



## HELPER MORNING TEA

**We want to say  
THANK YOU  
to all the parents and carers  
who have helped in many  
different ways**

bread  
butter

ham  
cheese

carrots  
beans  
apples  
bananas

biscuits

**When: Friday 5<sup>th</sup> December**

**Time: 11.15 am approx.**  
(after St John's concert)

**Where: On the Terrace/  
Staffroom**

Saturday  
morning  
Working Bee

Thursday - Help  
with reading

CANTEEN ORDER FORM

hot dog

☐

drink

☐

payment \$ \_\_\_\_\_

# Birchgrove Buzz

Term 4 Week 9 3rd December 2014

Newsletter of the Birchgrove Public School  
A NSW Government School  
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Balmain NSW 2041

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## 2014

### Dates to Remember

*Parent*

*Music*

*Sport*

*Student Parliament*

### Term 4

**4/12**

**Stage 3 Recognition**

**5/12**

**St John's Christmas Concert**

**5/12**

**Preschool Concert**

**5/12**

**Parents Thank you Morning Tea**

**5/12**

**Preschool Concert**

9/12

Preschool Party

9/12

Year 6 Farewell Dinner

**10/12**

**Stage 2 Recognition Ceremony**

**11/12**

**Kindergarten Recognition Ceremony**

11/12

Preschool Party

12/12

Year 6 Picnic

**12/12**

**Stage 1 Recognition Ceremony**

15/12

School Picnic Day

16/12

Preschool Cleaning Day

**17/12**

**Farewell Assembly and Year 6 Arch**

17/12

Last Day of Term 4

### Principals Report



#### Exodus Foundation Appeal

Each year as a school community we collect donations of food, toys and other presents for The Exodus Foundation, which looks after Sydney's poor and homeless.

Over 2,000 guests will share Christmas lunch at the Exodus Foundation and every one of them will receive a present. Christmas hampers are also distributed to families in need. Often it will be the only gift they receive. A donation area has been set aside in the school foyer. Please note: food items need to be non-perishable or have long expiry dates, as they will not be picked up until the last week of term. Presents need to be unwrapped. Donations of wrapping paper are also appreciated.

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Last Friday, Primary students in Protestant and Catholic Scripture presented a nativity play to celebrate Christmas.

It was an enjoyable experience for the audience and actors involved.

Congratulations to our new **P&C Committee** and welcome to our new committee:

- President: Matthew Garvey
- Vice Presidents: Kim Hall and Lynn Feldon
- Secretary: Anastasia Warden
- Treasurer: Richard Hinchliffe
- Fundraising Co-ordinator: Lindy Sivyier
- Sponsorship Committee: Geoffrey Cooper
- Environment Committee: Rob Love
- Infrastructure Projects Committee: Anthony Green

**Sponsorship Committee:** This is traditionally a shared role and ideally there would be another person to assist Geoffrey. It is entirely possible to for working parents to take this on. School sponsorship is a major source of P&C funding.

I would like to **thank our fabulous 2014 P&C** for all their hard work and efforts on behalf of the staff, children and myself. Thank you to Chris O'Donnell (president), Angela Davies (VP) and Tony Board (treasurer) for their amazing efforts and dedication.

2014 P&C President Chris O'Donnell has sent a **thank you to Rosie Lloyd** for her sterling efforts in preparing the flyer and tickets (with Phoebe) for the school disco. Chris knows my cut off time for newsletter contributions and was racing to get his thank yous in. Thank you Rosie!



**Stage 3 Sleepover** Thank you to the teachers who generously gave up their Friday night, Mr Cormack, Mrs Karnaros, Ms Keating, Miss Hawkins, Mrs Copping, Mr Nguyen, Mr Dodds and Miss Ussher (and in some cases Saturday morning) to enable this exciting event on the Stage 3 social calendar!

Highlights included:

- Sock wrestling (photo to the left)
- Games on the basketball court
- Pizza dinner
- Spotlight is always the highlight for the teachers and children (who cheats the most is the usual point of discussion)
- Movie
- Sleeping or not in the classroom!

