A note of appreciation from the WPS staff and children...All the staff and children would like to thank the many parent helpers, grandparents, carers, and community volunteers who generously give their time to our school. It is with your assistance that we are able to provide the wide range of excellent programs and extension activities for our students. We are truly fortunate to have so many people working in the best interest of students, often working quietly behind the scenes in a positive and supportive manner. It was great to see many of our helpers at the thank you morning tea held yesterday morning however, we understand not all our helpers could attend so I would like to extend a warm, heartfelt thank you from all of us.

The WPS Big Day Out/School Transitions...This morning I spotted many year six children walking to their local high schools. This is a great milestone for our year six students, an event they all look forward to, that is at once both exciting and a little scary! This year there are 53 year six students graduating from WPS and they will be attending a number of local and not-so-local high schools. We hope you have been able to meet some of your new teachers and were able to become more familiar with the school you will be closely linked to for the next 6 years—many of you will graduate from high school in 2019!!!

In continuing the transition theme, our Westgarth students participated in numerous activities today that involved team building and familiarity with new situations and activities. Some of our students have provided a report about some of the events and we hope you will enjoy reading these.

To give you an idea of what the day involved, year five students took part in “Planks”, a construction activity which allowed students an outlet to display both the creative and technical sides of their personalities. We also organised CPR training for the year five students. If you have a child in year five, please be sure to ask him or her about the training.

CPR training for primary school students is quite a unique initiative started at Westgarth Primary School about five years ago through the generous offer from Drew Sutherland, one of our parents. Drew is the CEO of the Benchmarque Group, provider of professional medical and first aid training. On behalf of the community we thank Drew for this great opportunity afforded our students.

All students experienced school life as it will be for them in 2014, with grade two students sharing in a Kitchen-Garden activity and spending both their recess and lunchtime in the playground on Clarke Street.

To sum up—today has been all about transitions and I thank all those involved in shaping the day and making it so successful!

Feedback...In the past week I have received over 12 positive emails/letters of appreciation from parents. At this time of year where there are many pressures to complete unfinished tasks yet still plan for the following year we are truly nourished by your positive feedback and acknowledgements. Your constructive feedback encourages us with our planning and provides excellent feedback for the year ahead. We are most of all humbled by your kind expressions of appreciation. Thank you!
Student-Led 3-Way Conferences (SL3WC)…Whilst on the topic of feedback, all the staff have received numerous positive and constructive comments about the SL3WCs. Staff and students will be providing their feedback and we are asking parent to provide us with feedback too. The survey feedback form will be sent home later this week and should only take a few minutes to complete. When you receive yours please complete it and return to your child’s teacher as soon as you can. Thank you.

Children, Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Social Media…Anecdotally, staff and parents alike seem to share the same message when speaking about ICT or social media. The theme of the message or the challenge, depending on how you look at it, is how do we keep our children safe when there is so much information available and applications for children to engage with? In response to this question, the school is planning an information evening early next year for parents and staff. In the meantime it is important to note that Apps are being produced at a faster rate than parents and teachers can keep up with—one such app as reported by several parents is called Kik. Many of you may have read in the Sunday Age (p 4, December 1 2013) article “Social media app winning over kids, but police warn of nasty Kik”. This article was brought to my attention by one of our parents and talks about the importance of parents to be aware of the ages these apps may be used. In the case of Kik, 17 is the recommended age and of importance is the fact that “Conversations cannot be viewed publicly, which makes it much harder for parents to monitor Kik than Facebook or Twitter”. The implications of apps such as Kik is that parents (and staff in schools) need to be aware of, and ensure, open dialogue between adults and children. From experience, children are often relieved when an adult or teacher discovers that children have been targeted on these apps. The overriding piece of information is that if your child is being targeted through any social media, please take a photo image of the offending message, as evidence for future reference.

News and Information regarding Grade Organisation 2014…As reported in previous newsletters, the staff are currently involved in forming grade lists for next year with the intention of creating a combination of composite and straight classes that include a balance of gender, different learning needs and styles and a number of other criteria. As we have been developing the class lists we have identified that some of the classes will have a gender imbalance that might be avoided by creating straight classes. Consequently, for 2014 only we will have a change to our usual blend of straight and composite classes and run all straight classes. For 2014, we will have four Prep classes, four Year 1 classes, five Year 2 classes, four Year 3 classes, three Year 4 classes, three Year 5 classes and four Year 6 classes. However, please be aware that the organisation of grades remains an operational responsibility of the school and principal. Consequently, please be aware that this remains an annual consideration and that we retain the flexibility to revert to a mix of both straight and composite classes in future years.

LWP- Progress Report…Last night the Languages Working Party met to discuss the results of the recent survey that was conducted. Glenn (teacher), Bruce (parent) and Erica (parent) did an impressive job in leading the survey design and implementation. Thank you Glenn for the report that follows on Page 3.

End of Year Concert…Thank you to our talented music teacher John for organizing the end of year concert. Children have been rehearsing and talking about the big day which is always and eagerly awaited event to mark the end of another year at Westgarth Primary School. John has prepared the ‘End of Year Concert’ information to help us prepare for the big event.

With warm regards,
Grace Conway
**Term Dates 2013**

Last day of Term 4:
Friday 20th December 2013
Students dismissed at 1.30pm

**Term Dates 2014**
School Office Re-opens
Tuesday 28th January

Grade 1-6 commence Thursday 30th January 2014

Prep Commence Monday 3rd February 2014

Term 1 30/01/14 - 04/04/14
Term 2 22/04/14 - 27/06/14
Term 3 14/07/14 - 19/09/14
Term 4 06/10/14 - 19/12/14

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**Diary Dates**

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School Assembly in gym at 2.40pm.  
Item: 3/4 Melanie |
| Fri 13th December    | Prep Circus In-House Activity                           |
| Tues 17th December   | End of Year Concert 9.30am - 10.30am Brooke St          |
| Fri 20th December    | Last day of Term 4. Students dismissed at 1.30pm.  
OSHC is available for care. Please call Mike on 9482  
3323 or email asc.westgarth.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au |

**School Uniform:**
A reminder that Uniform Shop APLUS Uniform is located at 133 Bakers Road Coburg North  
Tel 9354 8345

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**Kitchen Garden**

Volunteers needed for watering over School Holidays

Our Kitchen Garden in Clarke Street needs the help of volunteers to assist with watering our vegetables and fruit trees during the Christmas holidays.

If you would like to help please call Betty Vassiliou, Kitchen Garden Specialist on 0405 364 084.

Happy Cooking and Gardening 😊

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**Languages Working Party - Progress Report**

As you’re probably aware, the Languages Working Party (LWP) recently surveyed the WPS community with respect to Languages learning at Westgarth.

The LWP were delighted with the response to this survey, receiving feedback from 155 households. This response rate of 38.65% far exceeds the 33% average response rate for online surveys identified in research conducted by Nulty (2008). Suffice to say, we were thrilled with this outcome! Even more pleasing, nearly two-thirds of our respondents (96 people) took the time to provide detailed written feedback to support their response, providing us with a vast amount of valuable qualitative data to pore over in coming weeks.

We have conducted preliminary analysis of the data gathered from this survey, from which we have quickly been able to ascertain that there is a strong appetite for language learning to continue at WPS. The LWP will conduct further, more targeted, analysis of the data we have collected and will report back on our findings during term 1 next year.

The LWP would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who gave up their time to respond to this survey, and would like to advise that the winner of the double pass to Palace Cinema Westgarth is Virginia Arter. Congratulations Virginia!

Wishing you a Merry Christmas, Buon Natale and Feliz Navidad!  
WPS Languages Working Party

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WPS Languages Working Party
Plastic Fun in Grade 1/2 Rosie

Today me and Luke partnered up to go to Coles. We emptied the rubbish bin that we took to Coles. Did you know that Coles recycles soft plastic? Orson 1/2 R

Today we went to Coles. We emptied our plastics so they could get recycled because it heads to landfill. It takes a long time to break down (which is bad). Percy 1/2R

Today we went to Coles. My favourite thing was when we went to the park. Did you know that Coles recycles soft plastic? Jemma 1/2R

Today at Coles we emptied the plastic bin, everyone had a go. We all walked there together and when we were going back we got to have a go on the playground. Did you know that Coles recycles soft plastic? And we were sustainable! Jojo 1/2R

Junior School Council Fundraiser - Toys for Christmas
Anglicare Foster Care Home

A reminder to all families that Westgarth Primary School is holding a fundraiser for Anglicare Foster Care Homes, which are homes for unfortunate children who can’t live with their parents.

We will be helping by donating new toys and resources to help these children have a Happy Christmas. JSC has decided to help this cause by collecting new toys (for infants to 13 years old). Toys such as, books, Lego, arts and craft materials and anything else that you think would be great for these children. We ask that the toys that are donated are new and unwrapped.

Anglicare Foster Care Home will be collecting these on the Thursday 12th December.

Last minute gifts can be donated up until 9.30am on the 12th December.
Now that the 3-way student-led conferences are over, we are asking parents, students and teachers to provide us with some feedback. If you would like to contribute your feedback on 3-way student-led conferences, please complete the survey below and return to your child’s teacher, as this will assist us with future planning.

Thank you. Grace

Parent/Carers Name (Optional): _________________________

Please circle the conference/s you attended: P 1 2 3 4 5 6

The 3-way student-led conferences have been a trial process. Our aims were:

- To engage students in learning about their learning (metacognition)
- To engage students in developing concepts and ideas based on set criteria
- To increase student confidence in speaking, listening and using multimedia as a presentation tool
- To engage children in speaking to parents and teachers about their personal learning

The following statements are designed to provide the school with some feedback regarding the 3-way student-led conferences. Please answer Yes or No

| This was a positive experience and I learnt a lot about my child/ children’s learning & goals. | YES | NO |
| I would prefer a traditional 1:1 interview with the classroom teacher. | YES | NO |
| I would like to see the 3-way student-led conference implemented to replace the traditional, annual mid-year, parent teacher interview. | YES | NO |
| I would prefer to not have another 3-way student-led conference. | YES | NO |

Please provide any additional comments you would like to add on the 3-way student-led conferences.
The End of Year Concert will be held next Tuesday December 17th. It's a chance to celebrate the end of the year as the whole school joins together in song. I have done my best to answer some FAQs regarding the concert. I hope the weather is kind to us on the day and that you can all attend. The students are sounding great and are very excited.

What time does the concert start and how long will it go for? The concert will start as close to 9:30am as possible and will run for about one hour.

Where is the concert being held? The concert will be held on the tiger turf on the Brooke St campus. The stage will be set up in the shady corner and the students will sit along side the big trees mostly in the shade. Teachers will be sitting on chairs with their grade. The audience will sit on the tiger turf. You may like to bring a picnic blanket or cushion. There will be limited chairs provided at the back, but if you need to sit in a chair it would be best to bring your own. If bringing your own chair please ensure to sit in the "chair" section. There will be signs showing the student section, the sitting on the tiger turf section, or, the chair section at the back.

Do the students need to wear a costume? We are suggesting a white, red, green, gold, silver theme with one, more or all of those color combinations. We are happy for children to dress up if they wish but there is no set costume. They might like to dress in festive clothes (keeping in mind that it may be hot and Santa hats may not be the best thing to keep cool) or dress as something to do with one of the songs they are singing. There are songs ranging from dinosaurs to hippos so check with your child about what they are singing if you need ideas. While the children are waiting their turn to perform, the must wear a SunSmart hat.

Can you give me an exact time that my child will be performing? Unfortunately we cannot. This year the concert will have year levels performing in random order rather than in year level order. This makes for a more interesting concert for students and the audience. Please support our students by staying until the end of the concert. The final act needs just as much audience support as the opening act.

Who can come? The concert is for family members. The tiger turf is a large area but please bear in mind that we are a large school with a large number of families. We have decided to hold the concert outdoors so we do not have to limit the number of people from each family that can attend but please let common sense prevail when deciding who should attend from your family.

When do I take my seat? The day will start as normal with children attending morning assembly then going inside for the teacher to mark the roll. Once this is done, the students will begin to assemble outside. It would be best for audience members to leave the Brooke St tiger turf area after morning assembly and come back at about 9:25. This will ensure that the students get settled quickly and the concert can start on time.

Should I clap loudly and sing along if I know the words? Yes! Please sing along even if you don’t know the words.

Is there a wet weather contingency? No, we do not have an indoor space that can accommodate the number of students and family members who would wish to attend.

If you have any other questions or concerns do not hesitate to call and ask. See you Tuesday.
School Council Report - End of year wrap up

The School Council year officially ends with the Annual General Meeting held in March. This is when School Council reports to the school community through the annual report, which provides a summary of the school’s performance over the previous year. But December is a nice time to reflect on our achievements throughout the year. So, below I explain some of what has been going on in 2013.

Most of the work is done at the subcommittee and working party level. Our subcommittees are: Finance, Policy, Environment and Out of School Hours Care. Then there are the Parent & Friends and Kinder representatives.

In addition to that work, School Council has this year:

- Held a parent forum and, in conjunction with staff, carried out follow up work
- Established the Languages Working Party which is running well
- Established a Parent & Friends Working Party which is completed
- Put in place a new licence agreement with Westgarth Kindergarten
- Taken uniform sales offsite under a new agreement with the uniform supplier
- Started to establish (under the Environment Subcommittee) a Safe Travel to School Working Party.

In terms of governance, we have had excellent attendance at School Council meetings, including punctuality and positive contributions by councillors. Our decision-making has been considered and we have maintained as our primary concern what is in the best interests of the students and the need to improve their learning opportunities.

Well done to all of those people on, and involved with, School Council, including the parents and teachers on subcommittees and working parties. Also, a big thank you to the staff, and Susan Price especially, for continuing to provide administrative support to the School Council.

Thanks for reading and enjoy your holidays!

Ully Merkel (ullmerkel@hotmail.com)
You are invited to an INTIMO OPEN HOUSE FUNDRAISER for the Philippines Typhoon Relief this Sunday at Myf’s House. 1 Palmer St Northcote. 10 am - 5pm. Come along for a drink and nibbles and to say hi. All welcome. Bring a friend. There will be discontinued cheap INTIMO product, new stuff, a raffle, gift vouchers, African product from Orphfund that helps orphaned children in war torn countries. Check out www.intimo.com.au. Love to see you. All orders this week will contribute to the fundraiser. BLOKES - nice Xmas pressie ideas for your beloveds! Myf Browning (Harry 3/4 Hannah & Akira 1/2 Cameron) 0418 122 663. myf.browning@intimo.com.au

School Holiday Magic Show Melb CBD, Discount Tickets! Looking for amazing school holiday entertainment? The Comedy Magic Show is packed with amazing magic and illusions for the whole family to enjoy. Blending great comedy with magic this show has lots of audience interaction and fun. Luke the Magician is a big kid performing amazing tricks to delight and astound his audience. The performance is tailored to ages 5 - 12 years, but older kids and parents will enjoy it too! Luke's show is a whole new way to experience magic with your family these summer school holidays! For a limited time tickets are only $10! Show dates and times are: Jan 9th & 10th - 11am, 1pm, 3pm.

January School Holiday Drama Program
For kids between 5-12 years of age! Thursday 23rd & Friday 24th January 2014, 9am to 4pm at Richmond Uniting Church Hall (314 Church Street, Richmond). $130.00 Awesome Drama Stuff Included in this Program: Improvisation, script work, Voice and singing, character development, movement and creative dance, costume play, performance for parents and friends! Rosa Campagnaro 9495 1980, email: info@makeascene.com.au or visit website: www.makeascene.com.au.

AT HOME FUN MUSIC LESSONS
I can teach your children the skills to enjoy a lifelong love of playing music. University of Melbourne Bachelor of Music. Working with children check. Studied percussion in Cuba and across West Africa. Composed music for live theatre including The Australian Ballet. Can provide instruments for lessons including a weighted keyboard. I’m an experienced teacher who will tailor tuition to the needs of you or your child. T: 0416 709 767, e: productivemonkey@yahoo.com or w: www.chiucox.com

House for Rent in April/May 2014
House to rent in Northcote. 2 bedroom 2 lounge rooms, fully furnished. Contact Janet 0400 505 288.