Welcome to the New School year. This year I will be teaching your child in the Grade 3/4 year level. I’m sure I will have your support in your child’s education and we can work together to achieve positive results. Please feel free to contact me or any other specialist teaching staff, if you have any concerns or questions.

GENERAL CLASS EXPECTATIONS

At Preston South Primary School we aim to provide our students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to succeed in a constantly changing society.

The general aim in Grade 3/4 is to provide a relaxed, happy and cooperative learning environment for all children. Students are encouraged to share their experiences in an atmosphere that promotes success and a feeling of self worth. As a whole, the class will be focusing on the development of self discipline and a sense of responsibility. Students will be encouraged to develop classroom organisational skills. Students need to be responsible for remembering their equipment and materials for school, such as homework, library bags/books and return of notices. Overall students are encouraged to be independent, self disciplined, thinking people, responsible for their own actions and the consequences of these actions. Students will progressively develop independent and interpersonal skills, which ensure safe, happy life styles. Terms such as co-operation, respect, acceptance, manners, responsibility, dependability, fairness, sharing and caring and reliability are some which are frequently found in school expectations, rules and goals.

Our School values and expectations (R.E.A.C.H) of respect, encouragement, achievement, cooperation and honesty are what each student should be striving towards at P.S.P.S.
We believe in providing an inclusive education, building a strong community and for all students to feel a solid sense of belonging. Please see your child’s teacher if there are any problems and encourage your child to always seek out a teacher at school if they feel upset in any way.

ENGLISH:

The English Program is based on the Fountas & Pinnell Literacy Program. The program develops strategies in reading, writing and spelling.

English includes the dimensions of Language: knowing about the English language; Literature: understanding, appreciating, responding to, analysing and creating literature; and literacy: expanding the repertoire of English usage.

Through Literacy we aim to develop students’ ability to interpret and create texts with appropriateness, accuracy, confidence, fluency and efficacy for learning in and out of school, and for participating in Australian life more generally. Students learn to adapt language to meet the demands of more general or more specialised purposes, audiences and contexts. They learn about the different ways in which knowledge and opinion are represented and developed in texts, and about how more or less abstraction and complexity can be shown through language and through multimodal representations. This means that print and digital contexts are included, and that listening, viewing, reading, speaking, writing and creating are all developed systematically and concurrently.

READING:

Through Literature we aim to engage students in the study of literary texts of personal, cultural, social and aesthetic value. Learning to appreciate literary texts and to create their own literary texts enriches students’ understanding of human experiences and the capacity for language to deepen those experiences. Students interpret, appreciate, evaluate and create literary texts such as short stories, novels, poetry, prose, plays, film and multimodal texts (combination of two or more communication modes, for example, print, image and spoken text, as in film or computer presentations), in spoken, print and digital/online forms. Texts recognised as having enduring artistic and cultural value are drawn from world and Australian literature. These include the oral narrative traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, texts from Asia, texts from Australia’s immigrant cultures and texts of the students’ choice.

Children will be assessed routinely and taught according to reading ability. Development of oral reading, comprehension and word attack skills will enable progression to higher levels of competency. Your child will be expected to progress through reader levels throughout the year.

Guided Reading, shared reading and independent reading lessons are conducted within Literacy sessions to develop specific reading skills. Children are given Take Home books to read at home, which should be easy to read, based on ability. These are usually changed daily and we ask you to fill in their Reader Diary page each night. Sometimes a book may have particular words or ideas, which a child does not grasp immediately. These books may be kept to read a second or third day at home until competency is reached. As higher reading levels are reached, books become too lengthy to read in one night. Library Books are borrowed weekly (as long as the previous book has been returned) during library sessions.
These books are not always equal to your child’s ability. They are free to select any book which may interest them.

