This week the school report for NAPLAN was made public on the QSA website. St Andrew’s achieved extremely well in the test and it is a credit to all teachers and students in the school. The individual student report has not been sent to the school yet and will be sent home sometime soon after the holidays.

Although the media places great importance on NAPLAN results below I have outlined some arguments about why the NAPLAN result is not the most important or accurate result for your child and their learning.

- NAPLAN results are a ‘snap shot’ of a ‘thin slice’ of the curriculum, for only some students - those at the juncture years 3, 5, 7, and 9.
- Because they need to be marked by machines, NAPLAN tests are limited to being ‘pencil and paper tests’ where responses are mostly ‘fill in the bubble’. This limits the type of authentic demonstrations of learning.
- Continuous school-derived learning data is rich and understood in local contexts – for all students, in all years, for all aspects of the curriculum.
- Teachers can share directly and personally with their students and parents individual work folios with many examples of different kinds of authentic demonstrations of learning, and then plan what is needed to support the next phase of learning.

In this sense, folios of school-derived learning data are extensive ‘photo albums’ showing evidence of learning in ‘all of the curriculum’ for all learners. Although NAPLAN is one way of testing it is not the only or the most important way.

I am happy to answer any questions by phone or e-mail on this topic. mbeacroft@bne.catholic.edu.au.