What is Best Start/PLAN?

Best Start is a series of tasks that students complete when they begin Kindergarten to ascertain their literacy and numeracy skills.

PLAN stands for Planning for Literacy and Numeracy. It is a tool that schools use to ensure that students are on track in their literacy and numeracy development. Currently, this runs from Kindergarten to Year 2.

Literacy

Literacy has been split into eight aspects that are crucial in the development and achievement of all students.

Reading texts – this is the recognition of words instantly, being able to read a text fluently and expressively, as well as understanding that texts create meaning.

Comprehension – involves responding to retrieval and inferential questions and encouraging students to analyse and evaluate the text they are engaging with.

Vocabulary knowledge – this is displaying an understanding of spoken and written words, and using effective word choices when speaking or writing.

Aspects of writing – involves creating texts to suit a specific purpose, either digitally, or in a written form.

Aspects of speaking – includes the use of oral language to communicate with others in various scenarios, listening actively and interacting confidently with peers and adults.

Phonics – comprises of making the connections between sounds and letters to support with the reading and spelling of words.

Phonemic awareness - incorporates the hearing of sounds and manipulating those sounds in spoken language. An example of this is, being able to say a new word by adding or changing a sound in word – cat and cap, lip and slip.

Concepts about print – involves displaying an understanding of how print works and using those conventions. This includes identifying punctuation and understanding how that affects how we read the text.

Each cluster is made up of set of markers that students have to move through, as they are sequential. Phonemic awareness, Phonics and Concepts about print are intended to be taught explicitly and mastered by students by the end of Year 1 (Phonemic awareness and Concepts about print) and Year 2 (Phonics).
Numeracy
Numeracy has been split into seven aspects which cover the key concepts in mathematical development.

Counting sequences – involves being able to label a number both verbally and in a written context. This includes forward and backward number sequences, being able to count in jumps of 10 and 100 and reading numerals correctly.

Early arithmetical strategies – this is the development of skills to solve addition and subtraction problems.

Pattern and number structure – incorporates the use of known number combinations to solve problems.

Place value – consists of students understanding of how numbers are ‘made up’ and using this knowledge to solve arithmetic problems. An example of this is, 43 + 26. 26 consists of 2 tens and 6 units. Students will add the tens first then the units to reach the correct solution.

Multiplication and division – comprises of creating and working with equal groups to solve problems.

Fraction units – involves creating partitions and understanding how that relates to the whole. An example of this is, 1 whole is the same as 4 equal quarters or 2 equal halves.

Unit structure of length, area and volume – this is the progression of comparing two objects, then measuring using non-standard units (paper clips, cubes) and finally using standard measures (cm, kg, l)

The aspects are not distinct from each other, but are inter linking, with students being allowed to develop at their own rate.

Feedback to Parents
PLAN feedback to parent letters will be sent out in Term 1 and Term 3. The letter for term 1 will be used as a discussion point in your parent teacher interview with your child’s teacher.

The first column states the skills your child has consistently been showing during literacy and numeracy activities.

The second column gives a series of ideas you could use at home to support your child to achieve the next benchmark. These activities are predominately of a practical nature and are only meant to last for 10-15 minutes. Research has continually proven that children learn best in short bursts and when activities are fun and meaningful.