We made approximately \$1000 towards the Exodus Foundation

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Birchgrove PS put out our cricket bats and school hats in memory of **Phillip Hughes** today. While the nation as a whole mourns the loss of a great sportsman, I would like to extend the school's condolences to all of his family and friends. Macksville is a small country town, so he is well known to the whole community,



whose grief struck home as Miss Ussher talked about him this week. Thank you to 1U for their understanding as Ms Ussher went home to the funeral of her childhood friend and classmate.

Last week in our staff meeting the teachers and executives developed our plan "A" option for **2015 classes**. Of course, this will all change as new children arrive and children whose parents haven't had time to fill out the 'we are leaving' form think to send it in. At the moment we have 15 classes for next year. Each year a couple of parents ask about composite classes so I have attached the DEC's information flyer on composite classes. All classes at Birchgrove are mixed ability and teachers are expected to cater for individual differences. This was all in last week's newsletter however I am running it again for anyone who missed it.

Teachers have mentioned that they are being asked by parents what classes their children are in or asking if they can be put with certain teachers/children in 2015. The teacher input to the classes is finished until 2015 and they are not allowed to discuss 2015 classes with the parents.

If you have a valid reason for not putting your child with another child or wanting them in a certain class, e.g your child has received an anxiety diagnosis etc, please forward the request in writing to: , attention Tracy Gray and attach copies of the relevant documentation.

To be equitable, we try and make sure all parents get the information about their children's classes at the same time. The only exceptions are some of our children with a disability who need to set up meetings with the school and health care professionals their 2015 to transition the children.

Classes are based on the children's learning needs, social groups and learning styles and the teachers are assigned to the classes that best suit them. The teachers know the children's friendships, learning needs and which children they need to be separated from and have taken this into consideration forming classes to suit the 355+ students K to 6. It is a big task and I would like to thank the teachers and executive for all their hard work. Classes are now finalised until we return in the new year and find new enrolments or that children have left without letting the school know before hand.

In 2015, children will return to their 2014 class and, where possible, their 2014 teacher until class numbers are finalised. The reason we do this is to avoid children starting with a new teacher, finding numbers have changed and the classes have to change.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the St Johns Concert, Volunteer Morning Tea and Recognition Ceremonies!

**Tracy Gray**  
Principal



Education &  
Communities

## Multi-age or composite classes: 2005 to 2011

Research shows it makes no difference to performance whether students are in a straight year group or in a multi-age class – it's the teacher who makes the difference.

Multi-age classes are made up of students drawn from different year levels. They may be established because of the uneven pattern of enrolment in the school, because of the small size of the school or where it's considered that mixing students of different ages is academically and socially advantageous. These multi-age classes are often designed to match the organisation of the syllabus, which is based on 'stages' running over two years.

### Research about multi-stage classes

Research findings on the effects of multi-age classes and best teaching practices are available at:

[http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/programs/classsize/multiage/multi\\_age.pdf](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/schoolsweb/studentsupport/programs/classsize/multiage/multi_age.pdf)

Two findings stand out in the research:

- it makes no difference to performance whether students are in a straight year group or in a multi-age class. The most important factors in determining how well a student does are the quality of the teacher and his or her teaching
- multi-age classes may benefit students both socially and emotionally.

The number of multi-age classes and children in these classes in each NSW public primary and infants school can be seen in the data below. It doesn't include students in support classes or schools without multi-age classes.

### NSW students are performing at a high level

NSW consistently performs above average in NAPLAN testing.

In 2010:

- the proportion of NSW students performing at or above the national minimum standard for Reading and Numeracy was above the national average in all four testing years with the exception of Year 7 Numeracy, where NSW has 94.9 per cent of students at or above the national minimum standard, compared with an average of 95 per cent for Australia
- NSW is mostly ranked in the top three jurisdictions, along with ACT and Victoria, on the proportion of students at or above minimum standard and the proportion of students achieving results in the highest band for NAPLAN performance.

For Data see:

<https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/about-us/statistics-and-research/key-statistics-and-reports/composite-and-multiage-classes.pdf>



## Composite Classes

### What are composite classes?

Composite classes are classes where the children may be from two or more year groups/grades.

