2008 Annual School Report
Blacksmiths Public School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Our school at a glance

Students

Blacksmiths Public School student enrolment at the end of 2008 was 126, comprising 62 boys and 64 girls.

In 2008 we had 5 classes. All classes were composite classes where programs catering for the individual needs of students were the basis of student learning and success.

Staff

Our staff for 2008 were;

Teaching Principal – Sue Britton (Term 1)
Teaching Principal – Rose Johns (Acting)
Assistant Principal – Ellen Smith
Classroom Teachers –
   Mark Schasser
   Lisa Brownsmith
   Maria Stoppini
   (in a shared acting role)
Teacher Librarian -  Zel Solomon
Support Teacher –  Carole Burns
Release Teacher –  Kellie Pascoe
Time –  Cindy Gibson
School Administration Manager –  Susan Chambers
School Administration Officers –
   Zel Solomon
   Kellie Pascoe
School Learning Support Officer/ Cleaner –  Bob Chambers
General Assistant -  Bob Chambers

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Significant programs and initiatives

The school is recognised for the opportunities it provides for successful achievement of outcomes by the students. Our initiatives include:

- The introduction of choir, sport, art club and drama group as part of the recess and lunchtime extension activities.
- The introduction of junior and senior dance groups through Lollipops Dance Studio’s weekly visits to the school in Term 4.
- The development and implementation of environmental initiatives to improve the carbon footprint of our school and community.
- The introduction of fruit and vegetable initiatives to foster knowledge of healthy diet and informed choices by students.
- Involvement of senior students in the University of Newcastle Engineering Games.

Student achievement in 2008

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

Students performed very well in literacy in 2008, with 100% of the students in the top four bands. Strengths were demonstrated in finding and comparing information, sequencing events and inferring the main idea in a paragraph.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

Strength was shown in subtraction of one digit and two digit numbers. 100% of students performed in the top four bands.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

70% of students were in the top three bands for overall literacy. 100% of students achieved results in the top four bands. 80% of students were in the top three bands for writing. Areas of strength included spelling, grammar and connecting ideas.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

Areas of strength in the numeracy test included time and fractions and decimals. 40% of students performed in the top three bands, while 90% of students achieved results in the top four bands.
Messages

Principal's message

Blacksmiths Public School is a learning environment that fosters success for its students. Every child is encouraged to strive for their best and to never give up.

Teachers provide opportunities for every child to challenge their understanding and significant improvements have been found in standardised testing.

The community continues to show enthusiasm and support for the school, with increased regular involvement in classrooms, performances, sporting events, fundraising and donations.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development.

Rose Johns

P&C message

The P & C have had such a great year and thanks goes to our tireless volunteers on the P & C committee, sub committees and other wonderful people who continually put their hand up to help out.

This year the money our families have raised was given as class funds, assisting with the costs of the air conditioning, supporting students in their representative sports and also the purchase of numerous canteen items.

We are working towards a huge goal of updating our classrooms to the level of others in the Lake Macquarie area. We hope that one day soon our children can benefit from technology in the way of interactive whiteboards and more computers.

Some of our successful fundraisers included:
- Mother’s and Father’s Day stalls,
- The Easter Raffle,
- End of term Discos,
- 100 club,
- The Mars Chocolate fundraiser,
- Pizza Night
- Christmas Raffle fundraiser.

The Canteen had some huge changes this year; the P & C wanted to support the school in their healthy eating policy. The new menu has been very popular and a great success and has set the canteen up financially for even more success in the future.

Melinda Aylett
P & C President

School Council message

In 2008 the Council has maintained a strong commitment to our local school. The School Council has supported the following school programs and capital works:
- Upgrade and refurbishment of school toilets
- Installation of an air conditioner in a classroom
- Introduction of school programs which have provided opportunities for the students, such as healthy eating and physical fitness, dance, drama and art.
- Reviewed the school’s values and the subsequent introduction of a school values program.

The School Council will continue to support the school in the future as it strives to provide quality education to the students of the Blacksmiths community.

Mrs Sue Paul
President

Student representatives’ message

In 2008, leaders had a wide and varied role to play in school life. Leaders represented the school at functions such as the opening of Buttaba Land Council facility, Anzac Day Dawn Service, Remembrance Day and the Young Leaders Forum in Sydney.

Student Leaders conducted assemblies each week and led the Annual Presentation Day Ceremony for the whole school.

Other leadership opportunities included peer support activities such as Sea Day and guiding performances during Education Week, Book Week and Carols by Candlelight.

Leaders also played a strong role in the launch of the Galgabba Community of Schools.

Danika Henshaw, Callie McLennan, Jade Nicholson and Toby Walters.
School context

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>93.8</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class sizes

In March 2003 the Government announced its commitment to publish primary class sizes in annual school reports in order to provide parents with as much local information as possible.

The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2008 class size audit conducted on Tuesday 25 March 2008.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K-1</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Staff information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all staff must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies. The teachers at Blacksmiths School are a dedicated group who work cohesively. Every staff member in the school has something unique to offer for the school and its students. As a team they work together to provide a well rounded and comprehensive teaching and learning environment for all students.

The following table indicates the number of positions held, but it is important to note that only 5 of these positions are full-time. The remaining positions operate 1 day per week.

We employ 1 School Administration Manager full-time and 1 School Administration Officer for 2 days per week. Our General Assistant is employed 3 days per fortnight.

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal Teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal(s)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief From Face to Face</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff retention

At the end of Term 1, the principal, Sue Britton, accepted a promotion position and was replaced in an acting capacity by Rose Johns for the remainder of the year. The Assistant Principal position was shared by Ellen Smith and Lisa van Koeverden. The teaching position was filled by several part time teachers, most significantly by Cindy Gibson-McElhone. Mrs Carole Burns, our School Administrative took a relieving position in another school during Term 3. All other staff positions remained stable.

Staff attendance

Staff have access to leave entitlements such as sick leave. As determined by the Department:

In 2008, the average daily staff attendance rate was: 97.9%

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2008</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>40,515.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>29,125.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>9,170.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>8,146.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>613.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>391.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>87,962.62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**            |             |
| Teaching & learning        |             |
| Key learning areas         | 1,603.94    |
| Excursions                 | 1,737.29    |
| Extracurricular dissections| 2,101.66    |
| Library                    | 1,024.34    |
| Training & development     | 0.00        |
| Tied funds                 | 2,142.73    |
| Casual relief teachers     | 2,812.91    |
| Administration & office    | 7,301.31    |
| School-operated canteen    | 0.00        |
| Utilities                  | 1,740.66    |
| Maintenance                | 2,118.19    |
| Trust accounts             | 419.69      |
| Capital programs           | 0.00        |
| **Total expenditure**      | 23,002.72   |
| **Balance carried forward**| 64,959.90   |

A full copy of the school’s 2008 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2008

Achievements

Arts

Choir

The School Choir continued to grow in 2008, participating in both school activities and the combined choir for the launch of the Galgabba Community of Schools. At school, the choir performed for Grandparents Day, Education Week, Book Week and Presentation Day. The children practised regularly during recess and lunch times.

Dance

During Term 4, Lollipops Dance group provided opportunities for interested students to participate in a dance program. 48 students, both boys and girls, became involved. There were 27 Primary children, consisting of 25 girls and 2 boys, and 21 Infants children consisting of 17 girls and 4 boys. These children participated in a six week programme, where the dance teacher taught 2 dances to each group. The children were very enthusiastic and would practise during their lunch times as well. Very quickly the routines were established and the decision was made for both senior and junior groups to perform at Presentation Day and Carols by Candlelight.

Art Club

At lunchtime one day each week in Term 4, students were given the opportunity to participate in art and craft activities provided by Mrs Gibson. More than 45 students participated each week and were very positive about their experiences. Many of the activities were Christmas themed.

Drama Club

During Terms 3 and 4, more than 20 students rehearsed during lunchtimes as part of the Drama Club. They performed an Olympics skit during Book Week and Christmas skits at the Carols by Candlelight.
Sport

The school continues to cater for all students through our diverse sports programs. These activities include regular physical education programs, school sport, inter-school gala days and carnivals. These programs have contributed to a number of very successful achievements in 2008.

In swimming, the school was successful again in winning both the Small Schools Trophy and the Handicap Points Score Trophy. Twelve students qualified for the Regional Carnival including the Junior Girls Relay Team, who also went on to represent at State level. Three other students also qualified and competed at the State Championships in a number of events.

In Cross Country, for the second year in a row, the school was very successful, winning all trophies at the zone carnival. Eleven students went on to represent at Regional level, with five of these students qualifying and competing at the State Championships.

For the first time at the school, two students qualified and competed at the National Championships. The school community fundraised to help the girls travel to Geelong to represent NSW and Blacksmiths Public School.

In Athletics, the school won both the Small Schools Trophy and Handicap Points Score Trophy at the Zone Carnival. Nine students qualified for the Regional Carnival with three of these students qualifying and competing at the State Athletic Championships.

The Blacksmiths Bulls Rugby League team were Grand Finalists in the Paul Harragon Cup competition against schools from all over the Hunter region. For the first time, the team qualified and competed at the State Championships in Sydney against other schools from all over NSW.

Blacksmiths entered four successful mixed Touch Football teams and a senior and junior mixed Netball team at local gala day events. One senior girl was selected in the Hunter Netball squad and competed in Dubbo at the State carnival.

A 10 week gymnastics program was enjoyed by all students from Kinder to Year 6. This program focussed on developing and improving coordination and gross motor skills.

A Blacksmiths Olympics was held to coincide with the Beijing Olympics. Children enjoyed participating in our version of discus, javelin and relays. The Olympic “flame” was lit by Hannah Gibson, after being carried around the arena by students from Kinder to Year 4.

Other

Academic Competitions

During the year a number of students in Years 3 to 6 participated in various external competitions in English, Writing, Mathematics and Science. Achievements by students were excellent with a total of 9 Credits and 3 Distinctions.

Students from Year 5/6 entered the Hunter Region Primary Mathematics Competition. They were awarded 1 High Distinction, 8 Distinctions and 8 Merit awards. This is a significant improvement on the results for 2007.
Following an examination process and personal interview, 6 students gained places in the Swansea High Selective Class for 2009.

Four students were selected to participate in the University of Newcastle Engineering Games. They designed and built a catapult capable of propelling a small ball 8 metres.

Health

The school began its participation in the Good for Kids Good for Life program. Crunch 'n Sip was introduced in several classrooms with students having a healthy snack break during mid morning.

In addition to this two initiatives were trialled. The first was apple slinky days. Once each week for 4 weeks, parents helped to put apples through slinky machines with apples provided through the school or students bringing their own.

The second initiative was to give students points for eating fruit or vegetables at recess or lunch. A high percentage of students changed what they were eating during breaks. At 10 points students received a free crunch and sip water bottle, with an emphasis on filling it with water each time.

Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.

Yr 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Yr 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

Blacksmiths students achieved higher than the region and state in overall Literacy. However there are several areas for development which will help to form the future directions for our school.

In Reading, locating information, word meaning, connecting ideas and inferring the motivation of a character were identified as concepts poorly answered.

The identified areas of strength for this group in Reading were connecting ideas, comparing and connecting information, inferring main idea and sequencing life cycle information.

Strength was demonstrated in many areas of Spelling. In Grammar prepositions, proper nouns, commas, plural pronouns, a and an usage and direct speech were areas where the students performed strongly.
Blacksmiths students demonstrated strength in Numeracy in the area of subtraction.
However, there were several areas for improvement which will be addressed in school planning for the future. The following concepts are those in which our students performed poorly - recognising quarters, interpreting data, comparing volume, 3D drawing from a different perspective, totalling money, addition and using a key to interpret data.

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5**

Blacksmiths School has achieved higher than state and equal to regional averages in literacy.

Some of the areas which have been identified as providing an ongoing focus for future planning are:

**Reading** – inferring the nature and motivation of a character, synthesising ideas to identify key information, understanding the use of figurative language and finding points of agreement in arguments.

**Grammar** – indirect speech and direct speech, personal pronouns and apostrophe of possession. Areas in which our students showed strong understanding included connecting ideas in reading, sequencing events in life cycle and identifying the purpose of diagram.

Students also showed strong understanding of the grammar concepts of the correct form of a verb, past participle of an irregular verb, forms of verbs and punctuation of direct speech.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5
Our students achieved higher than state but lower than regional averages in numeracy.

The areas for improvement include division, multiplying money, interpreting data from a graph, symmetry, units of measurement, scale of distance on a map, nets of prisms, equivalent fractions and decimals.

The areas of strength were digital and analogue time, place value of decimals, perimeter, irregular hexagons and subtraction of decimals.

Progress in literacy

In Reading our school was lower than both the School Education Group and the state.
In Writing our school performed above the state average and in approximately the middle of the School Education Group average score.
In Overall literacy our students were slightly above the state and School Education Group.
Progress in numeracy

In Numeracy our school was on average for the School Education Group, but below state average.

Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

Percentage of Year 3 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Year 5 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

School leaders attended the official opening of the Buttaba Office.
During NAIDOC Week all students in the school used handprints to create an Aboriginal flag on canvas.
In Term 4, Aboriginal students in the lower primary of all Galgabba Community of Schools, were invited to participate in a Numeracy initiative based on the Count Me In Too program. During this term, the school provided a tutoring program for all of its Aboriginal students aimed at improving and extending literacy and numeracy understanding.
Aboriginal perspective continues to have priority in the school through the teaching and learning programs offered to our students.

Multicultural education

The school promotes the positive values of a multicultural society, particularly through curriculum perspectives in Human Society and Its Environment. Classes use work chosen from our scope and sequence programs that seek to provide students with attitudes, values and beliefs which will enable them to better understand their own background and that of people from other cultures.

Student Leadership

During 2008 the Student Representative Council continued to flourish, with representatives from all grades. Year 6 students again had leadership roles in various teams and on the Executive.
The SRC met regularly and were involved in a variety of fundraising ventures, such as mufti days, talent quests and competitions including handball, poster and air guitar. From Term 2, the SRC was guided by Mrs van Koeverden.

On 17th March, all Year 6 students had the opportunity to attend the National Young Leaders Conference. They travelled with leaders from other Galgabba schools to hear outstanding public figures speak about their motivations to succeed.

Values Education
During Term 1, parents were invited to attend a Values Forum. Using the values established for schools at both state and federal levels, a set of values relevant to the local community was selected. Teachers were then invited to participate in the process and a total of 10 core values were chosen.

To promote the values within the community, signage has been purchased and planted in garden beds at the school's entrance. Staff also worked collaboratively to develop a teaching program to highlight the importance of the 10 core values and the skills associated with demonstrating the values.

Other programs
Library
The library aims to be a vibrant and dynamic resource centre. Students have enhanced the library by using the Book Week theme ‘Fuel your mind’ to design concept maps on a topic. Students were also very creative when they used the theme to create innovative characters by creating their own changes to book characters. Creativity and innovation are part of higher order thinking skills which the school has aims to further develop.

Technology
The highlight of our technology program in 2008 was our Technology Training Day in November. A professional facilitator from Mac1 in Sydney ran a full day podcasting workshop for 12 students – four each from Years 3, 4, and 5. These students will perform the role of peer tutors to pass on their new skills to their classmates. The students learned to plan and prepare a podcast using Garage Band software. Their presentations were integrated with our school curriculum by creating an exposition related to the class HSIIE and Science and Technology units of Rainforests for Year 4 and 5 and the Human Body for Year 3. Students worked in pairs to produce a podcast which included a commentary, music and accompanying graphics. It was a highly successful day and all students are looking forward to sharing with their peers.

Environment
Students, particularly in class 1/2, have been very involved in reducing the carbon footprint of the school. The students have improved the level of recycling, particularly of paper products, with the result that rubbish pickups were halved from Term 2 onward. Students were responsible for ensuring that paper recycling bins were taken out to the roadside and returned each week.

In Term 2, four students from 1/2 attended the Landcare Youth Forum. They were the youngest group in attendance and talked with students from other schools confidently about Reduce, Reuse, Recycle programs operating in the school. Following this day, the students were presented with a Wollimi pine for planting in the school grounds.

The students in K/1 and 1/2 created and planted a vegetable garden and, as the plants matured, ate the produce picked each day.

In Term 3, all students in the school were involved in planting trees. These trees were placed at the front of the school and aim to extend the living corridor for native animals. Students became more active in composting their fruit and vegetable matter in the worm farm donated by Mrs Smith, in the vegetable garden and in compost bins.

In Term 4 a volunteer group from Green Volunteers planted a further 50 trees and mulched this area. A frog pond has also been established.
Progress on 2008 targets

Target 1
To improve literacy outcomes for all students

Our achievements include:

• No students failed to benchmark in literacy in Years 3 and 5.
• Staff training and development, including sharing of best practice, in the Quality Teaching Framework.
• Development of criterion referenced marking for writing, giving focus to explicit areas targeted through Basic Skills Test results.
• More than 80% of all matched students in Year 5 achieved greater than one skill band growth in NAPLAN.

Our achievements include:

• conducting a Values Forum held in Term 1 through which parents and staff determined core values for our school.
• staff developing a values education program to ensure common understanding of the core values by all staff.
• purchasing signage and erecting it in school entry gardens, ensuring the community were aware of the core values and reinforcing them for staff, students and families. This initiative has drawn positive comment from community members.
• creating values postcards with an image of the school and space for staff to write to families informing them of the values shown by students.

Key evaluations

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2008 our school carried out evaluations of Learning and PD. H. PE.

Educational and management practice

In response to the school’s planning matrix, the school community was surveyed on Learning in our school.

Background

As the most fundamental business of a school, it is essential that the learning which happens is monitored in a consistent fashion. A survey was developed in consultation with the School Council, staff and School Education Director to determine the response to the school’s effectiveness in this area. The survey was issued to the school community in Term 3.

Findings and conclusions

The majority of parents who returned their survey (approximately 33%) were positive in response to questions about current learning programs.

The majority of parents indicated that they were pleased with the quality of learning programs offered in the school and also their child’s access to learning which meets the students’ needs.

Staff was pleased with the input they had into developing learning programs across the school and felt that the strategies in place were suitable in providing for the needs and strengths of individuals.
Future directions

A few responses suggested that the school could work towards improving the focus on technology as a future direction.

Other suggestions indicated that students should receive more recognition for academic achievement and that stronger links should be made with other learning centres, such as the local high school and university.

Curriculum

The Self Evaluation Committee of the school used the planning matrix to identify Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (P.D., H, P.E) as the curriculum area to assess.

Background

A survey on P.D., H, P.E yielded 30 responses from a total of more than 80 questionnaires sent home to parents.

Findings and conclusions

The majority of parents were pleased with the fitness and sport skills development happening during each week. Similarly most parents indicated they were pleased by the personal development programs being offered to students.

Future directions

Parents suggested a range of strategies to improve or build upon what is already happening in the school.

These included fruit breaks being introduced across all classes with rewards for healthy eating, stronger implementation of sunsmart strategies and involvement in physical activities such as Jump Rope for Life.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

At the end of Term 3 a survey was sent home to families to gather information for future planning. 33 families returned the survey. Responses to the questions were overwhelmingly positive, with many suggestions to guide the future directions of the school.

Professional learning

During 2008 Blacksmiths Public School received $5903.00 as Teacher Professional learning funds.

Throughout the year all staff have been involved in 3 Staff Development Days where they underwent training in:

- Child Protection
- Co-operative Grouping

- Values Education
- Quality Teaching

Individual staff underwent training in various areas according to the needs of the school and the school’s Management Plan, addressing the 2008 targets.

As at 30/11/08, $4980.77 has been spent in teaching staff professional development and $1243.16 has been spent in administrative professional development.

School development 2009 – 2011

The school is beginning a three year planning cycle. School improvement is based on data collected from a variety of sources, including NAPLAN data and information from community surveys. This data ensures we are able to make changes to the way we respond to the needs of the students and school if an initiative is not working effectively.

School planning involves all aspects of school life and includes:

- Student leaning
- Teacher training and development
- Purchasing resources
- Development of school programs
- Improving the environment
- Capital works

Targets for 2009

Target 1

Literacy

Improvement in student and school achievement in reading and writing.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- School wide Home Reading Program implemented
- All staff effectively incorporating Higher Order Thinking skills into reading lessons

Our success will be measured by:

- 80% of K – 2 students achieving Regional Reading level targets
- External data (NAPLAN) showing the school is achieving in the top 20% of reading and top 40% of writing in the local School Education Group by 2011.
- School based data will show each student is achieving grade/stage appropriate outcomes for literacy
**Numeracy**

Improvement in student and school achievement in numeracy.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Common approach to the teaching of Numeracy evident in class programs, lessons and practices K – 6
- Quality teaching embedded into classroom programs and lessons

Our success will be measured by:

- External data (NAPLAN) will show the school is achieving in the top 20% by 2011.
- School based data will show each student is achieving grade/stage appropriate outcomes for numeracy

**Technology**

Increased use of information communication technology (ICT) is engaging all students and teachers in Quality Teaching and Learning.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Development and introduction of a technology skills program.
- Increased technology resources, access and usage by all staff and students.

Our success will be measured by:

- One classroom set up and effectively using an interactive whiteboard
- Technology skills program developed and implemented
- Two classrooms set up to effectively teach technology skills

**Environment**

The school community is actively involved in promoting environmentally responsible living practices.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- School staff, students and community involved in writing School Environmental Management Plan. (SEMP)
- Environmental Management plan implemented
- Students in K – 6 involved in gardening program

Our success will be measured by:

- School Environmental Management Plan developed and implementation begun
- Students K – 6 involved in garden program

**About this report**

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: