2009 Annual School Report
Bowral Public School

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

Students

2009 saw a slight increase in the number of students enrolled at Bowral Public School. The year concluded with 541 students being distributed throughout twenty one classes. During the year, a small number of families moved away from the Southern Highlands area resulting in the loss of 32 students. However, this was balanced by new enrolments of 38 students. This did not alter the class structure resulting in stability within each classroom. Predictions indicate that numbers for 2010 will enable the school to maintain the 2009 class structure.

94.5% of students attended school on an average each day. This represents a decrease of 0.6% when compared to the 2008 figure. The enrolment trend over the last five years continues to reflect a pattern of more girls than boys undertaking their education at Bowral although the gap is narrowing. In March 2009, these numbers were 275 girls compared to 263 boys.

Staff

Staffing numbers were the same as those for the 2008 school year. These comprised a non- teaching principal and deputy principal, four assistant principals, seventeen classroom teachers, three relief from face to face (RFF) teachers, a full time teacher librarian and one support teacher with the specific task of developing appropriate programs to address the needs of students exhibiting special needs. The support of non-teaching personnel employed at the school was very much appreciated. These included a school administration manager, two school administration officers, four school learning support officers (previously classified as teachers aides special) and one general assistant with the responsibility of maintaining the school grounds and carrying out minor school repairs. In addition, the school was provided with two cleaners, contracted to the school.

The conclusion of Term 1 saw the retirement of the Principal, Mr John Morris after forty years of dedication to public education in NSW. For a time during Term 2 Bowral Public School was under the leadership of Mrs Ros Adamson, Principal of Wollondilly Public School. Mrs Wendy Buckley was appointed as Principal in mid Term 2 and took up this appointment at that time.

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

Significant programs and initiatives

Teaching and learning is always the most important aspect of our school, however our students are also provided with many exciting and unique learning opportunities throughout the school year that enhance and enrich the curriculum. In 2009 these included:

- comprehensive sport programs, including gymnastics, swimming, sport skills, inter-school sport (PSSA gala days) and the Sport for Life coaching program led by professionals;
- extensive cultural programs including participation in the Bowral and District Art Show and the choral and instrumental concerts coordinated by the NSW DET Performing Arts Unit;
- excursions to Killalea Environmental Education Centre for Stage 1; Old Berrima town for Stage 2; the Maritime Museum, Canberra and Narrabeen and Recreation Centre for Stage 3 as well as local area walks to enhance the teaching of the Human Society and Its Environment, Science and PD/H/PE syllabi;
- ongoing links with our local community through Tulip Time festivities, the ANZAC March, extensive involvement with the Bradman Museum and the Country Women’s Association;
- intensive teacher professional development in the area of Gifted and Talented Education with a specific focus on the identification of students;
- involvement in a Community of Schools initiative for a Stage 3 class based on Values in Education and the concept of poverty; and
- major upgrades to our technology resources with the installation of a connected classroom and five interactive whiteboards.
Student achievement in 2009

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

Year 3 student results for the NAPLAN tests were above or equal to the state and like school group average in reading, writing and spelling. 89% of our students were at or above the minimum standard in literacy. There was no discernable difference between the skills in each of the sub strands.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

Year 3 students performed at the state average in numeracy, although our results in the proficiency bands were slightly lower than our like school group in the number strand. Performance in the proficiency bands of measurement was above state average. 84% of students were in the proficiency bands in numeracy. An area for ongoing development is the acquisition and application of number skills.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

Year 5 student results for the NAPLAN tests in literacy were above the state average, with 91% of our students in the proficiency bands. There was no discernable difference between their reading, writing and grammar and punctuation skills. Spelling is an area that is to be addressed.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

Year 5 student results for the NAPLAN tests were slightly below state average in number and measurement with less than half the cohort achieving in the proficiency bands in number compared to 55% of the state. Students performed better in the measurement strand with 64% of the cohort performing in the proficiency bands. Performance in the proficiency bands in numeracy is lower than our like school group, an area to be reviewed.

Messages

Principal's message

I was fortunate to be appointed to Bowral Public School in May, following the retirement of Mr John Morris. It was an important time to begin my principalship, with government improvement programs beginning on many fronts. Bowral Public School was the recipient of a 3.1 million Building Education Revolution (BER) grant that has been earmarked to build the school a new hall, canteen, covered outdoor learning area (COLA) and a toilet block. National School Pride (NSP) meant that we were able to get some areas of the school carpeted, some overdue repairs made to buildings and significant areas of the school painted as well as five new interactive whiteboards in classrooms. Under the Principal's Priority Program (PPP) a much needed overhaul of the school's sewerage system was undertaken, which should see the end of plumbing and flooding problems that have occurred in the past. The school put to good use the money that has been received through voluntary contributions and much needed air conditioning has been installed in the school library.

The school has benefitted from this facelift and classrooms are becoming even more exciting with the introduction of new Interactive technologies.

Bowral Public School continues to be an active member in the Bowral Community of Schools. Class 5T together with their teacher and Miss Christie participated in a values project this year which culminated in all Bowral students contributing money to build a well in a small village in Cambodia. It is hoped that projects like this will continue with students benefitting from the joint cooperation and learning with other local primary schools and Bowral High School.

Academically, Bowral Public School continues to achieve at, or above the regional average. Strong programs in literacy and numeracy will build on the foundations established by our experienced teaching staff.

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.

Wendy Buckley
Principal

P&C and School Council message

As we draw to the end of the year, it is time to reflect on what has been achieved during 2009. The functions and fundraising that have occurred
have allowed the P&C to contribute greatly to the upgrading of the school’s facilities.

The front corner garden is the most visible of parents’ achievements. Working bees combined with coordination from people within the community have created such a lovely space, a vast difference to the area we had 12 months ago! This effort cost over $6,500.

P&C funds ($3,000) also paid for the play equipment to be brought out of its ‘condemned’ status. A round of ‘painting bees’ helped brighten our concrete and give the students games to play.

Technology became one of our main priorities this year, and the P&C was asked to fund the upgrade of the school’s networking capabilities. The funds raised at the Trivia Night also went directly towards the purchase of a mobile interactive whiteboard for the library. At this stage, the P&C’s focus in 2010 will be to purchase interactive whiteboards to add to those we are currently having installed.

None of the events or fundraising efforts could have been achieved without the hard work of the parent body, and in particular those who turn up every month to the P&C meetings.

The members of our committees need to be recognised, as this year has been a big one for both the Uniform Shop and the Canteen.

The Uniform Shop has finally become computerised, streamlining the entire stock control process.

The canteen committee acted on the results of the parent survey and added healthy meal deals to the menu and cut down on the less healthy products. Given the facilities the canteen has, this is a huge task. The canteen was also given a facelift this year, thanks to our creative mums.