### Why would we have them?

For a variety of reasons including

- Meeting social needs
- Meeting academic needs
- Allowing children to learn within a more effective group to meet their needs
- Matching children to teachers
- Maximising teacher strengths
- Minimising classroom sizes

### What are the benefits?

Composite Class Research shows:

- Students in composite classes are socially more confident
- Can co-operate better as part of a group
- Are more assertive
- Become more independent learners and problem solvers

They also make friends outside of their standard age-groups. In later life, if we have a one year age difference with a friend it is of no consequence.

Australia rates as one of the best educational systems in the world. Teachers who are Australian trained are sought throughout the world. Why? They teach to a stage not an age! They teach what your child needs, not a Year or curriculum from a text book.

### What are the negatives about composite classes?

There are none according to the research and according to children once they get into them. Research in NZ, the UK and Australia shows that children in composite classes achieve outcomes no different to those in straight year group classes. Educational experts agree that Composite classes are not educationally detrimental for the acceleration of gifted students. Composite classes encourage more of a family or community atmosphere.

### Don't we have a curriculum for each year group?

No. We never have. We have a curriculum separated into levels. The curriculum was designed in the knowledge that learning is not linear and children, regardless of their age have differing needs and learn at different paces.

### Benefits of Composites

- Older students can benefit from helping younger students in co-operative learning situations and increasing their skills in the subject.
- Younger students have the opportunity of enhanced learning experiences where they are ready for it (just in time learning).
- Allows more flexibility in students grouping and learning styles.
- Encourage children to help each other and work collaboratively and cooperatively.
- Role models and leaders can come from both the younger and older children; the children who excel at these traits do so irrespective of age.

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## Quality of the teaching/teacher quality

The most important variable determining student success is the quality of the teaching (qualities of the teacher).

Australian teachers are trained to teach in ability groups - the hall mark of good teaching is teaching to meet individual needs.

Composite classes draw attention to individual needs and student development and facilitates learning programmes (personalised learning pathways).

The quality of the teacher - student relationship has the most influence on student achievement.



## END OF YEAR CONCERT

The End of Year Concert will be held on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> December, in St John's Church. Audience members need to be seated by **9.30am**. Could all ensembles please check your emails from contact parents regarding arrival times. Performers are to wear music uniform (Birchgrove Music t-shirt, black trousers/skirt, black socks and shoes).

## INSTRUMENT RETURN

School hire instruments must be returned to the Instrument Coordinator at the Church following the End of Year Concert on 5<sup>th</sup> December.

## MUSIC LUNCH

The Music Committee will be holding a **free** Music Students lunch on Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> December on the basketball courts. There will be pizza and an ice block with vegetarian options available. All members of the Early Childhood Music Program, Recorder Ensembles, Strings Ensembles and Bands are invited to come along. If you are able to help serve the food/drinks please contact [smskipard@bigpond.com](mailto:smskipard@bigpond.com).

## MUSICAL DATES FOR THE DIARY

- ☺ Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> December – Senior Strings perform at Balmain Hospital
- ☺ Friday, 5<sup>th</sup> December - End of Year Concert, St John's Church followed by instrument return and Music Students Lunch



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On Tuesday, Senior Strings went to Balmain Hospital to perform a Christmas Concert for some of the patients. We got there and tuned up our instruments. Then when the patients were ready we went into the hospital gym and played some songs for them. They really enjoyed it. I think they liked the older style of music that we played for them.

After the concert when we were putting our instruments away in their cases, some of the patients thanked us and said that it was a very good concert. Afterwards we went to the park and then we came back to school. It was a really fun morning. It makes me feel good to know that we were making people happy.

**Piper Daly**

## For the love of science

Science is a method of engaging with, and trying to understand, the world. Professor Tim Flannery says if a child is interested in pursuing science, encourage them to develop persistence and humility – the idea that they won't always be right. Listen to the podcast:

<http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/homework-and-study/other-subjects-and-projects/science/science-tips/for-the-love-of-science>

## Pleasures of free play

Allowing free time for children to play on their own, making up games and activities, can help kids to be comfortable in their own company, teach them how to cope with boredom and, importantly, foster their imagination.

