

Primary entry #24: St John's Primary School, Lambton



# The Lambton Light



**HELPFUL:** Ayman Nasser and his kindergarten buddy Cai Evans.

Picture: Oscar Gilson

## Buddies can become the best friends

By LAUREN AUSTIN and  
HANNAH BUIST

KINDERGARTEN students at St John's Primary School in Lambton team up with a year 6 buddy on their first day to help make their year as seamless as possible.

Principal Annie Duggan knows the important role this initiative plays in providing a smooth transition from school to home. "I think it's very important, because it provides a support person, a role model and a trusted friend."

The program also helps kindergarten children to become familiar with the school and learn appropriate behaviours.

Linda Dunn and Florence Suba, St John's kindergarten teachers, believe "having a buddy fosters trust, responsibility and a lovely relationship between buddies. It also makes the transition easier for both parent and child as parents leave on the first day knowing that someone is looking after their child."

Kindergarten student Cai Evans said: "Having a buddy has helped me settle into big school".

Taking care of a buddy also develops a sense of responsibility in year 6 students. Ayman Nasser, who took part in this program, said: "I think having a buddy is a huge responsibility. It has helped to develop my skills in leadership before entering high school."

By MACKENZIE MATTHEWS

STUDENTS from around the Hunter are buzzing after the latest Aspire concert was performed by students in the Maitland-Newcastle Catholic School's Diocese at the Newcastle Civic Theatre.

Aspire is a variety concert that involves more than 120 students learning dance, drama and music in Catholic schools in the Hunter Region.

Closing the curtains on their second concert, Aspire is a fast-growing organisation that has been running for two years.

This year's performance took the audience on a journey with three young children playing in their grandmother's attic.

Through various objects, stories unfold about three of their ancestors, set across the decades of the 20th century.

"It's an amazing opportunity for all kids involved to get the chance to perform live with music, props, costumes, lighting and sound. It gives children a fantastic opportunity that not many kids have the chance to experience", said Jeanette Chapman, this year's Aspire's vocal group support person.

Aspire is a positive learning environment that aims to develop student confidence levels as they get ready to perform in front of a



**STAGE STAR:** Oliver Griffiths is still buzzing after his first Aspire performance.

Picture: Indiana Bradford

live audience. Each year, all students across the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese are given the opportunity to audition and work with industry professionals to bring together a performance.

Former students of St John's Lambton, Laura Chapman, Henry Silva and Lillia Grubb have taken part in Aspire in its two years of running.

Lillia has danced in Aspire for the past two years and knows the value of this experience. She believes that "Aspire gives the chance for kids who are musically talented to really shine."

Current St John's student Oliver Griffiths showcased his talents at Aspire in his chosen field of expertise - drama. In his first year, he gained experience by perform-

ing on stage and made new friends in the process.

"What I enjoyed most about Aspire is the way they teach you all different skills and that I was able to make a lot of new friends."

Attended by more than 3000 individuals, Aspire was considered a success for all involved and plans for next year's performance are already under way.



**WARMING UP:** Year 6 students with their knitting needles for St Vincent De Paul.

Picture: Matthew Provost

## Mini Vinnies knit for good cause

By ISAAC GRESHAM

THIS year the Mini Vinnies team at St John's Lambton have been raising awareness for the 2013 St Vincent De Paul Winter Appeal.

An initiative developed by St Vincent De Paul, Mini Vinnies encourages primary schools to come together to help those in need in their school and community.

The Winter Appeal cam-

paign this year challenges groups and individuals to recognise needs within the community and to do something about it.

To help keep people warm this winter, the year 6 team are knitting squares with community volunteers, which will be sewn into blankets to be donated to youth on the streets.

Helene O'Neill, the Family Parish liaison officer for

the Maitland-Newcastle Diocese, believes that "for many students this will be the first step in helping the not-so-fortunate to keep warm during winter. It also gives students a sense of responsibility and sharing".

St John's teacher Jenny Harrison has been very excited to be involved this year. "The warm feeling in your heart when you help others is beautiful," she said.

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