Chairperson’s Report
AGM – 18 February 2016

Firstly, a big thank you to all of the members that served on the Governing Council in 2015 – small in numbers, but large in enthusiasm and ideas, the 2015 Governing Council made some important contributions across the School.

Early in 2015 the Governing Council moved to establish a school wide breakfast club program. Governing Council members worked together to gain support for the initiative which included an ongoing partnership with KickStart for Kids, and organisation that sponsors breakfast programs across South Australia. Throughout 2015 breakfast club was well attended by students, with an average of 20 – 25 students attending each morning. Breakfast Club has already commenced for 2016 and will operate from the JP shared space.

The healthy snack program for junior primary classes was another new initiative for 2015, which saw volunteers prepare platters of fruit and vegetables for each of the junior primary classes to enjoy at recess. Staff, student and family feedback was extremely positive and the program has re-commenced for 2016, along with donations from Mount Barker Fresh who provides a generous donation of fruit and vegetables each week, in addition to the donations received from families.

The children enjoyed pancakes for breakfast on Walk Safely to School Day, with volunteers from GC mixing up a vat of pancake batter and cooking over 200 pancakes in an hour, with ingredients donated by families.

Grandparents’ day was once again a huge success, with Governing Council providing morning tea for those that attended.

The Governing Council held a World’s Biggest Morning Tea for the Cancer Council which included families sharing their very personal stories about how cancer had touched their lives.

In October the Governing Council was approached with an opportunity to assist one of our school volunteers with holding an Open Garden visit for her property. In exchange for a very generous donation, Governing Council, school staff and some students provided afternoon tea to the visitors.

In December the Governing Council ran a bake sale at the End of Year Concert, which was enthusiastically supported by staff and families alike.

Throughout the year the Governing Council was responsible for overseeing the financial management and performance of the school through the Finance Advisory Committee. I would like to thank the schools previous finance officer, Elizabeth Haldane (who retired midway through 2015), the current finance officer, Jane Jenkins and Catherine Cox-Walliss, who persevered through the many questions that both myself and the outgoing Treasurer (Merrian McCormick) had in relation to systems and reports.

2015 was, once again, a challenging year for the Out of School Hours Care service. Consistency of staffing was an issue and there were many (many!) hours of both School and Governing Councils’ time and
resources put into the operational tasks and management of the Service. I believe this is a critical issue for Governing Council to address in 2016.

I would like to thank all the staff across the site who worked together in 2015 in such a collaborative and open way. I would particularly like to thank Steph Pilla, Kate Nolan, Tamara Edwards and Emma Castleton who all attended Governing Council as staff representatives throughout 2015. The reports presented were always thoughtful and relevant and all staff bought a positive and resilient attitude to the meetings.

Many of the school events that were held throughout the year were co-ordinated by Ursula Chapman who works exceptionally hard to ensure all events are successful. My thanks go to Ursula for her efforts in ensuring such high quality activities across the school.

A heartfelt thank you must go to Catherine Cox-Wallis for her unbelievable efforts in shaping the South into a school that, across almost all measures, exceeds expectations and strives for excellence. I have not met a person more genuine in their belief that all children deserve the very best that we can offer. The achievements and results that we are seeing across the School are, I believe, a direct result of the quality of teaching and learning that Catherine both expects and demonstrates on a daily basis. Catherine’s exceptional leadership qualities are evident in the relationships she has with staff, students and families. With respect to Governing Council, Catherine has always been generous in sharing information and ideas about the School and in supporting the Governing Council in whatever ways she can. Catherine strives for continuous improvement across the site and her passion for education is evident each and every day.

Finally, thank you to my fellow Governing Council members for your valued contributions throughout 2015. Each of you brings a unique perspective which helps make the Governing Council reflective and inclusive of the broader school community.

Emma Bácskai
Chairperson