Welcome to week 6!

Another quiet week here at school which has been lovely. I am continuing to work on the 2015-2017 School Plan. Our new Belltrees School Plan will reflect the learning, teaching, leading and community aspects of our school for the 2015-2017 school years. This work is the next part of the project which we began in Term 4 last year in consultation meetings with staff, P&C and community. For new parents, the following documents underpin this new reform in NSW Education. You may access them online or borrow copies from school. Please feel free to discuss any of these issues with our staff.

- Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians
- Local Schools, Local Decisions
- Great Teaching Inspired Learning
- Rural and Remote Education

School absences:
Next Wednesday 11th March I will be attending the termly Invermein meeting in Scone. The collective group of Principals from other small schools in the area meet to discuss the School Plan, upcoming events or grants, professional development and general networking. Mrs Scott will be on class and any change of routine can be directed to her.
Mr Young Visit:
Next Friday 13th Mr Young will be visiting Belltrees School for a meeting with me and to catch up with the students. Mr Young and I will be discussing the 2015-2017 School Plans, the School Excellence Framework, Australian Curriculum and the School Budget. I know the children will be looking forward to another one of his ‘true stories’.

What’s on in the classroom?
This week the students have been working very hard on Proper nouns and Capital letters. We are continuing our fantastic use of nouns in our imaginative texts and students have been focusing strongly on improving their handwriting.
In numeracy we have had a focus on revision this week with our five weekly cycle ending last Friday. It is fantastic to see the difference that five weeks of explicit teaching can make with various concepts.
Science and Technology saw us exploring the Water Cycle and some interesting facts we discovered are
- Groundwater or water stored in the Earth's surface can remain there for thousands of years before moving.
- Really old groundwater is called fossil water.
- Water is constantly being recycled so the water you drink today could be the same water dinosaurs drank millions of years ago.
This certainly provided for some interesting discussions.

Tissues, Tissues, Tissues
It is that time of year again and we would love to replenish our school supply of tissues. If each family could send 1-2 boxes in that would be greatly appreciated. – Thank you!

Belltrees P & C says thank you!
Wonderful community support enabled Belltrees P&C to run a very successful canteen at the Moonan Flat Campdraft on the 15th/16th February. Thank you to all those who made lasagnes and sandwiches and baked cakes and slices for the P&C. Also to those parents, grandparents and community members who helped with their valuable time in the canteen and on the BBQ. You are too numerous to mention, but we will thank you personally!
Also a special thank you to Kathy and Peter of the Victoria Hotel, Moonan. Once again their support to the P&C was greatly appreciated, providing us with donations of ice and other emergency supply back ups! Thank you also to the Upper Hunter Sports Committee for giving the P&C the opportunity to run the canteen for the first time this year. Funds raised on the day will go towards covering the costs of upcoming excursion activities. These excursions will enable our students to mix with other groups of school students and gain new cultural experiences.

We never know the worth of water till the well is dry. ~Thomas Fuller, Gnomologia, 1732
Weekly Recipe....
SAUERKRAUT RECIPE – From Dorry

Here is how to make sauerkraut:

Ingredients

2 large cabbages. Reserve 3-4 large leaves - enough to cover the surface of the brewing container

2 large onions

Optionally, other vegetables in season. I have also used hot peppers, carrots, beets, beetroot, caraway seeds, a wide variety of fresh herbs, radish, curry powder, ginger and garlic, all with great success

2 teaspoons of sea salt. Use more salt if you are not adding the whey below, less if you have a good raw milk kefir whey. The salt helps promote the lactic acid bacteria in competition with bad bacteria

1 cup filtered water.

1 cup of liquid whey. If whey is not available, use 1 cup of lemon juice, or half a cup of vinegar, preferably apple-cider vinegar. White supermarket vinegar is a poor alternative. The clear liquid whey that forms as kefir or yogurt sours as it ages is by far the best starter, and will make a reliable and delicious sauerkraut by introducing plenty of lactic acid bacteria

2 Tbs juniper berries (optional)

2 Tbs seaweed such as wakame, kelp or dulse (optional)

Recipe

Shred the cabbage and other vegetables in a food processor. Put the shredded vegetables in a large container or bucket with the other ingredients. Pound them with a pestle or wooden mallet for 10 minutes - long enough to release the juices.

Press the mash down. The liquids should just about cover the top of the mash. Put a large plate into the bucket that fits nicely and seals the top, and a heavy weight on top of it. Within a few hours, liquids should cover the top of the shredded mixture (if it did not cover to start with). If there is not enough cabbage juice, add cold filtered water with whey / lemon juice / vinegar to cover.

Leave to ferment at room temperature for 3 - 5 days. Within 1 day the smell should start to change, and within 3 days the mixture should have a delicious aroma. After 2-3 days of lacto-fermentation, vegetables start to soften and some of their components break down. As lactic acid-producing bacteria proliferate, the food becomes more acidic and easily digestible. Micronutrients such as choline are formed, the entire medium is preserved, and new flavours and aromas develop.

Transfer to capped jars. Leave 2-3 cm / 1 inch at the top as they can bubble and leak. However, try not to expose it too much to the air, as making sauerkraut is an anaerobic process.

Sauerkraut may need to be stored in the refrigerator if you live in a hot climate, but most refrigerators are too cold to allow it to mature properly. The ideal storage is about the same as for a fine bottle of wine. Sauerkraut needs at least six months to fully mature, depending on what it is made from; the best sauerkraut I have tasted was eighteen months old.