

## 2017 YEAR'S END STAFF MEETING WITH HELEN BLAKE

The whole school is moving towards excellence!

An excellent school is a place where students learn well.

This year, we've been moving forwards taking some small steps and also making some big leaps, to make the school into a much better learning environment.

Some of the new things we've introduced have been:

- Quality staff training throughout the year, giving us a lot of keys and tools for more interesting, well managed and productive classes
- An AV room and screens in the Pre to 2 classrooms, to enrich students' learning experience
- Electives, and Vanuatu curriculum subjects relevant to life in Vanuatu
- Daily reading and comprehension sessions
- Changes in our early learning classes to speed up early reading skills and increase comprehension at an early level

Important **changes to our education** in 2018:

- Kindy will begin teaching the sounds for early reading skills using the Jolly Phonics approach, instead of the old way of learning the alphabet (A-Z)
- Level 1 will begin a new integrated daily program using Jolly Phonics revision, Fitzroy Word Skills 1 books and activities, videos, and ACE Paces to speed up learning to read and write and to increase comprehension
- Introducing the concept and practice of learning by seeing, hearing, doing, thinking about and memorizing
- Levels 11 & 12 will have some elective subjects to choose between
- Levels 11 & 12 English will include required reading

Another important change in 2018:

- A 'Learning Blocks' approach to student learning and achievement

### A 'LEARNING BLOCKS' APPROACH

**Background:**

**1. Until this year 2017, our school ran like this:**

Pre

K & ACE's ABCs learning to read (**2 YEARS**)

Levels 2-13 (12 years)

**From the start of next year, because of the changes we've made this year in the preschool, kindy and level 1 learning to read classes, we are now able to run like this:**

Pre

K learning to read (**ONE YEAR – 1 year less at school**)

Levels 1-12 (12 years)

**2. Until 2014, our levels were like this:**

Pre

K & ACE's ABCs (2 years)

L2	1001-12
3	13-24
4	25-36
5	37-48
6	49-60
7	61-72
8	73-84
9	85-96
10	97-1108
11	1109-1120
12	1121-1132
L13	1133-1144

**(3 years + 12 years)**

**3 years ago, after advice from ACE in Australia that we can finish at 1120, we changed our levels to this:**

Pre

K & ACE's ABCs (2 years)

2	1001-10
3	11-20
4	21-30* Cert
5	31-40
6	41-50
7	51-60
8	61-70
9	71-80* Cert
10	81-90
11	91-1100* Cert
12	1101-1110
13	1111-1120* Cert

**(3 years + 12 years)**

**From 2018, I would like to change to this:**

Pre

**K (1 year)**

1	1001-9
2	10-18
3	19-27
4	<u>28-1036* Cert</u>
5	37-45
6	46-54
7	55-63
8	<u>64-1072* Cert</u>
9	73-1084
10	<u>1085-1096* Cert</u>
11	1097-1108
12	<u>1109-1120* Cert</u>

## (2 years + 12 years)

### **Reasons for the changes:**

1. Until now, students have been in school for too many years. Student progress has been too slow in some classes. This year, we have been identifying the reasons.
  1. Taking much too long for little ones to learn to read and write. During this year 2017, we've been creating a much better program for early learning. Next year, 2018, it will begin in full swing.
  2. A serious lack in following the right ACE procedures, in classroom management and teacher participation with the students' learning, in some of our classrooms. We're all on a mission now, to do that much better!
  3. Also, students come to us from other schools, and too many student absences.
2. This year, we were moving towards dropping every level number 10 PACES, in order to start Level 1 at 1001, instead of Level 2 at 1001, and so that we can end with Year 11 at 1020. Changing to 9 and 12 paces per year instead, means that the students won't feel they have 'dropped' a full 10 paces. Also, it means that students learning at their own pace (3+) will all move up a level number during next year.
3. If we don't make a change now, we will be giving certificates part-way through a topic, from 1097 up (all 1097+ subjects are whole 12-Pace subjects).
4. Alignment with overseas levels will be more identifiable, if any student wishes to study overseas in the future, after leaving our school (ACE NZ level 12 is 1020).
5. Younger students will learn better, having less paces spread across the year and more time for reading, comprehension, Vanuatu studies and extra visits to the AV room.
6. Older students from levels 9-12 will complete a topic of learning at the end of their level (e.g. 1097-1108).
7. From 1073, there are 12-pace specific subjects. For example, 1073-84 Environmental Science, 1085-96 Earth Science, 1097-1108 Biology, 1109-1120 Physical Science.

### **Concerns about making the changes:**

1. Every teacher will need to get to know some different paces.
2. Star charts handed out at the beginning of next year will need to reflect the student's achievement level this year. Next year, during the preparation week before school starts, teachers will need to stick stars on every student's star chart to reflect which paces are already completed.
3. Next year, some Level 4 students won't receive a Junior School Certificate at 1036, because they already received one this year at 1030. (This is the only level whose Certificates will be affected).
4. A headache, sorting out student numbers in classrooms and pace numbers! Monika has counted student numbers in classrooms now to make sure they will fit.

### **Helping the students feel encouraged and positive about the changes:**

1. They will start the year with their own star charts already having stars on them.
2. Classrooms will say the pace numbers, not the level number ('SENIOR SCHOOL 1073-1120', 'MIDDLE SCHOOL 1037-1072', 'UPPER JUNIOR SCHOOL 1028-1036' etc.).
3. Tell them they will all go up into the class level number they expected to move up to, during the year (better than waiting a full year if we kept at 10 paces per year).
4. Explain to them that the level number change just simply means they will finish Senior School with a level 12 certificate, not 13. The paces they will study are exactly the same pace numbers.