**Our school at a glance**

**Students**

At the end of 2013, our enrolments totaled 109 students, 56 boys and 53 girls.

Students were divided into five classes, Kindergarten/Year 1, Year 2, Year 3/4, Year 4/5 and Year 5/6.

**Staff**

During the year our staff numbers remained constant, though we experienced some changes in personnel, due to one staff member taking leave and the unfortunate passing of our principal, Miss Leeanne Young, during Term 4.

Our staff for 2013 comprised:

- **Teaching Principal**  Leeanne Young
- **Assistant Principal (relieving)**  Mark Schasser
- **Classroom teachers**  Ellen Smith, Robyn Hellier, Lisa Brownsmith, Laurindah Taylor-Hambleton
- **STLA/RFF**  Leeanne Young
- **Teacher-Librarian (relieving)**  Amanda McLean
- **Admin Manager**  Vanessa Clark
- **Admin Officer**  Margaret White
- **Learning Support Officer**  Sharon Reid
- **Cleaner**  Sue Chambers
- **General Assistants**  Bob Chambers, Steve Wilmott

**Significant programs and initiatives**

A range of programs is provided in our school to engage student interest, develop various academic and non-academic skills and experiences, which encourage their growth and development. In 2013 we:

- Continued our GATS (Gifted and Talented Students) programs, to cater more fully for students excelling in Mathematics.
- Due to our improved Numeracy levels, staff were invited to contribute to the Regional Numeracy Panel to present best practice ideas and strategies with other schools and support staff in the Lake Macquarie region.
- Performed in Starstruck, with 23 students participating in a dance item.
- Implemented the Active After-School Program on Tuesdays and Wednesdays where approximately 20 students had the opportunity to develop skills in various sports including karate, orienteering, tennis and cricket.
- Continued our dance program in Semester 1, with infants, junior and senior groups, giving every student the opportunity to participate.
- Continued the Year K-6 choir.
- Expanded our environmental program.
- Participated in a national Walk to School Day to promote road safety.
- Provided opportunities for students to participate in a range of external competitions, academic, cultural and sporting.
- Continued our whole school Public Speaking program, including participation in the Galgabba and zone finals.
- Implemented our Kindergarten Orientation and Year 6-7 transition programs to make transitions easier and more effective for students and staff.
Successfully applied for a number of grants to obtain resources for our school, including:

1. $1250 from Pelican RSL Club to purchase guided reading resources.
2. $878 from the Premier’s Sporting Challenge.
3. In Book Week, Mrs McLean organised a very successful parade and book fair, where students were invited to dress up according to the theme “Reading Across The Universe”. Year 6 students compared the presentation.
4. Successfully competed in a range of sporting competitions and gala days, giving many students the opportunity to represent our school.
5. Provided a range of opportunities for Years 5 & 6 students to develop and demonstrate leadership skills in academic, cultural, environmental and sporting areas.

Messages

Principal’s message

2013 has been a highly successful and productive year at Blacksmiths Public School, academically and in many other areas.

The school, staff and wider community have continued to work together to achieve optimal outcomes for our students.

Providing the best technology for teaching and learning continues to be a priority for our school. The inclusion of wireless connection in each classroom has helped with the growing number of notebooks and computers available for students.

Sport continues to be an area of excellence for our students, who represented at regional, state and national levels.

Similarly, to provide a balance, students were given many opportunities to be involved in the arts, environmental and academic programs, both within and outside the school.

The achievements, as well as the attitudes of our students, are a testament to the great staff, who have consistently gone well beyond the call of duty, particularly during difficult times throughout the year. I am proud of what we have achieved in 2013 but also look forward, with great anticipation, to the challenges and rewards of 2014.

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.

Mark Schasser

P & C message

The school enjoys many benefits as a result of the small but dedicated, hardworking P and C.

