Interpreting NAPLAN Results

Each year students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 in every school in Australia sit a series of exams commonly known as NAPLAN. NAPLAN stands for National Assessment Programme - Literacy and Numeracy. These exams are held in mid-May and the results arrive to the schools and parents in September or October.

In Years 3 and 5 the students sit five exams - Reading, Persuasive Writing, Language Conventions (Spelling), Language Conventions (Grammar and Punctuation) and Numeracy. Each of these exams aim to assess the ability of the student in relation to all of the other students in their year group in the country.

When you receive your child’s NAPLAN Report there are four main indicators that you need to take into account. There will be a black dot somewhere on the scale indicating your child’s individual result. This needs to be compared to the four indicators:

**The Scale in Bands**

The results across all assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. On your child’s report you will notice that it does not have all of these Bands listed on the table, it only shows the bands related to that year group. For example Year 5 results are reported from Band 3 to 8. When comparing your child’s Year 3 results to their Year 5 results, it is important to ensure that you look at the Bands listed. A dot in the middle of the graph on a Year 3 report may be in Band 3 but on a Year 5 report will be a Band 5 or 6.

**The National Average**

On the scale you will find a black triangle which indicates the national average. It is usually below the school average for All Saints’ but it does give you something to make a comparison to in relation to all other students in the country in your child’s year group.

**The School Average**

You will also find a triangle that has a black outline but is white in the middle. This shows the average for All Saints’ College and it provides you with an idea of where your child sits in the class. There is obviously half the class above this triangle and half below.

**The Range of Achievement**

The range of achievement for the middle 60% of students in your child’s year group is indicated by a bar on the graph. The national average black triangle is always in the middle of this bar. If your child’s results are above this bar they are in the top 20% of the country and if they are below the bar they are in the bottom 20% of the country.

The most important thing to take into account when looking at NAPLAN results is to realise that they are only a single assessment of your child on one day. They do not take into account how much effort your child puts into their school work on a daily basis and also does not take into account that some children get very anxious in exams and do not show their true ability. A much better way to judge your child’s progress is to use the NAPLAN results alongside their school report and their portfolio. This will provide you with a more holistic view of how they are progressing.

It is my understanding that they will be adding a Science component to NAPLAN in 2015. This will add a further dimension to the exams and provide additional information to both schools and parents about their child’s progress.