**HOW CAN I HELP AT HOME?**

- Listen to your child read the Take Home Reader.
- Check the school bag for new readers and the return of ones read.
- Encourage borrowing of library books. Encourage correct care and responsibility for the safe return of the books.
- Encourage reading of any description. Read road signs, play car reading games. Read WITH and TO your child as often as possible, but make it “fun”.
- Encourage your child to read to the end of the sentence to enable him/her to gain further cues to the identification of an unknown word.
- Encourage your child to read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts and ask questions that will help them improve their comprehension.
- Praise every effort in reading, especially if confidence is low. Don’t compare your child’s performance with that of relatives or friends.

**WRITING:**

In the *Language* component, students develop their knowledge of the English language and how it works. They learn how language enables people to interact effectively, to build and maintain relationships and to express and exchange knowledge, skills, attitudes, feelings and opinions. They discover the patterns and purposes of English usage, including spelling, grammar and punctuation at the levels of the word, sentence and extended text, and they study the connections between these levels. By developing a body of knowledge about these patterns and their connections, students learn to communicate effectively through coherent, well-structured sentences and texts. They learn to reflect on their own speaking and writing and discuss these productively with others.

**Spelling**

Spelling words correctly is important. Just as learning to recognize words enables your child to read more fluently, learning to spell the most commonly used words enables them to spend more thought on the creative process of communicating their ideas through writing. As with learning to read words, learning to correctly spell words requires a lot of practice. Students are encouraged to use a variety of strategies in their spelling. They are taught to focus on visual (*the way a word looks*), sound/symbol (*sound pattern*) and morphemic strategies (*meaning of words*).

Each week students are given a list of words and will largely consist of commonly used words and words focusing around a spelling pattern or sound rule. Vocabulary based on our Inquiry units and on the student’s own writing also forms an integral part of the spelling program. Activities are completed to
reinforce the learning of these words in a meaningful context. A differentiated program is taught for spelling, lessons held daily to consolidate, establish and extend word study skills.

**HOW CAN I HELP AT HOME?**

- Your child should try to spell words for himself/herself by ‘having a go’ and then checking with adults, dictionaries, thesaurus, word lists or any other accurate source.
- Encourage your child to use the LOOK, SAY, COVER, WRITE, CHECK method to learn new words. This method incorporates the most fundamental learning processes; visual, auditory and kinesthetic.
- Encourage your child to look at the shape of the word, for patterns in words and for words within words.

During Literacy sessions, children will be given handwriting lessons, (Handwriting texts are used in class to sequentially develop fluency, correct letter formation and size.) The correct formation of letters and joining according to the Victorian Cursive Script are revised and taught. Attention is paid to fluency and style of writing with the reinforcement of slope, size, shape and grip. Children use an HB pencil and write on 18mm (leading to 14mm) lines with dotted thirds to assist with the correct sizing of letters. Students are encouraged to present all written work in a neat, legible manner. Year 4 students will be able to use a pen on obtaining their Pen Licence during term 2 or later.

A large proportion of literacy sessions will be devoted to the writing experience and teaching of specific written language skills to expand vocabulary, grammar and proficiencies across all writing genres: Narrative, Report, Recount, Procedure, Persuasive, Comparative. Students at all times will be encouraged to express and develop their ideas.

**HOW CAN I HELP AT HOME?**

- Supervise completion of any homework tasks. Ask your child, “do you have homework this week/today?”
- Encourage writing of any description. Shopping lists, letters to friends and relatives a diary, imaginative sentences / stories, wish lists, transcription from brochures....
- When on an extended holiday from school, either interstate or overseas, have your child write a daily diary to share with the grade upon return. This need not be lengthy. It can include illustrations. Send postcards.
- Encourage correct pencil grip and writing on lines.
**MATHS:**

The understanding of basic mathematical concepts related to real life activities is a focus of the program. It includes the three AusVELS content strands of:

1. **Number and algebra** -
   Number and Algebra are developed together, as each enriches the study of the other. Students apply number sense and strategies for counting and representing numbers. They explore the magnitude and properties of numbers. They apply a range of strategies for computation and understand the connections between operations. They recognise patterns and understand the concepts of variable and function. They build on their understanding of the number system to describe relationships and formulate generalisations. They recognise equivalence and solve equations and inequalities. They apply their number and algebra skills to conduct investigations, solve problems and communicate their reasoning.

2. **Measurement and geometry** -
   Measurement and Geometry are presented together to emphasise their relationship to each other, enhancing their practical relevance. Students develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of size, shape, relative position and movement of two-dimensional figures in the plane and three-dimensional objects in space. They investigate properties and apply their understanding of them to define, compare and construct figures and objects. They learn to develop geometric arguments. They make meaningful measurements of quantities, choosing appropriate metric units of measurement. They build an understanding of the connections between units and calculate derived measures such as area, speed and density.

3. **Statistics and probability** –
   Statistics and Probability initially develop in parallel and the curriculum then progressively builds the links between them. Students recognise and analyse data and draw inferences. They represent, summarise and interpret data and undertake purposeful investigations involving the collection and interpretation of data. They assess likelihood and assign probabilities using experimental and theoretical approaches. They develop an increasingly sophisticated ability to critically evaluate chance and data concepts and make reasoned judgment and decisions, as well as building skills to critically evaluate statistical information and develop intuitions about data.

Use is made of a variety of teaching strategies, a focus on the learning needs of each student and a balance of teacher directed and student centred teaching strategies. We use a combination of whole class, small group and individual instructional strategies to provide explicit teaching for specific student needs. In this way lessons are differentiated, with teaching to develop and extend skills, reasoning, problem solving and application to real life situations.

Opportunities to explore mathematics in task centre activities, investigations, games, quizzes, communications and information technologies/software is encouraged.
Some ideas to help your child with Mathematics

There are countless ways to help your child grasp mathematical concepts and skills. Calculation is not the only mathematical skill necessary at school. Geometry and Measurement, statistics and probability are all part of the Mathematical Curriculum and opportunities for experiences in these abound.

✓ Games – many children’s games are mathematically based. Jigsaw puzzles provide early experience for visual planning skills to develop. Games where dice are used give opportunities for number use and understanding. Logic and strategy games sharpen young minds for thinking and planning ahead. Apart from the social language opportunities inherent in these games, the mathematical thinking involved is a huge value and cannot be taught in a formal sense.

✓ In the kitchen – cooking and preparing food involves numbers and measures. Ask your child to contribute at an early age, from counting how many people and how many potatoes, to trebling the recipe which calls for one and a half cups of flour. Temperature, weight, mass, time and length are all part of life in the kitchen, as are fractions, decimals and dozens.

✓ Attitude – the most important thing is that these activities provide useful, happy experiences in mathematical thinking. Keep it enjoyable. Learning happens best when the learner is ready and wants to learn.

✓ Homework- Students are encouraged to access Mathletics and Study Ladder websites at home. Learning of times tables and playing games to develop automatic response skills are very useful.

INTEGRATED CURRICULUM:

AusVELS is the curriculum and standards policy for all Victorian Schools. AusVELS is based on a triple-helix structure of three interconnected areas of learning called strands.

The three strands are as follows:

Physical, Personal and Social Learning - Students learn about themselves and their place in society. They learn how to stay healthy and active. Students develop skills in building social relationships and working with others. They take responsibility for their learning, and learn about their rights and responsibilities as global citizens.

Discipline-based Learning - Students learn the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the Arts, English, Humanities, Mathematics, Science and other languages.

Interdisciplinary Learning - Students explore different ways of thinking, solving problems and communicating. They learn to use a range of technologies to plan, analyse, evaluate and present their work. Students learn about creativity, design principles and processes.

To incorporate these three strands in an interesting and meaningful way, we present an integrated curriculum within an Inquiry Learning Framework.
The questions to be explored this year are:

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<tr>
<th>TERM 1</th>
<th>Harsh Environments</th>
<th>TERM 2</th>
<th>Entertainment</th>
<th>TERM 3</th>
<th>Our Multicultural Australia - Indigenous Australia</th>
<th>TERM 4</th>
<th>Melbourne</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natural Disasters</td>
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<tr>
<td>How does a Harsh Environment impact upon the way living things survive?</td>
<td>Entertainment is all around us and stimulates our senses and thoughts.</td>
<td>Are there different forms of Entertainment?</td>
<td>What makes Australia?</td>
<td>What was life like for them before the arrival of the early settlers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How have animals and plants adapted to suit their environment?</td>
<td>What does it mean to Entertain?</td>
<td>Is Entertainment essential?</td>
<td>What does it mean to be Australian?</td>
<td>What did Melbourne look like before the arrival of the early settlers?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How are humans affecting harsh environments?</td>
<td>How are humans affecting harsh environments?</td>
<td>How do we respond to Entertainment?</td>
<td>What different Indigenous groups are there around Australia?</td>
<td>How has Melbourne changed?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What can we do to minimise any harmful effects?</td>
<td>How do Natural Disasters impact us?</td>
<td></td>
<td>What are their beliefs, styles, cultures, traditions and ceremonies?</td>
<td>Who were the first inhabitants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do Natural Disasters impact us?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>What effect did the settlement of the Europeans have on the indigenous Australians?</td>
<td>What are Melbourne’s Landmarks/Icons?</td>
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**HOW CAN I HELP AT HOME?**

- Discuss with your child issues that appear on TV and in the paper; relevant to their interest.
- When visiting new places, empower your child to be able to relate the experience. Tell them the name of the place, how to get there, discuss what they did there.
- Seek out information and books that will assist your child to further understand specific topics.
- Let your child bring appropriate souvenirs, items from home for discussion.

**SPECIALIST LESSONS:**

During the week, all children go to specialist classes. Please ensure your child has appropriate footwear and hat for PE and an art smock for Art. Try to ensure library books are returned in time for sessions on a Friday.
TIMETABLE 3/4:

Art: Tuesday
Performing Arts and LOTE: Wednesday
PE: Thursday
Library: Fridays

HOW CAN I HELP AT HOME?

 ✓ Progressively give your child more responsibility, placing increasing expectations on tasks. Eg, expect them to tidy their room; your input into the tidying should become less as they become more independent and able.
 ✓ Encourage responsibility for school notices, books, homework.
 ✓ Expect your child to put things away.
 ✓ Encourage manners. “please”, “thank you”, and waiting their turn.
 ✓ Encourage sharing with friends.
 ✓ Give your child responsibility for handling money and for handing in money for excursions, lunch orders and special efforts.
 ✓ Supervise the selection of suitable items from home for Morning Talk.
 ✓ Teach and expect your child to tie shoelaces and dress themselves, progressively faster and with greater ease.

HOMEWORK

Homework is a home study task set to consolidate and extend concepts covered in class. It also provides students with an opportunity to attempt new learning as well as develop good study habits and organisational skills. Homework will consist of nightly reading, a weekly contract worksheet incorporating Literacy, Numeracy, Grammar, Spelling, Inquiry tasks and weekly participation using ‘Mathletics’ and ‘Reading Eggs’ computer programs.

Reading – nightly reading is encouraged and monitored via the reading log sheets. Please listen to your child read, discuss the story with them and sign off each day. Each student is expected to return their reading record sheet weekly for monitoring purposes. Every student has a personal account and log on code to use Reading Eggs. They progress through books and activities according to reading ability and completion of Literacy activities and games.

Maths – the Maths homework requirement is for students to use ‘Mathletics’. Extra Maths homework is on the contract sheet as well.

Spelling - Weekly spelling wordlist with specific spelling patterns will be given out on Monday. Students will be tested on weekly words every Friday. Students also have the M100 words and Oxford words to learn. These words are commonly used words and assist in writing. Students will vary on which list they are learning.

Homework is collected, corrected and recorded. I ask for your support and cooperation in encouraging neatness and pride in the presentation of work, by ensuring your child has a quiet place to work and by signing off completed work.
I look forward to working with you in the education of your child. If you have any concerns or problems at any time, don’t hesitate to make an appointment to see me. If available, a quick chat before or after school can help fix most concerns.

Regards

Chris Smyrneos