Dear parent or caregiver,

Thank you very much for giving consent for your child to be part of the 2012 research project into primary science at North Sydney Demonstration School. This report constitutes the feedback that you requested when you signed the form.

Amanda Coroneos, Assistant Principal, and I designed the research study so that teachers might better understand the methods for teaching the new national curriculum in primary science. We focused on the teachers applying the structure of predict-observe-explain sequence to their science planning and lessons. We employed the methods of collaborative planning, lesson coaching and collaborative reflection in order to achieve these aims.

The collaborative planning sessions occurred with each team of teachers who elected to undertake action learning in primary science in either terms two or three of this year. For the first five weeks of these terms, Amanda and I worked with the teachers to help them understand the requirements of the new science curriculum as well as to incorporate the predict-observe-explain sequence explicitly into their lessons. The teachers were able to do this successfully and the evidence remains in their refined teaching programs that will be used across the school in 2013. We can claim, therefore, that the planning part of the plan-teach-reflect cycle that constitutes action learning was a successful enterprise on our part.

The second part of the action learning cycle, the actual teaching of the science programs with your children, was the most exciting aspect of this research study. Amanda and I went into classrooms as teacher observers and coaches helping out where possible to help your children learn the science concepts via the predict-observe-explain sequence. We saw some amazing lessons and had incredible fun learning science with the teachers and children! The video that we took of excerpts of the lesson provides evidence of science learning by your children that is supported by the great work they produced in their workbooks.
The last part of this action learning cycle was collaborative reflection by the team of action learners each Wednesday afternoon after school. In these meetings, teachers took turns to discuss their science lessons sharing their insights on science content, teaching methods and, most importantly, student learning in science. The analysis of the transcripts of these meetings reveals that there were significant gains made in the teachers’ understanding of the predict-observe-explain sequence and its efficacy as a method for teaching primary science that leads to deep understanding of the concepts for students.

In summary, the research project into the instructional core of primary science at North Sydney Demonstration School allowed the teachers involved to gain a greater understanding of the methods that can be used to teach primary science. This new understanding will be shared throughout the staff in 2013 as these teachers use the insights gained to help their colleagues to understand the new national curriculum in primary science. In turn, this will lead to more effective science lessons being taught that lead to improved student outcomes for your children.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Tony Loughland