

Just like any other school: Brethren

BY JANICE HARRIS

26/09/2008 8:21:00 PM

THE Exclusive Brethren opened the doors of its Dalton Street school to the Central Western Daily yesterday, dispelling some of the myths of how and what children in the religion are taught in the newly expanded facility.

With no religious icons on display, it could be any school in NSW with a state-of-the-art computer room and computer system throughout the school, science labs, industrial arts rooms and a gymnasium.

“This is just like any other school,” said chief executive officer and Brethren elder Colin Pascoe.

“We don’t have a dungeon where we lock people up.

“And our teachers are required, just like any other school, to report any issues where they believe there could be abuse.”

But the difference between the Brethren’s Summer Hill School in Dalton Street is students cannot aspire to a university education which is banned by the church, which believes it is an environment that would have a negative influence on its young people.

However, Mr Pascoe said students are exposed to the experience of post-school study through trades training at TAFE.

He said some consideration was now being given to post-graduate studies beyond TAFE.

“We are currently looking at further study in the areas of law and medicine,” he said.

One of the school’s directors, Steve Sandeman, said the embracing of technology by the Brethren in recent years, including introducing computers in schools and businesses, comes with moral reservations about the internet.

“To get through in business we saw that was needed. We’ve just taken it on later than others,” he said.

Mr Pascoe said the school’s 15 teachers were all non-Brethren but a mutual respect exists between staff and the school about opinions on religion.

The school’s curriculum coordinator non-Brethren Jennifer Lacey, who has been at the school since 2003, said a huge effort had been put into providing the widest subject choices possible for high school students at the school who come from around the area including Bathurst and Cowra.

“It is rare for us to refuse a student’s subject choice - we will run a class with just two students which other schools are not in a position to do,” she said.

Mrs Lacey said the school had to deal with the same student issues facing other schools such as wearing the correct uniform, and not bringing mobile phones to class.

Mr Pascoe said the Brethren’s decision to withdraw from a proposal two years ago to build a school at Priests Lane in Orange and instead expand from the existing site had been the right decision.

“We have resolved issues here with the neighbours and have purchased adjoining properties with large backyards which we have incorporated into the school plan,” he said.

Two houses have been purchased on the western side of the main building and another two at the rear and completely refurbished to house primary students who have started at the school for the first time this year. Other classrooms include science labs, music and art and general purpose rooms.

Mr Pascoe said the school endeavoured to find a job that would suit each student when they finished their schooling, and this usually involved working in one of the several Brethren owned businesses in Orange.

Comments

No comments yet. Be the first to comment below.

Post A Comment



COMPUTER ACCESS: Senior students of Orange's Exclusive Brethren school in the state-of-the art computer room where students are embracing technology. Photo: STEVE GOSCH

Family

Trying to fall pregnant? Here's how...



Here are some answers to common questions surrounding the act of conceiving; rest assured you don't need to have the flexibility of a contortionist to [achieve the best results](#)

Also at Essential Baby

- Bad mothering worse than bad fathering
- Baby, you're just too hip
- Brain wired for music in the womb

SEND...

 [Email a friend](#)

SAVE...

 [Favourites](#)

 [Del.icio.us](#)

SHARE...

-  [Facebook](#)
-  [Digg](#)
-  [StumbleUpon](#)
-  [MySpace](#)
-  [Reddit](#)
-  [Newsvine](#)
-  [LinkedIn](#)
-  [Kwoff](#)