2013 DIARY DATES

TERM 1, 2013
Thursday 28 March
Pupil Free Day
Friday 29 March
Public Holiday: Good Friday
Monday 1 April
Public Holiday: Easter Monday
Wednesday 3 April
10:30am Morning Tea
11:00am Term 1 Assembly
Friday 12 April
2:00pm Term 1 ends

TERM 2, 2013
Monday 29 April
Term 2 begins
Monday 10 June
Public Holiday: Queen’s Birthday
Friday 5 July
2:00pm Term 2 ends

TERM 3, 2013
Monday 22 July
Term 3 begins
Monday 29 July
Pupil Free Day
Friday 6 September
Pupil Free Day
Monday 9 September
School Closure
Friday 27 September
2:00pm Term 3 ends

TERM 4, 2013
Monday 14 October
Term 4 begins
Monday 21 October
Pupil Free Day
Friday 13 December
2:00pm Term 4 ends

FROM THE PRINCIPAL

This term has been a very positive start to the year. There has been a high attendance rate with very little illness. This means that classes can establish routines that are inclusive of all learners. Beginning each day with a fitness session is most successful with the learners energised to start the day. While learners may arrive at school at different times, even when they are late, they can be included in the fitness stations and then all gather together for the morning sessions in their classes. This makes an enormous difference to the organisation of the school day. The learners develop a sense of security and the ability to anticipate the structure of the day which enhances their participation in lessons. When there is a regular routine with recognised structure, anxiety is reduced and learners can enjoy their learning.

The whole school approach to literacy using the Four Blocks Literacy framework, is also proving successful with each learner showing improved literacy and communication skills. Use of individual, consistent modes of communication including speech, sign, devices and PODD, has allowed learners to express their own needs and ideas. This has reduced inappropriate behaviours used to attract attention such as acting out and whingeing. Last week Cheryl, Beccy and Jess presented the Kilparrin journey to the Four Blocks Literacy framework to over 200 participants at the Special Schools Principals Association Conference. When we were preparing the introduction to the presentation we reflected on the learning which has underpinned the current success. In 2003 we held a day of training in all the communication support being used at Kilparrin School and by Kilparrin Statewide Support teachers. This day was led by Speech Pathologists from the Education Department, Novita, Disabilities SA and Autism SA. All of whom were supporting Kilparrin learners. In the years following we have invited Dolly Bhargava a paediatric speech pathologist to come to Kilparrin and hold a similar training session. Dolly introduced us to Personal Communication Dictionaries and visual schedules. Sharon Barrey Grassick shared information about communication with babies and children born with both vision and hearing impairment. Sharon is world renowned for the excellence of her work in deafblind communication and early intervention. Dr Mark Barber contributed information about Intensive Interaction. This is a program to promote communication for learners who are at a pre-intentional level of communication.

A range of other factors supported the focus on literacy and communication. Seven teachers were studying the Masters in Hearing Impairment course together. This course concentrated on the development of language and communication. Several deaf SSOs were employed at Kilparrin. To support communication across the staff an Auslan teacher taught weekly lessons. Lea attended the Literacy Intensive course in Victoria. DECD initiated a course of study for Principals titled Principals as Literacy Leaders with the expectation that schools would develop a whole school literacy approach. Research indicates that a whole school approach to literacy has the most successful outcomes.

Most recently Jane Farrall, Janelle Sampson, the Four Blocks Literacy framework and PODD were introduced with structured and supported learning across the school. So far Kilparrin literacy development has taken ten years. However, we are now at the stage where each learner at Kilparrin has an identified and consistent mode of communication. In many cases this is the first time that the learner has been able to have a voice. I am delighted that we have been able to establish this benchmark for each learner at Kilparrin. Without communication there is no possibility of literacy. The teachers and support staff are to be congratulated in their relentless pursuit of this achievement.

Happy Easter.

Alison McWilliams
Principal
GREEN TRIANGLES
Green Triangles have had a great few weeks.

The learners have been enjoying the book of the week *We Are Going On A Bear Hunt*. From using this book we have been doing lots of writing about the size and colour of the bear and how they would feel if they saw the bear.

On swimming days we talk about what you need to wear for swimming and how to be safe in the pool. We practise so that we are ready for the lesson later that day.

We have also been working on our social skills with our peers learning how to play together and learning how to wait and take turns.

We are having lots of fun painting our surprise for Easter!!

Green Triangle students have been practising their large motor skills. Sitting, walking and lifting themselves up.

A special ‘Thank You’ to the Green Triangle parents/carers for coming in and meeting with me to discuss their individual NEPs and their goals.

We hope you have a great Easter break.

Nalani, Hayley, Uzma and Kay

PURPLE STARS
Here we are at the end of Term 1, 2013 already!! The learners have had an excellent start to the year and have shown an eagerness to learn and participate in the curriculum.

Literacy and communication has continued to be a major focus in the classroom. The use of PODDs (Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display) has opened up a whole new communication world for some of the learners. One thing that has been noticed is that since the PODDs have been introduced there has been less attention-seeking behaviour. Often undesirable behaviour occurs due to frustration and the learners not being able to get their point across, however this has significantly decreased since all learners in the Purple Stars have a PODD. Each of the learners now has a voice and they are able to express themselves in appropriate ways.

If a learner is sad; they can tell us, if they are sick; they can tell us and if they are tired; they can tell us. Having a voice empowers the learners and puts them in control of their own lives. It provides them with opportunities to make choices, have conversations about what they want to talk about, share opinions and ask questions. Communication is the key to life and living and it is vital that every learner has a voice!! This is the way we think in the Purple Stars.

With the start of the 2013 AFL season we thought that as part of our Mathematics program we, in the Purple Stars, would have a go at Footy Tipping. So far the learners are doing well however the staff are not doing so well!! It is an enjoyable activity to partake in on a Friday afternoon.

We are looking forward to next term and continuing our hard work in the Purple Stars!!

Beccy, Elisha and Christina

YELLOW SQUARES
Here we are in Week 9, and Term 1 is rapidly coming to a close. I can’t believe it’s going by so quickly! So much has happened already this term – Swimming, Aquatics and Horse Riding, on top of the fantastic learning that’s been happening in Yellow Squares.

Everyone has been enjoying our time together. We have spent time getting to know each other all over again, with lots of friendly group activities, such as cooking, singing, water play and sensory experiences. Through these activities, not only have we developed our literacy and numeracy skills, but we have also built upon our social skills and fine motor skills.

Literacy has continued to be a focus, with phonics playing a major role. So far this term, we have investigated words beginning with ‘S’ ‘A’ ‘T’ and ‘P’ as well as word families ~at and ~it. The learners have already demonstrated great improvement in their phonemic understanding and it’s wonderful to see.

We have also been exploring ‘personal responsibility and people who help us’. We have looked at ways we can take care of ourselves and our belongings, both at home and school. Hopefully you see the fruits of this at home! We have also investigated the people in our community who help us, with a focus on the emergency services. The learners have enjoyed dressing up as police officers and firefighters!

Here’s wishing you all a Happy Easter and a great end to Term 1. Enjoy the break!

Christina, Jess, Lyn and Kay

ORANGE CIRCLES
As we near the end of Term 1, the Orange Circles are pleased to be able to say that we have seen great improvement from learners in the areas of literacy, numeracy and communication. We are working intensively with PODDs in the classroom, and coming up with some great original writing. iPads are really motivating the learners to think with numbers and try their best in maths lessons.

Those of you who are able to attend next week’s assembly will be able to watch our “People who help us shuffle”. This is our wrap up of both the term theme (*responsibility and people who help us*), as well as our assessment piece from our work with Purple Stars in dance. We have really enjoyed some fantastic interactions with the Purple Stars class, and hope that we can continue our arts studies together in Term 2.

We are becoming familiar with all kinds of extreme weather and disasters in our science lessons, and hope to finish the Term 1 unit by making a volcano in Week 11. Reports from both orientation and mobility, and music classes indicate
that the Orange Circles class have already learned much this year. They have set the bar high... and we expect that they will continue from strength to strength in Term 2!

Jess, Karly and Sarah

KELC

It has been great to catch up with families during the past fortnight to discuss learning goals and health support documentation. It’s fantastic when families and school are on the ‘same page’ regarding the development of their child/the learner. Thank you for using the diary for day-to-day communication. It’s useful to hear about the learners’ weekends and any other general information about them that you feel I need to know.

I have had a strong focus on using the Pragmatic Organisational Dynamic Display (PODD) books this term, and this will continue throughout the year and beyond, as the learners (and I) become more familiar with the communication pathways.

I have also been providing many opportunities for learners to make ‘yes’ and ‘no’ choices, based on individual needs. One learner is learning to use a consistent head nod/shake while another is being encouraged to orientate her head towards the ‘yes’ and ‘no’ symbols on her wheelchair tray.

This term learners have spent time out of wheelchairs, moving their bodies, using specialised equipment and being supported to sit and weight-bear. Assessment has begun for the MOVE program, and following consultation with parents, goals will be set to develop functional motor skills.

During Week 11 of this term, we hope to join the Green Triangles class for an excursion to the new ‘disability friendly’ playground at Bonython Park. We had such a fun time last visit and it’s wonderful to observe the learners easily access sand, water, swings etc at a public playground.

Rachel

MUSIC

During group music sessions we continue to concentrate on songs and activities related to our theme People Who Help Us and Responsibility and for the past 2 weeks we have also been practising two songs that acknowledge Harmony Day.

Held on March 21 each year, Harmony Day is about community participation, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. It is a celebration of the cultures that make Australia great and promotes an environment in which all people participate in Australia’s future.

Orange is the theme colour and we use orange scarves in a particular song. The learners listen carefully and focus on creative movement using scarves to the chorus of the Get Along song recorded and sung by Guy Sebastian.

To celebrate Harmony Day we will be decorating the music room and our classrooms with orange balloons and special posters.

The learners will present the new program to parents, carers and friends during the end of Term 1 assembly in Week 10 on Wednesday 3 April at 11.00am. There will be music items and an item from each class.

We have also invited students from the School Representative Councils from SASVI and Ascot Park Primary School to this event. Prior to the assembly we will all meet in the staff room for morning tea.

Krystyna Misiana
Music Teacher

Horse Riding

The learners seem to be enjoying their regular riding lesson. They are all building on their balance skills and some are becoming more tolerant of putting on their helmet and wearing their helmet. The learners are anticipating what we will be doing during the lessons and are now ready to have a go at different activities during their lessons.

Karen and Jess

Fitness

Fitness continues each morning with the learners becoming more involved in the various activities that are set up each day. They are getting used to the routine and are now starting to associate the different days with the different activities. It has been great watching the learners in their walkers being able to choose where they want to go and what they want to do during this time.

Karen

A Better Understanding of Cerebral Vision Impairment

Based on the presentations of Professor Gordon Dutton at the SPEVI Conference 2013

In January this year Kilparrin class teachers and Statewide Support Services (SSS) teachers were fortunate to attend the SPEVI Conference in Auckland. The presentations delivered by Professor Gordon Dutton, Consultant Paediatric Ophthalmologist, at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Glasgow, and the Tennent Institute of Ophthalmology, Glasgow were a highlight. This article attempts to report some of the information and learning we were able to obtain from attending his conference sessions.

Professor Dutton addressed up-to-date diagnosis and features of Cerebral Vision (Visual) Impairment and indicated strategies. He argued that the term
‘cerebral’ vision impairment should be used in preference to ‘cortical’ vision impairment (historically the term ‘cerebral vision impairment’ is used in Europe and Britain; ‘cortical vision impairment’ is used in America) because children with cerebral vision impairment (CVI) have injury to distinct areas of the brain related to vision. Only rarely is simply the cortex of the brain damaged in isolation. Vision loss results from the impairment to the brain’s ability to adequately integrate and organise visual information that it receives from the eyes.

It is not easy for us to envisage how a child with CVI perceives his/her environment however the following may give some understanding:

- Imagine that you are looking at a blackboard full of complicated maths equations, much higher than your level of maths. You can see all the numbers and codes, but you cannot understand what you are seeing. The inherent patterns and logic are not obvious to you. Similarly, a child with CVI may see a world full of colours, shapes and symbols with good available visual acuity but not have any perception of what s/he is seeing. The child may not make meaning from the visual images and may not identify that the colours and shapes are a car, a hat or his/her mother.

- Imagine that you are at a sports stadium, packed full of people and you know that your sister is somewhere in the stadium. You visually search but you cannot see her among the thousands of faces. You can see the thousands of faces, but the visual environment is just too complicated for you to locate a specific person. However if the stadium is suddenly darkened and a bright light is shone on your sister, you will be able to spot and recognise her.

(Shaman, 2009)

Cerebral Vision Impairment is a neurological disorder in which there is damage to the posterior visual pathways and/or the occipital lobes of the brain resulting in visual processing issues. The inability to process visual information is recognised as a form of vision impairment. Understanding what CVI is and what it is not helps us realise which interventions will be most effective.

The occipital lobes are at the back of the brain and they receive the electrical signals from the visual pathways and break the information up into its component parts. Each element is analysed into colour, detail, orientation and movement. Children with damage to the occipital lobes can therefore have a range of different visual field defects depending on which parts have been damaged — loss of vision on one side or loss of the lower visual field.

Prof. Dutton has researched, written and published his findings on children with Cerebral Vision Impairment for decades. Part of Prof. Dutton’s work has been to describe the functions and systems of two visual pathways or streams in the brain and what happens when an area of that pathway is injured.

After visual information is processed in the occipital lobes, the visual data is transferred to other areas of the brain, primarily the parietal lobe and temporal lobes via one of two principal pathways, the Dorsal Stream and the Ventral Stream. Dorsal and Ventral streams each serve distinct visual functions. The process of seeing is complex and includes encompassing a visual scene, locating and recognising parts of that scene, choosing what to look at (attending to relevant visual information and suppressing irrelevant information), and engaging in visually directed body movements. Visual attention, an essential part of efficient vision, often is reduced with children with CVI.

Prof. Dutton states that CVI in children “includes impaired recognition of people, shapes and objects, and problems with orientation” (when the temporal lobes or their connecting pathways are damaged), and “difficulty handling complex visual imagery and problems making visually guided movement of the limbs” (when the posterior parietal lobes or their connecting pathways are involved).

The dorsal pathway is located between the occipital lobes and the parietal lobes. This system delivers sensory information (sight, smell, sound, taste, and touch) from the external world to the brain. This visual pathway, most easily remembered as the **WHERE** pathway, serves a person’s ability to see and process the whole visual scene and carry out visually guided movements. For example, when a child looks down to see steps, assesses if they are steep, and then visually monitors the motion as his feet feel the stairs; he is using his dorsal system.

The ventral stream runs from the occipital lobes into the temporal lobes on each side. The temporal lobes contain the “visual library”. This library contains a general store of objects and shapes, which enables us to recognise one object from another. It is also the store of people’s faces and the collection of route finding methods. The ventral system is also called the **WHAT** pathway because it is involved with object identification, visual recognition and memory.

The boxes below help to distinguish the Dorsal Stream and the Ventral Stream (Dutton, 2003)

**Dorsal Stream:**
- **The WHERE System**
- Dorsal Stream dysfunction causes difficulty with:
  - processing complex visual scenes
  - moving through space, especially crowded places, kerbs
  - visual attention
  - finding an object/person from within a group
  - inability to see multiple objects at the same time
  - accurate visual reaching
  - accurate movement of the arms and legs in space
  - decreased lower field.
Ventral Stream: The WHAT System

Ventral Stream dysfunction causes difficulty with:
- visual recognition of people
- understanding facial expressions
- route finding
- recognising colour, shape, properties of objects
- visual memory.

If there is damage to the dorsal stream the ability to handle a lot of information at the same time is decreased.

Dorsal stream dysfunction disturbs the task of giving selective attention to different parts of the visual scene. Another function is to scan the information about the visual scene and to make choices about what to look at and what to reach for. Finding a toy in a toy box or on a patterned carpet can be very difficult or impossible. Difficulty in seeing things that are pointed out in the distance is typical. Busy environments like supermarkets, shopping centres or swimming pools can be challenging to handle. Learners can have struggles with reading. Print size diminishes with each school year. This leads to progressive crowding of text, which in turn leads to problems with reading, because the text becomes too crowded.

Children with damage to the dorsal stream may have trouble reaching for things and moving their feet to a correct location in visual space. The ability to accurately move the head and eyes to a new target location is reduced and such movements can be either inaccurate or not possible to bring about at all. This means that it can be hard to follow and track moving objects, or to perceive detail on moving objects, because the dorsal pathway, which gives the head and eyes the new location to look at, is not functioning properly. Moving accurately through space requires intact dorsal stream function. Learners with CVI may manifest profound difficulties in differentiating outlines and edges, changes in floor coverings, negotiating kerbs or steps (lifting their foot to the wrong height, too early or too late) or going down stairs with the complexity in judging depth.

The ventral stream is associated with visual recognition, orientation and visual memory. Recognition of shape and form and visual memory are essential for day to day learning and applying information taught.

Children who have damage to the ventral stream can experience blocks in distinguishing one object from another, and in recognising people’s faces and different types of animals, one from another. Route finding can be particularly difficult – this applies on a large scale when out and about, but also on a small scale where for example it is testing to know in which drawer items are kept. A learner with such damage may be able to see one thing (familiar - embedded visual memory) but not another (unfamiliar/novel - insufficient visual memory).

Clarity of vision is accomplished by ‘accommodation’. Accommodation is the process by which the eye changes optical power to maintain a clear image (focus) on an object as its distance varies. Cerebral Vision Impairment can lead to incomplete accommodation or inability to adjust focus, with consequent blurring.

In children who have profound brain damage affecting vision, there can be peripheral motion detection present. Children who show very little visual response may detect a moving spoon if it is to the side, and open their mouths more readily, than if the spoon comes from straight ahead. However this system appears to be ‘fatiguable’ because it may appear to work initially, and then doesn’t work, but will work again after a rest.

Careful, reliable and inclusive assessment is the basis for effective educational programming for a learner with CVI. Prof. Dutton strongly emphasised his principle of a combination of history gathering from parents and pertinently observing the children using their vision, as the most effective method of diagnosing CVI.

Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzcy in her book, *Cortical Visual Impairment, An Approach to Assessment and Intervention* (2007) developed the CVI Range, a systematic information gathering and functional vision assessment tool that evaluates 10 specific characteristics common to children with CVI as well as three phases of CVI severity. Our understanding of the work of Prof. Gordon Dutton together with Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzcy (as well as others) enables us to recognise that the visual characteristics and severity of CVI vary widely, so that a child with CVI may have one or many, mild or severe CVI characteristic(s).

Dr. Roman-Lantzcy’s three Phases of the CVI Range are assessed and then described as:

**Phase 1**

The child is focusing on building visual behaviours.

**Phase 2**

The child begins to integrate vision into daily routines.

**Phase 3**

The child progresses to develop and integrate more typical visual functioning.

Dr. Christine Roman-Lantzcy’s Ten Characteristics/Symptoms of CVI continue to provide us with a strong assessment and programming base. They are:

1. colour preference
2. need for movement
3. visual latency
4. visual field preferences
5. decreased visual complexity
6. light-gazing and non-purposeful gaze
7. difficulty with distance viewing
8. atypical visual reflexes
9. decreased visual novelty
10. decreased visually guided reach

We now understand, after attending Prof. Gordon Dutton’s presentations on the function of the
dorsal and ventral streams and on the impact of specific damage, why our learners may have some or many of these CVI characteristics and that the degree of severity may vary considerably.

Although they share a common diagnosis, learners with CVI show a range of characteristics, and teaching strategies need to be evaluated considering the uniqueness of each learner. Strategies that work for some may not work for others.

Each learner with CVI presents with unique vision attributes and educational needs, resulting from the many types and locations of brain damage, and additional disabilities, as well as variations in personality, temperament, abilities, interests, and experiences. Some learners with CVI do not see objects that are moving while other children do not notice objects that are still. Some learners can only see one special toy. Others get lost in familiar environments or do not recognise people or facial expressions.

Many have difficulty with multiple sensory inputs and cannot effectively use their vision at the same time as they touch or listen. Learners may stop using their vision when music is playing, when someone speaks, or when the bell rings. Some learners may close their eyes when listening. In general, strategies for CVI aim to decrease and structure the amount of incoming visual information. Providing toys in small numbers on a plain play mat is an example of helping the learner to focus on one thing at a time. Good contrast helps to separate features and parts of the whole. Highlighting a picture or symbol through appropriate use of a penlight torch (being aware of not invoking light gazing) is an idea for drawing the learner’s attention to what they need to look at. Use of preferred objects, colours or visual fields is another example of providing the learner with their best opportunity to look. The essential focus is to simplify and clarify the visual world by having limited, well-defined visual information in the foreground and a plain background.

Recognition of how much the child is able to handle at any one time through careful observation and judgment will help facilitate access, and appropriate development and delivery of the curriculum.

For learners managing the effects of CVI, seeing is tiring. They need environmental accommodations that maximise the effectiveness of their vision, increase their visual attention and preserve energy. It has been suggested that the visual withdrawal behaviour observed in many children with CVI may result from their defense against real or imagined threats caused by an overload of sensory information that the brain is not able to organise. Educational curriculum that addresses the complex and diverse learning needs of children with CVI will also support and strengthen the learner’s sense of safety and ability to cope with stress.

Prof. Dutton referred to his own research and that of several others, which shows there is considerable plasticity of the developing visual system. Recent discoveries about the capability of the brain to adapt and alter visual pathways offer new hope of improved visual function of children with CVI. Multiple visual pathways and structures in the brain are involved in the process of seeing. The brain has specialised areas specific for distinct visual functions such as distant vision, colour, motion, visually directed movement, and recognition of faces (Hyvarinen, 2005). Brain plasticity is the brain’s ability, as the result of learning, to reroute old neural pathways, create new pathways, and maximise function of non-damaged structures. Additionally, as the child develops, s/he can gain visual skills as intact areas of the brain increase in function. Progressive improvement in visual function in children with CVI can take place over many years. A developmental program designed for vision engagement can result in significant improvements in visual function. It is also accepted that children with CVI can develop a range of visual strategies - classifying and recognising by colour, recalling a sequence of visual orientation marks, finding things on communication charts by remembering their location, and making use of their other senses to a considerable degree.

Louise Morpeth, Teacher
Statewide Support Services

References
Hyvarinen, Lea & Jacob, Namita (2011). What and How Does This Child See?

Mothers’ Day Raffle

The Kilparrin Governing Council is running a Mothers’ Day Goodie Basket Raffle again this year with the prize/s to be drawn in the second week back at school in Term 2, just before Mothers’ Day. Donations of prizes would be much appreciated; it could be anything
from wine, to chocolates, books, jams, biscuits, soaps, magazines anything that you think a mother would like! We would like to have a 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize basket.

Items can be sent to school clearly marked DONATIONS FOR MOTHERS’ DAY RAFFLE by Monday 8th April 2013. Alternatively you can drop items to the front office at any time.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Kristy Sander
Fundraising Committee
Kilparrin Governing Council

Foster Care Information Session

More Foster Carers are needed who can provide a safe and nurturing home for children and young people while their own families are unable to care for them. This voluntary service can be rewarding both for the carer and the children placed in their care.

Families SA are hosting an information session in Reynella.

Foster Care:
Play your part, enrich a life
Tuesday 16 April, 6:30pm-8:30pm
Reynella Youth Centre
10 Main South Road
Reynella
Phone: 1300 2 367 837
www.fostercare.sa.gov.au