



Pittwater House

Gifted and Talented Newsletter 2020

achieve a balance
co-educational campus | single-sex education

Message from the Co-ordinator of Gifted and Talented



As part of the Gifted and Talented Learning Enrichment classes, students are encouraged to understand themselves as powerful learners who can solve complex problems and generate new ideas, through the discipline of personal development as well as the ability to collaborate effectively with others.

This year has been a turbulent one to say the least, but I have been so proud of the way the students have shown resilience and the ability to adapt to any given situation.

This newsletter has been designed to provide you with an overview as to what has been happening in the school this year. I hope you find it informative.

Mrs Victoria James
Co-ordinator of Gifted and Talented

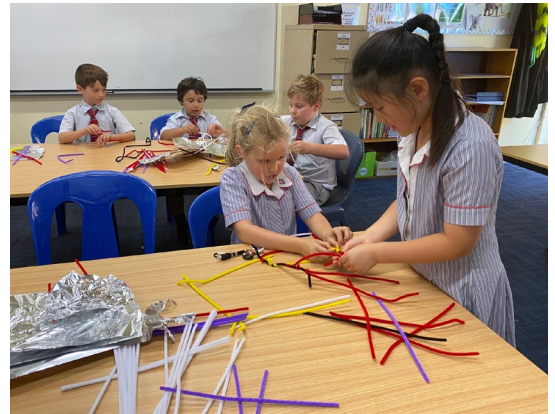
Big Ideas K-2

This year Big Ideas has been divided into two groups: K-2; and Years 3 and 4.

As part of the learning enrichment program we have been meeting on a weekly basis to share ideas and to collaborate with like-minded peers.

The class is skills-based and not an extension of the curriculum. Each week is a different theme, however, the focus is on the higher order thinking skills required to complete various tasks. The purpose is that students have consistent opportunity to practice these new skills before transferring them to use in the regular classroom setting.

Students have an outlet to express the wealth of knowledge they already have whilst learning new techniques and strategies to enable them to become divergent thinkers.



Critical Thinking

This year students have had the opportunity to be taught on a weekly basis in a combined Year 5 and Year 6 learning enrichment class called Critical Thinking.

The Australian Curriculum defines critical thinking as ‘at the core of most intellectual activity that involves students learning to recognise or develop an argument, use evidence in support of that argument, draw reasoned conclusions, and use information to solve problems.’

It is widely agreed that critical thinking is a necessary capability across all content areas, and in a rapidly changing world.

Students have been taught various strategies through different topic areas in order to allow them to look at the world through new eyes, to think, using higher order thinking skills, and always to consider ‘why?’.

Debating Club

Students in Year 5 and 6 have had the opportunity to participate in a weekly lunch club where we look at contemporary issues, discuss as a group, and then debate the motion.

It has been wonderful to see how students analytical, persuasive and debating skills have developed over the course of the year.

Future Problem Solving



FPS is a research-based, academic program that teaches problem solving strategies, collaboration, critical and creative thinking, and effective communication. The interdisciplinary approach helps develop ethical leadership skills and provides a unique opportunity for students to learn and apply essential life skills in the 21st century.

Nine students in Year 8 participated in the program this year on a weekly basis. The students applied themselves enthusiastically to the course, and they displayed a positive attitude to learning new skills.

All students are to be commended for their commitment to the course, however, a special mention goes to Yarra who is now the National Champion in the Individual Category. Yarra will go on to compete in the International Competition in 2021. An incredible achievement!

Billy Carts Incursion

Students in K-6 were provided with an exciting opportunity to attend the Billy Carts Incursion as part of the learning enrichment program.

Billy Carts provided a ‘hands-on’ experience where students could investigate push, pull and forces, better understand friction and gravity and how things move, and use tools and hardware in the workshop to create their own billy carts before racing them around the track!

The incursion educators were instructed to limit teacher-talk and initial explanations so that students could investigate for themselves and learn through doing.

Students were able to collaborate with other like-minded students from different grades. It was a great opportunity to display teamwork and leadership, and many of our students rose to the challenge!



Year 7 Genius Hour

Genius Hour has been an opportunity for students to participate in a fortnightly skills-based class with other students of similar ability.

Each lesson a new content area was covered from topics as diverse as Greek mythology, astronomy, brain teasers, and virtual escape rooms.

Students were shown how to better understand themselves as learners, to take risks within the classroom setting to challenge themselves outside of their comfort zone, and to take more ownership over their own learning journey.

There was a mix of opportunity to collaborate with a partner and to also demonstrate their ability to become an independent learner through ‘choosing’ their own tasks to display their knowledge of a topic.

Overall, students displayed high levels of interest, motivation and engagement which resulted in both some excellent discussion and work submitted this year.



Explorations Class

Students in Year 9 and 10 had the opportunity to participate in an exciting program called 'Explorations'.

Students chose to create a project from one of the following themes: Desert; Mountains; Rainforests; and Oceans. Students had the opportunity to work individually or to collaborate in a small group on a weekly basis. The project could take a variety of forms such as a book, a film, an artwork, a dance, a speech, or a community project.



The purpose was for students to take ownership of their learning and investigate a topic of interest in order to display their knowledge and talents in a way of their choosing.

One group created a painting in line with our school's values to display what success and achievement means to them. This has been donated to the school as a legacy to remind all Pittwater House students that we are all on our own personal learning journey, and that 'mountains' or challenges can be both physical or mental but overcoming them is still a big achievement.

Another group created a project around raising awareness amongst their peers for Cerebral Palsy (the charity's symbol is the mountain). They wrote their own poem about the disability, created a Kahoot to engage their peers, and organised fun activities on the oval so that all students in Year 9 raised their step level.

A different group wanted to create a 'mindfulness' painting to donate to a local northern beaches' mental health charity called 'Head Above Water'. Students understand how people's mental health can hugely impact their lives (particularly during the pandemic), and consequently, they decided to do their part to raise awareness.

A student in Year 9 decided to work independently on this task by using the opportunity wisely to investigate the unsolved mysteries of the Amazon rainforest, which had always intrigued him.

Students demonstrated their proactive stance to learning, commitment to the course, and perseverance to see through the project. They are to be congratulated for their efforts!

United Nations Incursion

The United Nations Youth NSW delivered a full-day incursion to Year 9 and 10 students.

Students learned about how the United Nations operates, and the focus for the day was on the world refugee crisis.

Students collaborated in pairs to each represent a country from the UN. They were tasked with researching their country's stance on the refugee crisis in order to effectively take part in a Model United Nations Debate.

Students all agreed that it enhanced their critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills through this valuable experience.