Unfortunately due to our fortune in receiving a new hall, it isn’t possible to maintain the canteen in its current location leading to its closure at the end of 2009. We thank Rhonda Stootman who has been with our school in some capacity since 1987. She has seen many changes in the time she has worked in the canteen and deserves a well-earned rest! Thanks Rhonda.

Justine McKinlay
P&C President

Student representative’s message

As this year comes to an end it will be very sad to leave Bowral Public School. We have all grown to know it so well. We have made many friends, learnt something new every day and enjoyed ourselves at every chance.

Year 6 has been so great. We have enjoyed sport, maths, HSIE and even English. We learnt about electricity, water tension, Australian government, medieval England and so much maths we are all walking calculators.

Definitely the highlights of the year were the Narrabeen Sport and Recreation Camp and the overnight excursion to Canberra. Camp was full of activity and loads of fun. We abseiled, tried out a ropes course, bushwalked, canoed, sailed, discoed and swam. Canberra was also great as we learnt about the city, the parliament and the election process as well as getting in some time for ice-skating.

When we started Kindergarten we had no idea what lay ahead. Homework, assignments, tests, impromptu speeches, musical performances, visitors coming to our school, firework nights and sport are just part of a fantastic list of memories.

We have all loved sharing our schooling experience together at Bowral Public School and are now ready to continue our journey of learning, thinking, growing and sharing as we launch ourselves in high school.

Thank you to everyone for the wonderful time and many moments we shared at this special school - Bowral Public School.

We wish the best of luck to the 2010 students, school captains, vice captains and student leaders.

Eliza Brennan, Nicholas Bell - Captains
Sophie O’Toole, Christian Lake - Vice Captains

The P&C organised a wonderful fireworks evening

Enjoying the hoedown
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

The school enrolment pattern has remained stable at approximately 530 students over the past three years. Over 80 students have indicated they will commence their formal years of schooling at Bowral Public School in 2010.

The enrolment trend over the last five years continues to reflect a pattern of more girls than boys undertaking their education at Bowral Public School although the gap is narrowing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile

Average attendance for 2009 was slightly lower than 2008 although the trend of the past three years continues for higher than average attendance at Bowral Public School than at region and state levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>94.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>91.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of non-attendance

Student absence is regularly monitored throughout the year. The school in consultation with families reviews any patterns of non-attendance. Incidents that cause concern are reported to the home school liaison officer for intervention.

Class sizes

In March 2003 the Government announced its commitment to publish primary class sizes in annual school reports in order to provide parents with as much local information as possible.
The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2009 class size audit conducted on Wednesday 18 March 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/2P</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1B</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1L</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1R</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/3J</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2W</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4T</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3C</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6E</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5T</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5W</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6B</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6Z</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KB</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KF</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KH</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KN</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes

In 2009 initial enrolment numbers indicated that four multi-aged classes and seventeen mainstream classes should be formed. This structure was implemented and maintained for the school year.

Staff information

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

Where the Wild Things Are by KF

Staff establishment

The following table is an indication of the total number of staff members at the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Principal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Principal</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time / RFF teachers</td>
<td>1.782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Recovery teacher</td>
<td>0.525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor (shared with Bowral High School)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff (SASS)</td>
<td>3.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>31.969</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.
Date of financial summary: 30/11/2009

**Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>278,464.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>234,378.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>155,143.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>273,300.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>11,678.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>6,473.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>959,439.95</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expenditure**

**Teaching & learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>56,463.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>61,540.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>134,373.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>12,213.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>18,015.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>180,846.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>78,961.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>54,285.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>39,445.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>27,750.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>6,919.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>670,814.85</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Balance carried forward**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>288,625.10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The balance carried forward includes unpaid salaries, for both casual teachers and school learning support officers for December 2009. 98% of income received was expended during the school financial year.

A full copy of the school's 2009 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meeting of the School Council. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

**School performance 2009**

Staff and parents are focussed on providing a wide range of outstanding educational opportunities and experiences for all students in all Key Learning Areas as well as in social and cultural contexts. The students are justifiably proud of their many achievements.

**Achievements**

**Arts**

Bowral Public School has a very strong focus on the arts and once again the students, with great support from staff and parents, made outstanding contributions in all areas.

**Primary Proms**

Our 30 strong, talented choral group from Stage Two performed at the Hills Centre, singing like angels!

**Mimosa Concert**

Our Stage 3 recorder group performed in the prestigious Mimosa Concert at the Sydney Opera House.

**Choral Concert**

On the first day of Term 4, 36 excited Stage 3 children participated in the Choral Concert at the Sydney Opera House. They spent the afternoon rehearsing with sixteen other schools and together, with accompanying orchestras, produced a wonderful night’s entertainment.

**Wollongong Art Gallery**

Eight students from Stage 2 and Stage 3 attended art workshops at Wollongong Regional Art Gallery.

**Bowral district art show**

51 students from K-6 exhibited their artworks in the 11th annual Bowral and District Art Society ‘Kids on Show’ exhibition with great success.

**Sport**

Sport has continued to be an important focus at Bowral Public School in 2009. A wide range of opportunities has been provided for all students, appropriate to their level of skill and development.
Students were given the opportunity to gain selection in a wide range of representative sports in 2009 at school and district level.

Students from Year 4 to Year 6 were given the opportunity to trial for selection in Bowral Public School teams in netball, soccer, cricket and AFL. The netball, soccer and cricket teams participated in the New South Wales PSSA Knockout competition and the AFL team in the Paul Kelly Cup. The students represented their school with pride and determination. The AFL and netball teams experienced considerable success. The netball girls being narrowly defeated in the fourth round of the competition and the AFL team winning through to the regional play offs in Wollongong.

Stage 3 students also had the opportunity to trial for selection in Wingecarribee district teams. Bowral Public School was represented at district trials in cricket, soccer, AFL, hockey, rugby league and netball. Several students went on to gain selection in the Tablelands Zone teams. Four Year 6 students were selected in the possibles/probables squads at regional trials, in rugby league, girls’ soccer, AFL and girls’ hockey. One student went on to gain selection in the South Coast Girls Hockey Team that competed at the NSW State Titles.

Stage 2 and Stage 3 students participated in Gala Days in touch football and AFL during the year. These days provided the opportunity for students interested in these sports, to participate in a non-competitive, supportive environment. The focus of these days, organised by the Wingecarribee District PSSA, was to provide the opportunity for students to learn the rules, participate with enjoyment, co-operate as part of a team and mix with students from other schools.

All students from Year 2 to Year 6 were able to participate at the three major school carnivals in swimming, athletics and cross-country. These carnivals were held in a variety of weather conditions, searing heat in February, a perfect autumn day in May and arctic winds in August. There was a high level of participation in these three major events with several records being broken along the way. Champions’ trophies were presented to successful students for swimming and athletics and the House Champion Shield presented to Oxley House for all three carnivals.

Students who excelled at these carnivals represented the school at the Wingecarribee District Carnivals and acquitted themselves very well. Bowral Public School retained the District Champion trophy for all three events. At the swimming carnival five of the six individual champions’ trophies were awarded to Bowral Public School students and the 12-year-old girls champion for Athletics also went to a year six student from Bowral Public School.

Students ranging in age from eight to twelve went on to represent the school and the district at the South Coast Championships. Our greatest success this year came in swimming with two individuals and the junior relay team earning the right to compete at the NSW State Swimming Championships held at Homebush.

Students from Kindergarten and Year 1 also had the opportunity to participate in modified carnivals. The younger students were introduced to cross country running in a fun event held at Bradman Oval and a Tabloid Sports Day was held in Term 4. This involved a variety of activities focusing on skill development, taking turns, participating in a team, following rules and having fun, while being active. The school captains and house captains were actively involved in the implementation of this event.

The opportunity to experience a wide range of sports at a non-competitive level has been a feature of the sports’ program this year. 2009 saw the continuation of the very successful and thoroughly enjoyable Sport for Life program from Kindergarten to Year 6.

During 2009 students have participated in programs in athletics, gymnastics, fitness, soccer, ballroom dancing, bush and creative dancing, cricket, baseball, AFL and rugby league. These programs ensured a high level of involvement for all and were run by highly energetic, enthusiastic...
and expert instructors from various sporting organisations. All students were also regularly engaged in class sport programs that aimed to develop strength, co-ordination, skills and an understanding of the importance of fair play. The students’ enthusiasm, determination and enjoyment of all these events were evident in their eagerness to participate.

Community

Bowral Public School takes pride in its long-standing tradition of supporting our local community. We value our positive interactions and readily commit ourselves to events and activities that show our respect and thanks to the wider community who are always ready to help and support our endeavours.

Victorian Bushfires

Like many, the Bowral Public School community was shocked at the complete devastation caused by the Victorian bushfires. To have close to two hundred people lose their lives is terrifying and the aftermath of this event will continue, in so many ways, for years to come. As a result of parents, teachers and students wanting to assist, a gold coin day was held and the $430 collected was forwarded to the Red Cross.

A further student based strategy that assisted schools was the donation of books and pencil cases. These were placed in the library in a designated area for this purpose. A reporter from the Southern Highlands News visited our school to talk to students and take photographs. The collection in the library truly reflected the commitment and empathy displayed by so many people in supporting the children affected by the fires. Students completed a bookmark and had their name attached to the cover page of donated books. The variety of books, to suit all ages and reading interests, was expansive. Added to the Bowral collection were books donated by students from Kangaloon Public School.

A cricket match at Bradman Oval, very well supported by families from our community, between students and staff was held in late March. The ‘brainchild’ of one of our very dedicated and caring parents, this match was a great fundraiser for the Bowral Public School contribution toward the Victorian bushfire relief. The match was played in the right spirit and it was a joy to see so many people enjoy the occasion. In a close match the staff, in the last over, won the game with two balls to spare. As a result of this fundraiser, nearly $1 000 was added to Bowral Public School’s collection. The contribution made by the crowd and players was very much appreciated. Special thanks are extended to those at Bradman Museum for providing the wicket and the families who helped with the catering.

National tree day

A number of shrubs donated by a local plant nursery were planted outside the Year 6 classrooms to celebrate National Tree Day. Some classrooms also turned ‘green’ using the day as inspiration for research, information reports, poetry and artwork.

ANZAC

Our student leaders very capably led our ANZAC Ceremony, held on Wednesday 8 April. We were very pleased to welcome Mr John Cummins from Bowral Returned Services League (RSL) Sub Branch as our special guest. He spoke on the importance of caring for family and community, the respect held for the ANZAC soldiers and an overriding desire for peace. He also reinforced how fortunate we are to be living in Australia, particularly the beautiful Southern Highlands. The comments from parents, grandparents and friends on the speeches given by students in Years 3 to 6, the behaviour of our audience and the way our leaders set the tone for the ceremony were very
positive and showed just how much this day of remembrance is valued. A letter from the ‘nana’ of one of our Kindergarten children summed up the day with a quote from her son ‘it was the best presented and comprehensive one, for that age group, he has attended’. Many children represented our school at the ANZAC march in town on April 25 wearing their uniforms and often medals from those in their family with great pride.

**Tulip Time**

Despite appalling weather, 53 of our students participated in the Tulip Time Parade. Our ‘float’ looked fantastic with decorations supplied by many of our classes. Our support of this annual community event was supplemented by the fantastic artwork displayed at the Bradman Museum.

**Mums and Bubs**

Continuing our tradition of supporting Bowral District Hospital, students and their families generously donated small items that were packaged into gift baskets for distribution at Christmas to new mothers.

**School Aid**

Students raised more than $1000 for the children in Sumatra, Tonga and Samoa who experienced natural disasters, tsunami and earthquakes, late in 2009. The names of the countries were written in chalk and coins used to cover the words. The funds were sent to SchoolAid, a registered charity to ensure that children, who need it most, benefit.

**Harbison Homes**

Stage 3 students again shared their love of music, performing a Christmas Concert at Harbison Homes. This annual gesture is much appreciated and valued by the residents.

**Other**

**“Faces of Poverty” a study of values**

Class 5T examined the "Right of Children in Poverty" through an intriguing study of literature. An amazing journey through texts such as ‘If the World Were a Village of 100 People’, The 30th Year celebration of the ‘UNICEF Declaration on the Rights of the Child’ and Colin Thompson’s ‘Dust’ culminated in an exhibition of work completed on the global issue of poverty. Students were introduced to this global issue at the ‘Big Day Out’ a joint Community of Schools initiative at Bowral High School.

Bowral Public School was privileged to have Chamnan and Vathana visit from Cambodia and students collected coins after our Term 4 self help day to cover the cost of installation of a well in their Cambodian village of Peak Sneng.

**Pilot Study – Speech Pathology**

Early reading skills of students in Kindergarten were the focus of a pilot study between Bowral
Public School and the speech pathology department of Bowral Hospital.

The sound awareness skills of the children were assessed and a small group were selected to ascertain the usefulness of a short intensive program. The skills included alphabet knowledge, identifying sounds in different positions in words and blending and segmenting sounds in words.

A valuable outcome was in the improvement in literacy skills and the confidence the children acquired as they could see success in an area that had been somewhat difficult for them.

**Information Communication Technology (ICT)**

2009 saw the beginning of major technological upgrades to our network. The server has been changed from a Mac platform to a PC platform that will allow for remote monitoring and repair by the DET helpdesk.

The rollout of 80 PC computers in early 2010 will replace the older Mac machines and the network will operate on a dual platform.

