Welcome to Windaroo and to your child’s first year at our wonderful school. We hope that our children and families have all enjoyed the start to the new school year. As always, it is a special and exciting time as we welcome our new Prep learners into the school community. We are all very proud of their efforts during their early days at school.

The children are all settling in well in preparation for a very busy year. With our first days already completed, we are quickly establishing our classroom routines, procedures and expectations. Activities and experiences in the first weeks provide us with a wonderful chance to get to know one another. Our Early Years students work so well to develop friendships and positive relationships with their new classmates and peers. We are all doing a terrific job of “Caring and Learning Together.” Our Preps also gain confidence as they begin to negotiate their way around the school's physical environment and start to participate in specialist lessons such as Physical Education, Music and Science. We find that they are very proud about knowing the names and faces of special teachers and staff members in their school and are most keen to be part of the Windaroo community.

A core part of our learning journey in Prep is of course the development of fundamental literacy and numeracy skills through the Australian Curriculum in English and Mathematics. Opportunities for students to learn about language, literacy and literature as well as number and algebra and measurement and geometry will include a range of experiences presented within the five contexts for learning. The contexts for learning are identified in the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines and include focused teaching and learning, play, real life situations, investigations and routines and transitions. These learning contexts make our classrooms very active, challenging, engaging and vibrant learning environments. Students in Prep also engage in a wide range of learning experiences designed to share and develop their knowledge and skills in Science, History and Geography.

As we launch into the school year in earnest, we would like to take the opportunity to thank our parents and carers for your enthusiasm, interest and support. Thank-you in particular for your hard work in preparing and encouraging your child as they enter the school environment for the first time. Your efforts have contributed greatly to such a positive start.

Meet Our Prep Team!

Deputy Principal (Prep, Yr 2,4,6)
Mrs Danielle Roff

Class PA: Mrs Amanda Auld
Class PC: Mrs Charlotte Turner
Class PJ: Ms Tegan Cross / Miss Jane Elsby
Class PK: Mrs Karen Ham
Class PN: Mrs Nadine Costigan
Class PW: Mrs Wendy Pearson

Our Specialist Teachers
Ms Tracy Shaab (P.E), Mrs Caroline Kuss and Mrs Jenni McIntyre (Science), Mrs Cara Naabs (Music) and Ms Maria Stanicic (Library)

Special Events

Term 1

Parent Teacher Interviews
Later in Term 1. Dates to be advised.
Old McDonald Farm Visit
March 8, 2016
Easter Hat Parade
(end of term celebration) Date to be advised.

Don’t forget to check the school newsletter Windaroo Weekly (via email) and the Skoolbag App for the most up-to-date information on school events!
Our English Curriculum this term will provide our students with opportunities to develop and share their beginning knowledge, understanding and skills in listening, reading, viewing, speaking, writing and creating. In Term 1, Prep learners will explore a range of texts including fiction and non-fiction books and everyday texts. Texts will include traditional oral texts, picture books, various types of stories, rhyming verse, poetry, non-fiction, film, multimodal texts and dramatic performances. Students will listen to and participate in the shared reading of texts to explore predictable text structures and common visual patterns. As students engage with these texts they will begin to recognise the purpose and importance of reading for enjoyment and information. They will also be encouraged to use literature to stimulate their imagination while planning and participating in imaginary play which includes developing characters, vocabulary and story retells. As their awareness of print concepts and the writing process develops and as they learn about ways of communicating with different types of language, students will attempt to write their own signs, labels and messages.

In English this term, our prep learners will have opportunities to:

- understand how different types of texts are organised
- discuss how authors create characters using language and images
- express preferences for specific texts and authors
- use comprehension strategies to build literal and inferred meaning

Exploring our Mathematics Curriculum

As they engage in the Mathematics curriculum this term, our Prep learners will explore, develop and apply a variety of mathematical concepts in real-life, life-like and purely mathematical situations. They will continue to make connections between number names, numerals and quantities up to 10. They will develop the ability to compare and sort shapes and objects and to identify connections between events and days of the week.

Mathematics Overview Term 1

Patterns and Algebra: identifying how objects are similar or different; sorting objects based on similar features; identifying a rule for a ‘sort’; identifying patterns in the environment; copying and describing simple patterns; identifying patterns within counting sequences.

Using units of measurement: sequencing stages within an activity; comparing duration of events using time language; directly comparing the size of objects; describing objects.

Number and Place Value: recalling counting in ones, identifying numbers in the environment; representing quantities; comparing numbers; recalling counting sequences; representing quantities; visualising arrangements to five; matching numerals to quantities; counting forwards and backwards from different starting points; comparing quantities (more/less/same); identifying numbers before, after and next in a sequence; ordering quantities and numerals.

Location and Direction: using positional language to describe location; identifying positional opposites; representing locations with models and images.
**Exploring our History Curriculum**

The Australian Curriculum provides prep students with the opportunity to study personal and family histories. Students learn about their own history and that of their family. This may include stories from different cultures and other parts of the world. As participants in their own history, students build their knowledge and understanding of how the past is different from the present.

This semester, our key inquiry question for Prep is “What is my history and how do I know?” In this first unit, students will investigate their own personal story, including their family background and relationships within their family. Through an appreciation of family stories, students will develop an understanding of their own history. They will also examine family structures and appreciate that diverse family groups today have commonalities as well as differences. Students will develop historical understandings through the key concepts of continuity and change, perspectives and empathy.

**Exploring our Geography Curriculum**

**What do our Prep students learn about in Geography?**

By the end of their prep year, students learn to describe the features of familiar places and recognise why some places are special to people. They recognise that places can be represented on maps and a globe and explore why places are important to people. Students observe the familiar features of places and represent these features and their location on pictorial maps and models. They share observations in a range of texts and use everyday language to describe direction and location. Students reflect on their learning to suggest ways that they can care for a familiar place.

In their first Geography Unit, students investigate the inquiry question “What are places like?” Students will explore the place that they live in and belong to and will learn to observe and describe its features. Learning about their own place and building a connection with it will contribute to student’s sense of identity and belonging and will develop an understanding of why and how we should look after places. Students will start to explore their feelings about places by talking about their own special places and what makes them special. The idea of location is introduced through drawing story maps and creating models to show where places and features are located, and by learning about the globe as a representation of the Earth on which places can be located. While the emphasis is on the places in which students live, investigations will also include places of similar size that are familiar and of particular interest to learners.

**Science**

Our school is very fortunate to have a wonderful team of Science Specialist Teachers: Mrs Caroline Kuss and Mrs Rebecca Johnson. Students in Prep-Year 5 access the school Science room each week for exciting and engaging Science learning experiences. Science News can be located on the website link. Mrs Kuss teaches our Prep learners.