During the year, the P and C supported the school with significant contributions of resources, Mathletics computer program and Reading eggs,
new BBQ for our school to enable us to continue fundraising and hold inter school gala days, guided readers, Benchmarking kit for teachers to assess students reading level and comprehension (K-3 reading expectations), trophies for presentation day

The P and C would like to thank all those local businesses who support our school, especially Pelican RSL, whose ongoing assistance is very much appreciated. We thank everyone for their support in 2013 and look forward to doing it all again next year.

Damien Connell  P and C President

Student representative’s message

School Leaders
Being school leaders has been a great opportunity for us. We have enjoyed representing our school at special occasions such as Anzac Day, as well as running our weekly assemblies. Our confidence and public speaking has improved as a result of our involvement in leadership programs.

We were honoured to be school leaders and felt proud to be able to help other students and our school.

Bronte, Jed, Kye and Makayla

Sport Leaders
We have enjoyed the opportunity to be sports leaders during 2013. We have been able to assist the teachers at the school carnivals by organising teams and encouraging children to participate.

At Presentation Day, we were honored to hand out trophies and awards. Being sports leaders has been an enjoyable experience and we hope future sports leaders enjoy it as much as we have.

Go Binda and Biwong!

Zac, Harmony, Gabby and Dylan

Environment Leaders
Being environment leaders this year has come with a lot of responsibility. We have spoken at assemblies about Nude Food Days and announced the ‘Clean Classroom’ Award.

This year our school was very privileged to be the recipients of the overall primary schools winner of Lake Macquarie City Council’s Environment Awards.

We are very proud to have been the environmental leaders at Blacksmiths Primary School in 2013.

Lucy and Tom
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>Gender</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During 2013, our enrolments declined marginally. By the end of the year, a small number of families had left the school due to work commitments, once again reducing our numbers.

At the end of the year, we had 108 enrolments, 55 boys and 53 girls.

The majority of our students are from English speaking backgrounds, but we also have students from Indonesian, Samoan, French, Thai, Khmer and Macedonian backgrounds.

We have 3 students of Aboriginal descent.

Staff information

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

Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
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</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>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Emotional Disabilities</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Mild Intellectual Disabilities</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>1.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce.

At this time, our workforce does not include any indigenous staff.

Management of non-attendance

Non-attendance is managed in accordance with departmental procedures. Teachers initially discuss any attendance issues with parents and carers. If the concern continues, Home School Liaison Officers are involved to work together with the school and family to set out a clear plan to improve attendance.

Staff retention

Whilst our staff numbers remained stable, we had some changes in personnel during the year.

In 2013, Miss Garry’s maternity leave continued from Term 4 2012 with her classroom position being filled by Mrs Hambleton, who has worked in our school since 2010, and was therefore well known by staff and students. Mr Schasser relieved in the Assistant Principal position.

During semester two, our principal, Miss Young, was diagnosed with a serious illness. Mr Schasser relieved in the principal’s position whilst Mrs Brownsmith acted in the relieving Assistant Principal role.

Ms McLean continued in the unfilled teacher-librarian position and in terms 3 and 4 relieved for 5 days a week due to Miss Young’s illness.
During semester one, our General Assistant, Mr Chambers was on extended leave due to an injury, with his position filled by Mr Wilmott.

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>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>20</td>
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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>Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>80271.59</td>
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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>86308.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>38180.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>37122.09</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>2708.82</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>9322.30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>194934.36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure

<table>
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<th>Teaching &amp; learning</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
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<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>1173.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>730.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>35366.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>8532.21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>24104.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>11405.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>21112.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>9895.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>162987.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Balance carried forward         | 90926.80 |

School performance 2013
Blacksmiths Public School prides itself on providing the opportunities and the environment necessary for our students to develop the skills, knowledge, attitudes and values which will allow them to thrive both at school and within the wider community.

We value academic achievement and continually strive to improve learning outcomes for all our students. At the same time, in our quest to develop well rounded, socially competent individuals who see challenges as opportunities and failure as a way of learning, we also place a high level of importance on the sporting, creative and extra-curricular activities of our students.

Achievements

Arts
Throughout 2013, the students of Blacksmiths PS have been exposed to a variety of artistic and creative areas including music, choir, dance, drama and visual arts.

- In Term 2 a grant allowed a local artist, Deanne Newland, to work with staff and give every student the chance to make a clay tile based on a sea theme. These tiles were fired by our feeder high school and then painted by the students. The tiles are being used to create a mural at the entrance to our school. In addition, students were able to watch Deanne Newland paint a beautiful mural on an outdoor wall of our hall, to beautify the area.

- Mrs Brownsmith conducted technology club again this year, catering for students with a particular interest in this area.

- The choir, led by Mrs Hambleton, gave up a lot of their lunch times to learn songs, while students in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 experienced singing and music lessons in their own classrooms.

- A group of 23 students from Years 3 to 6 participated in Star Struck this year. The students and staff involved gave up many hours rehearsing and performing. Many parents and friends of the school assisted with costuming and transport.

A full copy of the school's 2013 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the P and C. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.
• Public Speaking has become a regular focus at Blacksmiths PS, with our school again holding our own Public Speaking competition at a class and school level, with our winners representing at Galgabba and Zone competitions.

• Several Stage 2? and 3 students also attended a “Capapillars” day at our local high school, along with other Galgabba schools. They participated in activities such as Visual Arts, Drama, Dance, Music and Photography.

• Miss Young worked with students from across the school in three dance groups. These groups were inclusive of any student wishing to participate, and allowed the older students to mentor the younger students.

• Throughout the year, students from Kinder to Year 5 have had the opportunity to see “Emily Eye Finger” and “Possum Magic” at the Civic Theatre, as well as the musical “Grease”, at the Lyric Theatre in Sydney.

**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 outcomes in 2013.

In swimming, the school was again successful in winning both the Zone Small Schools Trophy and the Handicap Points Score Trophy. This is the eighth year in a row the school has won both these trophies. Five students qualified for the Regional Carnival while two students also qualified and competed at the State Championships.

In Cross Country, for the 12th year in a row, the school won both the Zone Small Schools Trophy and the Handicap Points Score Trophy. Five students went on to represent at Regional level, with one student qualifying and competing at the State Championships.

In Athletics, the school won the Small Schools and Handicap Points Score Trophies at the Zone Carnival. Three students then qualified for the Regional Carnival.

The Blacksmiths Bulls Rugby League team again competed in the Paul Harragon Cup, only narrowly losing one game on the day.

One student then went on to earn selection as halfback for the N.S.W. Invitational Rugby League team where he travelled to Perth to compete in the week-long national competition. This was the second year in a row that a Blacksmiths Public School student was selected as the halfback for the N.S.W. Rugby League team.

For the first time Blacksmiths Public School entered a netball team in the Netball N.S.W. Schools Cup. The Blacksmiths Breakers won five out of their six games, narrowly missing the finals. One student also earned selection in the Eastlakes Macquarie Netball Team.

Blacksmiths also entered four mixed touch football teams and four mixed netball teams at local gala day events, with all teams very successful. One boy was also selected in the Eastlakes P.S.S.A. Touch Football squad.

Blacksmiths Public School also organized and held a soccer gala day and local small schools were invited to participate on the day. This day was specifically designed to provide sporting experiences for the students in Stage 1.

Our school continued its participation in the Premiers’ Sports Leadership Program, where students demonstrating leadership qualities were given the opportunity to develop their skills in a variety of sports.
Other
During the year, students participated in a number of excursions to complement class programs and to develop valuable social skills.

- Year 6 students enjoyed an end of year two day excursion to Point Woolstoncroft Sport and Recreation Camp, experiencing a number of activities including sailing, kayaking, archery and high ropes.
- Years 3-6 participated in an excursion to the Royal Easter Show which added to their understanding of the Sustainable Living program conducted throughout the school.
- K-2 travelled to Oakdale Farm where they enjoyed ....
- Year 6 students enjoyed a day at the Science and Engineering Challenge, run by the University of Newcastle, which involved challenging problem solving tasks.
- Years 3-5 enjoyed an excursion to the Civic Theatre, Newcastle to watch a live performance of Emily Eye Finger, a novel the classes had read.
- K-2 students enjoyed a performance of Possum Magic at the Civic Theatre, Newcastle.

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 these 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)

In 2013, our school’s NAPLAN results were, once again, pleasing.

Of particular note is the growth from Year 3 to Year 5 in numeracy. In all areas of numeracy assessed, 46% of our students achieved in the top two bands, an increase from 24% in 2012.

The My School website provides detailed information and data for national literacy and numeracy testing (NAPLAN).

Click on the link http://www.myschool.edu.au and enter the school name in the Find a school and select GO.

Significant programs and initiatives
Aboriginal education

Aboriginal education is addressed at both classroom and whole school level.

In the classroom, Aboriginal history and perspectives are included as part of HSIE units on Australian history, Science and Technology units as appropriate and where relevant during other Key Learning Areas, eg. studies of Aboriginal art and literacy.

On a Staff Development Day at the end of Term 4, 2012, staff attended a professional learning day to investigate Aboriginal sites of significance in the local area. Staff have utilised the stories and concepts gained in their classroom lessons.

Aboriginal perspectives are also addressed at a whole school level at various times throughout the year, including Australia Day, Harmony Day and NAIDOC Week.

All Aboriginal students have an Individual Education Program (IEP), which addresses their particular needs and is monitored on an ongoing basis.

Staff have been involved in extensive training and development on the new National English Syllabus, to be implemented in 2014, which formalises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures’ as one of the three cross-curriculum priorities. An inventory of appropriate resources has been made and will be used to direct priorities for resource spending in the coming year to support this implementation.

Multicultural education

Class and school programs include multicultural perspectives wherever relevant. Studies in HSIE in all grades help develop an appreciation for the diversity of all cultures and occasions such as Harmony Day provide the opportunity to
celebrate the cultures represented in our school community.

Senior students learn about different religions and also study specific cultures and countries, including Bali and Antarctica.

**Student Leadership**

The school continues to have a strong focus on giving students a real and meaningful voice in the decisions which affect them and their school.

Every year, four school leaders are elected by the student body. They are responsible for running assemblies and school functions, representing the school at community events and presenting student views, concerns and ideas to the principal at regular leader’s lunches.

The sport leaders, also elected by students, assist with the running of all sporting carnivals and with our annual Presentation Day.

Students also have leadership roles in environment, dance and other areas, where they are encouraged to show and develop initiative, responsibility and have a voice in decision making.

Apart from elected leaders, all students are encouraged to have an opinion, express it respectfully and to develop ideas and initiatives which may improve the school. Recently, this has included students organising fund raising events, running activities for younger students at lunch time and selecting charities for the school to support.

**Sustainability Education**

Our school has continued to be proactive in promoting sustainable living with our school community.

We have now adopted a binless program for waste management at our school. During recess and lunch eating times, students volunteer to supervise several reciprocals for students to place their food scraps and recyclable food packaging. Food scraps are either placed in buckets for the worm farms and compost and other appropriate food scraps are placed in buckets to feed chickens of staff members.

Every class and office has recycling bins for students and staff to put recyclable materials in.

Our efforts with our waste management was again recognised with our school being the recipient of the Lake Macquarie Schools Innovation Award for the second consecutive years.

The range of sustainability initiatives at our school also earned us the 2013 World Earth Hour Education Award. This great honour was celebrated by the Mayor of Lake Macquarie presenting an award to our school.

We have also continued our support of community events such as Clean Up Schools Day and having a Dress Green Day to promote the addition of a green waste bin to the rubbish and recycling bins used in the Lake Macquarie Area.

During Sustainability Education Lessons students have learnt about how our food gets from the farm to our plate, waste and landfill issues and the importance of conserving water for our future.

