Maggie’s ideas in motion

At age 11, Maggie Khan has a remarkable record of achievement, writes KATELIN MEREDITH.

WITH just two weeks left of primary school, Maggie Khan has made it her mission to show Mount Ousley Public School just how grateful she is to have had such great support through her schooling.

A highly ambitious and motivated 11-year-old whose social awareness goes well beyond her years, Maggie has put a plan in motion to give the school a new playground.

“I want to raise money to help the school because it’s a beautiful school and I love it. I want to help as much as I can and leave something from me when I leave,” she said.

“I’ve had beautiful teachers and a beautiful principal from the first time I stepped foot in this school. I want to give something in return. Single-handedly raising almost $3000 in donations to date, Maggie believes the playground is in great need of an upgrade.

“The ground is very easy to scrape yourself on because I’ve done that before and you can fall off it very easily so it needs to be more safe.”

Mount Ousley Public School principal Peter Holmes believes Maggie’s grand ideas never cease to amaze him.

“It’s just been the loveliest thing because whenever Maggie sees something that she thinks needs to be done whether it’s in our school, in the local community or indeed the world, there’s an idea there, there’s a plan of action and she goes about doing it.” Mr Holmes said.

“I would describe Maggie as a once-in-a-lifetime student,” Mr Holmes said.

I would describe Maggie as a once-in-a-lifetime student. It’s rare for somebody her age to have this level of not just social interest but action, and wanting to do positive things to really make a difference to the world. This is who she is and we love it.”

Maggie’s mother Allison believes the school has fostered an environment where other schools had failed Maggie in the past.

She believes the principal and Maggie’s classroom teacher Mr James So have gone beyond the duty of care to help Maggie to realise her potential.

“She came to this school in 2012 and it basically changed her life. She has Asperger’s and her principal and teachers here have literally changed her and she’s so thankful and she’s always just wanted to do a lot for the school to give back.”

“She’s a very highly, highly intelligent girl with a heart of gold,” Mrs Khan said.

“Being autistic, she doesn’t get close to very many people but her principal and teacher, I’ve seen her hug her teacher. A child with autism doesn’t do that,” she said.

Maggie has hopes of one day becoming a politician. She is on a first-name basis with local MPs, has interviewed the education minister for a school assignment and last year she raised funds to buy the school a spring free trampoline.

“I wanted to get the trampoline because we have a few autistic kids at this school and it’s for when people are angry, it helps them calm themselves down. If I get upset, the trampoline helps at home,” Maggie said.

Moving on to Wollongong High School of the Performing Arts next year, she hopes the community will get behind her and help make the new playground a reality.

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