

Watch how they GROW!

The school starters for 2014 have now well and truly settled into 'big school' with three school terms already under their hats! We spoke to **Grace Lutheran Primary School** to find out what their latest cohort of Brisbane Preppies have been learning and how far they have come this year!



The transition from the Pre-Prep/Kindergarten environment to the bigger learning fish pond of Primary School is a key focus in their first year of formal schooling. This transition is designed to be a gradual one with nurturing programs and processes in place for them from their first day of school and slowly easing into more opportunities for independence and mixing with children from other year levels as the year goes by. Primary Schools across Brisbane will be aiming to make the adjustment to school as seamless, joyful and memorable as possible. After all, this is the beginning of their formal learning journey.

So what do children learn in school nowadays and how is it different from when we were at school? It is normal for families to ponder such questions, so let's take a look at the key areas for focus.

The 5 Most Important Areas Young Children Should Learn

The Australian Curriculum guides what Prep students learn in their first year and covers the following five areas. This national program is supported by teachers working towards building on the knowledge, skills and understandings that children bring to school from their home environment.

- Social and emotional skills are very important. So far in their 'school' learning journey Preps have worked to 'get along' with others, communicate with classmates and various adults, and manage themselves in terms of planning, problem solving and organising. Prep children are able to make friends, think about others feelings, follow instructions, and express how they feel, follow rules, wait for turns and share. "The Preps have loved making new friends and enjoy their lunch times and afternoon tea times together." says one Prep teacher.
- Physical skills are essential to a child's school life and learning. Students participate in specialist Physical Education lessons which work on developing 'gross motor' skills. A Perceptual Motor Program aims to give the child experiences in seeing, hearing, touching, processing, making perceptual judgements and reacting through carefully sequenced activities which children enjoy doing like running, hopping, skipping, jumping, balancing, crawling, climbing, throwing, catching, bowling, sliding, and so on, using a variety of common and specially designed equipment. The child needs the motor skills of balance, locomotion and eye / hand / foot co-ordination and needs to be fit to function effectively.
- Academically there is a big focus on building Literacy and Numeracy skills. Brisbane schools will be aiming to have students who are becoming 'literate'. This means that Preps are developing strong oral language skills, speak with confidence and maintain a conversation with their peers and adults. They learn about the 'code' of English through exploring letter/sound relationships, rhyming words and syllables. Many Preps are able to combine letters to make words and words to make sentences to share information. Students borrow books from the library and take home readers to support their development.

In the area of Numeracy many Preps know about numbers to 20 and beyond and solve basic problems involving numbers. They can connect their own experiences with days of the week and compare objects using ideas such as largest, longest, more, less.

- Preps are natural investigators. They are forever curious and ask lots of questions. Inquiry learning and harnessing natural curiosity is done by presenting real-world questions. Prep students gather and organise information, imagine possibilities, transfer information from one context to the next, search for solutions, and reflect on their thinking.
- Prep students are starting their journey as 21st century learners. Technology is going to be a big part of their lives. They begin to understand that information can be gathered on the internet, use touch screens to record ideas, computer programs to practise letters and numbers, computer keyboards and mouse to operate devices, use digital devices to record information and sequence or communicate experiences

It is important to realise that parents are partners in their child's learning journey. Parents know what their child is learning and how they are progressing through school reporting processes and other formal and informal ways of communication. Parents will be invited to interviews and written reports are provided throughout the year. Parents are welcomed to special events and are encouraged to visit the classroom environment as well as participate in activities such as reading groups. This is an exciting time in the life of your child and there is so much to celebrate in their vital first year at school.

Grace Lutheran Primary School is a co-educational independent school located on the Redcliffe Peninsula in South-East Queensland. The school currently has over 400 students across Prep to Year 6. For more information about Grace Lutheran Primary contact Karen Misso on **3283 0011** graceadmin@glps.qld.edu.au



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