Establishing foundations

Ann Mathers — Mentone Girls' Grammar School

Ann Mathers' vision for Mentone Girls' Grammar Junior School is a simple one: to provide the best possible education foundation for young students. As Head of the Junior School, she is passionate about the development of girls into confident individuals who are motivated to gain knowledge and new experiences.

"As I greet the students every morning, their enthusiasm to learn is inspiring and is what makes this school such an incredible place to teach."

Having been educated in a girls' school herself, Ann is extremely passionate about giving girls the best learning opportunities, explaining that she was "always encouraged to follow [her] dreams."

For Ann, this meant pursuing a career in science, where she soon became a Medical Microbiologist at a major Melbourne hospital. However, Ann's priorities soon changed: "I realised while pursuing this career that I wanted to share my knowledge and experiences more broadly, so I entered the field of education."

Appointed to her current position in 2011, Ann now enjoys the daily interaction with students of all ages and the excitement of encouraging them to learn and discover.

"This begins in our ELC where we continue to immerse our younger learners in diverse play-based activities. Across the Junior School, too, we are committed to helping students develop the best possible literacy and numeracy skills, which includes a strengthening of our Asia Literacy program."

"This year, Ann will be focusing on promoting excellence in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, in which girls are extremely under-represented.

"Our aim is to encourage more girls to pursue STEM pathways in senior school and beyond," says Ann.

The focus includes the development of a Year 5 Science and Technology Centre, as well as encouraging students in Years 5 and 6 to explore STEM subjects through design, invention and experimentation in specialist science classes.

Mentone Girls' Grammar School also has a partnership with Monash University's Faculty of Engineering, which sees engineering students make regular visits to the school to assist students in their endeavours in the fields of science and technology.

Ann has big hopes for Mentone Girls' Grammar Junior School and believes that, like her, every girl given the opportunity to learn can achieve great things.