

MINLATON DISTRICT SCHOOL

2 NORTH TERRACE, MINLATON, SA 5575 • (08) 8853 2346



Dear families and friends,

Minlaton District School Wins SAASLA Best Practice Award

Minlaton District School (MDS) is thrilled to announce that we have been awarded the South Australian Area School Leaders Association (SAASLA) Best Practice Award for 2025. This prestigious state-wide award recognises excellence and innovation in teaching and learning among area schools.

Our whole-school Inquiry-Based Learning initiative is driven by the vision of creating "Expert Learners" earned this honour, highlighting the amazing work of our staff and students over the past two years. This award is a wonderful external validation, but the real reward is the impact we see every day on our students and our community. The achievement is a true team effort and a celebration of the excellent learning happening at MDS, and we're excited to share the story with our parents, families, and community.

As you know we pride ourselves on being a connected school community where "every student is empowered to thrive". Our core values are Zest for Learning, Deep Understanding and Mastery, Transfer of Learning, Building Personal Capacity, Close Connections and Identity & Belonging. These core values guide everything we do and form the foundation for our award-winning project.

This year especially MDS has embraced a vision of fostering "Expert Learners". We want our students not just to absorb information, but to actively question, investigate, create and take ownership of their learning. This vision set the stage for a transformative journey in curriculum and teaching practice across the whole school.



The Journey to Inquiry-Based Learning Excellence

We determined in 2024 that best way to cultivate Expert Learners was through a whole-school focus on Inquiry-Based Learning (IBL) in its many forms. IBL is an approach where student's curiosity and questions drive their learning. Instead of passively receiving facts, students engage in exploring open-ended questions, solving real-world problems and pursuing projects that interest them. While elements of inquiry learning were not new to MDS, having a united, school-wide commitment to it allowed IBL to flourish across every classroom and subject area. From Reception to Year 12, all teachers committed to action - planning, trialling and refining inquiry methods together. The change has been exciting and classrooms transformed into hubs of activity and exploration. Teachers reported the visible changes in student engagement and outcomes were tangible. We observed increased enthusiasm, deeper questioning and more creative thinking from students of all ages.

It's important to note that we didn't "invent" inquiry-based learning, many great schools use it. Each teacher leveraged their personal strengths and interests (and even sometimes stepped bravely outside their comfort zones) to create unique learning experiences. This collective effort sparked significant professional growth for our educators and remarkable learning growth for our students. Our story showcases the dynamic, can-do spirit that rural area schools are known for, and it demonstrates that even a small community school can lead the way in educational best practice.

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Inquiry in Action: Innovative Learning Across R–12

One highlight of our journey has been the variety of inquiry projects and methodologies that have flourished across year levels. During Terms 1 and 2 of 2025, teachers were encouraged to “try anything” in the realm of inquiry learning – and they certainly rose to the challenge. The following examples are drawn from our SAASLA Award Entry (\$6):

- **Early Years (Reception–Year 1): Play-Based Learning** – purposeful play used to seed inquiry.
- **Upper Primary & Middle Years: Learning Matrices** – Gardner/Bloom inquiry matrices to provide student choice and differentiation.
- **Middle Primary: Genius Hour** – weekly passion projects where students formulate questions, research and present findings.
- **Middle Years Art: 20% Project** – a portion of class time dedicated to self-directed creative projects.
- **Middle & Senior Years (HASS/English/HPE): Solution Fluency** – a structured problem-solving cycle applied across disciplines.
- **Upper Primary & Middle: Entrepreneurial Investigations** – inquiries with an enterprise focus.
- **Upper Primary: “Become the Expert”** – students select a new skill/domain, learn it independently, and share their expertise.
- **Mathematics: Authentic, hands-on projects – authentic maths – physical projects** connecting concepts with practical tasks.

From playful exploration in Reception to complex problem-solving in Year 12, inquiry-based learning became a common thread tying the whole school together. It demonstrated creativity, critical thinking, communication, collaboration and effective use of technology, all in service of deeper understanding. Students were not just learning facts; they were learning how to learn.

Positive Outcomes: Engaged Students, Energised Staff

The ultimate goal of our inquiry focus was to improve student outcomes academically, socially and emotionally. While we initially expected to see the biggest impact in our 2026 data (after giving the program time to mature) we have already observed improvements in the pilot stages:

- **Boosted student attitudes (pilot classrooms): +19% “Feelings about the future” +16% “Attitudes towards study/work” +15% “Motivation to improve”.**
- **Academic growth: 2025 NAPLAN** indicates more students demonstrating growth; inquiry-rich tasks and high engagement are supporting literacy and numeracy.
- **Student engagement & agency:** learners articulate their learning more clearly, ask deeper questions, and in many cases choose to continue projects during breaks; some classes report students more likely to attend on inquiry-project days (anecdotal).
- **Greater independence:** students are increasingly self-directed, less reliant on constant teacher help and more resilient when first attempts don’t succeed.
- **Communication, thinking and belonging:** inquiry strengthens collaboration, student voice and a sense of belonging.
- **Inclusivity and differentiation:** scalable tasks enable all learners to access challenge and support.
- **Energised staff & sustainable change:** staff report higher job satisfaction and collegiality; learning is increasingly supported by AI and other technologies; teachers view IBL as a sustainable improvement aligned with curriculum requirements.

The shift to inquiry-based learning has transformed the culture of learning at MDS. Classrooms are places of discovery and joy. Students have greater voice and choice in what and how they learn, and they’re developing skills that will serve them far beyond school: problem-solving, creativity, self-direction and confidence. For our teachers, seeing these outcomes has been the ultimate reward.

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Winning the SAASLA Best Practice Award is not the end of this journey, it's just the beginning of an exciting new chapter for us. Our next focus area is to extend this spirit of inquiry beyond the school walls and into the community. In 2026, we plan to strengthen partnerships with local community groups, businesses, and families as part of student inquiry projects. By involving the community more directly, we hope to give our students an even greater sense of purpose and to share the joy of learning with the whole community.

For now, we want to take a moment to celebrate this achievement. Congratulations to our incredible staff for their creativity, courage, and hard work in making inquiry-based learning a success. Thank you to our students for embracing new ways of learning; your enthusiasm and achievements made this award possible.

Minlaton District School's journey with inquiry-based learning has shown that by deeds, not just words, a small school can achieve big things. We are proud to be leading by example in rural education. This Best Practice Award is a shining affirmation of what we've accomplished together. Let's all share in the pride of this moment, and look forward to even more innovative learning ahead. Go MDS!

Principal, Andrew Dickinson

FOLLOW US ON
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MINLATON DISTRICT SCHOOL



**We are hiring
a Basketball
Canteen
Manager**

- Minlaton Basketball Netball Club
 - Paid position
 - Planning, ordering and preparing food and drinks,
 - Ensuring food safety and hygiene standards are met
 - Manage and support canteen staff and volunteers
 - Strong leadership and communication and money handling skills
 - Previous experience preferred
- Email applications to
minlatonbnc@outlook.com by 2nd October



The Fabulous Year 4/5 Students Successfully Make Legendary Profit On Their Market Day

This article is a compilation of excerpts from feature articles written by Miss Roads' Year 4/5 students, reflecting on their Market Day experience. As part of an inquiry-based HASS project, students planned and ran their own market stalls, developing real-world skills through a hands-on, student-led approach. In English, students studied the structure of effective feature articles, which they then applied to document and celebrate their learning journey. The result is a showcase of creativity, collaboration, and a zest for learning



The Year 4/5 class turned the school STEAM room into a beautiful market lane. Each business was created and run by students, to learn about economics, teamwork and customer service. The businesses had fun and creative names: Pinch Perfect Playdough, O.J.S PopCo, Supper Supply Girls, Jolly Little Sips, Croc and Rock and NEM Sweets. From playdough to sweet treats each stall had something unique to sell. Pinch Perfect Playdough sold handmade colourful playdough with mix ins to squish and squash. Croc and Rock offered sticky hands and croc charms. Super Supply Girls created fabulous personalised school ribbons and key rings. O.J.S PopCo served delicious popcorn with multiple flavours. NEW Sweets focused on scrumptious baked goods, while Jolly Little Sips created delicious spiders and milkshakes.

If you look behind all the fun, there was some serious planning involved. The students worked in teams to decide on pricing, advertising and logo designing. The students had to learn roles in customer service, product developer and finance manager. They created plans, practised their selling skills and even investigated profit and costs. "We needed enough sweets but also not too many!" said Mia from NEM Sweets.

The Minlaton District School primary students came to support the Year 4/5's on their big day. Stalls were filled with students wanting to buy products, where the Year 4/5's felt like real business owners. The market was a huge success and everything was a sell out. "I loved the feeling of all the cups almost being all gone," said Sid from Jolly Little Sips. All the students were very happy and the day was a total success.

It wasn't just a fun day, the market was a real-world experience about business that taught responsibility, creativity, and confidence all while building a strong sense of teamwork. "We learnt all about customer service!" said Tuleah from Super Supply Girls. With big smiles both sellers and customers left Market Day with a new appreciation for the world of business and the joy of learning by doing. The Year 4/5's are very proud and happy of their efforts and they know this day will proudly remain in their hearts. Incredibly, made over \$1000 and will use the money to hold a fun event for all of the primary classes in the near future.





The lovely ladies from Lakeside Dental visited us



Mr Dickinson (Principal) & Mr Hackett (Deputy Principal) with our Rural Youth Ambassador, and Year 11 student, Elijah

Di (Pastoral Care & School Support Worker) caught a huge fish on Year 4/5 camp!



Destiny, Tilli, Jorja, Alexis & Shanaid played footy in Adelaide



The MDS Youth Opportunities graduating group of 2025

A hole-in-one for Noah!



ALL THE MDS CALENDAR DATES YOU NEED, HERE:

September 2025

				Thu 25 Primary Learning Expo 2:10pm	Fri 26 T3 end, 2pm dismissal, buses 2:10pm	
	Mon 29 School Holidays Week 1	Tue 30				

October 2025

			Wed 1 School Holidays Week 1	Thu 2	Fri 3	
	Mon 6 School Holidays Week 2	Tue 7	Wed 8	Thu 9	Fri 10	
			Wed 15 Road Awareness Program			
	Mon 20 Year 10 Outdoor Ed Camp	Tue 21	Wed 22	Thu 23	Fri 24	
	Mon 27 SAPSASA Girls Football State Carnival	Tue 28	Wed 29			

November 2025

			Wed 5 Kindy Transition			
	Mon 10 SAPSASA Boys & Girls Tennis State Carnival	Tues 11	Wed 12 Kindy Transition			
			Wed 19 Kindy Transition			
	Mon 24 SAPSASA Boys & Girls Cricket State Carnival	Tue 25	Wed 26 Kindy Transition		Fri 28 STUDENT FREE DAY	

December 2025

		Tue 2 Year 6-9 Middle School Camp	Wed 3	Thu 4	Fri 5	
					Fri 12 T4 end, 2pm dismissal, buses 2:10pm	

2025

SPORTS AWARDS

NOMINATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR:

- Primary Sports Award
- Secondary Sports Award
- Year 12 Sports Award

See nomination instructions & criteria on page 8 of this newsletter!

Special Sports Awards – Presentation Night.

DUE: Term 4, Week 4 - Friday 7/11/25

All sports award nominations can be sent to Craig Fitzgerald via email Craig.Fitzgerald239@schools.sa.edu.au or left in an envelope at the front office.

Primary Sports Award

- Open to male and female students in years 5-6
- Consistent or high achievement in a range of school sports (community sport not taken into consideration).
- Positive ambassador for MDS at all times.
- Displayed leadership in sport or held leadership positions.
- Students, parents and staff are able to nominate students for this award.
- The winner will be selected by the HPE Committee based on the evidence presented to them on nomination forms.

Award: The winning student will receive an award donated by the Minlaton Cricket Club.

Secondary Sports Award

- Open to male and female students in years 7-11
- Consistent or high achievement in a range of school sports (community sport not taken into consideration).
- Positive ambassador for MDS at all times.
- Displayed leadership in sport or held leadership positions.
- Students, parents and staff are able to nominate students for this award.
- The winner will be selected by the HPE Committee based on the evidence presented to them on nomination forms.

Award: The winning student will receive an award donated by the Minlaton Cricket Club.

Year 12 Sports Award

Essential Criteria

- Must be in Year 12.
- Been involved in sport in every year of enrolment (preferably at least in years 10-12).
- Been involved in a range of strictly school sports (community sport not taken into consideration).
- Been a consistent or excellent performer at all times in sports undertaken.

Preferred Criteria

- Displayed leadership or held leadership positions in sports undertaken and been a role model to fellow students.
- Been an ambassador for Minlaton District School.
- Shown willingness to assist teachers and parents in the set-up, organisation or any other aspects of sports teams/events.
- Displayed all attributes of good "Sports-person-ship".
- Upheld school and other codes of conduct at all times.
- Students, parents and staff are able to nominate students for this award.
- The winner will be selected by the HPE Committee based on the evidence presented to them on nomination forms.

Award: The winning student shall receive an award donated by the Minlaton Progress Association.

JUNIORS, JOIN US

Division 1 (Under 16)
-as at 1st September 2025

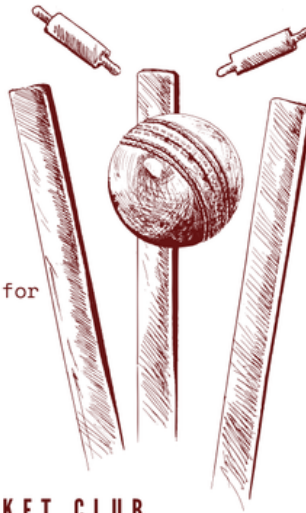
Division 2 (Under 12)
-as at 1st September 2025

Trainings commence Thursday 16th
October, time TBA

To register your child's interest for
the 2025/2026 season or for more
info, contact MCC President:
Michael Coote 0417 840 483

Everyone welcome!

MINLATON CRICKET CLUB



HATS MUST BE WORN IN TERM 4

Bucket Hats

\$15.50

Reversible

\$17.50

Navy inside

ORDER ON OKR!
NOW SO YOU'RE
READY TO GO



Minlagawi ^{FREE} NATURE FESTIVAL

Thursday 2nd October 10^A M ➔ 1^P M

Minlagawi – Gum Flat Reserve

(corner of Old Port Vincent and Gum Flat Roads, Minlaton)

Nature
Festival

Nharangga craft

mindfulness and movement

wardli (cubby) building

music and earth drums

nature art and craft

face painting

... and much more for all ages!



Proudly supported by ...



Register at:
<https://www.naturefestival.org.au/event/minlagawi-nature-festival/>

We acknowledge Nharangga people as the Traditional Custodians of this land, and of the significance of the Minlagawi area. In particular we pay respect to the Windara (east) people, of the garrdi (emu) totem, the connection to language, culture, community, and Country, and to Elders past and present.

YORKE PENINSULA COUNCIL PRESENTS...

YORKON Games Convention

NEW LOCATION ➔ MINLATON TOWN HALL - OCTOBER 10-11



COMPUTER
GAMES



ARCADE
GAMES



TABLETOP
GAMES



BEST DRESSED
COMPETITION



CARDBOARD
CREATIONS



AND
MORE!



REGISTRATIONS ESSENTIAL. SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT
[HTTPS://EVENTS.HUMANITIX.COM/YORKON-GAMES-CONVENTION](https://events.humanitix.com/yorkon-games-convention)