Parent Connection

Parents reflect on their own style of parenting

Psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg and Principal Shane Power

A cornerstone of Total Education is the development of school parents through the Parents Program. Held weekly, the program varies from small group discussions, to special interest groups and presentations to the combined parent group.

The importance of good parenting was highlighted by celebrity child psychologist Dr Michael Carr-Gregg who spoke to parents on the *Six Deadly Sins of Parenting*. Dr Carr-Gregg encouraged parents to reflect on their own style of parenting as he took an entertaining look at such styles as helicopter parenting, hothouse parenting and buddy parenting. The evening was run in conjunction with Medicare Local and was open to the general public. It was an ideal way to engage parents with the challenges of parenting.

Excellence

Excellence in the School is seen as flowing from wholeheartedness and from not comparing oneself with others.

Our focus is not about high academic results at all costs. It is about effort, enjoyment and unlocking potential. These may be fine words but I have no doubt that the practice of this approach frees our students to do their very best and propels our year 12 students to outperform the rest of the state academically.

As reported in the Courier Mail, and displayed on the last page of this Annual Report, 90 percent of our Year 12s sat the QCS and of them 55% achieved an OP of 5 or better. The others all did well, achieving what they had hoped for and getting into their desired courses.

*Shane Power, Principal*

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ENGAGING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Schools are increasingly taking the lead in society as a major source of cultural and intellectual stimulus. The School of Total Education naturally has much to offer, stemming from the rich cultural environment and stimulating ideas it nurtures. We see it as our duty to share what we have with the broader community.

In 2013, through our involvement with the Warwick Peace Festival, we hosted a student forum in the Town Hall bringing engaging speakers to Year 11 and 12 students in the district. The speakers included the Telstra Businesswoman Award winner, Deann Natividad and former Queensland Red player Charlie Fetoai (pictured). We also opened up our parents program to the general public, inviting them to Q & A sessions with a variety of expert speakers on raising children such as Catholic priest, Fr Hal Ranger and Parent Matters consultant, Di Tamer.
Five Key Features of Total Education

**Nurturing the Spirit of the Child**

The School’s founder, Vijayadev Yogendra, believed that happiness is derived from the life of the spirit — from love and service. This continues to be a central goal of Total Education.

You can see the spirit of a child when they spontaneously help someone else or when they express their joy in living through their laughter. You see it when they bring themselves into their learning and their interactions or when they discover insights into how the world works. The teachers emphasise these things with the students in their everyday experience at school.

Each child needs to experience love and to feel “loveable”. Many children lose this when they join an education system which evaluates their personal worth only on the basis of measurable academic achievement.

**Bringing Out a Child’s Innateness**

This is a place where everyone is important. Small class sizes (one teacher to 13 children) mean that no one misses out on attention. Valuing everyone means that no matter what a child’s apparent academic or other abilities, they are considered in the school program.

The challenge for teachers and parents is to observe each child, trying to understand what it is that speaks to their individual self-expression. It may be something in the academic field like writing, science, history or mathematics. Or, it could be a creative pursuit such as art, drama, dance or music. This gift, whatever it is, is what we mean by “innateness”, and the teachers will try to cultivate this, to give it a chance to grow and be expressed.

**Balancing Academic and Character Development**

At SOTE we believe that a person’s success in life, whether it be work, family or community, will largely depend on what kind of person they are, on their character. The Total Education program therefore aims for a balance of academic and character development.

Although all children need the key skills of literacy, numeracy and much else in the way of academic knowledge, academic achievement can be over-emphasised and this can put unnecessary pressure on children’s learning.

Character development is not treated as a separate subject. It involves every aspect of school life. Students are given an experience of service and a practical understanding of values such a patience, consistency and responsibility. The most important part of this is the idea of the good example or what we would now call ‘positive role models’. Both teachers and parents have a crucial part to play in this.

**Modelling a Co-operative Ethos**

Our experience over many years has shown that students can achieve excellence without the motivation of competition. Instead the School emphasises cooperation and intrinsic motivation.

Co-operation is modelled by the teachers working together for the good of the children. Students experience co-operation through being given tasks to work on together, whether it be helping around the school, activities at the Outdoor Education Centre, cross-grade project, school camps or within the class setting.

Intrinsic motivation is motivation that comes from within a person such as: interest, enjoyment, curiosity, challenge and a desire for excellence. All of these are within the individual’s control. At SOTE we encourage intrinsic motivation rather than external motivation from prizes, awards and other artefacts of the competitive approach.

**The School as a Living Community**

They say it takes a village to raise a child. SOTE invites parents, teachers and children to be part of a living and evolving community in which they all play a vital role. A community requires a level of cohesion, a sense of shared values, open communication and a level of interdependence.

Parents are welcome in the school and have the opportunity to interact with the teachers each day when dropping their children off at school and walking them into the classroom.

Parents are involved in regular discussion groups on parenting where they can raise any issues of concern and share their parenting experiences with others.

Parents assist in caring for the grounds and buildings through working bees. They also participate in preparing cooked meals which are served to the children twice each week.
Distinctive Curriculum

Total Education

The School’s curriculum is based on the program of *Total Education* devised by School Founder Vijayadev Yogendra. This provides for a balance between Academic, Health & Physical and Character Development, as well as a focus on the key relationships in the School.

Broad Curriculum Offerings

The School offers a broad curriculum and balances support for literacy, numeracy and science with focus on humanities and languages and a special emphasis on the visual and performing arts.

Yoga Classes

Yoga Classes are taken on a voluntary basis for secondary students. There is a good level of participation by students. Classes are taken by experienced teacher Debbie Lane at the Centre For Healthy Living adjacent to the School.

School Meals

The School provides a hot meal twice a week. The teachers and students share the meal and this creates a family atmosphere. Parents assist with the running of the kitchen and the preparation of hot meals. Children help by setting the tables.

Film, Television and Media

In 2013 Film and Television was offered to Year 10 students with the subject taught by Mr Funder and assisted by Mr Jeffries.

Students learn the fundamentals of video production including use of cameras, lighting, sound and editing. They also learn different forms of production design as well as analysis and critique of commercial and documentary films.

In the course of the year, all students produced a film review and film analysis as well as scripting and directing a film of their own.

A Broader Approach to Physical Education

Students in Grades 1 to 3 take part in the *Movement for Learning Program* which includes cross-patterning exercises and co-ordination activities which stimulate brain development. All students take part in 15 minutes of physical education four days a week as well as a sport class once a week.

Physical Education at SOTE is not just about sport. School meals, preventative stress management, education in positive attitudes and input to parents on the value of a good routine of exercise and rest are all part of the School’s broad approach to Health and Physical Education.
Interest Groups

On Friday afternoons the primary students participate in the Interest Groups program. A range of activities are offered that allow the students to discover new interests, follow a passion and connect with other teachers and students in a way that is not able to be offered in a regular class program.

The activities in these programs are offered by the teachers of middle and upper primary and are designed to allow teachers and students to connect through a common interest.

Quiet Time

Quiet Time is for primary children and emphasises the value of finding a sense of quietude and stillness. Storytelling with a focus on positive values is used to settle the children. They spend a few minutes with their eyes closed listening to music or ambient sounds.

Listening and Breathing

All secondary students spend 15 minutes each day on two meditative exercises. One involves the equal breathing and the other requires students to listen to sounds in the environment. These exercises promote a daily experience of stillness and contribute to management of others and emotions.

Time Out Program

The Time Out Program is conducted in the second semester of Year 7 and the first semester of Year 8. Students cover their core academic program on Mondays and Tuesdays. Thursdays and Fridays are spent on student-directed activities. A weekly excursion on Wednesdays gives students a broad-based outdoor experience and there are two camps, one bush-based and one beach-based.

Students return to the full-time curriculum in July of Year 8 with renewed enthusiasm and a stronger idea of themselves and their future direction.

Outdoor Education and Camps Program

The Schools has an extensive camps program starting at Year 4 with a Sleepover at School and progressing through to an Outward Bound Program for Year 11 and 12 students.

Outdoor Education Centre

The School conducts an Outdoor Education Centre program on a bush property at Upper Freestone. Each class spends half a day per week over four weeks at the Centre each year. There are also indoor facilities.
Extra-Curricular Activities

Year 12 Presentation
At the Combined Parents’ Meeting on the 4th May, Year 12 students gave a number of presentations on the topic of *Stand up and Be Counted*.

The students’ talks engaged parents through their sincerity and honesty and humour. It gave them a genuine insight into how senior students view issues such as peer pressure, bullying and dignity.

![Year 12 students on ‘Stand Up and Be Counted’](image)

Parents consistently vote this annual event as a highlight of the parents’ program calendar because of the quality of the student presentations.

Students Running the School
On Tuesday 28th May, Year 9 students took over the running of the school for the day. The students’ tasks ranged from being Principal and Secretary to Teachers in Primary, Phys. Ed. and Music Classes. They really enjoyed the role reversal.

![Jorge Muehlebach as Receptionist](image)

Work Experience
The Year 10’s undertook work experience at a very wide variety of work places from Monday 27th to Friday 31st May. Some of these included: Total Dog Grooming, Myer, Warwick Daily News, the Court House and Osborne Lane Engineers.

Musica Viva
The *Musica Viva* for 2013 was by female vocal trio ‘Gypsy Tober’, who performed a variety of songs in many styles from jazz and Latin to folk songs. Teachers had been trained about the material at a dedicated PD held in Toowoomba Grammar School earlier in the year.

![Musica Viva](image)

Sports Days
There were sports days held for secondary and primary students. Events of the day are organised so that everyone can participate and those who wish can challenge themselves to see what they can achieve.

![Sports Days](image)

Science Week
Science Week involves a range of fun and interesting activities concerning science. The Year 9 and Year 10 students helped the primary students make a variety of electronic toys including torches, motorised cars and dioramas. Pictured is a Year 9 student helping some Grade 3s with their electronic toy construction.

![Science Week](image)

Secondary Musical
The secondary musical, *Fiddler on the Roof Jr*, was directed by Colin Alley, Michael Funder and Ronda Mattarollo. The choreography was a reproduction of the original by Lisa Notley. Held from 17th to 19th October, each performance was sold out and received outstanding reviews.

![Secondary Musical](image)

Celebrating a marriage agreement
Graduation
The guest speaker at the 2013 Graduation was Father Hal Ranger, from St Patrick’s Cathedral, Toowoomba. He spoke about *Being Yourself - Holding True to Your Values*.

![Celebrating a marriage agreement](image)

Father Hal congratulates graduate Mollie Devine
Aboriginal and Islander Engagement

Aboriginal and Islander enrolments increased from 1 to 5 percent in 2013, following our decision to actively encourage indigenous families into the school.

To facilitate this development, we engaged aboriginal educator, Grant Sara to conduct a day long cultural awareness workshop for the teachers. Grant has a delightful, disarming manner which enabled the group to tackle the very real and challenging issues of being aboriginal in Australia today, resulting in some deep reflection on attitudes and new ways of caring for indigenous students. Local indigenous leader, Ranald McIntosh also attended the workshop.

Leroy Brown playing the didgeridoo

Xsanthia-Rose Frith performing at the Naidoc Concert

Teacher Aide and Antamatyerre woman, Sharman Parsons accepted the duties of Aboriginal and Islander Co-ordinator this year and has played a pivotal role in helping the new students settle in. She also helped plan and performed in the NAIDOC Concert which included a song sung by Grade 5 student Xsanthia-Rose Frith in her native Gurindji language. Xsanthia is the great granddaughter of the late Vincent Lingiari. Accomplished didgeridoo players and uncle of one of our students, Leroy Brown, also performed at the concert, which was opened by our staff member and Githadul woman, Del Charles.

Graduates Give Back to School

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE AND EXPRESS APPRECIATION

Graduates Run the School Day

Following a program started by the School’s Founder, Vijaydev Yogendra, about 15 past students (pictured) created and implemented a day long program for all the students from Prep to Year 12. It was an exciting and entertaining day with programs ranging from music recording to an Uber Awesome Game Show. Vijay developed the idea to give past students an opportunity to continue their engagement with the School and to express their appreciation of the School. It also helps freshen up the teachers with some youthful ideas and energy.
Use of Computers to Enhance Learning

**Computer Access**

The School provides 1:1 computer access for secondary students thanks to the Commonwealth Government’s Digital Education Revolution (DER) program.

Currently, there are primary and secondary computer labs for general use and specialist labs for Film and Television and Graphics.

Computers are available in the secondary school library and for specialist areas such as science, music and art. There is a small lab for Time Out.

The Graphics Lab has industry standard software for technical graphics (CAD), creative graphics, graphic design (Photoshop), video editing (iMovie), stop animation and for the creation of simple games (Adobe Flash).

**Student Laptop Program**

Students in Years 10 (only some as this is voluntary), 11 and 12 have their own laptops. The firewall and content filtering software were upgraded this year as part of a State Infrastructure Grant which has helped with network security.

**Teacher Laptop Program**

Every teacher has a MacBook laptop. These are used for preparation, research and reporting to parents. Teachers have access to data projectors and digital video cameras to record oral presentations and edit these on their computer.

Students are quick to adopt new technologies and keeping up is always a challenge. However, the teachers provide the important aspect of teaching the discerning use of technology.

**School Network**

As part of the State Infrastructure Grant the School Network was thoroughly upgraded to industry standard. This includes:

- All buildings, including the new auditorium, are now connected by fibre. The Time Out Centre is connected by fast wireless link.
- Two new servers, a mail server and a file server have added great stability to the network.
- The wireless network was upgraded so the whole school now has fast wireless coverage. Students can even use their laptops in the gazebo!
- All school computers have access to the most current version of Microsoft Office through a licensing agreement.

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**New Media** students in Year 8 and 9 learn word processing, spreadsheet, presentation skills and web page design as well as to use vector based graphic design programs.

**Art** students access artwork and research artists on the internet. Paintings or photographs created in the classroom are converted to digital format where they are further refined and manipulated.

**Drama** students use the internet to access information about playwrights and texts in their assignments as well as for poster design.

**Primary** students work on projects with their teachers through supervised internet access on their classroom computers and the primary lab.

**iPads** Thirty new iPads were acquired during the year. Uses include etexts for Year 9, rat and mice dissection for Biology, general literacy and numeracy applications and creating short animated plays as well as special education uses.

Students of **Humanities** subjects such as English, History and Study of Society use computers for word processing, internet research and oral presentations.

**Film & TV** students create short films and documentaries using digital video equipment and video editing software with the final products being burnt to DVD.

**Mathematics** Spreadsheets are used extensively for statistical and financial analysis including graphical representation of the results.

**Science** Internet research is conducted on projects and Word or PowerPoint are used to present the results. Virtual dissections are conducted on-line for Biology.
Social Climate

Student Well-Being

Class teachers in primary school give particular attention to the well-being of each child and connect regularly with parents if there is any cause for concern.

The Home Group system at secondary level ensures one teacher maintains an overview of each student's progress and well-being. The Home Group program looks after study skills, sex education, values education and welfare issues.

Primary and Secondary teachers assist each other with student welfare with support from the Deputy Principal and Principal.

Special meetings are held with parents of particular grade levels where issues arise.

Confidential counselling is available to students, parents and teachers at The Centre For Healthy Living adjacent to the School.

Teachers Well-Being

Measures are actively taken to support teachers in their well-being:

- Social get togethers especially at end of term.
- Regular mentoring meetings for new teachers.
- Weekly teachers meetings provide a forum for problems to be aired.
- Support with stress is provided by counselling through the Centre for Healthy Living.
- Leave is provided for sickness and family or bereavement issues.

Student Attendance

Student attendance is monitored by roll marking twice each day and extended absences are followed up by teachers and then, if necessary, by the Deputy Principal. The close relationship between parents and the School ensures that extended non-attendance is very rare.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Average Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Attendance by Year Level

The School of Total Education: Teachers and Students 2013
Parent Communication & Involvement

Parents’ Program

Parents at SOTE attend a weekly discussion group on parenting issues. Groups are facilitated by parents with longer experience at the School. Training and support for parent facilitators is provided through the Group Leaders’ Meetings.

Combined Parent Meetings involving all the parents are held twice each term. The most highly rated presentation this year was the presentation by Dr. Michael Carr-Gregg on the *Six Deadly Sins of Parenting*. Other highly rated presentations was the Year 12 Talk on *Stand Up and Be Counted* and *The Value of Service* by Father Hal Ranger.

Grade Meetings

Grade Meetings were held at the start of Term 3 for all levels. Parents met with the Class or Home Group Teacher to discuss the group’s progress and exchange views on how issues might be tackled jointly between home and school.

Reporting to Parents

At the end of each semester, parents receive a *Report of Student Progress* which covers academic, character and physical development as well as subject reports with an A to E grading at secondary level. All primary parents have agreed not to be included in A to E reporting. Primary reports include comments on each child’s achievement in each Key Learning Area and NAPLAN results are supplied. Prep Reports are based on a combination of Education Queensland and SOTE frameworks.

Feedback from Parents

Parents rated the Senior Musical, *Fiddler on the Roof* (96%) and the Senior Play *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass*, (88%) as the school activities they enjoyed most in 2013. Also highly rated were the Primary Musical Instrumental Concert (84%) and the Christmas Bush Dance (90%).
Leadership in Education

TOTAL EDUCATION AS A MODEL

Introduction

In pursuing the School’s strategic goal of promoting Total Education as a model of education for the benefit of communities throughout Australia and the world, the school focused largely on engaging with international educationalists who had shown an interest in Total Education. The school also engaged in a medium term research project with the Queensland University of Technology.

Fred Dervin - Professor of Multicultural Education, University of Helsinki

Professor Dervin toured the school and took a question and answer session with Year 11 and 12 students. He then met with the Principal, Deputy Principal and senior teachers to understand more about the School’s approach. He later met with the Principal and school adviser, Mr G.N. Shirke Baba (“Babaji”).

Professor Dervin was genuinely impressed with the depth and thoughtfulness of the students’ questions and intrigued with the school’s capacity to engage with and involve parents in the School. Interestingly, Professor Dervin was not surprised that the school’s non-competitive approach could produce such good academic results and well rounded students. He believed that the myth of Finnish education as something special would soon be exploded as it was based on statistical anomalies and not fact.

Professor Waddick Doyle - Founder and Director Masters in Global Communications Program - The American University of Paris

Professor Doyle toured the school and had question and answer sessions with a primary class and secondary class. He also met with the school leadership and Babaji to understand more the philosophic basis of the School and its impact on student wellbeing and learning.

Professor Doyle described a radically different education system that his own children had experienced in Paris and was interested to keep in touch with the school. His visit was quite inspiring for the students in relation to learning languages other than English as he described how it can help one see the world from a totally different perspective.

Ann Neumann - Student Teacher, University of Rostock

Ms Neumann, sought a place at the School as part of her university education practical training as she had not found anything like the School in her home country and was keen to learn the teaching approach practised here. Ann used the opportunity to also conduct some research on the School as part of her studies.

QUT Study on Children’s Moral Reasoning

In August 2013 the School hosted Professor Joanne Lunn Brownlee and her team of academics from Queensland University of Technology. The researchers spent time with the Grade One children and their teacher, Mrs Jubb, with a view to understanding the influences on children’s moral reasoning. A summary of their interim results has been provided to the School and parents. The study will go for three years. During this time the researchers will visit the school for one full day each year to carry out their research.
Teacher Development

Staff Stability

The School has a high level of staff stability with 88% of the teaching staff being retained from the previous year.

Staff Composition

- Full-time Teachers: 26%
- Part-time Teachers: 39%
- Full-time Non-Teaching: 18%
- Part-time Non-Teaching: 14%
- Indigenous Staff: 3%

Teachers Seminars

Teachers started the year with a seminar at the School on Values Education. There was a mixture of large and small group discussion and social interaction.

The focus in the Easter period was on Using the Australian Professional Standards presented by former SOTE Principal, Richard Waters. This was then followed up with teachers meeting with the Principal and Deputy Principal to formulate their individual professional development plans.

In July, the topic was Creative Education and in October the teachers looked at Strategic Indigenous Awareness Studies - Engaging with Aboriginal Children and their Families with guest presenter Grant Sarra.

Curriculum Afternoons

Teachers spend two afternoons each term on curriculum issues. This year the focus continued on planning with the Australian Curriculum. Specific sessions were held on: Cross Curriculum Priorities: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders History & Culture.

Other curriculum afternoons were held on Discussion of NAPLAN - Approaches and Coping with Stress and Teaching Children to Write and Spell.

External Professional Development

SOTE Teachers (21) attended a variety of Professional Development Programs. Many of these are subsidised by either Independent Schools Queensland (ISQ) or the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA). The amount expended per teacher on professional development was $336 p.a. (excluding the cost of teacher replacement).

Activities attended by SOTE teachers this year included: Teachers Differentiating Learning Practices, QCS Marking Training and Disability Standards for Education 2005: Understanding Schools’ Obligation.


Teacher Development

A Teacher Development Program on the principles of Total Education is held monthly. This provides a regular forum for teachers to reflect on their teaching in relation to personal and school goals.

These programs are conducted by SOTE personnel and in 2013 included: Teaching Children to Write and Spell, Communication with Parents and In-service on use of New Database.

Babaji also took one of these sessions with the teachers on Children - Wellbeing.

Teacher Supervision

SOTE teachers mentored 4 preservice teachers this year, 3 from USQ and 1 from Germany.

Teachers’ Qualifications

Leadership
Shane Power
LLB
Judy Currie
BSc., Dip. Ed.

Full-Time Secondary Teachers
Colin Alley
Dip Teach, M.Ed Admin
Matthew Bradshaw
BA, B Ed.
Ian Rowling
BEd (Health & Phys Ed)

Full-Time Primary Teachers
Wanda Brett
BMus BEd
John Cosgrove
BEd (Primary)
Sophia Lightfoot
BA GRDipLearn&Teach

Part-Time Teachers
Bernadine Bradshaw
BA (Hons), Dip Ed
Keiko Brailey
BEd (FET) CertECE
Susan Cooper
BA GRDipLearnTeach (MidYrSch)
Roy Fox
BSc Dip Ed
Judy Funder
BA (Hons), Dip Ed
Michael Funder
B Mus Ed
Allyra Greening
BESM (Secondary)
Patrice Jubb
Dip Teaching Early Childhood
Ray Licence
BSc (Hons) DipEd (Secondary)
Karen Leech
Dip Teaching
Ronda Mattarollo
BA, BEd (Secondary)
Peter Pickering
BEcon DipEd
Neil Rasmussen
Dip Fine Arts, TSTC.
Alison Rowling
BEd (Primary)
Claire Waters
BA, T.S.T.C
Required Statistics

System Affiliation
Independent, non-systemic, non-denominational.

Address
2 Freestone Road,
Warwick, Queensland 4370
Telephone: 61 7 4661 2666
Facsimile: 61 7 4661 4894
Email: admin@sote.qld.edu.au
Website: www.sote.qld.edu.au

Enrollments
109 students
62 primary (57%) and
47 secondary students (43%)
6 indigenous students (5.5%)
89% Average attendance P-12

Year Levels Offered
Prep to Year 12.
Single stream at each level.

Gender
Co-Educational at all levels.
40 girls and 69 boys.

Retention Rates
91% Apparent Retention Rate

Staff Statistics
88% Staff Retention from 2012.
97% Staff Attendance Rate.
$336 Staff Development costs
(per teacher per annum)
$5006 Total funds expended on
Teacher Prof. Dev.
100% Teachers attending staff
development activities in 2013.

Teachers and Students
Ratio of 1 teacher to 13 students

School Income: $1,742,244
Aust. Govt (55%), State Govt (13%),
Parent Fees (29%) Private (3%)

School Comment
These statistics need to be read with
some caution given the small
student numbers at SOTE.