Under scheduling your child: <http://www.schoolatoz.nsw.edu.au/wellbeing/health/benefits-of-underscheduling-your-child>



Hi All, As school finishes Wednesday the 17th of Dec we would like to let everyone know that Birchgrove OSHC is open on the remaining days of the week so please book your child in! A friendly reminder if your child is not attending After Care please call customer service team on 1300 105 343 or call us here on 0405 413 528. Thanks, Birchgrove Team.

## Chess class

The chess class at Birchgrove Public School runs on Tuesday lunch from 1:10 pm - 1:55 pm. In 2015, the class starts on 3 February. If you are interested in joining the chess class, please contact the Sydney Academy of Chess on (02) 9745 1170 or email [enrol@sydneyacademyofchess.com.au](mailto:enrol@sydneyacademyofchess.com.au).

## Puzzle information

Answer Puzzle nr. 13:

1. Ba6 #

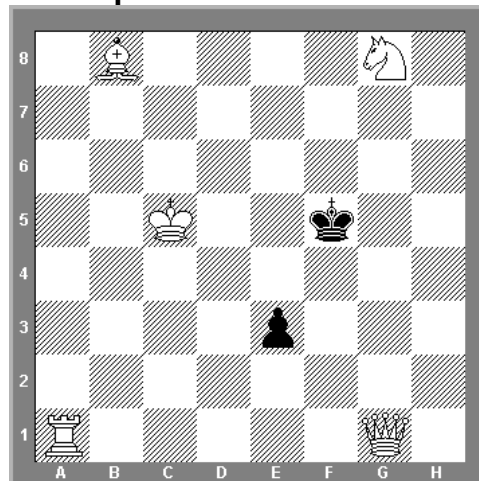
## Upcoming chess tournament

7 December: Inner West Sunday Fun

More information can be found on

[www.sydneyacademyofchess.com.au](http://www.sydneyacademyofchess.com.au)

## Chess puzzle



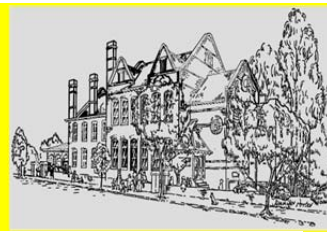
**Puzzle nr. 14:** White to play and checkmate in 2 moves

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## KIDS AT THE ARTHOUSE PRESENTS

**A *NEW* learn to draw program**  
An exciting and practical approach to drawing  
the world around you!

***TERM 1, 2015 ENROLMENTS NOW OPEN!***

**KIDS AT THE ARTHOUSE NEW DRAWING PROGRAM:**

***THURSDAYS 3:15PM-5PM***

**KIDS AT THE ARTHOUSE MULTI-MEDIA ART PROGRAM:**

***WEDNESDAYS 3:15PM-5PM***

**ENROL NOW! please contact:**  
**Sabina Carney**  
**e: [sabina@kidsattheartthouse.com](mailto:sabina@kidsattheartthouse.com)**  
**m: 0403768282**

### KIDS AT THE ARTHOUSE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS:

STUDENTS CHINESE NEW YEAR EXHIBITION AT THE CHINESE GARDEN OF FRIENDSHIP  
(DARLING HABOUR) "DREAM" EXHIBITION - 2014 & 2015  
FINALIST: AUSSIE ART COMPETITION 2014  
WINNER: AVANT CARDS "CALLING ALL ARTIST'S" COMPETITION 2013  
FINALIST: AUSSIE ART COMPETITION 2013  
WINNER: SYDNEY PORT AUTHORITY POSTER COMPETITION 2012  
WINNER: SYDNEY PORT AUTHORITY PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION 2011  
WINNER: AVANT CARDS "CALLING ALL ARTIST'S" COMPETITION 2010  
COLLABORATIVE PROJECT :THE AUSTRALIAN NUMERACY AND LITERACY FOUNDATION 2013  
THE TAFE ULTIMO SCREEN PRINTING DEPARTMENT 2011