

A VISIT FROM HIS EMINENCE

The Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal George Pell, took time out of his busy schedule on Friday April 1, to immerse himself in the life of Mater Dei. Along with Fr Danai Penollar, he attended a Principal's assembly, joined the staff for morning tea and visited our beautiful Chapel and Wivenhoe Historic Villa. The Cardinal then toured the classrooms, appearing to be very at ease with the kids. "He was fantastic", said Mater Dei CEO/Principal, Tony Fitzgerald. "He was comfortable, which is a fairly difficult thing to do with our children because, apart from their intellectual disability, they don't cope with newness and strangers well".

The guests arrived in Secondary G just as they were finishing making pancakes. His Eminence added apple sauce, cinnamon sugar and ice cream to his plate before helping Jared cut his pancake and chatting to the class about their cooking lessons.

The other classes were equally proud to show the Cardinal their work. Many understood His Eminence is an important figure in the Catholic Church and had been practising the



correct way to address him. There were a few smiles when he was sometimes referred to as "His M&M's".

He left Mater Dei with a framed artwork from the students and said Mater Dei would inspire his homily, to be delivered at St Mary's Cathedral that afternoon.

Tony invited His Eminence to return one day to visit the students in their new classrooms. The Cardinal promised to stay in touch.

Cardinal Pell, and his predecessor, Cardinal Clancy have been regular and generous supporters of Mater Dei for a number of years. We are very fortunate to have had them both visit our school in past decade.