Students also have the opportunity to maintain native, herb and vegetable gardens within our school grounds. The installation of two new ovens in our canteen has given many students the chance to prepare, cook and enjoy food made from ingredients they have helped to grow.

**Connected Learning**

Staff and students continue to use technology extensively for teaching and learning across all curriculum areas.
In 2013 wireless technology was installed throughout the school to support the set of laptops purchased by the P&C in late 2012. This has extended the capacity for students to use hands-on devices in a range of lessons, by supplementing the eight desktop computers in each classroom as the need arises.

**Community Involvement**

Our school enjoys wonderful support from parents and the local community and we appreciate the chance for our students to be involved in community events and functions. Some results of our great relationship with the local community have been:

- Student involvement in ‘Go Green Day’, promoted by Lake Macquarie Council to launch its new green waste recycling bins. In conjunction with this, students raised funds for charity.
- Participation in ‘Jeans for Genes’ Day.
- Co-operation with Swansea High School students to support the UNICEF ‘Clean Drinking Water’ appeal.
- During Book Week, former students of Blacksmiths Public School came and read stories to the K-2 classes.
- Staff, students and families supported fundraising for the school at a community market, where students also performed.
- Fundraising by students to show our appreciation to the volunteers of the Rural Fire Service, who protected local communities in the bushfire emergency.
- Generous support once again from Pelican RSL, developing community links which allowed us to purchase equipment and develop additional programs for students.
- Year 6 students attended the Science and Engineering Challenge run by Newcastle University and Rotary. They worked in teams to solve a range of problems, and had an enjoyable day.
- Community members working in our classrooms, assisting with excursions, working in the gardens, on canteen, and participating in reading, cooking and craft classes.
- Anzac Day ceremony at both Pelican and Swansea, where our leaders participated in the ceremony and laid wreaths, and a number of students marched in parades.

**Progress on 2013 targets**

Our 2013 targets included a focus on improving literacy and numeracy outcomes for all students, and further improving numeracy outcomes for high achieving students.

**Target 1**

- Increase % of students achieving greater than or equal to expected growth in Y3-5 reading to 78% in 2013 (from 67% in 2012)
- The percentage of students achieving expected growth in Year 5-7 reading will be equal to or greater than the state average

Our achievements include:

- 65.4% of year 5 students achieved greater than or equal to expected growth in reading in 2013, which is similar to last year’s result but below our target.
- 40.7% of students achieved the expected growth in year 5-7 reading which was below the state average of 48.4%.
- All staff completed an analysis of guided reading resources to identify specific needs.
Resources were purchased to address the deficiencies and will continue to be a priority.

- Most class programs and results demonstrate effective guided reading programs are occurring
- Home reading programs operate in all classes across the school
- Class programs demonstrate differentiation to cater for needs of all students in reading
- NAPLAN style, multiple choice questions are included as part of comprehension tasks to familiarize students with format and how to answer.
- K-2 continuum being used to effectively track inference students in reading and to target individual needs.

**Target 2**

- Increase % of students achieving in top 2 bands (proficiency level) in Year 5 numeracy to 35 % in 2013 (from 24% 2010-2012 average)
- The percentage of students achieving expected growth in Year 5-7 numeracy will be equal to or greater than the state average
- At least 85% of K-2 students will achieve Early Arithmetic Strategies levels by Term 4 2013

Our achievements include:

- In 2013, 46.2% of students achieved in the top 2 bands (proficiency level) in year 5 numeracy, compared with an average of 24% in years 2010-2012.
- 42.4% of students achieved the expected growth in year 5-7 numeracy equal to or greater than the state average compared to 48.6% of students in the state.
- 100% of Kindergarten students achieved the expected Early Arithmetic Strategies levels.
- 100% of Year 1 students achieved the expected Early Arithmetic Strategies levels.
- 87% of Year 2 students achieved the expected Early Arithmetic Strategies levels.
- Staff consolidated the extensive training undertaken in 2012 with the numeracy consultant and are using a more consistent approach to the teaching of numeracy concepts.
- Teachers used NAPLAN data, SENA data and the Best Start continuum to inform programming, monitor progress and set individual targets.
- Teachers used technology as part of maths programs, enhancing student engagement.
- All staff explicitly taught problem solving strategies for word problems using Newman’s problem solving steps.
- NAPLAN style, multiple choice questions are included as part of mathematics tasks to familiarize students with format and how to answer.
- LAST teacher supported Stage 2 and 3 teachers in providing differentiated curriculum in numeracy, with a particular focus on high achieving students.
- Students were given access to and practice at high level tasks, including external competitions, problem solving tasks etc.

**School evaluation**

It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct evaluations to support the effective implementation of the school plan. In 2013 our school carried out evaluations of all areas of the literacy program across the school, which includes reading, writing and talking and listening.

**English evaluation**

**Background**

An evaluation of the English program in the school was conducted to assess consistency, professional learning needs and future directions across the school, particularly with regards to the implementation of the National syllabus. A survey was developed for parents, staff and senior students.
Findings and conclusions

Parent Survey

The parent survey focused on whether the parents were satisfied with various aspects of the literacy program across the school and whether they felt they had enough information about the National English K-10 Curriculum.

95% of parents who returned the surveys were satisfied with the reading programs in the school. One parent would “like to see more one on one help for the kids that need it”. Another respondent thought the reading programs in the younger years were “fantastic”, but was less satisfied with programs from Year 4 onwards.

One respondent was unsure about the text type writing programs in the school. All other respondents expressed satisfaction.

With regards to talking and listening programs, one respondent was unsure. All others were satisfied with current practices, although one K-2 parent suggested that students should present two speeches per year “so second time round it’s not as daunting”.

One parent was unsure about the use of technology in literacy programs. 95% expressed satisfaction.

With regards to the implementation of the National English K-10 Curriculum in 2014, 30% of parents responding felt that they were not sufficiently informed on this matter and a further 15% were unsure.

95% of respondents were satisfied with the English content of their child/ren’s homework, with one unsure.

Future directions

In 2014, in response to these findings, we will endeavour to give more information about the National English K-10 Curriculum to parents. We will use the school newsletter to inform parents about the English curriculum, its priorities and the ways in which it may change classroom practice in the school. We will also make parents aware of the training and development, both external and within the school, in which all teachers are participating to build their knowledge and expertise about the new document. The Board of Studies made available ‘Parent’s Guide to the NSW Primary Syllabuses’ for the parents of kindergarten intake for the 2014 school year. Additional copies are available for purchase from the Board’s Shop Online and would provide additional information for interested families.

With regards to one-on-one reading assistance, this will depend on staffing, student numbers and class sizes. We currently have a LAST (Learning and Support Teacher) assigned to the school for one day per week to assist all students K-6.

In terms of reading programs in the senior years, the nature of such programs changes at this stage, from instruction on how to read, towards a focus on comprehension and reading to learn.

Information about writing programs in the school will be communicated to parents via the newsletter, as the new syllabus moves away from the explicit teaching of individual text types to the generalised groupings of persuasive, informative and imaginative texts.

Teachers will endeavour to inform parents about the overall scope of the Speaking and Listening strand (formerly Talking and Listening), of which our annual public speaking competition is a small component. Within the classrooms all students are engaging in Talking and Listening activities on a regular basis. Teachers will look into the possibility of increasing opportunities to speak in public in informal presentations, such as at assembly, but the students will not compete in another formal competition, as this is organised on a Zone, rather than a school, basis.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2013 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

Parents were invited to complete a survey covering all areas of school life.

Responses were very positive, with all respondents agreeing that the children’s needs are well catered for academically.

In the sporting area, 85% of respondents were satisfied with the school’s programs and a further 5% were unsure. One parent suggested weekly or
fortnightly swimming at the local pool. Another preferred structured sport, similar to our gymnastics program, each term with a sport instructor. Two parents requested more gala days and one parent more involvement with other schools in sport while three respondents asked for more soccer. One respondent felt that all children should be included in the sporting programs and another thought that all children should “choose if they wanted to go to a gala day” so they could “try a sport and see if it is something they would like to continue”. One parent would like to see the basketball/netball/tennis court used more.

Most respondents were satisfied with the cultural opportunities at the school, i.e. art, music, public speaking, etc, although one was unsure and two disagreed. Two satisfied K-2 parents made a request for more art and music in class and more public speaking. Another said that “basic music lessons would be a bonus” and looked for “more artistic opportunities. A dissatisfied parent felt that art was not as strong as it was several years ago and that the music program was “very weak”.

90% of respondents were satisfied with the discipline and student welfare programs, with the remainder unsure. One commented positively on the “communication of any issues no matter how minor”. However, another felt that consistency was important.

In terms of technology available at the school, all but one respondent was satisfied, the other being unsure. One parent thought that “iPods or tablets would be nice”.

With regards to the environmental programs available at the school, strong support was evident from most parents, with comments including “our school is a leader in this area and it would be good to see it continue” and “love the gardening they do as my children don’t do it at home!” However, one parent was not satisfied, preferring a focus on academics and another unsure parent felt that this was “not a focus for our kid’s education”. Two respondents requested rubbish bins (we currently have a ‘binless’ school), one expressing disagreement with the school’s “nude food” policy.

In terms of other programs or opportunities parents would like to see available at the school, comments included “you are all doing a fantastic job. Thank you.” One respondent requested more financial assistance for families in need, whilst another suggested that it would be great to see more excursions, such as a rockpool excursion.

**Future directions**

In response to the findings, staff note that all students are involved in the school sporting program, which involves daily class P.E. and a sport session once a week, where a range of skills, team games and sports are sampled. Operating structured sports every term would be expensive and would limit the sporting range available, making it impossible meet curriculum requirements due to time constraints.

Extra-curricular activities offered include a range of gala days (although the t-ball and soccer gala days were cancelled by the zone in 2013), knock-out competitions in netball and rugby league and Active After School Care, where three staff members undertook additional training to supervise, on a voluntary basis, the provision of a range of eight different sports for one term each, provided free to students after school hours in 2013. Staff will consider the possibility of participation in further gala days in 2014.

A survey was sent to all parents in Term 4, 2013, to ascertain the level of need for swimming lessons for identified non-swimmers. If a need is identified, staffing issues and parent assistance will determine if remedial lessons are feasible.

Creative and Practical Arts programs are part of the K-6 syllabus and are run according to curriculum requirements. Staff will overview their class programs in the light of parent suggestions. In 2013, a mural project was undertaken across the school, which involved all students contributing by making and painting a clay tile.

The school trialed running externally sourced guitar lessons in 2011 which were discontinued due to lack of support.

To address concerns raised about discipline and student welfare programs, staff will review the relevant policies in staff development meetings in 2014, to ensure that consistency is maintained across the school.

The possibility of purchasing a small number of iPads was investigated in late 2012. The advice that we received at that time suggested that we wait for further developments. Additionally, the school would need to depend on fundraising by
the P&C to purchase sufficient numbers of these expensive devices.

With regards to the issue of environment as an educational priority, the new English K-6 National Curriculum identifies ‘Sustainability’ as one of the three cross-curriculum priorities mandatory for all schools Australia-wide to “enable students to develop understanding about and address the contemporary issues they face” (P. 27). Our school’s environment program allows students to learn about these issues in real life situations, not just in theory in the classroom. Staff will attempt to address individual parent concerns.

Professional learning
All staff were involved in professional learning throughout the year, in a range of areas, based on needs identified in the school plan, mandatory training and individual needs.

Literacy was the main focus area for the staff in 2013. This included workshops on grammar, vocabulary, comprehension and visual literacy.

All staff were involved in a Local Management Group training day, introducing the new National English Syllabus K-10. Subsequent training and development sessions expanded on staff’s knowledge of the new curriculum.

Two teachers participated in a session on Visual Literacy and the New English Syllabus, before sharing with the staff.

The district Best Start co-ordinator was engaged to consult with staff and present an overview of updates of the Best Start Continuum at a staff development day.

Three staff members trained to supervise and implement the Active After School program that ran two afternoons per week throughout the year.

One staff member attended an eT4L workshop to learn about and implement the updated technology infrastructure and the migration of computers to the new server throughout the school.

The Learning and Support Teacher (LAST) training included sessions on complex learning difficulties, the York Assessment for Reading Comprehension, extending the Best Start Continuum to high school and supporting students in Out of Home Care. Training on Autism Spectrum Disorder was also undertaken.

Other external professional learning activities included courses on classroom management through effective instruction, Money Matters (developing financial literacy) and a New Scheme Teacher seminar.

School planning 2012—2014
The school planning policy provides direction for the preparation and implementation of school plans including the identification of priority areas, intended outcomes and targets that are consistent with the NSW State Plan and the Department’s planning documents.

School priority 1
Outcome for 2012–2014
Improve school results in literacy

2014 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

- Increase % of students achieving greater than or equal to expected growth in Y3-5 reading to 78% in 2014 (from 67% in 2012-13)
- The percentage of students achieving expected growth in Year 5-7 reading will be equal to or greater than the state average

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Provide staff with time for shared programming and evaluation of guided reading programs to share staff expertise and promote consistency.
- Access staff training in curriculum differentiation in reading to ensure that individual needs are being catered for.
- Allocate some LAST time to support staff in providing differentiated curriculum in reading, with a particular focus on comprehension.
- Include NAPLAN style, multiple choice questions as part of comprehension tasks, and explicitly teach skills for answering.
- Implement intensive reading program in Kindergarten to develop early reading skills.
• Access T & D and staff sharing time as required to up skill staff in integrating technology into reading programs in line with the new syllabus.

• Teachers implement comprehension strategies (Super 6) from training and development Term 4, 2013.

• Monitor staff skills and student needs in an ongoing manner to ensure that LAST role is flexible and responsive to emergent needs.

• Evaluate current resources available for guided reading and purchase new ones as needed, with a particular focus on digital and multimedia texts, the cross-curriculum priorities of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia.

School priority 2

Outcome for 2012–2014

Improve school numeracy results

Improve outcomes and achievements for high achieving students

2014 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

• The percentage of students achieving expected growth in Year 5-7 numeracy will be equal to or greater than the state average.

• Maintain % of students achieving in top 2 bands (proficiency level) in Year 5 numeracy at a minimum of 35 % in 2014 (increase from 24% 2010-2012 to 35% achieved in 2013).

• At least 85% of K-2 students will achieve grade appropriate Early Arithmetic Strategies levels by Term 4, 2014.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

• Analyse NAPLAN and school based data to identify individual and school based needs, then use data to program to meet needs.

• NAPLAN style questions included in numeracy teaching and learning programs from Years 1-6, with teachers explicitly teaching skills for answering.

• LAST teacher supports Stage 2 and 3 teachers in numeracy to support curriculum differentiation, with a particular focus on catering for high achieving students.

• Technology used to engage, remediate and extend students in numeracy.

• Purchase ICT resources as required to support teaching and learning in numeracy.

• Continue to implement strategies learnt from training and development in 2013 across school, including Newman’s problem solving steps and clearly defining learning goals e.g. WALT, (What are we learning today?) and WILF (What am I looking for?).

• Provide differentiated numeracy homework for high achieving students.

• Give students access to and practice at high level tasks, including external competitions, problem solving tasks etc.

• All K-2 staff trained in use of Learning Continuum and keeping abreast of updates.

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: