

The Literacy Centre

This Centre was established in July 1992 as a result of problems experienced by a member of the congregation in finding somewhere which could cater for her child who had learning difficulties. Time was spent exploring the possibilities and seeking out resources, with furniture being obtained from the excess at local schools. A cash donation from the Uniting Church Pudding Project allowed the Centre to become operational. Teachers who had expertise in developing the skills of children with learning difficulties were employed. The Centre receives no funding and operates on fees paid by students and occasional donations.

The program caters for children in Years 1 – 6 who are generally not succeeding in the classroom. Children are placed in groups of three students and taught by trained, experienced teachers who understand their special needs. Programs are adapted to the individual but all include reading, spelling, comprehension and story writing.

The Centre currently has six teachers and thirty-two students. It operates two afternoons per week, with each session being forty-five minutes duration. Reports are issued twice per year and parents are able to discuss their child's progress with teachers at any time.

Objectives

- To provide individualised support for children with learning difficulties
- To assist parents in developing strategies to help their children improve their literacy skills
- To monitor student progress and amend teaching programs accordingly
- To ensure that every student has the opportunity to reach their potential

The students we see are typically 12-24 months behind their peers in most aspects of Literacy. We carry out initial assessments to determine their current levels and then devise programs to build on their existing knowledge. Each program is individual to that child although there is often some common ground within the group.

All our students achieve improved results, with the greatest gains usually being demonstrated by the younger students. We also offer support to parents through informal chats before or after lessons. It is very rewarding to hear parents talk about the positive difference that attending the Literacy Centre has made to their child.

This year

Donations and grants enabled us to purchase new books in a variety of levels as well as painting, re-carpeting and a kitchen upgrade. This has certainly made an old building look more welcoming and it is now a pleasant environment in which to learn.

Although small, our Centre has a reputation as a quality, caring service which teaches students in a supportive environment and ensures that progress is achieved.

Our thanks

We could not function without the dedication and commitment of our Management Committee and teachers and the support of the UnitingCare Board. With their help we are able to make a real difference in the lives of students with learning difficulties and their families.

Marion Bee
Manager



Campbelltown Mayor Cr Anoulack Chanthivong presenting Community Grant to Val West on behalf of the Campbelltown City Council for books for the Literacy Centre.