

## Student Wellbeing and the arts

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If we talk about student wellbeing we talk about self-esteem, we talk about students finding their spot, we look at Habits of Mind, we look at Multiple Intelligences. But you need to have, therefore, the vehicles they can use all of these with. We're very strong in the arts. We have a dance teacher 2 days a week who just gives them... it's more than dance; it's following directions, it's thinking, it's relaxation which of course they need. At the end of it they do relaxation every time. It starts at prep and we scaffold it every year. When you see our senior children perform it's just quite amazing the confidence that they do it in. They just love it. It's part of who they are at Bethany and they all want to do it.

The other big part of the music component is the drumming. We started drumming 5 years ago and I talked to Philippa who is just an amazing music lady and I wanted to do something for anger management for some students. Now drumming is right through the place. It's African drumming and Philippa's been to Africa and it's just been an amazing experience to bring that through the place. All of our celebrations have drumming in them and they just die for the time when it's their chance and they can have a go at drumming. One of our teachers also runs a formal Drumbeat program which is cognitive behaviour therapy for some of the students, but once again that's based around the theory behind drumming. That's really helped some of our... particularly some boys.

In the visual arts, the ability to present has increased so much. It's not just that they do painting or whatever; they do wire sculptures, a lot of media through technology. But they learn the skills. It's not about "let's go out and create this magnificent piece"; they learn the skills and these can hopefully be transferable skills. No matter what they do in their learning; if they want to show something they should be able to transfer those skills and use those skills in their learning. So once they have the skill, whether it be mosaic... it doesn't matter what it is, they should be able to pick up those skills and if they want to create something to show a point or to show some learning, well then they've been taught the skills that have been scaffolded since prep. We do a lot of small group sessions on skill, not whole class, and that has been vital. The drama component comes through every time they move; it's about presenting themselves and we incorporate that a lot with their whole oral language and presenting of self. Once again it's about self and the building of confidence, and that's that social competence we come back to again.