Our school at a glance

Students

In 2011 enrolment reached a peak of 880 girls with a high demand for places in Year 7. Families beyond our local area are very keen to have their daughters enrol and we are very proud of the school’s reputation that has created this strong demand.

92% of students were from Language Backgrounds Other than English (LBOTE) comprising a diverse range of cultural backgrounds which represent 45 language and 19 religious groups. The majority of students are from Arabic, Vietnamese, Chinese, Turkish and Pacific Islander backgrounds.

The total average attendance rate for Years 7-12 is 92.4%. This is significantly higher than the state rate (89.2%) and reflects our highly effective attendance monitoring strategies introduced over the past 6 years.

Seventy five per cent of our 2009 Year 10 cohort completed Year 12 in 2011; a retention rate significantly higher than that of local schools and schools across the state (64.4%).

Staff

In 2011 our teaching staff totaled 76 (20% males and 80% females) and an additional 11 school assistants. Experience ranges from early career teachers to teachers with many years of experience. All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Significant programs and initiatives

The second year as part of the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership provided the funding and flexibility for initiatives including: the employment of additional specialised staff; the provision of innovative models for additional targeted Teacher Professional Learning (TPL); the strengthening of an academic partnership with the University of Newcastle, and, the expansion of sustainable technology based infra-structure. These strategies addressed community disadvantage by enhancing student outcomes, teacher quality and community engagement.

Student achievement in 2011

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7

The school average scores were below the state average scores in all components. The area of greatest weakness was grammar and punctuation. 93.3% of students met the minimum national standard in reading and 91.3% writing.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

Overall numeracy in Year 7 was below the state average; however, 84.6% of students met the national minimum standard.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9

Year 9 achieved pleasing literacy results. The average growth for our students in all aspects of literacy far exceeded the state average growth from Year 7 to 9. Consequently, the achievement gap for Year 9 students, identified when they were tested in Year 7 in 2009, was reduced in reading, writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation. The national minimum standard in reading was achieved by 91.8% of Year 9 students.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

The numeracy results for Year 9 showed a significant reduction in the achievement gap identified in 2009. The school’s average numeracy score for Year 9 was below state average; however, the school’s average growth was 51.8 while state wide it was 39.1. The national minimum standard in numeracy was achieved by 92.3% of Year 9 students.

School Certificate

Student performance in the 2011 School Certificate was outstanding. Improvement or relative growth from Year 5 to Year 10 was significantly greater than the state growth in all courses tested.

Higher School Certificate

The 2011 Higher School Certificate results were outstanding as our average student achievement was above the state average performance in 8 courses. The school’s top HSC candidate achieved an Australian Tertiary Assessment Rank (ATAR) of 98.2 and 56% of the cohort accepted places at university.
Messages

Principal’s message

The Annual School Report is an opportunity for our school community to celebrate the considerable achievements of 2011, review our programs and describe our plans for the future.

At Birrong Girls High School we encourage students to strive to achieve personal excellence—physically, socially, emotionally and academically. Our success is reflected in the achievements described in this report.

In 2011 our school entered the second year of its four year involvement in the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership. Through the injection of significant additional funding from the Commonwealth Government, this Partnership supports a range of in and out of school reforms that are aimed at transforming the way schooling takes place in disadvantaged school communities. The partnership aims to improve student engagement and attainment, and to start to overcome disadvantage in our community.

In 2011 the school used the partnership funding to support student learning by: providing supplementary professional learning for teachers; employing additional specialist teachers; expanding the school’s ICT capacity; and promoting greater community involvement in the school.

I would like to acknowledge the strong commitment and support from parents, staff, students and community groups that have greatly contributed to the school’s successes and achievements throughout 2011.

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.

Jenni Wilkins

P & C message

The P&C is a small but committed and active part of Birrong Girls High School. It has been rewarding to see the opportunities and developments we have assisted in providing our girls throughout the year.

I would like to share with you some of the events we have been involved in during 2011:

- continued support in the allocation of funding from the Priority Schools Program;
- contributions towards students personal sporting endeavours;
- discussions with teachers and senior staff regarding the direction of school plans and programs;
- the provision of school book packs for Year 7 students, and;
- the presentation of scholastic awards at the annual presentation day.

Our congratulations go to those students who achieved to the best of their ability this year academically or in any other area of endeavour.

I would like to thank all the members of the P&C and the teachers who attend our regular meetings for their efforts and their time. At the end of 2011 we said good bye and thank you to some valued and long serving members of the P&C as their girls completed the HSC and moved on to tertiary education.

Without the contributions and ongoing support of the parents involved in the P&C, the school would not receive the additional resources that go to improving our girl’s learning environment. I encourage all parents to take an active role in their daughter’s education by participating in the P&C and contributing to governance of the school.

Heather Reinke

On behalf of the P&C
Student representative’s message

2011 was a very rewarding and successful year for the Student Representative Council (SRC).

Our areas of focus for 2011 were student leadership, community interaction and the ongoing support of various charity organisations.

The SRC played an active role in encouraging students to participate in a variety of activities and charity initiatives such as 40 Hour Famine and Breast Cancer Awareness Day. The SRC also supported Stewart House, and held a maroon day to raise money for the rebuilding of schools affected by the Queensland floods.

We continued to support our school’s sponsor child Sabina Obedi, from Tanzania by running chocolate drives. The SRC have supported Sabina since 2005 and are regularly updated on her progress. We are delighted to learn that she is continuing to make excellent academic progress.

Members of the SRC were given the opportunity to represent the school and apply our leadership skills at a variety of conferences throughout the year. We have participated in regular inter school meetings where we listened to motivational guest speakers and exchanged ideas with other student leaders in our region. One of our students attended the State SRC Camp and the Global Leadership Summit in the USA. We also represented the school at the Global Leadership Convention, Harmony Day celebrations at the Bankstown Arts Centre and the International Women’s Day Breakfast.

Within the school the SRC has acted on suggestions put forward by the student body to improve the school environment. We have assisted with and catered for Parent Teacher Evenings and we have also teamed up with Year 11 students to respond to the International Water Crisis by raising money to build a well in Bangladesh.

The SRC 2011
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

Structure of classes

In Years 7 and 8 (Stage 4) classes were organised to provide a targeted support class for less able students and a targeted extension class for more able students with the remaining classes as mixed ability. This provided greater strategic and systematic learning support for students.

Retention to Year 12

Post-school destinations

The 2011 post-school destination data showed that a total of 78% of students gained entry to tertiary studies; 56% of students were offered university placements.

Management of non-attendance

Attendance is above state and regional rates because of the highly effective attendance monitoring system that incorporates regular and consistent contact with parents or guardians through the text messaging system, acknowledgment of students with outstanding attendance records and early intervention and support from regional Home School Liaison Officers.
Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

In 2011 26% of Year 12 students studied at least one Vocational Education Training (VET) course delivered at the school; 6.5% of the Year 12 cohort studied Business Services, 12% Retail and 7% Hospitality.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

100% of the 123 students in Year 12 attained an HSC in 2011. In addition, 6.5% of the Year 12 cohort achieved a Certificate II in Business Services, 7% achieved a Statement of Attainment towards a Certificate II in Hospitality, 10% achieved a Certificate II in Retail and 2% achieved a Statement of Attainment towards a Certificate II in Retail.

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

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<td>Principal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal(s)</td>
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<td>Head Teachers</td>
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<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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</table>

In 2011 additional staffing supplementation through the Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP) and the Low Socioeconomic National Partnership Program allowed the appointment of 3.7 additional support teachers and 2 additional Head Teachers.

Under the Digital Education Revolution (DER) program a full-time Technology Support Officer was employed to support the school’s laptop program.

No members of the teaching or support staff are from an indigenous Australian background.

Staff retention

Staff retention remains very strong at Birrong Girls High School. In 2011 one Head Teacher relocated interstate, another relinquished the position and after many years of dedicated service to the school one Head Teacher, a classroom teacher and the careers adviser retired.

Teacher qualifications

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Qualifications</th>
<th>% of staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Degree or Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</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.

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<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
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<td>Tied funds</td>
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<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
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<td>Trust receipts</td>
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<td>Canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>2 267 540.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**            |            |
| Teaching & learning        |            |
| Key learning areas         | 151 085.85 |
| Excursions                 | 82 534.55  |
| Extracurricular dissections| 49 985.95  |
| Library                    | 2 950.00   |
| Training & development     | 4 531.88   |
| Tied funds                 | 721 472.55 |
| Casual relief teachers     | 107 209.86 |
| Administration & office    | 216 809.78 |
| School-operated canteen    | 0.00       |
| Utilities                  | 98 334.31  |
| Maintenance                | 94 758.59  |
| Trust accounts             | 43 653.27  |
| Capital programs           | 75 479.47  |
| **Total expenditure**      | 1 648 806.06 |

| Balance carried forward    | $618 734.72 |

A full copy of the school’s 2011 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2011

Achievements

Arts

Birrong Girls High School continues to enjoy strong representation in the creative and performing arts in school and regional performances and exhibitions. Our junior student musicians were introduced to the pleasure of music through keyboard and guitar. Many girls enjoyed playing the percussion to learn the basics. Our senior student musicians have continued to present creative and highly polished performances.

The highlight of the year was the CAPA Extravaganza in Term 4 where selected art works were exhibited and musical items performed while friends and parents enjoyed the hospitality of the TAS students. The diverse musical talents of our students featured soloists and elective musical ensembles. The junior soloists delighted the audience with a range of vocal performances and senior vocalists performed various repertoires from a wide range of genres. This event also showcased the creativity and versatility of our art students with exhibits in painting, photography, multimedia, mixed media and pottery.

CAPA Extravaganza Performance

2011 was a very busy year for the Drama classes. Students took every opportunity to develop their acting, improvising and playbuilding skills by performing in a variety of contexts, including assemblies, intimate lunchtime performances and evening performances in the Little Theatre. Often, these performances involved associated skills such as promotion and poster design.
Through the medium of drama, students closely explored issues relating to Women’s Experience and presented their self-devised performances at assembly. Some topics studied closely included: Mime, Melodrama, Improvisation, Playbuilding, Design Elements and Close Study of Scripts. Our girls are very fortunate to be able to ‘walk in the shoes of another’ for a part of their school lives.

**Year 10 Drama**

The most notable theatre excursions were Lawler’s ‘Summer of the Seventeenth Doll’ and Shakespeare’s ‘As You Like It’ at Belvoir St Theatre, Sydney. These experiences introduced the universal and challenging themes that have kept Shakespeare’s work alive today and first introduced students to iconic Australian theatre.

**Public Speaking**

In Term 1 of 2011, Birrong Girls High School held its annual Henrietta Wooster Public Speaking competition. All Years 7-10 participated in the competition. The topic for 2011 had students had students persuading the audience on a given issue. The junior winner for the year was Betty Nguyen of Year 9 and the senior winner was Amanda Chaouk of Year 10. In May, Michelle Tran and Samantha Reinke of Year 10, competed in the Sydney Morning Herald Plain English Speaking Competition at Bass High School, an interschool competition for students from Years 10 to 12. The students performed well and enjoyed the experience.

In Term 3, Helay Zarmati and Betty Nguyen of Year 9, competed in the Legacy Junior Public Speaking Competition, an interschool competition for students in Years 7 to 9.

The annual Premier’s Debating Challenge commenced with a workshop which gave students the opportunity to develop their skills in such areas as manner, method and rebuttal. Debating teams then enthusiastically participated in the competition for their relevant age groups. Debates were challenging and thought provoking, the school’s teams often experiencing a successful outcome. The highlight of the debating year was reaching the final of the South Western Sydney Region competition. The finalists were: Destiny Valencia, Indra McKie, Aveen Yaseen, Christina Le and Melody Bonorchis. Destiny Valencia was also invited to join the South Western Sydney Regional Representative Team which competed against regions across the state in a competition held at Sydney University.

2011 saw the continuation of Teen Zine, an e-zine or electronic magazine created by a team of Year 10 students with the assistance of Ms Brown. The zine included short stories, poetry and reviews by students of all years. The zine team, consisting of Kathleen Wynter, Isabel Tran, Rowena Leung, Christina Le, Hanan Rahmany and Eman Gourani, worked together to promote, design, edit and write articles for the initiative, improving on skills developed in the previous year.

During Literacy Week students honed their writing skills and made creative contributions to the school’s *Stellar* publication. In Term 3 the English Faculty writing competition was well supported. The year’s theme was ‘better than chocolate’. Categories were senior poetry, senior prose, junior poetry and junior prose. Students were able to explore the techniques they had learned in their English classes and put this into practice in unique pieces of writing. Entries ranged from traditional narratives to post-modern pieces.
**Sport**

Our school Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country carnivals were great successes in 2011. Attendance and participation was of a high standard. A number of students went on to represent our school at Zone, Regional and State levels.

*Swimming Carnival*

Years 7-10 participated in an integrated sport program which developed students’ confidence by focusing on fundamental skills. Swimming school was held for Year 8 and both Years 7 and 8 also took part in field day events. Years 9 and 10 PASS students gained valuable leadership experience in their roles as leaders and coaches, assisting local primary schools in carnivals and field events.

*Athletics Carnival*

The Year 8 Jump Rope for Heart program raised $2500 for the National Heart Foundation.

The PDHPE display in Term 2 demonstrated to the wider community various styles of dance and culminated in an evening performance for our parents and community.

*PDHPE Display*

Year 10 PDHPE Display Champions

Success was achieved by students in Touch Football, Basketball, Softball, Netball, Lawn Bowls and Volleyball.

*Year 10 PDHPE Display Champions*

*Touch Football Team*
The Pierre de Coubertin Award was presented to the Sports Captain, Lisa Qiu, for her performances in sport, particularly table tennis, and for exhibiting the spirit of the Olympics at school level.

Throughout the year many students participated in a variety of sporting events. Laura and Lisa Qiu won the Senior Division of the Table Tennis NSW Secondary School Girls Challenge Cup for the second year in succession.

_Pierre de Coubertin Award Recipient_

During Term 3 our school participated in the Secondary Schools Bring it on Dance Competition, a state wide competition between all school sectors. Our team, comprising students from all year groups, displayed excellent skills and creativity and reached the finals.

_NSW Table Tennis Champions_
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)
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)

Enrolment in Year 7 each year includes students from more than 30 different primary schools and this means that our students arrive in Year 7 with great variation in their literacy and numeracy skills because of factors including: primary school experience; socio-economic status; language and cultural background, and, ability level.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7

The components of literacy tested are: reading, writing, spelling, and grammar and punctuation.

The best areas of Year 7’s literacy performance were writing and spelling, although all components were below state averages. The average writing score in Year 7 was 520.3 (compared with 509.4 for the region).
The area of greatest weakness for Year 7 was grammar and punctuation where the average score was 497.4 (compared with 538.4 for the state). The average reading score in Year 7 was 500.0 (compared with 544.2 for the state).

Year 7 achievement levels in reading and grammar and punctuation are of concern and are addressed in the school plan.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

The 2 components of numeracy tested are: number, patterns and algebra; and, measurement, data, space and geometry.

The average numeracy mark in Year 7 was 498.8, well below the state average of 550.4. Year 7 numeracy achievement levels are of concern and are addressed in the school plan.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9

Year 9’s average scores were above the state average scores in writing and spelling.
Progress in literacy

The Year 9 results were pleasing as they show that significant gains have been made in reducing the literacy gap that was evident when the same students were tested in Year 7 in 2009.

The gaps in achievement in writing and spelling were overcome i.e. the Year 9 average scores exceeded the state averages in these components.

The greatest improvement was made in the grammar and punctuation component of literacy from Year 7 to Year 9; Year 9 (158 students) are 25 scale scores above the state average growth in the test aspect of grammar and punctuation. The state average in grammar and punctuation was not exceeded; however, the gap has been greatly reduced. This improvement indicates a high level of quality teaching across the school over the past two years.

Those students in the lowest bands for literacy in Year 9 continue to receive additional specialist teaching support.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

The average numeracy mark in Year 9 was 560.0, well below the state average of 592.3.

Only 18.6% performed in the top two bands in numeracy compared with 28.6% of students across the state.

Progress in numeracy

The progress in numeracy for Year 9 from Year 7 was very pleasing. The average growth or improvement in numeracy for our Year 9 students exceeded the state average growth (44.4 compared to 37.7 for the state), which indicates high quality numeracy teaching across the school. This growth was sufficient to reduce the numeracy achievement gap but not to overcome it completely. The Year 9 numeracy average (560.6) is still below the state average (592.3).

Those students still in the lowest achievement bands for numeracy were provided with additional specialist teaching support throughout the year to assist them to improve their numeracy skills.

School Certificate

In the School Certificate the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Performance Band 1 (lowest) to Performance Band 6 (highest).

In English, 34.2% of Birrong’s School Certificate candidates performed in the top two bands compared with the state 32.6%.

The school’s average SC results were slightly above state average in Australian History Civics and Citizenship and in this course 27.1% of the school’s candidates performed in the top two bands compared with the state 21.3%.
School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)

A student’s School Certificate relative performance is a measure of the progress the student has made compared with students who performed at a similar level in the Year 5 Basic Skills Test. Relative performance is often referred to as value-added performance. By definition, state average value-added is zero. A positive relative performance means a student is performing above expectations.

Birrong Girls High School has a history of adding significant value to student achievement over time; however, the graph shows the outstanding average relative performance for students in each of the School Certificate external tests in 2011. The relative growth in performance (value-added) was very significantly above the state and LSG average growth in all courses. Very strong growth was achieved in Australian History, Civics and Citizenship and Computer Skills.

Higher School Certificate

In 2011, 123 students sat for the Higher School Certificate examinations in 31 courses. The results for these students were outstanding.

The strength of the 2011 HSC cohort was demonstrated by the 22 students named on the Board of Studies’ Distinguished Achievers’ List for 45 credits (band 6 or above 90 in a course) in the following 19 courses: Ancient History, Biology, Business Studies, Chinese Background Speakers, Economic, English (Advanced), English (Standard), General Mathematics, Mathematics, Mathematics Ext 1, Mathematics Ext 2, History Extension, Hospitality, Japanese Beginners, Legal Studies, PDHPE, Society & Culture, Studies of Religion 1 and Textiles & Design. Student results in 71% of courses were at or above state level.

56% our 2011 HSC class were offered places at university for 2012 and achieved very high Australian Tertiary Achievement Ranks (ATAR). The highest ATAR was 98.2.

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<td>71.9</td>
<td></td>
<td>71.8</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)

HSC relative performance is a measure of the progress the student has made compared with students who performed at a similar level in the School Certificate (SC). Relative performance is often referred to as value-added performance.

The average relative performance shown in the graph below is for all students in the school in all their HSC courses. It has been calculated separately for students in the lower, middle and upper SC performance bands. By definition, state average value-added is zero. The relative performance for our HSC students in 2011 was well above the state average and our Local School Group (LSG) for students in all performance bands.

When the Year 12 HSC results of 2011 are compared with those achieved by the same students in the 2009 SC results, the average growth or value-added achieved by Birrong Girls was 3.2 points higher than the state level for similar ability students. This excellent performance continues a positive trend that has been evident at the school since 2001.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students included)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students included)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Spelling</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Numeracy</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

Five students of indigenous background (Years 7, 9 and 11) were enrolled at Birrong Girls High School in 2011. An individual learning plan to identify strengths, target areas for improvement, set academic and personal goals was developed for each student. Regular interviews to monitor progress were held with the early intervention teacher throughout the year.

One student in Year 11, participated in *How Big are your Dreams?* This is a youth program for indigenous high school students in the Greater Sydney Area. The program is delivered through a partnership between the University of Technology, Sydney, Gilbert & Tobin Lawyers and Tranby Aboriginal College. The student has been awarded a scholarship to a boarding school, which she believed would help her focus on studying for the HSC. At the end of 2011 a Year 9 student submitted her “dream” to the program. She has yet to find out whether her application has been successful.

Mr Choolburra’s Dance Workshop

Particular highlights in 2011 were the NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week special assemblies where speakers and an indigenous performer reflected on our indigenous legacy through sharing ideas about Aboriginal culture and history. The NAIDOC Week assembly, organised by the indigenous students, featured the talented indigenous dancer, musician and story teller, Sean Choolburra. Indigenous and non indigenous students spent time with Mr Choolburra, a performer with the Bangarra dance company, who shared his Aboriginal heritage through a dance workshop.

Throughout 2011, staff continued to consolidate the teaching of Aboriginal culture and history as well as contemporary indigenous issues across all Key Learning Areas.

Multicultural education

92% of students were from a range of cultural backgrounds representing 45 language groups, the majority of families being from Arabic, Chinese, Vietnamese, Polynesian and Turkish backgrounds. Given the rich diversity of our student population, the value of understanding, tolerance and inclusion underpins all aspects of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning programs integrate multicultural perspectives to develop the knowledge, skills and understandings required for a culturally diverse society. 1.8 ESL teachers supported students from language backgrounds other than English through team teaching and targeted programs.

National partnership programs

In 2011 our school entered the second year of its four year involvement in the Low Socio-economic Status School Communities National Partnership. Through significant additional funding, the Partnership supports a range of in and out of school reforms that are aimed at transforming the way schooling takes place in disadvantaged school communities. The Partnership aims to improve student engagement and attainment, and to start to overcome disadvantage in our community. The key reform areas in the Partnership require schools to focus on teacher quality, improvement in student outcomes and strengthened community engagement.

A rigorous evaluation was conducted in late 2010 of those strategies and programs that had been implemented throughout the year. This evaluation identified a number of highly successful strategies and some areas in need of further improvement within the reform areas. Following the evaluation the school devised and implemented a 2011 School Plan which included a number of successful existing strategies, improved programs and new initiatives. The most significant of these included:

- the employment of additional staff including: two additional Head Teachers (Technology and Creative and Performing Arts); support
teachers for team teaching with targeted classes; part-time early intervention teacher to assist at risk students; full-time ICT technical support officer; and, full-time School Learning Support Officers to support students undertaking Life Skills program.

- the provision of additional targeted Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) by: embedding TPL in teacher allocation and using the Learn, Apply, Tell and Embed (LATE) after hours model, to develop teacher capacity in quality teaching, ICT and data analysis for improved student achievement
- the expansion of an academic partnership established in 2010 with the Faculty of Education at the University of Newcastle to provide additional support for the broad and sustained application by teachers of the NSW Quality Teaching Framework
- the expansion of sustainable technology based infra-structure including: cabling, wireless connectivity, remote access, interactive whiteboards and laptops.

The Evaluation Report, completed late in 2011 following reviews of these initiatives, indicated that they were successful at improving student outcomes, teacher quality and community engagement. This report informed the development of the 2012-2014 School Plan.

Other programs

Priority Schools Program (PSP)

The PSFP staffing supplementation was used to employ a learning support teacher 4 days a week (.8) focusing on Numeracy and learning support teacher 1 day a week (.2) focusing on literacy. These teachers provided intensive individual support for students requiring remediation in these areas. They worked in targeted classes in Years 7 and 8 with the allocated classroom teacher. Occasionally, small groups of students were withdrawn to address specific issues in numeracy such as measurement, data, space and geometry.

The remaining 1.1 staffing supplementation was allocated to reduced class sizes in Year 8. This facilitated the formation of two smaller targeted classes for students whose performance in national testing was generally under national benchmarks in literacy and numeracy.

PSFP funding supported the implementation of programs and initiatives to improve literacy, numeracy and student engagement. This was achieved in the following ways:

- The employment of a speech therapist two days a week to develop language processing, listening and auditory awareness skills
- Facilitation of a homework centre staffed by two teachers four times a week from 3pm-5pm
- Access to Mathletics and Spelladrome programs which use e-learning to engage students in numeracy and literacy, specifically spelling, activities
- The purchase of a mobile electronic whiteboard to support contextual understanding and promote interactive learning
- The purchase of student diaries to support organisational skills and engagement in junior students
- Author, Erin Vincent, presented an inspiring talk to students at assembly and conducted writing workshops for students interested in developing their creative writing skills
- The purchase of additional library books to promote reading for pleasure and to support student research skills
- Implementation of a Rewards Day to celebrate excellent attendance and punctuality.

2011 NAPLAN results suggest that these strategies have been successful. Year 9 average scores in writing and spelling were above state average and significant gains have been made in grammar and punctuation from Year 7 to Year 9. Improvement in numeracy is also evident with Year 9 students exceeding state average growth.

Student leadership program

Students continue to be involved in school governance through the prefects and the SRC in public relations; in programs such as peer support and peer tutor reading; and in a range of committees including the finance committee, the PSFP committee, the environment team and Amnesty International team.
The prefect body worked cohesively in fundraising, chairing assemblies and organising activities which supported our Code of Behaviour and Values. They inspired students with their assembly presentations on female role models and encouraged students to live by our school motto, ‘Ad Astra’. Aware of their civic responsibilities, they raised $2400 for Westmead Children’s Hospital and the Cancer Council. SRC students showed great leadership skills in profiling school values and working towards a better world through their child sponsorship program. Conscious also of the need to support families at a more local level, the SRC was also instrumental in raising $930 for the Queensland Flood Appeal and $250 for Stewart House.

Connected Learning

182 students were issued laptops this year as part of the Federal Government Digital Education Revolution initiative. The total number of laptops issued to students in Years 9, 10 and 11 totals 509.

In the third year of the DER program laptops have become an important and effective feature of high quality teaching and learning in the school.

Growing Communities Together Project

In late 2011 students from Year 7-10 participated in a research study that was conducted jointly by The Benevolent Society and the University of Western Sydney. The aim of the research was to measure a range of variables that contribute to social capital outcomes of students as well as education, health and well being outcomes for students in the Bankstown and Gorokan regions of NSW. More than 1300 students participated in the study.

The study was based on recent research that shows that those communities in disadvantaged locations that have high social capital tend to function in ways that reduce the effects of disadvantage, while others low in social capital tend to become entrenched in disadvantage.

Birrong students reported higher levels of school belonging and lower levels of discrimination than students from other schools in the study. They also demonstrated more positive future life goals including: doing well in school work; completing Year 12; going to university; and, having a job they would enjoy. The high social capital shown by the students is a very pleasing result and should help lead to the achievement of positive outcomes in the future.
Vocational education and School to Work (VET)

In Vocational Education four frameworks were delivered to Stage 6 students. These were Hospitality, Business Services, Sports Coaching and Retail. One teacher undertook additional training to gain qualifications to be able to deliver VET Business Services in 2012. In the HSC, Hospitality students performed well with one student achieving a Band 6. In Retail and Business Services, the highest band achieved by students was Band 5.

Hospitality students

Mandatory training and development was undertaken by all VET teachers delivering courses to maintain currency and to ensure that VET was being delivered to the standard required by the Registered Training Organisation, South West Sydney Region Department of Training. Nine teachers are qualified to deliver VET and of those 7 teachers taught Stage 6 VET Frameworks courses in 2011. Three students received SWSR VET awards and three students received Rotary district VET Awards as an acknowledgment of exemplary participation both in course work and in workplace.

Rotary district VET Awards

School to Work provided career information, an understanding of employment related skills, subject selection guidance and transition planning for students from Years 7 to 12. A Business Partnership was established between Birrong Girls High School and Bankstown Council. Through work placements and mentoring programs which provided outstanding opportunities for Year 11 students studying Business Services, students gained a detailed understanding of Business Services across a variety of areas administered by Bankstown Council.

Bankstown Council Business Partnership

All students in Years 7 - 9 participated in online School to Work activities delivered by KLA teachers and by the careers teacher. Students in Years 10 to 12 maintained an online log book and participated in interviews with the Careers teachers. Interviews and students’ completion of the Careers - Transition from Stage 5 to Stage 6 booklet, encouraged significantly more students to undertake work experience. Universities and career expos assisted students in their career path planning.
Progress on 2011 targets

Target 1
To improve student achievement in literacy, numeracy, School Certificate and HSC.

Our achievements include:

- 11% of Year 9 students in top 2 bands in reading in 2011 (ie. achieving proficiency standard). Note - Regional target for students in PSP schools = 7.2%
- 57.4% of Year 9 students achieved expected growth in reading; however, average scaled score growth = 44.4 significantly higher than state growth = 37.1.
- The number of Year 9 students in the bottom two bands in grammar and punctuation decreased by 4%. (ie. Decrease from Band 4&5 Yr 7 2009 = 33% to Band 5&6 Yr 9 2011 = 29%. Note Band 5&6 Yr 9 2010 = 30%)
- The proportion of Year 9 students who achieved expected growth in grammar and punctuation improved by 4.7% from 61.5% (2010) to 66.2% (2011)
- An average of 25% of students achieved in the top 2 Bands in all SC subjects. It should be noted that 34.2% of students were in the top two bands in English
- HSC results showed significant overall improvement. 71% of course averages were at or above state averages compared to 62% in 2010.

Target 2
To improve student satisfaction and engagement and student retention rates from Year 10–12.

Our achievements include:

- 56% of Year 11 and 53% of Yr 12 students surveyed in 2011 results felt they were offered a wide choice of subjects.
- 75.8% retention rate from 2009 SC to 2011 HSC (of those not retained 11% to TAFE, 8% other schools, 2% interstate/OS, and 4% work or apprenticeship) State retention for same cohort = 64.4%. Improvement on 2007 SC to 2009 HSC school retention rate = 73.9%

Target 3
All teachers familiar with Quality Teaching (QT) framework and utilise QT coding sheets and assessment practices.

Our achievements include:

- Implementation of TPL plans and programs informed by QT surveys
- KLA/Team management plans, programs, classroom practice, range of assessment tasks and feedback to students reflect the QT Framework and use of QT lesson coding sheets and assessment practices
- TPL logs show high rates of participation by teachers in flexible arrangements and quality accredited professional learning activities that build capacity and school improvement
- Academic partnership with the University of Newcastle expanded and implementation of QT framework strengthened in all KLAs

Target 4
Teachers and students utilising new technologies effectively to enhance learning.

Our achievements include:

- All teachers trained and can utilise the 35 interactive whiteboards (IWBs) in classrooms effectively
- All teachers of Years 9 - 11 use DER laptops competently
- All students utilise ICT facilities including the DER laptops to enhance their learning
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 2011 our school carried out evaluations of:

- Teacher Professional Learning, and
- Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) and Social Science QT

Educational and management practice

Teacher Professional Learning Evaluation

Background

In 2011 staff were allocated a timetabled professional learning period to enhance quality classroom practice and deep curriculum knowledge. An evaluation was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the initiative. All staff were involved in the evaluation process.

Findings and Conclusions

All staff maintained a teacher professional learning log to track and monitor progress. All professional learning activities undertaken during the designated period were closely aligned with school targets.

A survey undertaken by all staff during term two indicated very high satisfaction with timetabled professional learning time. 95% of staff stated that the teacher professional learning period was very useful and 92% endorsed the initiative by recommending that it continue in 2012.

Professional learning undertaken by staff during the timetabled period involved a range of activities. More than 50% of staff utilised the period to apply the principles of the Quality Teaching Framework to teaching and learning and 60% of staff utilised this time to develop quality teaching programs. 58% of teachers developed technology expertise while a small number participated in online learning.

Future Directions

Given the positive evaluation of the timetabled professional learning period, the initiative should continue in 2012. The establishment of the quality teaching mentor program in 2012 should complement this initiative and support the provision of customised professional learning for individual teachers. In addition, teacher professional learning logs should allow for greater flexibility to accommodate individual staff needs. Staff should be encouraged to work across key learning areas and access expert teachers both within and outside the school context to build deep curriculum knowledge and enhance teaching and learning practices.

Curriculum

Technology and Applied Studies (TAS) and Social Science QT Evaluation

Background

In 2010 all faculties worked with academics from the University of Newcastle to improve the quality of assessment tasks using the NSW Quality Teaching Framework and the 2011 School Plan described specific targets for improvement in Quality Teaching (QT) and student achievement.

To build on the 2010 work with the University and achieve the school’s 2011 targets, the teachers from the TAS and Social Science Key Learning Areas (KLAs), used action research that incorporated student, parent and teacher surveys to evaluate the quality of specific Stage 4 assessment tasks in their KLAs.

Findings and conclusions

Survey results and student grades indicated that with improved assessment criteria students were able to achieve higher learning outcomes. Parent responses indicated that although they were aware of the assessment tasks they provided only little assistance.

Where practices in relation to expectations, assessment criteria and feedback were inconsistent or not explicit, students were unable to access the task adequately and/or did not achieve a high standard. Students indicated that although the teachers in these subjects were positive and supportive, their learning could be enhanced with more emphasis on expectations and feedback.

Teachers indicated a desire to work more collegially to develop assessment tasks with explicit quality criteria and marking guidelines to ensure consistency of grading and achieve higher student learning outcomes.
Future directions

The major recommendations from the evaluations indicate that more collegial professional learning be undertaken to ensure that assessment tasks clearly incorporate the elements of the QT framework. Specific areas for focus are explicit quality criteria and high expectations. Other areas for focus are consistent practices in marking of assessment tasks and frequent, constructive and instructive feedback to students. Both KLAs have incorporated their recommendations into faculty management plans for 2012.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2011 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Year 12 students, using an online survey, described their satisfaction with the school and the programs offered and indicated that the following aspects of quality teaching in rank order were demonstrated highly by their teachers:

a. teachers who establish positive relationship with students and know, respect and understand students

b. teachers with a clear focus on learning and the provision of constructive feedback that provides accurate information on progress

c. enthusiastic teachers who create a climate whereby learning is purposeful and relevant; and,

d. teachers with fair and consistent classroom management practices that are underpinned by clear expectations.

Exit surveys taken by graduating Year 12 students and all students who ‘sign out’ of the school to relocate to other areas/schools, enrol in TAFE or take up employment opportunities overwhelmingly endorse the school’s supportive environment, the focus on literacy, the opportunities provided, the positive relationships between teachers and students and the willingness of teachers to assist students with their learning.

Responses from Year 11 students indicated strong support for the school’s focus on literacy, the caring and supportive culture, the incorporation of new technology (especially the Interactive White Boards and DER laptops) into learning and the opportunities to learn about post-school study and career options.

Responses to the survey, undertaken by all teachers during term two indicated very high satisfaction with the timetabled professional learning period introduced in 2011 as part of the National Partnership initiatives. 95% of teachers stated that the teacher professional learning period was very useful and 92% endorsed the initiative by recommending that it continue in 2012.

Teacher evaluations of the University of Newcastle program that focused on quality teaching were extremely positive. Teachers valued the opportunity to work in their KLA teams with university academics to improve their understanding of the QT framework by observing and coding lessons, and were able to recognise the implications for their own teaching practice. This highly successful and customised program will be continued in 2012.

Parents are invited to provide their opinions about the school by participating in discussions at the regular P&C meetings and via anonymous surveys, conducted at the parent-teacher evenings held in March and June each year. These surveys demonstrated the need to communicate with parents using a variety of means including the school’s website, the SMS text messaging system and the Birrong Bulletin. 95% of parents indicated that they were well-informed about school activities. Overwhelmingly, the parent responses indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the quality, dedication, caring attitude and focus on achievement of the teachers and the safe and supportive learning environment.

The Quality of School Life (QSL) survey in June indicated a very high level of parent satisfaction with most dimensions of school community engagement; 99% of parents surveyed indicated that they felt very welcome in the school; 98% stated they were pleased that their daughter attended the school; 100% indicated that they felt they could talk to their daughter’s teachers about progress and 98% recognised that the school has high expectations of the students.
Professional learning

Teacher professional learning priorities are aligned to the school plan and improving student performance and well being. Teacher professional learning included school based professional learning workshops and training and development courses operated by DEC, universities, approved providers and private companies.

The main priorities for professional learning were: improved student achievement in literacy, numeracy, School Certificate and HSC results; student engagement and retention, teacher quality and connected learning. Ninety-six percent of staff participated in professional learning activities, the average expenditure being $1900 per teacher.

All staff participated in module one of the professional learning program 'Teaching English Language Learners' to support teachers in providing innovative and tailored learning opportunities for students with Language Backgrounds Other Than English (LBOTE). 35% of staff completed all six modules and were successful in gaining accreditation for the course.

The successful academic partnership with the Faculty of Education at Newcastle University, in its second year, focused on the quality of teacher delivery. Lessons were observed, coded and evaluated against the standards articulated in the Quality Teaching Framework. Teachers in faculties filmed a number of lessons to support this process and gained a deep understanding of the practices which best support student engagement and achievement. Once again, staff positively evaluated the opportunity to work with university partners throughout the year.

Early career teachers participated in regional and school based induction programs which prepared them well to meet the demands of the Institute of Teachers as well as respond to school based issues. Two early career teachers were accredited at the level of professional competence with the Institute of Teachers.

Connected learning was a strong focus of professional learning throughout the year. 70% of staff were trained in interactive whiteboard applications; 10% of staff were trained in Moodle with a view to implementing the platform in 2012 and 5% of staff now have the expertise to maintain and update the improved school website. In addition, staff attended workshops to support the use of laptops in the classroom and the Mathematics staff worked with the regional technology consultant to develop skills in Google Sketchup.
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.

This section of the report describes our short term, specific improvement targets for 2012 under the four school priorities of the school’s three year plan (2012-2014). This plan was devised in late 2011 to accommodate initiatives including the National Partnerships Low SES Program and the Digital Education Revolution. The 2012 School Plan can be viewed on the school’s website.

Our improvement targets for 2012 are based on student performance data and outcomes of major school programs throughout 2011 and are the criteria by which our success will be measured in 2012.

School Priority 1. Literacy and Numeracy

Outcomes for 2012–2014

- Strong growth in literacy and numeracy achievement from Year 7 to 9 for every student in NAPLAN
- Reduced gap in mean literacy and numeracy achievement between school’s students and state cohorts.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

1. Increase the Year 9 average growth in reading by 10%, from 44 units (2011) to ≥ 48 units (2012)
2. Increase by 2% the proportion of Year 9 students who achieve expected growth in reading from 57.4% (2011) to ≥ 59.4% (2012)
3. Increase the Year 9 average growth in grammar and punctuation by 5%, from 53 units (2011) to ≥ 55.5 units (2012)
4. Increase by 2% the proportion of Year 9 students who achieve expected growth in grammar and punctuation from 66% (2011) to ≥ 68% (2012)
5. Increase by 2% the proportion of Year 9 students who achieve or exceed minimum growth in overall numeracy (63.3% 2011 to ≥ 65.3% 2012)
6. Increase the Year 9 average growth in numeracy by 10%, from 44 units (2011) to ≥ 48 units (2012)

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Provide targeted TPL for faculty and team groups. Create targeted class structures to support intervention for identified students in Stages 4&5
- Continue to employ STLAs (numeracy and literacy specialist) to support identified students in Stages 4&5
- Develop and implement whole-school reading and numeracy strategies to support improved outcomes in Years 7-10
- Continue to employ a speech therapist to implement classroom based targeted literacy intervention for identified students in Year 7 following testing
- Continue to employ additional quality targeted teachers to join current STLD & ESL staff in the Student Learning Support Team (SLST)

School Priority 2. Student Engagement and Attainment

Outcome for 2012–2014

- Increased proportion of students completing Year 12 or recognised vocational training pathway
- Enhanced student achievement in HSC
- Improved learning outcomes of Aboriginal students

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:

1. Decrease proportion of students in Bands 1 and 2 in 2012 Higher School Certificate courses to ≤ 10%
2. 100% of eligible students meet Stage 6 outcomes or follow recognised vocational pathways and receive recognition for their attainments.
3. Increase proportion of students staying on from SC 2010 to HSC 2012 to 78%

Strategies to achieve these targets include:

- Employ an early intervention teacher (FTE 1.0) to provide personalised support for at risk and under-performing students
- Continue to employ School Learning Support Officers (SLSO) for Life Skills students and
develop Life Skills programs for identified students
- Expand and improve opportunities for subject selection, career counselling and pathways advice for Year 10
- Expand curriculum provision to better accommodate the range of students including at risk students and G&T students
- Implement expanded welfare and support programs for at risk and special needs students including refugee and ATSI students
- Expand and improve opportunities for greater student involvement in leadership, citizenship, community and student initiatives
- Monitor attendance, lateness and truancy effectively by expanding SMS text messaging system and encourage and reward student attendance and retention
- Build relationship with local AECG to support achievement of Aboriginal students

School Priority 3. Leadership and Management

Outcome for 2012–2014
- Expanded school leadership capacity for school improvement
- Strengthened teacher capacity to improve student learning outcomes
- Enhanced community engagement to improve student learning outcomes

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
1. 10% improvement in parent participation rates in 2012 and increase in cooperative supportive relationships with key educational and community stakeholders
2. Increase teacher professional learning involvement, especially in Quality Teaching and teacher leadership, by 10%

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Provide targeted TPL, for faculty and team groups to enhance leadership and management
- Expand teacher post-graduate scholarship initiatives
- Implement School Leadership for School Improvement program
- Implement Quality Teaching Mentor program to support teachers to develop improved classroom practice
- Encourage greater community and business involvement
- Develop improved forms of feedback on school performance from the school community
- Enhance academic partnership through established links with the Faculty of Education at Newcastle University
- Continue to employ HT CAPA, HT Technology and ICT specialist

School Priority 4. Curriculum and Assessment

Outcome for 2012–2014
- Enhanced teacher preparedness for implementation of Australian Curriculum
- Enhanced access to digital educational resources for teaching, learning and for professional learning
- Improved curriculum delivery through regular review and evaluation

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
1. 100% of relevant KLA teachers participate in planning for implementation of Australian curriculum
2. 5% improvement in teachers’ satisfaction in their ICT usage in teaching and professional learning
3. All teachers of Years 9-12 competent in the use of DER laptops
4. All students utilise ICT facilities to enhance their learning

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Provide targeted TPL to enhance curriculum and assessment in Stages 4-6 and ICT usage
- Plan for the implementation of the Australian Curriculum
- Undertake English and CAPA faculty evaluations as part of school’s faculty evaluation cycle
- Review and evaluate teaching and learning programs and assessment practices
- Enhance student access to ICT for learning and expand sustainable technology based infra-structure
- Develop teacher capacity in the use of ICT, especially IWBs, DER laptops and remote access, for teaching and learning
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.

- Heather Reinke, Parent Representative
- Lily Huang, Student Representative
- Aphrodite Vassos, Teachers Federation Representative
- Margaret Fletcher, Deputy Principal
- Sandra Crossan, Deputy Principal
- Jenni Wilkins, Principal.

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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: http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/asr