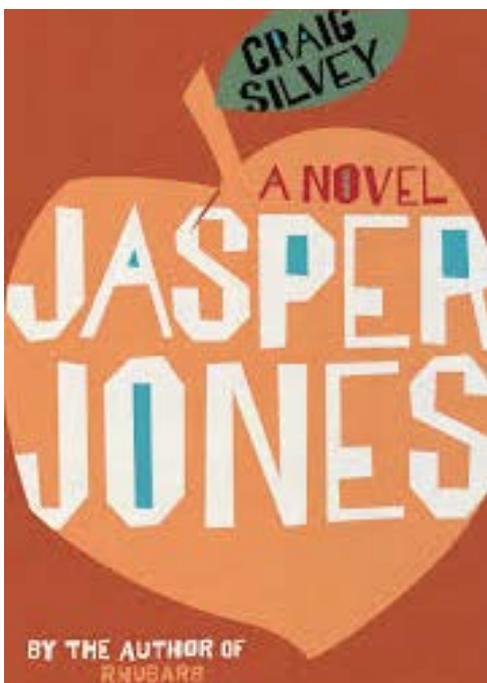
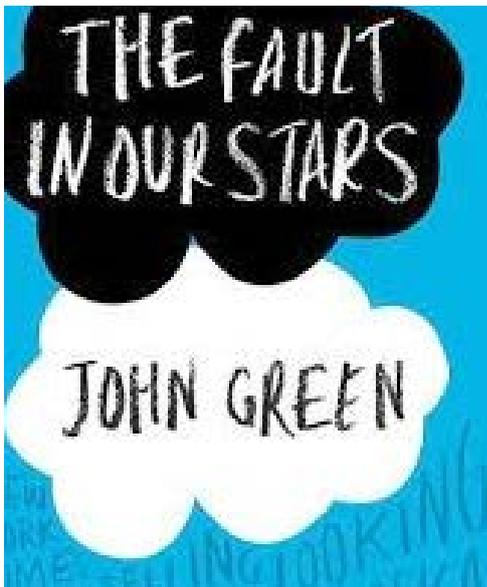
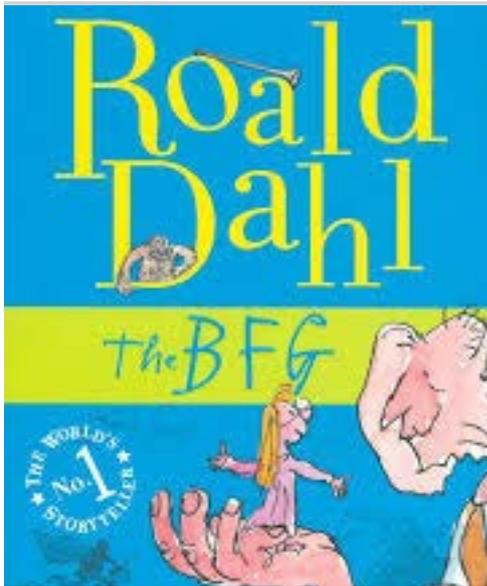
We will be modifying the students' lesson diaries so that they will need to record how much time they spend on each subject each night. This will allow Tutors and parents to monitor how much homework they are doing. Each Monday in the House period, time will be set aside for the Tutor to check diaries while the students engage in a school wide 'Drop Everything and Read' programme.

There will be consequences for students who do not complete their homework. However, teachers will also be on the lookout, pastorally, for students who struggle to do the work in the agreed upon time so that they can offer assistance.

The homework should be interesting and stimulating- not just 'busy' work. We will also be teaching the 'skills' of doing homework - prioritising, actively studying, avoiding distractions, etc.

We do very much expect homework to be a regular, structured and worthwhile part of Oxley students' lives. Perhaps not their favourite part - but they will get a great deal from it.

## HEADMASTER'S REPORT- PART 2



### PROGRESS REPORT: WIDE READING 'BOOKED UP'

Our Years 3-10 wide reading scheme, launched halfway through Term 3, has had hundreds of kids borrowing books from the library, reading the books and then borrowing more. Our 'slam dunk book presentations', which included using a large gong to wind up book reviews after sixty seconds, created a lot of enthusiasm (although maybe it was just students enjoying gonging me off). Indeed the rate of borrowing has doubled in the last three months for several high school year groups.

The fifty or so books we have selected take pride of place as soon as you walk in the front door of the library. We have at least ten copies of all of them (up to thirty copies of some of the more popular titles such as *Divergent* and *The Maze Runner*) so we don't run out. We almost never have to say to a boy or girl 'sorry... that book' has already been borrowed.' The wide reading website is working and kids are starting to write reviews of the books for the library and for each other. English classes from Year 3-10 return regularly to the library to update and hear more about the books. We are happy with the way that it has started and we plan to do more with it in 2015.

# HEADMASTER'S REPORT- PART 2

## EFFORT GRADES AND 'HEADMASTER'S LIST FOR OUTSTANDING ACADEMIC EFFORT'

We are a school that celebrates academic effort, regardless of whether the person is an academic high flyer or someone who struggles with writing and reading. (In fact, sustained effort from a student who finds it really tough every day is even more impressive to us.) In addition, the research from Carol Dweck (Professor of Psychology at Stanford University) and others shows that focusing on effort creates a 'growth mindset'. This allows for much greater resilience and success in life. We don't want to create hothouse flowers at Oxley who wilt when they stop getting 'perfect' marks.

So we are creating an effort mark on the reports which will take equal place alongside the academic marks. We will calculate this mark by giving a 'point score' for the teachers' various ticks in the 'works in class' etc sections of the reports. Alongside the marks we will show effort quartiles, and be able to track whether each student is improving or losing momentum. This will be a powerful new tool for parents to encourage their children to work harder if they need to.

We will also be starting the 'Headmaster's List For Outstanding Academic Effort'. It will use the effort score and will contain both students with straight As and students with straight Cs. It will be applauding effort. Randomly selected students from this group each term will be having a provided hot lunch with me in the Headmaster's Study (although I am not quite sure if this will act as an incentive or a deterrent). These students will certainly know that they are valued and admired by the School.

We are committed to students striving, stretching and sticking at Oxley and this is one of the ways that we are going to do it.



*Headmaster Michael Parker*

## ACADEMIC MONITORING

At the moment in almost every school, students' reports (which are laboriously produced) fall into a black hole. Parents and students read them, focus on them for a day or two, and then they go into a shoebox to be produced at twenty first birthday parties.

From 2015 we are going to use the reports more effectively. At the beginning of each term after a major report we are going to have an academic monitoring morning. Every student is going to write a guided reflection on his/her last report - what they are most proud of, what they can improve on etc. Then every student is going to have a ten minute meeting with his or her Tutor in which they discuss the report and make some goals for the next semester. All of this will be recorded in the new Student Diary so that the various pieces of paper don't all get lost.

Every student will be able to be much more closely encouraged and monitored by the School. For most of them it will be a really positive experience as they know that they have a 'coach' looking out for their academic work. For some it might be a little unsettling, knowing that their Tutor is going to go over their whole report with them. However, we have little doubt that it will ultimately work for almost every student.



# HEADMASTER'S REPORT- PART 2

## PHILOSOPHY AND STAGE TEACHING IN K-6

Philosophy in primary schools is always something that has been important to me- I spent fifteen years at Cranbrook and Newington teaching Philosophy in the primary schools several times a week, and my postgraduate work is all in this area. The new Head of K-6 Ms Justine Lind, has also been involved in critical thinking and 'big ideas' in schools and she is an expert in this area. So I am delighted that the teachers in K-6 at Oxley are keen to take this on and are planning many activities in this area in 2015.

Philosophy is actually an activity for everyone - the opposite of an 'elite' course. This is because it begins in wonder - and everyone wonders. Questions such as 'Where does a thought go when I finish thinking it' or 'Am I my mind or am I my body?' gets almost all kids stopping and thinking. The entire way that conversations are structured so that there are no 'right' answers make kids want to join in, participate and listen to others. They sit in a circle and discuss, which is exciting for them. They often go out of the lessons bubbling with conversations that they take home. Of course it helps their critical and creative thinking skills, which will be more fundamental in the twenty first century than ever before. It sets them up well for a life of thinking, wondering and being excited by the possibility of ideas.

In K-6 we are also working on the best possible blend of year group and stage teaching to make sure that each student gets the optimum combination of being in a small school yet still having the benefit of working with a wider variety of children.

Students are, of course, based in their own year group with their own teacher. Many, if not most, classes are delivered this way. However, the walls dividing the classrooms are literally easy to push aside and we have been doing more of this. The doors out of each classroom lead to a common playground and common grassed areas, so we will be using these as well.

When doing English reading groups we will be able to group students in interest groups across a stage. When doing some Maths we have been able to group students so that those needing the same sort of extra assistance can get it and those forging ahead can forge ahead. When working on projects we can group students who want to study space or horses or the Amazon Basin. These are not composite classes forced upon us by necessity. This is teachers deciding when exactly a single class setting is best and when a larger grouping is best.

## NEW HEAD OF K-6

Oxley has been operating as a K-12 school for the last three years and we are keen to keep all of the excellent connections between our oldest and our youngest students. However, it is now time for K-6 to have its own dedicated Head whose job every day is to wake up and ask 'How can I make Oxley College the best K-6 in all of this part of NSW'.

We now have that person in Ms Justine Lind. Ms Lind was the standout candidate amongst an extremely strong field. She is currently the Head of the Honours Programme at the Scots College in Sydney. Indeed, one of her eleven year olds sat some HSC subjects last week! She has previously worked as the Deputy Head at St Catherine's Junior School and the Deputy Head at St Andrews in Adelaide.

She is warm and personable - I think that the students will love her. She is extremely keen for a K - 6 school to be a place of welcome first of all. She is also someone who is committed to the School's learning programme to be visionary, forward thinking, rigorous and special. For it to be something that instils in children the basics of literacy and numeracy, whilst also teaching them to reach for the sky. The Executive, the K-6 teachers and I are all looking forward to welcoming Justine to Oxley College.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dL4IcRmekFY>



# HEADMASTER'S REPORT- PART 2

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## BUILDING PLANS FOR 2015

Our Building Committee has created a masterplan that spans the next twenty years. It is a very exciting document that envisages large scale theatres, meeting spaces and classroom complexes. What will be of most interest to people though is the next twenty months. We certainly have significant projects in train and the financial capacity to be able to achieve them. These include:

- A Year 12 Study Centre in the top floor of Elvo for January 2015.
- A new classroom block to replace the portables near the current staff car park at the beginning of 2016.
- A rejuvenation of many of the existing classrooms and the De La Salle Block during 2015. We are committed to making these exciting and innovative learning spaces. Through the use of learning themes ('Trinity College Dublin library' 'The Milky Way Galaxy', 'A Parisian Café') etc.) we will have learning spaces more invigorating than almost any in NSW. Watch this space.
- Improved staff facilities in early March 2015 so that we can continue to attract absolutely top calibre teachers (see page 3).
- Conversion of the Bray Fields across the river into ovals during 2015.

Of course you will hear more about each of these plans, and others, as they come to fruition.

# HEADMASTER'S REPORT- PART 2

## PREFECTS and LEADERSHIP

Last term, Year 11s voted overwhelmingly to change the Prefect System so that it was more competitive and merit based. This reflected the views of the school Executive too. So, from this term, 20 Prefects are selected by a vote from their peers and staff, as well as expert judgment from Heads of Houses. This vote is not a popularity contest - students have to vote for their peers on the basis of criteria such as 'Interventionist', 'Team Player' and 'Contributor'. From this group of School Prefects the House Captains, Service Learning Captains and Head Boy and Girl are drawn. In 2015, as an interim measure, we will also have House Prefects who are students that completed the leadership course.

The Prefects will also have more work to do. They will be expected to be an active part of maintaining the tone around Oxley College. They will be 'custodians of the ethos of the School', which means that school spirit and loyalty will be very much in their hands. Prefects will pass this on like a baton from year to year as the system matures.

This system is not without its risks. We do need to make sure that the year group remains cohesive and whole. We also have to be careful of wonderful, worthwhile young people who are not made Prefects - we have to ensure that they know they are valued just as much. We believe we can do this.

I do look forward to working with the Prefects and all of Year 12 in harnessing the unique spirit of Oxley and making sure that it radiates outward to all of the students.



Head Girl Evangeline Larsen and Catherine Fraser



Deputy Head Learning Kathryn Cunich, Edward Bowyer, Michael Zawal and Oxley Board of Governors Chairman, Frank Conroy



Veronica Kennedy-Good and her daughters Caitlyn and Sienna Bellis



Head Boy Zac Moran with Nicky and Scott Moran

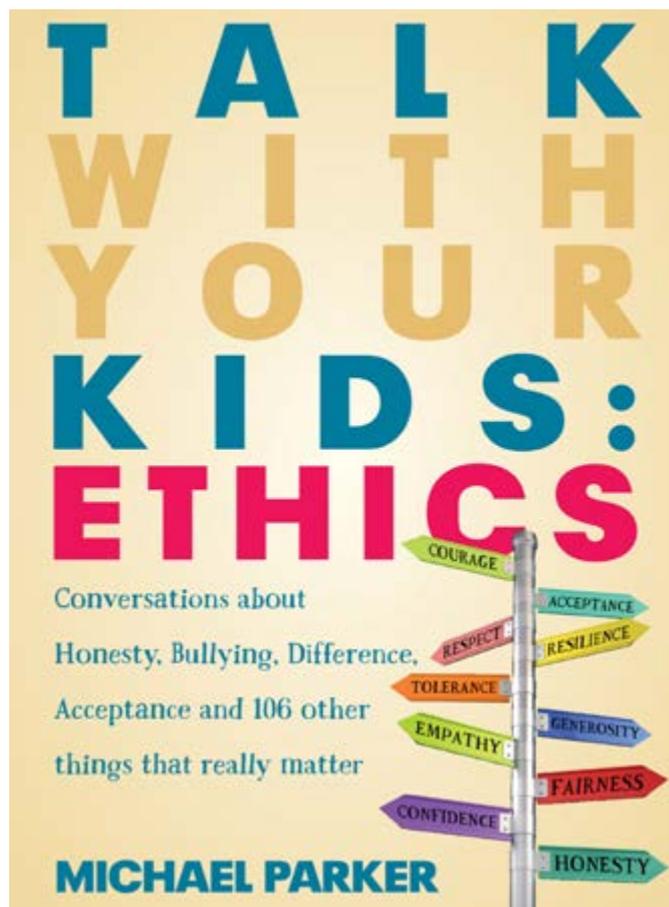
## FUTURE FORESHADOWING: MIDDLE YEARS AND SPORT

**Middle Years:** We are aware that the abolition of the School Certificate has sharpened the issue of motivation for thirteen to fifteen year olds at all schools. In other societies the age of fourteen was a 'rites of passage' year from childhood to adulthood. Even in the US, students at least go from middle school to high school at this age. Here they go from Year 8 to Year 9 and that is it.

We are keenly aware of this at Oxley. One of our major focuses over the next twelve months will be significant changes to make Year 9 and 10 invigorating, rigorous experiences. We have already introduced accelerated Legal Studies for some Year 10 students, but we plan to make changes that are more structural and holistic. I look forward to being able to write more about this soon.

**Sport:** I have been impressed with the spirit and calibre of many of our sporting teams. I put on a lunch for our two teams that won their ISA competitions in winter- the Opens Netball and the 15s Rugby- and I enjoyed hearing the stories of how they blazed their way to their victories.

In the last fortnight we have made two structural changes at Oxley to focus on sport at the School. At the moment we have excellent sports administrators and co-curricular co-ordinators in Kim McNaught and Natalie Lane. To this we will be adding a sports co-ordinator position from within the school who will work alongside Ms McNaught, focusing on the educational and training elements of our sport programme. With the arrival of Ms Justine Lind in K-6, our Deputy Mr Peter Ayling has more bandwidth to focus on sport at Oxley, and he will be taking this up with huge enthusiasm. This is another area about which I plan to be writing more in the months to come.



## BIG IDEAS

Michael Parker has been talking about his book 'Talk With Your Kids - Big Ideas' and 'Talk With Your Kids - Ethics' on a number of Sydney radio programmes (as well as interstate). Oxley comes into the conversation each time.

Listen to him speak on your favourite programme:

Alan Jones on 2GB: [http://www.2gb.com/article/alan-jones-michael-parker#.U\\_PG901d47I](http://www.2gb.com/article/alan-jones-michael-parker#.U_PG901d47I)

James Valentine on 702: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/dx8ta6qxs8v2al4/MICHAEL%20PARKER%203-10-14.mp3?dl=0>

Natashca Mitchell on Radio National: <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/lifematters/michael-parker/5623634>

His Sydney Writer's Festival appearance was also televised several times on ABC 1 as part of the 'Big Ideas' programme.



## Week 2 Awards

### Students of the Week

K: Molly Davis, Yr 1: Ava Ritchie, Yr 2: William Barnett, Yr 3: Sophie Dunn, Yr 4: Meg Callaghan, Yr 5: James Feetham, Yr 6: Luke Pierobon

### Respect Oxley

K: Archie Wallace, Yr 1: Torah Wooderson, Yr 2: Emma Scott, Yr 3: Saskia Gray, Yr 4: Genevieve Chapman, Yr 5: Sophie Kearney, Yr 6: Kodi Kropf

## YEAR 2

Year 2 have been exploring the living world in class and focussing on writing narratives. The students wrote stories on being 'Lost in the Wilderness' and some were shared in Assembly. They have created collages on the local environment and used a variety of materials to create their works of art.



## Week 3 Awards

### Students of the Week

K: Noah Byrne, Yr 1: Leo Ison, Yr 2: Sienna Soster, Yr 3: Cordelia Ison, Yr 4: Victor Van Der Schalk, Yr 5: Thomas Rapp, Yr 6: Claudia Fair

### Respect Self

K: Estelle Fragar, Yr 1: Chilli Sparke, Yr 2: Tom Santo, Yr 3: Oliver Janjic, Yr 4: Eloise Goodman, Yr 5: Luca Ritchie, Yr 6: Angelique Burton-Ho

## KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten students acknowledged their Year 6 buddies this week at Assembly by reading out the reasons why they like their buddy. A few of the responses were; "because she is beautiful", "she gives me piggy backs" and "he looks after me when I'm sad". We then had a presentation showing Kindergarten students with their buddies accompanied by the song "You've Got a Friend in Me" from the Toy Story soundtrack.



# IN THE NEWS



## Tech Wizards



### Sony Xperia Z3

Sony's latest flagship phone is here, and with being released six months after the Z2 it didn't take long to arrive. Sony have manufactured a phone that rivals Apple or Microsoft and have taken the market by storm. The main features of the phone are its new refined design, a 20.7 megapixel camera and a IP58 waterproof rating. Sony have gone all out when trying to work out the internal specifications and have given us a Snapdragon 801 quad-core processor clocked at 2.5ghz, a quad HD display (2,560x1,440) and 3GBS of ram. Sony have slightly refined the previous design formula: the glass covered front and rear have remained, the phone is a bit thinner and the rounded edges add for a premium feel. The results by an independent waterproof test has revealed the display is disabled underwater and water enters through the headphone jack. A 20.7-megapixel camera can be found, similar to previous models, but with a few improvements: ISO sensitivity now hits 12,800 and it has a wider lens as well as better image stability. Like the Z2, it's also able of capturing 4K video. The phone captures the essence of what a smartphone is and provides captivating features to accommodate anyone's wish list.



## In The Garden

The garden is bursting with spring and the Rhubarb is ready to pick.

### Rhubarb Crumble

#### Ingredients

4 Apples  
6 Rhubarb stems  
2 tablespoons of white sugar  
Water  
For the Crumble  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
1 teaspoon of baking powder  
1 teaspoon of cinnamon  
100g unsalted butter  
120g plain flour  
4 tablespoons rolled oats

#### Method

Preheat oven to 200c.

Peel the apples. Cut the apples in half, cut each half in half again so that you have quarters.

Using a small knife, cut out the core and seeds from each apple. Then cut each quarter into small pieces and place in a large bowl.

Wash rhubarb and remove leaves. Throw the leaves in the bin as they are poisonous.

Cut rhubarb into thin slices and add to bowl with cut apples.

Place cut fruit in a pot with white sugar and two tablespoons of water. Place on stove with lid on to cook for a few minutes until just soft.

To make the crumble

Mix sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, flour and oats into a bowl.

Cut the butter into small pieces and mix into the flour mixture with your fingers.

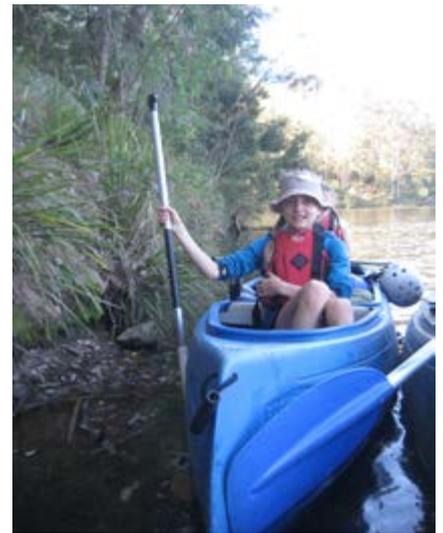
Rub butter over your baking dishes.

Spoon cooked fruit evenly into the dishes.

Then sprinkle over the topping.

Bake at 200c for 10-15mins.

**Garden Club: Tuesday  
lunchtime, ALL STUDENTS  
WELCOME!**



## In (and Out of) The Library

With a library full of students from 8:00am until 6:00pm we don't get out into the fresh air much. That's why the opportunity to attend camp with Year 7 and 8 students during OLE! week is embraced by library staff. This year, I attended Canoe camp with Year 7 at Tallowa Dam while Ms Rees climbed Mt Durras hiking with Year 8. Even though we are not completely comfortable with abseiling, pit toilets and camp food we love the opportunity to spend non-library time with a small group of students. Any discomfort was more than offset by the views along the coast at Murramarang, the glassy waters of Lake Yurrunga, the spectacular weather, and the chance to know the students a little better.

We didn't have to close the library while we were away as we were lucky enough to have Mrs Everingham holding the fort for K - 6 borrowing and the HSC students who needed somewhere quiet to study before their exams.

We are back now and would welcome visits from students or parents who might like to see and take copies of our camp photos. The library is open from 8:00am until 6:00pm from Monday to Thursday and from 8:00am to 4:00pm on Friday.



## The (Twenty)Two of Us

From travelling around the world, Billie Coupland (Year 12) has developed a passion for engaging with young children and aspires to bridge the gap between the developing world and developed world's standard of education. Simple things, such as paying \$7 in Fiji (about \$3.50AU) for a drink, and realising that she was spending the employee's monthly salary in one go, unsettled her. As a result Billie is now striving to attend Wollongong University, where she hopes to complete a degree in primary school teaching and then to work as a teacher in the developing world.

The opportunity to experience primary school teaching first hand was presented to her in Term 3 this year. Billie was able to help out in the Year 1 classroom during some of her study periods and Mrs. Ismay offered to have Billie do work experience during the first week of Term 4. Having loved this, Billie has continued to be with the class in her study periods this term and has helped with lesson plans, making displays, marking work and interacting with the students.

With the end of her schooling not too far away, Billie hopes to make the most of this insight into the world she plans to be a part of in the future.

By Maddie Thomas (Year 11)



## Junior Production

**The Visit**

by

**Friedrich Durrenmatt**

**24 & 25 October 7:00pm**

**Oxley College**



## Yr 12 Mentors

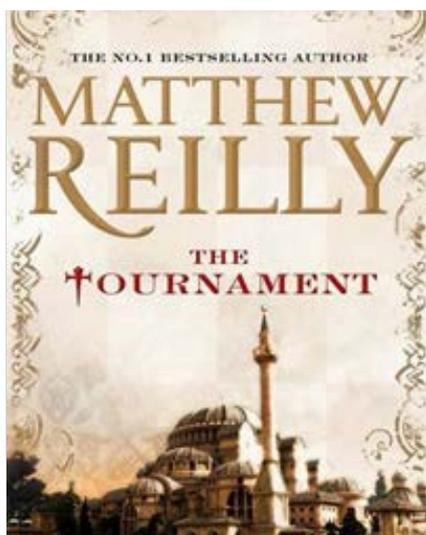
Oxley College has begun an exciting initiative - a Mentoring Scheme for our new Year 12 students. We have matched students to adult professionals who work in the student's possible career path. This is to last for the whole HSC year and its purpose is to give reliable information about the profession, to create an incentive for greater (and realistic) toil on the students' part and to supply another adult ear to provide a balanced view on life.

Our mentors are generously giving their time and, it has been reported, are falling in love again with their career choices! They are college parents (past, current and prospective), past and present members of our college Board and members of the Southern Highlands community.

We have always been involved in the local community and now the community has come to us!

Our students have also been involved in an extensive three hour career assessment (through a company called Morrisby) that has pinpointed aptitudes and corresponding possible career directions.





## Books

★ ★ ★

### The Tournament

This new novel by Matthew Reilly shows the addition of yet another genre to this author's repertoire. From the previous action thrillers comes this new historical fiction.

This book centers on the untold junior years of Queen Elizabeth I and her tutor Roger Ascham. Set in 1546, King Henry VII of England is sent an invitation by the Moslem Sultan to send his best chess player to play in a tournament to determine the best chess player in the world. As the King has no time for such trivial matters, the scholar and tutor Roger Ascham—along with his pupil 'Bess' and her friend Elsie—are assigned to travel with the player (his close friend Gilbert Giles) on the journey to the glittering city of Constantinople.

For Elizabeth the events that unfold—the Brutal murder of a powerful guest within the first quarter of the book, the rigging of a world chess challenge and the promiscuous activity of Elsie—would ultimately challenge her values, shape her character, and determine how she would act in her future role... as Queen Elizabeth I.

By Kaarina Allen (Year 10)



## Music

★

### Alt-J (Δ)

#### This Is All Yours

Alt-J (Δ) are a very British three-piece band whose appeal comes from their fragile timbre and vocals more nasal than Christopher Pyne. So, of course, it is with great anticipation that they release their second album: *This Is All Yours*, a peculiar album title for a band that blatantly has so little to give.

Following up their quiet appearance in the mainstream in 2012 thanks to the meaningless single *Breezblocks*, the Leeds chaps obviously thought it would be a swell idea to pop five sleeping pills each and record themselves drooling over their instruments for the next 55 minutes.

The album meanders aimlessly through melancholic piano stumbles before unearthing *Left Hand Free*: a Grade A example of the world's most generic indie pop mixed with the worst parts of Vance Joy and an American hillbilly.

It's not even going too far to say that the best part of the album is a surprise Miley Cyrus sample on *Hunger Of The Pine*. So thank you, Alt J, for this album; probably the only album in human existence that I wouldn't prefer to hear instead of Christopher Pyne's voice.

By Ruben Seaton (Year 11)



## Films

★ ★ ★

### Wish I Was Here

Zach Braff's new comedy on life *Wish I Was Here* is an emotional whirlwind of problems and midlife crisis that are a combination of uplifting and hilarious! Aidan Bloom (Zach Braff) is at a cross roads in his life with his career not being what he had hoped and having to transfer his kids from a private all Jewish school to the rudimentary public system. This leads him to start home schooling them, which is a disaster waiting to happen.

On top of all these shenanigans, his father tells him his cancer has returned with a vengeance and is a terminal case. Everything does work itself out in the end but it leaves underlying messages of family and loss that are quite eye-opening. The way the actors portray this dysfunctional family gives them incredible character and humour that people can relate to making you either laugh or cry. So if you are looking for a laugh but with a very real outlook on life, this movie is the one for you!

By Alexia Cheaib (Year 10)

# Other Learning Experiences [OLE!] WEEK GALLERY



# Sport



## SPOTLIGHT ATHLETE: GABBY TAYLOR-HELME

Sport: Netball

Pin Oak: What do you enjoy most about netball?

Gabby Taylor-Helme: Just playing the game, getting intercepts and making friends on the team.

PO: How did you get selected in the NSW Team Squad?

GTH: I put in an application, then I went through three training phases and a fitness and Swifts Netball Team camp during the holidays. The last fitness trial, phase four, is still to come. Then I'll find out if I am in the team.

PO: What does your average training session include?

GTH: It goes from 9:00am in the morning until 4:00pm in the afternoon on Sundays, and it involves warm-up, fitness, game play, weights and an education session.

PO: What has been the highlight of your netball career to date?

GHT: Probably winning with my Oxley team!

PO: Do you feel you have had to make any sacrifices in your life in order to pursue netball?

GTH: Yes, I have sacrificed pretty much my whole weekends and afternoons, and I have had to miss social stuff.

PO: How do you fuel your body?

GTH: Eggs and cereal in the morning, big pasta dinners and fruit. A lot of food!

PO: That's a lot of food for a lean machine like you! What is your ultimate netball goal?

GTH: To play for the Australian Diamonds when I am 18.

## PLAYERS OF THE WEEK



## EQUESTRIAN

Recently, Ben Quirico (Year 10) and Amelia O'Sullivan (Year 7) returned from the Inter-School National Equestrian Championships in Victoria.

Amelia did brilliantly in the Show Horse competition finishing in 3rd place. Ben also did brilliantly placing 6th, 9th and 9th in his 3 x 1.20m show jumping classes. He finished in 5th place overall.

## JAVELIN

Oscar Moran (Year 8) has had an outstanding athletics season. He was placed 1st in the Under 14s Javelin at the Oxley school carnival and then 1st at the ISA carnival and 2nd at CIS carnival.

During the school holidays at the NSW all Schools Carnival at Homebush he finished 4th in the state with a personal best throw of 40.93 m.



## SHOOTING

Recently, Sascha Kroopin (Year 7) became the NSW Junior Ladies 10 meter Air Pistol State Champion and 25 meter Sports Pistol Reserve Champion. (This includes every one under 18 and Sascha is 13). After competing she has been included in a National Talent Squad.