The P&C generously paid for an update of switches and ports in classrooms to extend network capability that will include interactive whiteboards and additional computers. The 2008 Year 6 gift to the school was a colour printer for use by Stage 3 classes.

Five interactive whiteboards were installed late in 2009 and the P&C purchased a portable IWB for the Library. A connected classroom was established in the old craft room after much remodelling.

This new technology has generated intensive professional development for teachers so they have the skills and expertise to effectively use it as a tool to enhance the learning for our students. ICT will continue to be a priority in 2010.

**Australian Government Quality Teaching Program (AGQTP) First Year of School Project**

During Terms 2 and 3, Early Stage 1 teachers participated in the AGQTP First Year of School Project with the aim of increasing literacy outcomes for children in Kindergarten.

Teachers were given the skills to work with small groups so as to focus on the intensive teaching of strategies to support children as they learn to read and write. Every five weeks the children were assessed on the number of words they could spell correctly, the number of sounds they could hear and record correctly in a dictated passage and the level of text they were able to read. The teachers were very pleased with the measured growth they could see each five-week period.

A feature of the program was the professional development that took place as teachers had the opportunity to observe children at Warrawong Public School in a literacy session and also meet with other teachers participating in the project each fortnight at Bundanoon Public School. These sessions promoted the sharing of ideas and resources for meaningful, independent literacy activities between the four schools involved in the program.

All involved agreed that this was an extremely valuable professional development course and came away with many practical ideas to implement in the classroom.

**Bluearth**

Class 3H had the opportunity to participate in the Bluearth program. Bluearth seeks to challenge each student’s coordination, agility, speed, motor skills, stability, flexibility, cardiovascular adaptation and balance within a playful and supportive environment. There is a strong emphasis on personal development and self-regulatory behaviour. The children from Bowral Public School involved in the program were immensely positive and enthusiastic.

**Reading Recovery**

Bowral Public School, for the second year, implemented Reading Recovery. This offered individual support to Year 1 students to enable them to become better and more confident readers and writers. Each student received 30 minutes of tuition per day for a maximum of twenty weeks. They were then assimilated back into the classroom literacy program with increased skills and knowledge. The 14 students this year will have their progress monitored for a further two years. Parental involvement and commitment to helping children with the reading material at home, enhances the home and school partnership. Reading Recovery makes a valuable contribution to the learning support offered to students at our school.

**Academic**

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

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

Yr 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Yr 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

In Year 3, 88 children sat the NAPLAN tests. In comparing the percentage of students in the proficiency bands the school had 55% compared to 51% of the state.

In reading, Year 3 demonstrated strengths in understanding how to interpret information in factual texts, including the purpose of features such as a postscript.

Boys were stronger in reading than girls who demonstrated strength in writing and grammar and punctuation.

![Chart of Reading Proficiency Bands]

In writing, students had an understanding of the structure of a narrative and paid particular attention to the beginning and complication. Vocabulary was mostly simple and this is an area to be developed, as is the ability to cohesively link more complex ideas.

![Chart of Writing Proficiency Bands]

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

In Year 3, 88 children sat the NAPLAN tests. Comparing the percentage of students in the proficiency bands, the school performed at state level, although slightly lower than the 45% average in our like school group. Results were above those for the region. Boys performed better than girls in the number strand.

In numeracy, Year 3 demonstrated strengths in:

- understanding am/pm notation when reading a clock face and telling digital time on the half and quarter hour; and
- properties of 2D shapes, including visualising them when flipped or forming a pattern

The areas to be developed are:

- understanding and applying fractions to practical situations;
- converting minutes to represent an hour e.g. 120 minutes equals 2 hours; and
- use of diagrams and models to represent numbers and 3D shapes.

![Chart of Numeracy Proficiency Bands]

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In Year 5, 72 children sat the NAPLAN tests. In comparing the percentage of students in the proficiency bands the school had 29% compared to the 34% of the state. Girls were strong in all aspects of literacy and particularly in the writing strand when compared to the boys’ cohort.

In reading, Year 5 demonstrated strength in connecting and interpreting ideas. In other
aspects of literacy it was noted Year 5 students are spelling most common words correctly when writing texts and accurately using punctuation in sentence construction.

The areas to be developed in reading are:

- correctly sequencing narrative texts;
- locating and understanding information when not directly within the written text e.g. labels, captions, graphs; and
- identifying the main idea in factual and persuasive texts.

Progress in literacy
Between Year 3 and Year 5, the expected growth of all students is approximately 80 points. In literacy and writing our average growth was 88.8 points compared to the average growth of 87.7 points across the state and 88 points in our school education group. Of the 56 students, i.e. 78% matched, boys performed better in reading than girls with a growth rate of 98.8 points. Major growth is noted in students who in Year 3 were at the lower end of the literacy scale. Our progress in providing more effective learning programs for should support those students in the proficiency bands as we continue to provide programs for those who had been experiencing difficulty in Year 3.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5
In Year 5, 72 children sat the NAPLAN tests. 19% of students performed in the proficiency bands and overall our performance was above that of the region. Girls were stronger than boys in all areas of numeracy.

The areas to be developed are:

- understanding analog time;
- working mathematically – using information, skills and understandings to solve problems, using 2 and 3 digit numbers;
- using and applying the correct terminology for chance and data; and
- identifying and describing higher order patterns, a preliminary to algebra.

Progress in literacy
Between Year 3 and Year 5, the expected growth of all students is approximately 80 points. In literacy and writing our average growth was 88.8 points compared to the average growth of 87.7 points across the state and 88 points in our school education group. Of the 56 students, i.e. 78% matched, boys performed better in reading than girls with a growth rate of 98.8 points. Major growth is noted in students who in Year 3 were at the lower end of the literacy scale. Our progress in providing more effective learning programs for should support those students in the proficiency bands as we continue to provide programs for those who had been experiencing difficulty in Year 3.
Progress in numeracy

Between Year 3 and Year 5, the expected growth of all students in the state is approximately 80 points. In numeracy our average growth was 87.2 points compared to the average growth across the state of 95.3 points and 87.6 of the School Education Group. Girls performed better than boys in the matched group of 58 students. Students who in Year 3, were at the lower end of the numeracy scale note significant growth.

Average progress in numeracy between Year 3 and Year 5

Note: State growth scores are for students in DET schools only.

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.

Those students who did not meet National Benchmarks in literacy and numeracy were targeted by the support teacher (learning assistance), with programs developed and implemented to meet individual needs.

Percentage of Year 3 students achieving at and above minimum standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>98</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Year 5 students achieving at and above minimum standard

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>96</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

Our school has a number of specific programs to enhance the school curriculum for our students. All students need to learn about Aboriginal Australia. The large number of ethnic backgrounds in our community requires recognition and promotion. We expect all our students to demonstrate respect and responsibility.

Aboriginal education

The protocol of ‘Acknowledgment of Country’ commences every significant assembly or presentation ceremony, serving to remind our students of the respect due to the Gundungurra people and the unique position of Aboriginal people in Australian culture.

All teachers promote Aboriginal Education as an across curriculum subject and where appropriate, teach an Aboriginal perspective to lesson content.

The introduction of learning plans for identified Aboriginal students was commenced in 2009 whereby students, their parents and teachers were actively involved in setting the goals and directions for future learning.
NAIDOC week was acknowledged and celebrated with a visit to the school from the itinerant performers ‘The Jollybops’. This performance highlighted the achievements of the Aboriginal people in the area of science. The practice of fire culture as a means of maintaining the landscape and the physics of the boomerang were among the topics explored. Classes engaged in follow up activities that consolidated understanding of the Aboriginal people.

Indigenous students conducted a special NAIDOC week assembly. They designed the format and determined the content. They gave a presentation explaining the NAIDOC ‘honouring our elders, nurturing our youth’ theme. The importance of Aboriginal spirituality and connection to country was discussed. The symbolism inherent in the Aboriginal flag was explained.

Stage 2 took part in Goodjaga in late June. Co-ordinated by local Aboriginal people and the Wingecarribee Shire Council, students were involved in face painting, indigenous games and songs and introduced to indigenous language.

All teachers visited a significant Aboriginal site in the local area to gain an insight into the cultural heritage. Co-ordinated with Aboriginal elders and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, teachers were encouraged to ask questions and learn the significance of the area to the Aboriginal people, past and present.

The school has 9% of the school population from a culturally and linguistically diverse background: The English as a second language (ESL) teacher has developed specific programs to address the needs of students from language backgrounds other than English.

Respect and responsibility

The incidental, informal but consistent teaching of the core values identified by the NSW DET through curriculum and the interactions of teachers and students characterises the care and commitment of our staff towards children.

Stewart House provides short-term respite care for children in need who attend NSW public schools. Our students showed they care by raising $329 to help them continue this vital work.

Our student leaders attended the Young Leaders Day at the Sydney Entertainment Centre. They heard presentations from author James Roy, actor Bridie Carter, sports reporter Mark Beretta and Olympian Natalie Cook. All discussed the importance of having a go, following your dream and picking yourself up and trying again and again. They also spoke of the value they placed on family and friends who have supported them in everything they have chosen to do.

Bowral Public School’s rules reflect the Core Rules for NSW Government Schools. The rules are:

- Be Safe
- Be Fair
- Be Kind
- Be Cooperative.

Rules are displayed in classrooms and teachers regularly remind students of the rules and what they involve. The school executive team follows up serious breaches of rules and parental support is sought. There is a zero tolerance approach to bullying.
Bullying Awareness

Students from Stage 2 and Stage 3 participated in an excellent program run by an accredited presenter from Interrelate Family Centres. This program addressed the ongoing issue of bullying in schools and provided students with a range of strategies to cope with bullying. The focus of this workshop was to:

- address cyber bullying;
- raise awareness of bullying behaviour;
- promote an atmosphere of mutual respect;
- develop age appropriate strategies for bullying situations;
- focus on ways students can contribute to a bully-free school environment; and
- encourage the view that bullying is a problem for the whole school community.

This program was an excellent supplement to class programs and will be continued in 2010.

Other programs

Enrichment days for students in the Highlands

Bowral Public School continued to be the host of enrichment days involving eleven other public schools in the Southern Highlands. Our school counsellor co-ordinated a program that embraced a range of topics in 2009 including: Trial by Jury, digital animation, model making, dramatic art, mathematics and archaeology. All presenters have been experts in educating gifted children within their topic area.

Enrichment days are aimed at developing our gifted students by encouraging their interest and exposing them to local opportunities to learn from experts. In 2009 class teachers nominated 111 students from Bowral Public School to participate in the programs offered.

Premier’s Sporting Challenge

Our school participated in the Premier’s Sporting Challenge. The program aims to engage young people in sport and physical activity and encouraged them to lead healthy, active lifestyles.

In 2009, this involved 18 classes K-5 participating and recording their sport and physical activity efforts over a 15-week period. Classes were challenged to set goals to accrue time spent each week in moderate to vigorous activity which was undertaken in a range of sports and physical activities. This was, in effect, the time regularly dedicated to the physical education program conducted as part of the PD/H/PE curriculum.

All students involved received a certificate acknowledging their efforts and the school received a Gold Award from the Premier of NSW for its achievements.

Our commitment to this program has lead to our involvement to a leadership initiative for students in Years 5-8 across our Community of Schools. Twelve students in Stage 3 who expressed an interest in sport and physical activity in a leadership role such as official, organiser or junior coach and intend to further their learning at a public secondary school were invited to participate in the NSW DET Premiers Sporting Challenge Sport Leadership Learning to Lead trial program.

University of NSW Competitions

Students in Years 3 to 6 participated in the six University tests held. These were in the areas of writing, spelling, English, mathematics, science and computer skills. Overall 292 students took the challenge with 14 students prepared to test their skills and knowledge in each of the competitions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
<th>Year 5</th>
<th>Year 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table below indicates the success attained by Bowral Public School students in each competition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High Distinction</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Drama Group

This year our drama group performed two homegrown plays, ‘The Imposters’ and ‘The Binomial Enigma’ directed by Dr Cotter. Participating in these activities were some eighty of our students, their parents and two members of staff. Their efforts were greatly appreciated by audiences. In preparing and performing their roles, the actors learned a good deal that will strongly influence their future personal growth. In helping to mount these two productions, both performers and crew members have had the rewarding experience of working on a co-operative project with their peers. Both productions raised funds, with a gold coin donation, from the audience to support Stewart House and UNICEF.

Public Speaking / Debating / Spelling Bee

Four Stage 3 students attended the Illawarra South East Region debating camp at Batemans Bay. The enthusiastic and dedicated group learnt that the skills required to build a fantastic argument in a debate can also be used when presenting a point of view and justifying it when writing an exposition. They saw the value of looking at different points of view, presenting a case to either justify or rebut the position taken, clarifying and substantiating the main idea with a series of supporting statements. The team finished the two-day camp with a debate on the topic ‘Children should have the right to vote’. The debating team also participated in the Premier’s Debating Challenge, a series of debates conducted amongst local schools.

All interested students in Stages 2 and 3 were given the opportunity to participate in the Multicultural Public Speaking Competition. A Year 4 student was successful at the local level and was a regional representative at Illaroo Road Public School in the Shoalhaven.

Four students from Stages 2 and 3 participated in the Goulburn/Southern Highlands Regional Final of the 2009 Premier’s Spelling Bee, hosted by Goulburn North Public School against students from 23 other local schools. Students were given the opportunity to compete at the class and stage level before going to represent our school at this level. The Premier’s Spelling Bee is about encouraging students to focus on spelling in a fun and competitive format.

CWA International Day

Year Six students participated in the Country Women’s Association International Day celebrations. Bowral Public School students have supported this community initiative for many years. This year the students were asked to research the country of Egypt. Students designed a poster that highlighted some aspect or aspects of the country. These posters were judged according to the criteria of information, presentation and originality. All students who participated were presented with a certificate of appreciation. Five students received prizes to acknowledge the excellence of their contribution. The winning entry from Bowral Public School was submitted to the regional CWA and was judged the best entry for the region. The Country Women’s Association has been a long time supporter of Bowral Public School. They are the sponsors of one of our major awards at the annual Stage 3 Presentation.

Progress on 2009 targets

Information relating to the school targets is directly linked to the school’s 2009-2011 school management plan. All staff contributed to these reviews and evaluations during staff meetings in Terms 3 and 4. A number of initiatives were commenced in an attempt to further improve student performance and whilst achievement was sound in all areas, the ambitious goals were not achieved in all areas. It is the school’s intention to continue to set high expectations in 2010 and implement a range of strategies to enhance student achievement.

Target 1 Literacy

Students will be able to construct a range of writing texts that are structurally correct, have grammatically correct sentences, with an increasing complexity and possessing a rich vocabulary

Our achievements include:

- strengthened teacher capacity and consistent teacher judgment practices in Early Stage 1 following intensive focus on guided and interactive writing;
- all Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 teachers trained in Best Start assessments to provide a sound basis for teaching/learning programs matched to student needs;
- focus on daily writing in each classroom across curriculum areas and text types; and
• text types linked to Key learning areas, particularly topics studied Science and Human Society and Its Environment.

Future Directions:
• the English committee is currently devising a school based scope and sequence continuum for writing;
• use of explicit criteria following the development and implementation of rubrics matched to text types; and
• ongoing teacher professional learning and collegial time with a focus on consistent teacher judgment in writing.

Target 2  Teacher Quality

Quality teaching practices are evident in teaching and learning programs and classroom implementation

Our achievements include:
• teachers actively involved in identifying their professional learning needs in line with the Quality Teaching Model. Stage 1 teachers noted ‘this refreshes memory and revitalizes teaching, often providing another angle’;
• guides on Quality Teaching distributed to all staff as a preliminary to teacher professional learning (TPL) about the features of the NSW Quality Teaching Model; and
• due to a change in leadership and priorities this target will be the major focus for 2010.

Future Directions:
• more time to be allocated to developing a common understanding of the terminology and implementation of the Quality Teaching Model;
• 100% of staff possessing a working knowledge of the Quality Teaching Model and this is evident in teaching and learning programs and classroom practice; and
• students engaged in learning experiences using the Quality Teaching Model.

Target 3 Student Engagement and Retention

Students will be provided with an enriched and extended curriculum to enable gifted and talented (G&T) students to achieve their potential

Our achievements include:
• school committee established to gather information for the identification of gifted and talented students and development of a school policy;
• teacher professional learning (TPL) on how to identify gifted and talented students;
• core group of staff attended Ralph Pirozzo workshops on curriculum differentiation;
• staff provided with documentation on Tony Ryan’s ‘thinkers keys’ and the teaching of higher order thinking skills;
• database of G&T students established using teacher and peer nomination and external data such as NAPLAN results; and
• stage based enrichment days, conducted by the gifted and talented network, continued for identified students.

Future Directions:
• further teacher professional learning (TPL) opportunities, with a focus on curriculum differentiation and how to compact the curriculum in order to strengthen teacher capacity and knowledge;
• refinement and presentation of Gifted and Talented Policy to the school community;
• ongoing participation in programs refined to better target the identified needs / interest of students at enrichment days; and
• enhancing the effectiveness of family support of their children’s learning through the sharing of information in newsletters and at workshops.
Target 4 Student Engagement and Retention

Developing resilience in students and to further develop current practices and introduce new strategies that will create a more harmonious school learning environment

Our achievements include:

- committee review of ‘You Can Do It’ program and decision made by staff to trial the ‘Better Buddies’ program with Kindergarten and their buddy class in 2010;
- collaborative revision of student welfare (discipline) and anti-bullying policy by committee that is to be presented to all staff and our community in Semester 1 2010;
- values displayed in office area and other learning areas as a reminder of the expectations of our school community;
- anti-bullying initiatives, Interrelate and Bravehearts, to enhance school programs and practices to minimise bullying;
- risk assessments and management plans for identified students documented and needs monitored by welfare team;
- regular staff meetings on school rules and how these need to be consistently applied across the school;
- student survey in Semester 1 to identify and document the incidence of bullying and where appropriate, parents contacted so that we worked more as a partnership to provide students with strategies to deal with bullying and make better choices; and
- school executive team completed the introduction to ‘Keep Them Safe’ and all staff to be made aware of the changes to current guidelines and implementation in 2010.

Future Directions:

- effective implementation of ‘Better Buddies’ in all trial classrooms as evidenced by student use of the language of values in interactions with peers, teachers and family in discussions;
- teacher capacity strengthened to provide them with the skills and knowledge to better understand the social and emotional needs of students and how this impacts on learning through ongoing teacher professional learning;
- more effective documentation of student behaviours utilising the RISC database; and
- refinement and presentation of Welfare Policy to the school community.

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 2009 our school carried out evaluations of school communication and PD/H/PE.

Educational and management practice

Aspects of School Communication

The management of effective communication between the school and the home is an ongoing consideration. In 2009 this became a major evaluation of the means for despatching the weekly newsletter and the design of the school website.

Background

A school committee, including parent representatives, attended two workshops in relation to this vital area at Goulburn. The material presented was informative and provided guidelines for future direction. Newsletter surveys were conducted and whilst the total number returned was just under 10% of families, it allowed parents and caregivers to highlight their opinions about many areas of the layout and content of the weekly newsletter that hopefully would be reflected by the majority of families.

Information most valued was the calendar (46%), current events (16%), the principal’s report (14%) and student contributions (8%).

Traditionally, the newsletter has been a hard copy delivered by children to their parents. The evaluation revealed the possibility of using email, however this was considered too time consuming to establish at this point and with not all homes having an email address it would require a dual
system operating. The availability of the newsletter on the school web site was valued and evaluations revealed the desirability of redesigning the school web site.

A further, more extensive survey was undertaken, in Term 4 to ascertain the quality of general communication offered at Bowral Public School.

Findings and conclusions

Of the 100 surveys distributed to families, 36 were returned, many with additional comments providing us with the specific detail required by parents.

- Overwhelmingly, 94% of replies indicated they were satisfied with the communication between school and home. Some commented that, at times, notice for events was too short and others, new to the school, requested explicit details be provided as it could not be assumed they had an awareness of routines. 'Information is often assumed. If you have your first child at the school you do not know how things operate just because the teachers do the same thing every year. Parents do not know the procedures and not all children relay messages to their parents'.

- 97% rate the newsletter as a good or satisfactory means of obtaining information.

- 94% valued notes home regarding excursions, upcoming events and sport, although it was noted it would be valuable if these could be accessed from the website.

- Over 90% of respondents rated the efforts of the office staff as good, one person wrote ‘excellent’ and another commented on the polite manner of these members of staff. It was noted that ‘front desk staff know the children at the school which is reassuring and helpful’.

- The ability to access and meet teachers as well as information meetings was very strongly supported. Some parents noted they would value the ‘formal opportunity of a teacher catch-up in T3/T4’ and ‘it would be good to have scheduled parent / teacher days / nights twice per year’.

- 22% felt that communication of stage assemblies needed improving as there was ‘no prior warning of assemblies’: ‘I have not felt welcome to attend Stage 3 assembly where I attended regularly in Stage 1 and 2, where specific classes lead and showed work in the assembly’; ‘please inform Kindergarten parents about assemblies, never knew when they were on’.

- The school website and email address are rarely used as a means of obtaining information. Only 25% perceive both the email and website address as satisfactory. Many commented that the website is not always up to date and they could not access permission notes.

- The P&C and School Council were noted as very positive bodies for parents, yet many stated that for many reasons they only rarely or sometimes used these forums to raise concerns. Primarily it was ‘can’t get there’ but ‘the P&C is doing a good job’; ‘keep up the good work’.

- 78% were pleased about the possibility of having a class contact person to pass on information in 2010. Those involved in the trial were very pleased.

Future directions

The school newsletter now has an increased number of student items, reflecting the suggestions made by parents early in the year. It is a more streamlined workable document. The community is regularly accessing the newsletter on the internet and our goal is to ensure the current newsletter is available online when it goes home. Improved communication with the parents of the school by enhancing the newsletter and updating the website with relevant information for easy access by the school community, possibly having a facility on our website that allows parents to print off relevant notes from the internet will ensure our current parents are well informed and as we are increasingly aware, parents considering our school as a choice for their children have current information about our school.

Our Community of Schools was successful in obtaining a school promotions grant for 2010 and we will be utilising the expertise of the NSW DET School Promotions Unit to help in the development of professionally printed brochures and banners to successfully enhance our reputation by promoting our school throughout the year and highlighting what makes our school a quality public school.
Curriculum

PD/H/PE

Each year the school evaluates a key learning area (KLA). In 2009 the current teaching / learning programs, student and parent perceptions of the, Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PD/H/PE) syllabus were evaluated. Surveys of students, staff and parents were conducted to determine how our programs are perceived. The response to the surveys was high and valuable information gained.

Background

PD/Health encompasses Child Protection, Drug Education, Interpersonal Relationships, Safe Living, Personal Health Choices and Growth & Development. Within the school some of these aspects are taught as discrete units, some are integrated into other units of work and some are outsourced to specialist educational organisations such as Life Education and Interrelate. Physical Education is, in part, outsourced as Sport for Life and partially covered by classroom teachers. There was a need to determine the effectiveness and value of current strategies employed.

Findings and conclusions

Parents noted a high level of recognition of the importance of this KLA in the school curriculum. They would like to be more informed of their child’s progress and see a need for more parent information to increase their content knowledge.

100 surveys were distributed to families K – 6 and 38 returned. The following are the results of the parent surveys:

- All parents acknowledged the importance of this curriculum area and that their child enjoyed the learning taking place.
- 97% felt that their child had developed new skills in games, sports and gymnastics.
- Almost 90% felt positive that their child was developing a good understanding about the importance of Personal Health & Safety and about relationships with others.
- Over 85% responded that their child was developing a good understanding about personal identity, the importance of values and that their child knew how to get help.
- Just over 50% felt the school had sufficient equipment to teach this KLA.
- Some parents commented that the strands of Personal Development and Health might not be given the same degree of formal focus as the Physical Education strand.
- The importance for our practices to match the messages in the teaching programs, specific reference being made to the positive links to Crunch and Sip and the need for a healthy school canteen was vital.

The following are the results of 88 student surveys in Years 1 - 6:

From Stage 1:

- 98% of students indicated they understood the importance of being active and 93% enjoyed participating in sport lessons.
- 93% knew how to get help when they needed it, a feature of Child Protection.
- 88% indicated they knew how to make healthy food choices and how to keep safe whilst 67% had an understanding of how their bodies grow and change.
- 88% felt they were getting better at gymnastics and 70% thought they were improving at throwing and catching.
- Dance was not valued as highly as other aspects of the syllabus with 65% saying they liked to participate.

Students commented on the use of the bars, the trampoline and their relationship with the coach, as the best things about Sport for Life.

From Stages 2 and 3:

- 100% knew the importance of being active and playing and 77% felt that they were fit.
- Over 90% co-operate and play well with others in team sports.
- Stage 2 and 3 students felt they were quite good at using equipment with 91% saying they could throw and catch and 71% saw themselves improving in gymnastics.
- 96% indicated they could make healthy choices and how to keep themselves safe.
- The importance of values and developing personal goals was acknowledged by 82% of students, possibly a consequence of the Interrelate and Life Education lessons.
- 64% enjoy learning about different styles of dance.
- Fewer than 50% of students indicated their teacher told them how they were progressing in their learning in this KLA, an aspect that needs to be addressed.

Student comments on the Sport for Life program indicate they enjoy the fun aspects, being with friends and the learning.
The following are the results of the staff surveys:

- All staff indicated they used the syllabus to plan lessons; the PD/Health strands were taught via visiting performers, informal discussion and integrated into other KLAs.
- 100% of staff surveyed indicated that PE lessons were primarily skills based.
- 100% of staff believed their students enjoyed participating in PE lessons. Time spent on PE ranged from a minimum of one hour to in excess of two hours per week.
- 73% taught an explicit values education program with a focus on personal identity, the importance of values and relationships with others.

All teachers commented favourably on the Sport for Life program, especially for gymnastics that requires specialist equipment. Teachers stated they had gained some professional learning from the program but felt the success is in the level of expertise of the presenters.

Others made reference to the equipment in the Sports Store and the difficulties they had in either accessing that equipment or the time taken to set up and pack away equipment.

**Future directions**

In 2010 the school will ensure information is more regularly distributed to all families, regarding PD/Health activities. Parents will continue to be given opportunities at parent/teacher interviews to discuss their child’s progress.

Sport for Life will be maintained, however, as cost is a factor for families it is prudent we determine what is offered each term and whether class teachers, as suggested by some parents and teachers, might conduct some aspects of the physical education curriculum such as dance or athletics.

The sports store will be revitalised with the construction of the proposed new hall and a purpose built area set aside for equipment so that it is accessible for all classes.

**Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction**

In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. As a result of a survey issued to families the following results reflect their degree of satisfaction:

- All supported the idea the school is a friendly school that is tolerant and accepting of all its students.
- 95% indicated that the school is connected to its community and welcomes family involvement.
  
  ‘Being a new family to Bowral and BPS we can say that it has been a pleasant experience and very welcoming’.

- 95% believe the school maintains a focus on literacy and numeracy although programs offered are not necessarily perceived as challenging for students.

- A significant number of families believe that the school is not an attractive and well-resourced setting for students in which to learn. The inadequacy of grass areas and lack of playground space was raised by many, as was the need for a hall for indoor sport and performing arts.

- 20% of families indicate concern with the promotion of the school uniform policy. Students need to be encouraged to wear hats during sport as well as during recess and lunch.

- Access to computers and strong technology programs could be further improved according to almost 30% of families. Issues in this area may be alleviated with the recent installation of the connected classroom and interactive whiteboards.

From teachers:

‘The quality achieved in education at this school is reflective of the quality of its teachers and their relationship with quality leadership.’

- 100% felt that the school presents a warm and welcoming atmosphere to students, staff, families and visitors.

- 100% feel welcome as a member of staff and believe that their contribution to Bowral Public School is valued.

- 95% actively pursue professional learning opportunities and enjoy teaching at Bowral Public School; a school they see offers a safe and secure learning environment.

Fewer than 70% of teachers believe staff ideas and suggestions are actively encouraged and acted upon although 82% indicated they have the opportunity to contribute to school improvement.
An area identified as in need of review is the student welfare policy. Less than 70% of teachers perceive the current policy supports students, staff and families in terms of expectations and consequences for both positive and negative behaviours. It was noted:

'The school’s welfare is certainly improving; however there is room for further improvement or suggestions …. The welfare committee have done a great job; the kids at this school are wonderful and happy.'

From Stage 2 and Stage 3 students:

- 100% cope with their work and believe the things they learn are important.
- 100% of students feel they are treated fairly by their teacher in class and 93% said their teacher takes an interest in helping them.
- 91% supported the notion that they got on well with the other students in their class.

Despite the support for their learning and the usefulness of that learning 15% of students expressed the viewpoint that they couldn’t keep up with the work taught.

Nearly 20% of students felt that fun was not a component of learning and that school is not a place where they get enjoyment. This is consistent with similar findings in 2007 and 2008. The values expressed by this student are indicative of the positive attitude students have about Bowral Public School.

‘My school is a place where people can learn and care for others’.

**Professional learning**

Throughout 2009 all staff had the opportunity to participate in a variety of professional learning programs to extend and refine teaching and learning practices and to continually improve professional knowledge and skills. Professional learning was linked to the major priorities and targets from the School Management Plan. Professional learning was supported on the basis it assisted staff to meet school or individual goals.

Opportunities for professional learning included attendance at school development days, staff meetings and courses offered by NSW DET consultants and professional organisations.

Collegial learning occurs on a regular basis at stage and team meetings. Some staff participated in university mentoring programs with pre-service teachers, relieving positions in the school and self-directed learning programs.

Topics for school development days included first aid, asthma and CPR, child protection updates, the Code of Conduct, an introduction to the Aboriginal Education document released in 2009 and a revisit of the Quality Teaching Model.

Stage based professional development sessions were held three times during the year to enable teams to work co-operatively on planning and develop a common understanding of consistent teacher judgment as it impacted on, in particular, literacy and numeracy.

**Professional learning this year included:**

- Regional training days for library and technology staff.
- Attendance at courses and workshops to support Reading Recovery and the Learning Assistance program.
- All Stage 1 staff attended Best Start training to enable them to continue literacy and numeracy assessments.
- All staff participated in a range of professional learning tasks presented by the school computer coordinator.
- Six teachers attended a two day course on the use of interactive whiteboards.
- Seven teachers attended a regional presentation on curriculum differentiation.
- Three teachers attended music training, over three days.
- The AGQTP team maintained their professional sharing and dialogue, including a term where they trialed teaching across the class and grade in areas of expertise.

The school professional learning expenditure for 2009 was $27 950.

**School development 2009 – 2011**

The school has commenced the implementation of targets and planning that are to be addressed over the next three years.

In defining the areas to be specifically addressed within the school plan, staff and parents have prioritised areas of need within the school, setting targets and nominating strategies to assist in meeting the goals.

Our major focus in 2010 will be to improve student learning outcomes using the Quality Teaching Model. We will continue to work on improving student welfare and effectively promoting the school within the school community.
Targets for 2010

Target 1  Quality Teaching

Quality Teaching practices are evident in teaching and learning programs and classroom implementation

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Teacher professional learning (TPL) to provide a deeper understanding of the features of the NSW Quality Teaching Model using NSW DET resources.
- Use of the Quality Teaching Model to improve lesson programming and classroom teaching with specific reference to literacy and numeracy.
- Development of assessment strategies, matrices and activities that reflect an understanding of quality teaching including collaborative planning, consistent teacher judgment and collegial discussions.

Our success will be measured by:

- Students readily engaged in learning experiences developed using the Quality Teaching Model.
- All staff possessing a working knowledge of Quality Teaching elements and able to apply them as evidenced in classroom implementation.
- Staff demonstrating enhanced understanding and knowledge of a variety of effective Quality Teaching and Learning strategies reflected in the depth of professional dialogue.

Target 2  Numeracy

Students will demonstrate, through assessments, improved outcomes in all strands of mathematics, with a particular focus on number

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Teacher professional learning K-6 to ensure greater understanding of explicit teaching methods with emphasis on number and the application of number facts.
- Stage 1 teachers participating in the pilot project The Early Numeracy Program (TENS) to identify and implement effective teaching strategies in number.
- Analysis of NAPLAN and Best Start data to determine areas of strength and those to be developed when planning for the number strand.
- Planning for mathematics programming integrating the Quality Teaching Model.

Our success will be measured by:

- Staff engaging in professional dialogue when planning and assessing student work samples.
- Evidence-based improvement K-6 when assessing syllabus outcomes in the number strand.
- Teachers’ increased confidence in using a range of strategies, including Mathletics, to support the teaching of number.
- An effective learning plan K-6 based on syllabus key ideas implemented and evaluated.

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.

Justine McKinlay, P&C President
Geoff Kerr, School Council President
Jan Christie, Deputy Principal
Wendy Buckley, Principal

School contact information

Bowral Public School
Bendooley Street
Bowral, 2576
Ph: 02 4861 1086
Fax: 02 4862 1004
Email: bowral-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Web: www.bowral-p.schools.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 1335

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: