Our school at a glance

Students
We commenced the 2011 school year with 536 students in twenty one classes. As at December 2011 we had a total enrolment of 526 students. At Bowral Public School we have many applications for out-of-area enrolment and this reflects the high esteem in which the school is held by the community.

Staff
Bowral Public School has thirty six members of staff. The Executive staff consists of the Principal, one Deputy Principal and four Assistant Principals. Each Executive member has varied responsibilities and is accountable for supervising a stage and to support teachers within the school. The seventeen class teachers have various amounts of teaching experience and expertise which is willingly shared. The school also has a School Learning Support Teacher (SLST) to assist students who are challenged by their learning. We are fortunate to have talented and versatile teachers who deliver the Release from Face to Face (RFF) program in technology, fitness, science and visual art. The full-time Teacher-Librarian incorporates a library program as well as supporting the RFF program. Due to the varying needs of the student population, the school employs five School Learning Support Officers who assist students with special needs. The four School Administrative and Support personnel, including a General Assistant, led by our School Administration Manager perform a vital role which is highly valued and rated by our whole school community.

Significant programs and initiatives
Building The Education Revolution produced a significant building addition and consequent changes to site layout with the completion of our eagerly awaited hall and canteen. The Schoolhouse Museum was relocated; Bowral beach was established in the lower playground and the boat moored at the jetty thanks to dedicated parents; a grant for new playground equipment was approved and we await construction over the holiday period. The Bowral Men’s Shed donated time and expertise in fixing the picnic seats in the Hyde Park area, a much needed and appreciated restoration project.

Bowral Public School students made a significant contribution to the Community of Schools launch held at the Bradman Museum. Student leaders asked questions of the special guests, including former Bowral students Craig Reucassel and Miriam Lyons; students performed in the massed choir; artwork was prominently displayed; and one student assisted by playing the didgeridoo following ‘Welcome to Country’.

The Southern Highlands Academically Gifted class for Stage 3 students was established. Students, who attended one day a week, were motivated and challenged. A survey of parents and students indicated the success of this initiative and the class will continue in 2012 for eligible Stage 3 students.

During August we hosted a welcome evening for potential students with parents and community members invited to see a wonderful showcasing of talent from K-6. This highly successful initiative had, as a focus, the importance of the transition points of entering Kindergarten and also moving from Year 6 to secondary school. Our students sang, worked with buddy classes, played numeracy games, presented speeches and displayed art works to highlight the opportunities available at Bowral Public School ensuring they develop and enhance the skills required for lifelong learning.
Some of our Year 6 students benefitted from a pilot program between Bowral High School, Mittagong Public School and Bowral Public School. With an external agency, our students have been better supported during their transition to high school.

In 2011 our students had many interesting and challenging learning opportunities that enhanced and enriched the curriculum. These included excursions to Fitzroy Falls for Early Stage 1; a visit by the Illawarra Environmental Education Centre team for Stage 1; Stage 2 had a tour of the Nan Tien Temple in Wollongong and also a bike safety day; Sydney Aquarium and Wildlife World for Year 5; Canberra for Year 6; and Narrabeen Sports and Recreation Centre for Stage 3.

**Student achievement in 2011**

**NAPLAN data**

In 2011, 70 students sat for the Year 3 assessments and 87 students sat the Year 5 assessment tasks in literacy and numeracy. Year 3 girls performed particularly well in punctuation and grammar. Year 5 girls performed well in reading, scoring 32 scale scores above the state average. Year 3 and Year 5 boys have shown that their strength lies in numeracy with the trend data for both groups continuing upwards and now above the state average.

**Messages**

**Principal’s message**

2011 was another year full of fantastic learning opportunities for the students of Bowral Public School. In March this year we officially launched our Bowral Learning Community, which consists of our partner high school, Bowral High and six other local public schools. Together we showcased the incredible talents of our students and demonstrated the depth of public education in our Highlands learning community.

This year also saw the introduction of a Southern Highlands Academically Gifted Class which is hosted by Bowral Public School. In 2011 Stage 3 students from nine local public schools participated in this exciting enrichment opportunity and benefitted from additional academic challenges for the 26 weeks while the class ran.

Bowral Public School also continues to host Enrichment Days, organised and coordinated by Samantha Swan, Bowral Public School’s School Counsellor. Students from all Highlands Public Schools are invited to attend these days which aim to cater for the needs of gifted and talented children across our schools.

At Bowral Public School we are concerned about each individual student and strive to provide a caring community committed to students achieving their best. Our school motto, is “Striving, Thinking, Learning” and this ethos is reflected in all that we do to support our students. We empower and engage our students by providing a broad scope of learning opportunities. Our children are more resilient and better able to cope with the challenges that school offers as they progress through their years here at Bowral, experiencing the full gamut of learning experiences.

Our students’ learning is underpinned by an emphasis on strong foundations for all students in literacy and numeracy. In 2011 we continued the L3 program; Language, Learning and Literacy and our Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 teachers continued their professional learning in this area to better support the teaching of literacy to our youngest learners. Our school was also part of a “Lighthouse Program” where Mrs. Virginia Pridham was able to support her colleagues by leading literacy in those early years through additional professional learning together with team teaching and the sharing of resources.
Bowral Public School enjoys excellent community support. The School Council and P&C are strong organisations that encourage parents to be active participants in school decision making and fundraising. Special features of the school include our new high quality hall, library, computer laboratory, Connected Classroom, canteen, music rooms and Schoolhouse Museum. Our school provides a wide variety of educational experiences that contribute to the character development of each child. None of this can be done without our dedicated, experienced staff who are all highly committed to serving this wonderful school.

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.

Mrs. Wendy Buckley
Principal

P & C and School Council message

Many factors go into making a great school. Not the least of these is the quality of support given by its parents. We have many outstanding parents who support the school selflessly in a wide variety of endeavours. Every child and family benefits from this contribution. The School Council worked with parents to move the Schoolhouse Museum and also to level the Banyette St playground. Both of these endeavours designed to enhance and extend the green space where children can play, especially when the Churchyard area will no longer be available. In a time when many schools are struggling to get parents to help, Bowral Public School leads the way with our wonderful helpers. Thank you one and all!

Sarah Munro - P&C President
Geoff Kerr – School Council President

Student representative’s message

What an honour!

Being student leaders of Bowral Public School was a huge honour. We were privileged to be part of a fantastic Year 6 group who demonstrated that they were all leaders and individuals. Each one of us was given greater responsibility and we worked with the teachers and especially Mrs Buckley, our Principal, to lead the school. Year 6 took an active role in caring for the younger students and helping Kindergarten settle into school as their buddies. Attending the Young Leaders Day with students from Mittagong and Kangaloon was an early highlight as we heard inspirational talks from people including Kurt Fearnley and Jessica Watson who encouraged us to love what you do, never give up and the ability to live our dreams. Sport has been important for each of us as we have learned so much over the years about teamwork, giving your best at all times, how to be a good loser and importantly how to be a good winner. Highlights of the year were the Stage 3 camp at Narrabeen, the annual Year 6 Canberra excursion and of course the end of year formal. When we first arrived at Bowral, we didn’t know too many students. Now we have exciting event was in Term 3 with our canteen (the Bee Hive) opening. Your continuing support is very much appreciated.

We would like to wish Year 6 students all the best in the future and hope all their dreams come true. We congratulate this year’s school captains and vice captains for their contribution and welcome the new captains and vice captains for 2012.

Sarah Munro - P&C President
Geoff Kerr – School Council President
friends for life. We’ve all come such a long way and now we’re ready for life in high school armed with the skills and confidence that we have learned here at our time at Bowral Public School. We have all benefitted from the experiences and challenges of being school leaders and wish next year’s leaders all the best.

Jonathon Bell, Rosemary Bowyer – captains
Toby Croudson, Gigi Dunn – vice captains

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
In 2011 the enrolment pattern of more girls than boys undertaking their education at Bowral Public School was broken with an almost equal gender balance. Student numbers have remained relatively stable over the past few years. Parents have advised that up to 30 students will leave at the end of 2011 to take up a placement at a local non-government school. Approximately 70 students will commence Kindergarten at Bowral Public School in 2012 with 80 students moving to secondary school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance profile
Average attendance for 2011 was lower than 2010 and the trend of the past three years continues for small decreases in attendance rates for Bowral Public School. 2011 is the first time in many years that student attendance rates are lower than at region and state levels. The increasing number of partial absences for students who arrive late to school is of concern as these absences impact on student learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>95.1</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>94.8</td>
<td>93.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>93.7</td>
<td>91.8</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>94.4</td>
<td>94.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of non-attendance
Regular and consistent school attendance is essential to student achievement and social development. Class rolls are legal documents and absences are monitored daily. Where a pattern of non-attendance is identified and cannot be resolved the school contacts the Home-School Liaison Officer (HSLO) for intervention and support.
Class sizes
Primary class sizes are included in the annual school report in order to provide parents with as much local information as possible. The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2011 Class Size Audit conducted on Monday 21 March 2011.

<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>KH</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KJ</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KP</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/1B</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1P</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1W</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2D</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2L</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2P</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3B</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3M</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4H</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4D</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4T</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5W</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5T</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/6Z</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6C</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6J</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes
Students are allocated to classes to ensure a spread of ability, talent and gender. In 2011 our enrolments enabled us to form a total of 21 classes; five multi-aged and sixteen mainstream. This structure was 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.

Staff establishment

<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 Principals</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>Teacher of Reading Recovery</td>
<td>0.5</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>Counsellor (part share)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff</td>
<td>3.962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31.744</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The National Education Agreement requires schools to report on Indigenous composition of their workforce. In 2011 the school employed an Aboriginal School Learning Support Officer on a casual basis to work with Stage 3 students.

Staff retention
Stability is high with the majority of teaching staff retained from 2010 to 2011. Our teaching staff is comprised of both experienced teachers and those at the beginning of their careers. Two Assistant Principals took extended leave in 2011 which will continue in the 2012 school year. One long serving member of staff resigned and another member of staff retired from the teaching service. These positions will be filled on a permanent basis in 2012.

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$1114998.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>354560.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>253628.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>178717.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>294977.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>20957.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>12156.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>1114998.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenditure</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>38616.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>57361.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>103369.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>6112.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>9833.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>222755.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>86229.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>57018.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>42903.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>35911.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>16676.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>59230.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td>736019.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td>378978.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The balance carried forward includes unpaid salaries for casual teachers and school learning support officers for December 2011. 96% of income received was expended during the school financial year.

A full copy of the school’s 2011 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and the P and C. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance 2011
Bowral Public School students continue to display excellence in the Creative and Performing Arts, sport and our commitment to community based events and initiatives. The benefits of these highly valued opportunities is seen in the cooperation and friendliness amongst students, the support of our parents and the recognition by our staff that all students have gifts and talents that need to be developed and nurtured.

Achievements

Arts
The Creative Arts play a significant role in the education of Bowral Public School students. It is taught as discreet programs as well as being integrated into class programs in all years from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Primary Proms
Thirty students from Stage 2 performed in the Daintree Concert at the Primary Proms, held in the Sydney Town Hall, as part of the massed choir. As students in Stage 2 learn the repertoire so a special encore performance was held in our new hall showcasing the talents of the stage group.

Festival of Instrumental Music – Recorders
This concert, held at the Sydney Opera House, was a privilege to attend. The quality of the performance was second to none and our students are to be commended for the professionalism and the enjoyment shown when playing their three pieces. Three of our talented students performed with the string group at this concert playing the violin and cello. They had rehearsed and played our three pieces, including El Camino de la Danza joined by the 700 recorder players from schools all over the state.
Festival of Choral Music
A group of 36 students joined the massed choir in the Festival of Choral Music concert. Some of the songs in the challenging repertoire were performed with a symphony orchestra and included works such as "A Sea Change", "Electricity" (from Billy Elliot), "The Water is Wide" and "Chattanooga Choo Choo." These Bowral students are fine examples of many who demonstrate excellence in performance.

Kids on Show
Outstanding artworks from students K-6 were selected for submission in the Kids on Show Exhibition hosted by the Bowral & District Art Society. Our participation in this exhibition has been established for many years and district representation was from some 15 local primary schools as the society is keen to encourage and celebrate young artists. Students from each class visit the gallery and are encouraged to view and reflect on the artworks presented such as this comment by one of our Year 5 students ‘My personal favourite was “Chocolate Delight” which was a painting of a very realistic cake with a cherry on top!’

Drama – ‘When Alice Met Harry’
‘When Alice Met Harry’ was a stage production put on by the Bowral Public School Drama group, written and cast by Dr Cotter. Costumes were designed and made by parent volunteers and the dance group choreographed by Mrs Neale. The plot, a story book cross-over of Harry Potter and Alice in Wonderland sees Harry, Ron and Hermione thrown out of their book after being chased by dark wizards, ‘The Death Eaters’. Arriving at children’s reading corner, London they search for others and find Alice in Wonderland. They meet many of the Wonderland characters before having afternoon tea destroyed by the Jabberwock. All proceeds from the ticket sales of the play went to support UNICEF.

Sport
Sport has continued to be an important focus at Bowral Public School in 2011. A wide range of opportunities have 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 2011 at school and district level.

Students from Year 5 and 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 teams in the Paul Kelly Cup. Our school teams experienced great success this year. The soccer team participated with great skill and was unlucky to be knocked out in the third round of the state competition.

The netball team was the most successful for many years being narrowly beaten in round five of the competition, just one game short of the South Coast final. Our cricket team was also very successful making it all the way to the South Coast final only to be beaten by a few runs after losing the toss and having to bat first. A highlight
for the cricket team was their fifth round match played on the hallowed turf of Bradman Oval.

Three teams entered the Paul Kelly Cup and our senior team made it through to the state finals held in Blacktown, only to miss the top four on a count back. All students represented their school with pride and determination.

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, tennis, AFL, hockey, rugby league, rugby union, touch football and netball. A large number of students went on to gain selection in the Tablelands Zone teams. Several students were selected in the possibles/probables squads at regional trials, in netball, cricket, tennis, soccer, rugby union, touch football and hockey. Six students went on to gain selection in South Coast teams for tennis, cricket, hockey and basketball. These students had the fantastic experience of competing at the NSW State Titles.

Stage 2 and Stage 3 students participated in gala days in touch football, AFL, soccer and rugby league 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, cooperate 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. 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 these carnivals four of the six individual champions’ trophies for swimming and two of the individual champions’ trophies for athletics went to students from Bowral Public School. Eight students were runners up to the champions in these events.

A large group of students ranging in age from eight to twelve went on to represent the school and the district at the South Coast Championships. A student from Bowral Public School was awarded runner up in the eleven years championship at the regional swimming carnival. Four students earned the right to compete at the NSW State Championships, two in swimming and two in athletics.

Students from Kindergarten and Stage 1 participated in modified carnivals. They were introduced to cross country running in a fun event held at Bradman Oval and participated in a Tabloid Sports Day. 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 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. During 2011 students have participated in programs in athletics, gymnastics, ballroom dancing, cricket 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
All programs and activities at Bowral Public School use core values as a guide reference as our students are given opportunities to develop into fine young citizens. A strong and effective Buddy program helps to foster care and concern for younger students and assists the transition program for Kindergarten students. Values related to respect are reinforced through special events such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day when special assemblies are held. Community awareness and responsibility is also reinforced through the support and fund raising for Stewart House, Mums ’n’ Bubs Salvation Army Appeal and the Christmas concert at Harbison Homes.

Tulip Time
This year the theme for Tulip Time was Purple and White/Hope and Strength; the selected charity, Parkinson’s NSW. This was a meaningful time for our school because Linda Christison, who had been a teacher at Bowral Public School for seventeen years, had been diagnosed with early-onset Parkinson’s disease. Linda was an outstanding athlete, selected to trial for the Olympics and the first Australian woman to complete the Boston marathon. Linda has been forced to retire and the local community was determined to raise money to support her needs and Parkinson’s NSW. Our school held a Purple and White Self Help Day and donations went to the appeal. Purple wrist bands were sold as were ‘virtual tulips’ which were ‘planted’ to make a display during Tulip Time. Linda addressed an assembly to thank the students for their support. She left us with a message on choosing happiness even when things don’t go as planned.

Anzac Day
We were fortunate to have old army vehicles as a backdrop to our school Anzac service. The vehicles were organised by Greg Bowyer who also spoke to our students about his role in the Australian Defence Force. We welcomed Mr. John Cummins, Mrs. Barbara Grey and Major Tom Moon (retd.) as representatives of Bowral RSL to our service conducted by our student leaders. Matt Dunn, a talented musician from Bowral High School played the ‘Last Post’ and ‘Reveille’.

CWA International Day
Our strong relationship with the Bowral CWA continues with our Year 6 students entering the annual country competition; in 2011 this was Iceland. Our students enjoyed afternoon tea with the local members when the award winners were announced.
Bowral Public School continues to be the host of enrichment days involving 13 other primary schools in the Southern Highlands. Our School Counsellor coordinated a program which included: Mathematics, Telling the Impossible Story – Puppetry, Dinosaurs & Fossils, Ancient Greece & Rome, Digital Animation and Visual Storytelling. We have been very fortunate to have presenters who are experts in their field and share their passion for their topic with our children. Enrichment days aim at developing our gifted students, offering local opportunities to learn about areas outside of the traditional curriculum and encourage their interest. 149 places were offered to students from Bowral Public School to attend these days in 2011.

**University of NSW Competitions**

Over 200 Bowral students in Years 3 to 6 participated in the University tests held in writing, spelling, English, mathematics, science and computer skills. All performed well as indicated by the table below. A Year 3 student was awarded the university gold medal in English this year, as a result of him achieving the highest score in Australia. The medal was awarded to him at a special ceremony by Mr Stephen Jones, M.P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medal</th>
<th>High Distinction</th>
<th>Distinction</th>
<th>Credit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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)

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3**

In Year 3, 71 children sat the NAPLAN tests. In analysing the percentage of students in the proficiency bands, the school had 54% in reading, 66% in grammar and punctuation, 55% in spelling and 76% in writing working at the proficiency level, representing an improvement of 31% in writing, 15% in spelling, 20% in punctuation and grammar and 6% in reading. In particular, Year 3 students have shown substantial growth above the state average in grammar and punctuation, reading and spelling. No growth trend data was available for writing due to the change in the writing scale from narrative to persuasive text type. However, 76% of Year 3 students scored in the top two bands for writing compared with 64% of Year 3 students across the state.

In reading, Year 3 demonstrated strength in linking information across sections of texts and interpreting, applying and locating information. Year 3 students also showed strength in
identifying and correctly using correct basic punctuation and spelling.

The areas to be developed in literacy are:
- linking information and identifying the main idea in texts;
- Increasing the correct use of punctuation and grammar in all written texts.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

In Year 3, 71 children sat the NAPLAN tests. 45% of students performed in the proficiency bands an increase of 3% on the performance in 2010 and 3% higher than the performance of students across the state. No Year 3 students were below the national minimum standard.

In numeracy, year 3 students showed strength in the use of multiplication arrays, simple fractions and decimals and analysing and interpreting data and word problems.

The areas to be developed are:
- identifying possible and probable outcomes;
- nets of three dimensional shapes.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In Year 5, 87 students sat the NAPLAN tests. 63.5% of students achieved bands 6, 7 and 8 in reading, a slight increase from 2010. Most growth over the past three years has taken place in students moving upwards from bands 3 and 4 to bands 5 and 6. Strengths in reading include the ability to interpret details in the text to justify inclusion of information, understanding imagery and metaphors in poems and making inferences as to the key motivation when looking at an issue from a character’s point of view. Spelling results show we had fewer students in the top bands.
compared with reading and writing results. Although very few students scored in the lowest bands, there is a need to focus on the teaching of spelling and move all students into a higher band. Girls performed better than boys in the aspect of grammar and punctuation, however there is a need to lift the performance of all students, particularly those in bands 6 and 7, encouraging them to achieve at a higher level.

Areas to be developed in literacy include:

- understanding the correct use of relative pronouns;
- use of proper nouns in direct speech i.e. capitalisation of names; and
- identifying spelling errors and then correcting them, particularly words of more than one syllable or those with a soft or silent ending.

**Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5**

Performance of Year 5 students in numeracy is satisfactory with an upward trend for students who are at the lower end of the scale reflected in the increased number of students in Band 6. Statistically we fall below our statistically similar group when analysing the data for those students who have the potential to achieve in the top two bands. Areas of strength included comparing analog and digital time, recognition of the faces of 3D objects, matching data to a table and aspects of multiplication and division.

Areas to be developed in numeracy include:

- solving multi step word problems by thinking mathematically;
- equivalent number relationships eg. $0.1 = 1$ tenth $= 1/10$
- recognising and continuing number patterns; and
- using mental and written strategies more effectively to solve number problems.
Progress in literacy

Between Year 3 and Year 5, the expected growth of students is approximately 80 points. In reading our average growth was 87.7 points compared to the average growth of 74.0 points across the state. In spelling our average growth was 75.8 points compared to the average state growth of 75.4 points and in punctuation and grammar our average growth was 68.2 points compared to the average growth of 82.7 points across the state. In reading and spelling girls showed greater growth than boys, but boys performance was better in grammar and punctuation. Significant growth was evident in most students who, in Year 3, were at the lower end of the literacy scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average progress in Reading between Year 3 and 5*</th>
<th>2008-2010</th>
<th>2009-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>87.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>73.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State DEC</td>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 98.1 points compared to the average growth across the state of 95.8 points and 105.4 of the School Education Group. 62% of students showed greater than or equal to the expected growth and 99% of students experienced some growth. Most students who in Year 3, were at the lower end of the numeracy scale displayed significant growth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average progress in Numeracy between Year 3 and 5*</th>
<th>2008-2010</th>
<th>2009-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>98.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG</td>
<td>98.1</td>
<td>105.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State DEC</td>
<td>89.6</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 3 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students included)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Year 5 students achieving at or above minimum standard (exempt students included)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar &amp; Punctuation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students who do not meet National Benchmarks in literacy and numeracy work with the school learning support teacher on programs designed to meet individual needs.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

At Bowral Public School we are proud of our indigenous heritage and celebrate Aboriginal culture and history in a variety of ways:

- recognising important annual events such as the anniversary of National Reconciliation and NAIDOC week;
- K-6 student involvement during NAIDOC week through all KLAS, especially English and Visual Arts;
- ensuring appropriate Acknowledgement of Country protocols are met at the beginning of all formal gatherings and assemblies; and
- celebrating indigenous culture by including an Aboriginal perspective as an integral part of the planning, implementation and assessment of units of work (K-6).

An afternoon tea for our Aboriginal parents gave the students a wonderful opportunity to share how we use technology to support and enhance learning.

Aboriginal students have personalised plans for their learning (PLPs). All children were involved to some extent in the preparation of the PLP or review of past PLPs and current update.

Our school celebrated NAIDOC week with in-school activities and a visit by the ‘Jollybops’ who presented a show on how science is an integral component of Aboriginal culture. The concepts of flight, heat and sound energy were presented using boomerangs, didgeridoos and a ‘campfire’.

Each class developed designs for our fabulous didgeridoo mural that is displayed outside the library.

Early Stage 1 had a great end of year excursion to Fitzroy Falls. Students enjoyed working with the National Parks and Wildlife Discovery Rangers as they learnt about traditional Aboriginal culture: bush tucker; bush medicine; hunting; music and dance.

A highlight of the year was the awarding of a Nanga Mai Encouragement Award from the NSW Department of Education to a student who assisted at the opening ceremony of the Bowral Learning Community, playing his didgeridoo with skill and pride.

One teacher completed the training for ‘No Gaps, No Excuses’ and will, with the support of a regional consultant, present this mandatory cultural awareness package to the Bowral Public Schools’ Learning Community in 2012.
Multicultural education
The school continues to incorporate multicultural perspectives across all our key learning areas to address issues and communicate themes to our wider community. We have rich and diverse cultural backgrounds to draw from and used our parents and students to teach about this diversity and learn from each other. Special occasions such as Harmony Day are promoted and celebrated. Students in Stage 2 and 3 participate in the Multicultural Public Speaking Competition. This year our students performed very well at the district final held at Burrawang Public School, particularly in the impromptu speeches, with the Stage 3 students awarded ‘Highly Commended’ certificates as they showed their ability to think and plan a quality presentation without prior notice of the topic.

Connected learning
Interactive whiteboards have been a main focus for spending and resources this year. All permanent classrooms are installed with IWBs as is the library. The connected classroom is used for professional learning, video conferences and to support those classes without IWBs. Highlights included the use of the connected classroom for our debate with Mittagong Public School – the adjudicator viewing the debate from the Performing Arts Unit office in Sydney; and a group of Stage 3 boys attended a virtual excursion to the V8 super car championships and could talk with Craig Lowndes and Nick Percat about the importance of physical fitness. The school has committed financial resources both in hardware and professional training to enhance our technology capabilities. Thirty five iPod touches have been purchased for use in Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 classes for literacy and numeracy groups. Technology will continue to be a focus for 2012 with professional training the target for whole school staff development. As our world continues to embrace digital technologies, a Cybersafety Outreach—Internet Safety Awareness presentation was held for parents and teachers early in 2011 to help parents keep their children stay safe whilst online.

Reading Recovery
The Reading Recovery Program has been operating for 5 years at Bowral Public School. This year Mr Shannon Egan commenced training as the Reading Recovery teacher. Ten students from Year 1 were placed on the Reading Recovery Program with most reaching a reading level of 16 or above. Former Reading Recovery participants in Years 2 and 3 continue to be monitored to ensure reading levels and skills are improving at an appropriate rate.

Learning Support Team (LST)
The LST meets regularly to monitor and discuss the needs of students experiencing learning, behavioural, emotional and adjustment difficulties. The LST process of referral provides the team with information from parents, teachers and often outside agencies to ensure specific programs and recommendations meet the explicit needs of students. The LST received an average of one referral per week in 2011 with over a hundred students mentioned for follow up and ongoing progress reports. In 2011, the School Learning Support Teacher (SLST) supported various classes with students who have specific needs. Literacy programs were implemented in Stage 1 that supported students in a whole class environment. This was beneficial for the teachers at Bowral as they have the skills to follow up and continue implementing the programs. A motor skills program was run by the School Learning Support Officers (SLSO) for students in the early years. Students in Stage 2 and 3 with literacy needs have been supported through a volunteer tutor program.
Other programs

Loopline Masterminds
A terrific Bowral Community of School’s initiative is our involvement in Loopline Mastermind. Stage 2 and 3 teams participated in the Semester 1 event at Mittagong Public School and we hosted the Semester 2 event in the hall. This challenge is about working collaboratively to develop a group-devised performance based on a given brief using a limited number of props. Presentations to an audience of parents, students and teachers complete the session. One parent noted the quality of the final product with the statement ‘I felt they displayed a focus and maturity well beyond their years, and certainly did our school proud.’

Debating
Stage Three students had the opportunity to participate in lessons on debating with a view to participating in the Premier’s Challenge Debating competition in Term 2. Coaching sessions took place at lunchtimes for all interested students and a team selected. The topic is not known in advance and students have one hour to prepare, with no adult help. Our school team was most successful, being crowned zone champions, and went on to represent the local area in the Illawarra and South East regional finals. A group of students attended the debating camp at Batemans Bay. They learnt to build an argument and present a point of view. Students enjoyed these opportunities to take a position on a topic and justify it.

Chess
A group of fifteen dedicated Stage 3 students enhanced their chess skills under the skillful and dedicated coaching of Mr Rykers. Six competed in the Junior Chess League Tournament at Moss Vale and acquitted themselves very well.

Student Representative Council
The SRC was reformed in 2011 to help make BPS an even better place for everyone. Student leaders, house captains and two representatives from each class from Year 2 to Year 5 have been selected by their peers to represent the students of our school. The main function of the SRC is to come up with ideas and to take action to further improve and promote our school. The SRC organised a multi-day to assist the Wingecarribee District PSSA to raise money for much needed zone uniforms for zone teams. In Term 4, 57 SRC students travelled to Wombaroo Outdoor Education Centre to participate in a day of leadership activities. This involved the students challenging themselves physically and mentally working in teams. Leadership qualities were on display on the low ropes course to the shark infested custard swamp and in a non-verbal communication session.

Progress on 2011 targets

Target 1  Spelling
To improve spelling skills K – 6 for all students

Our achievements include:
- assessment data used to support stage / class programming, including collection of L3 data twice per term in Early Stage 1
- class based activities include reinforcing sounds, structure, phonemic values, usage and extensions
- professional learning focus in early years with L3 training and involvement with Lighthouse project
- Stage 1 trialing different spelling strategies to fully engage and challenge students to use the four spelling knowledges
- program for Stage 2 developed at the start of the year and implemented with spelling assessment – marked consistently across stage at end of term
- Using IWBs to support class / group learning
- Early Stage 1 using the literacy continuum to identify student strengths and further needs
- NAPLAN data for 2011:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3 NAPLAN - Spelling</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>SSG</th>
<th>State DET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average 2010</td>
<td>400.2</td>
<td>439.4</td>
<td>408.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 2011</td>
<td>429.1</td>
<td>445.2</td>
<td>415.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 5 NAPLAN - Spelling</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>SSG</th>
<th>State DET</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average 2010</td>
<td>498.6</td>
<td>526.1</td>
<td>498.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average 2011</td>
<td>503.0</td>
<td>524.0</td>
<td>493.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average progress in Spelling between Year 3 and 5*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008-2010</th>
<th>2009-2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>75.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSG</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>71.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State DEC</td>
<td>84.5</td>
<td>75.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Target 2 Punctuation and Grammar

To improve the quality and structure of text type writing with a focus on punctuation and grammar

Our achievements include:
- Increased use of the NAPLAN website and text samples to ensure explicit teaching of grammar and punctuation
- Data from L3 used by ES1 teachers as a means to identify specific needs
- Increasing use of IWBs and appropriate websites to model correct punctuation
- School editing guide developed and distributed, need to now review effectiveness
- NAPLAN data used as a diagnostic tool to support writing by Stage 2 teachers
- Literacy continuum applied to programming and assessment by K-2 teachers
- Year 5 NAPLAN results 10 scale points above state average but 21 scale points less than statistically similar group for punctuation and grammar (similar statistics in writing of persuasive texts)

Target 3 Numeracy

To improve the numeracy learning of all students.

Our achievements include:
- explicit teaching of numeracy utilising interactive whiteboard activities to consolidate the learning with ES1 specifically using: Smartkiddies; Study Ladder; and Count Me In Too websites
- Mathletics used regularly across all classes to provide practice and consolidation
- Greater differentiation of numeracy curriculum with fewer classes using whole class text book and many not using text books at all
- Identified need for a K-6 scope and sequence with some stages basing programs on North Coast DEC site; others using grade based text book as a guide;
- recognition for need to differentiate tasks across all grades and stages
- use of Best Start early number skills for ES1 and grade assessments to inform teaching and learning across all stages
- significant progress in numeracy as identified by NAPLAN, using matched student data, of 34 scale points, with progress now above state average
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 Quality Teaching and Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar.

Educational and management practice

Quality Teaching

Background

The school has long had a focus on quality teaching and the effective implementation of the Quality Teaching Framework in class programs. In 2010 all teachers worked intensively with Ralph Pirozzo identifying strategies to support curriculum differentiation ie. ensuring the learning environment and the learning tasks and activities are conducive to meeting the specific needs of students.

Findings and conclusions

Twenty parents with children in Years K-6 responded to the online survey. All noted that what the students were required to learn was important and 85% indicated their child enjoyed school. 95% rated the quality of the teaching very highly with the teachers being adjudged enthusiastic and professional in their approach. Curriculum differentiation is more evident in maths than spelling and reading.

Teachers were asked to respond to the survey in terms of the three dimensions of the framework ie. significance, quality learning environment and intellectual quality. Seventeen teachers responded. In terms of intellectual quality all engage in explicit teaching of concepts with discussion and questioning techniques identified as the strategies used most often and effectively. All teachers noted that students in their class operated in an environment of mutual respect and trust, are readily engaged in activities and there are minimal behavioural issues to disrupt the learning. Only two teachers regularly provide students with the opportunity to negotiate the form and direction of classroom activities and their own learning. All lessons are planned to build on the background knowledge of students. Approximately half incorporate the cultural knowledge of diverse social groupings such as gender, ethnicity, race, disability, language and religion into lessons to embrace the concepts of inclusivity and connectedness to the wider community. Importantly, teachers have identified, irrespective of students social and cultural backgrounds, all students feel valued.

Students in Years 4-6 were asked to respond to this survey. Their candid responses provide an excellent guide to their perceptions of their learning environment.

Sometimes I feel pushed, and I don’t always understand what I am learning. I enjoy working in groups, although sometimes I feel that people are doing my work for me, or all the work is left up to me, or someone else in the group.

My teacher makes learning fun. It’s hard but fun to learn with him. My teacher finds out new things everyday and tells the whole class about it.

I think it’s great that all of the teachers understand you and they are helpful and friendly.

It’s fun at school with my teacher, so far I have learnt a lot and look forward to learning as much as possible. I always look forward to coming to school of a morning.

It’s fun, interesting and I like how we do stuff in groups.

I think Bowral Public School is a great learning environment and gives me a great start for future learning (i.e. High school, possibly university).

Learning is fun

Future directions

It is important we provide better feedback to both students and parents on the learning and how it is assessed as only 52% of parents indicated they understood this process. Less than half the parent responses indicated that higher order thinking skills were being taught to their child, an important element of the quality teaching framework. It was also noted that ‘when children have been extended, it is disappointing that when they go into a single stream class, the extension work is not maintained’.
Teachers identified the use of higher order thinking skills as an aspect of quality teaching, particularly as a component of assessment tasks, is used least often. Students have limited opportunities to take greater control of their learning ie. the concept of student self direction, an aspect that should be addressed as it would encourage the role of the teacher as a facilitator of learning rather than 'the font of knowledge'. Teachers have identified the opportunities to share resources and teaching ideas with staff members in other stages is limited as is the opportunity for students to share their knowledge and understanding with the wider community.

Students have clearly noted the positives of enjoying yourself as a major element of the learning environment and the value that they place on the quality of the teacher who cares about them and their learning.

These skills are noted as being essential for their children and 96% indicate their child enjoys spelling activities. Exactly 50% of parents who responded state they are provided with useful information about their child’s progress in spelling, something all are seeking based on this data. The quality teaching focus and the need for curriculum differentiation and student self-direction is highlighted by parents:

'It would be nice for strong spellers to be extended and have extra/other words each wk. I'm sure that within a class there is a variety of spellers. I find it frustrating that those good ones plod along.'

'From discussions with my child, it appears that only those students who are very lacking in areas of punctuation and grammar are given assistance; as a general rule, it is not an area covered in class.'

'The kids should be encouraged, in a much greater scale to write their own stories. They need to be able to have more say in the content of their writing, ... It is ALWAYS the same, week in and week out? How will that keep them interested and engaged??'

The nineteen teachers who responded to the survey hold very similar views to parents as regards the importance and value placed on the explicit teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar. All encourage students to transfer the knowledge they acquire in spelling lessons although it was noted the learning is sometimes compartmentalised, as is the explicit teaching of grammar and punctuation and not transferred when writing. One teacher did state that spelling errors, in writing, are becoming good approximations rather than wild guesses, possibly linked to the comment by another teacher 'The 'hearing and recording sounds' component of L3 has a positive impact.' Another teacher is encouraging ‘more sustained writing with a purpose with quality content’ every day, using BlogEd, a departmental ‘blog’ site.

Responses from 199 students in years 3-6 were received. 97% noted they are being given explicit teaching in spelling and 89% said they were given instruction in grammar and punctuation. All value being taught this aspect of English as they indicate the work set is challenging and makes them think and know it will help them communicate more effectively. The use of
Technology is like a double-edged sword as 53% believe it is useful as a tool to support spelling, punctuation and grammar, specific reference being made to spell and grammar check hints and icons. 50% say that use of those tools makes it unnecessary to learn the specifics as spell check ‘can do it for me’. This is an area that needs to be addressed as not all written communication uses computer technology.

Future directions
50% of parents indicated explicit feedback is given on how to improve writing skills. Individual teachers are to be encouraged to provide such feedback if students are to understand their strengths and continue to develop their skills. Parents value spelling and 88% stated they would like to have more information on spelling strategies to help their child. Better communication with parents is indicated and our participation in the Illawarra South East Region spelling initiative should incorporate a parent component. One third of teachers indicated they are seeking additional professional learning in the teaching of spelling and spelling strategies. Teachers are continuing to encourage and support students to transfer spelling knowledge when publishing their writing.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2011 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Parents
‘Bowral Public fosters a strong sense of pride and ownership in the school and a strong sense of belonging in a community.’

The strengths of the school are:
- Teachers and staff are an approachable, experienced and committed team ‘teachers put in so much time and energy to give the children some amazing experiences’;
- Extra-curricular learning opportunities ‘for students who are willing to ‘give it a go’ example drama, public speaking, sport etc.’;
- 95% of parents say they feel welcome at the school and the staff has a positive relationship with school and wider community;
- 85% state the school provides students and teachers with a safe and welcoming learning environment. ‘Building confident children with the necessary skills for High School ....providing assistance for children struggling with basic skills but also looking after those that require extension.’; and
- 81% acknowledge teachers are competent and set high standards of achievement and that expectations are reasonable and fair.

The biggest issue is that of communication with class teachers. A strong preference for scheduled, individual parent/teacher interviews was identified. It was noted communication and parental input was much better in the early years and that link between home and school is vital from K-6. It was acknowledged that ‘parents can instigate this at any time, but as a parent, I feel loathe to chat to teachers about how my kids are going in general - I don't want to hold them up when they're doing so much.’

(Note: responses from 21 parents via online survey, letters to over 100 parents (6 classes) and invitation to all in the newsletter to comment)

Teachers
In 2011, 19 teachers chose to respond to online survey on satisfaction.

There are opportunities for everyone to experience (create, develop, lead and participate in) a wide range of academic and enriching activities which are driven by high whole school and personal expectation to achieve the very best outcomes possible.

The strength of Bowral Public School lies in ....
- The dedication and commitment of the staff ‘genuinely care about their students and do their best to help them maximise their potential’
- Fantastic students who are eager to learn and ‘who set the tone’;
Parents who are ‘very strong and supportive’ as communication links continue to improve at a class level with the class contact email system utilised by most teachers and a P&C and School Council who play a vital role.

95% believe the school presents a warm and welcoming atmosphere to students, staff, families and visitors.

95% perceive the student welfare policy supports students, staff and families, letting them know about expectations and consequences of both positive and negative behaviour – this may be linked to the extensive review of student welfare undertaken in 2010 and consequent changes aligned to findings.

All teaching staff value the supportiveness of the administration staff and their vital contribution to school life.

100% view the expectations for student achievement as reasonable. It was noted the way assessment data is collected varies across the school and that ‘a teacher MUST use varying assessment tools including observation and daily work samples for accuracy.’

Of concern is less than 50% of teachers have the view that their ideas and suggestions are actively encouraged and acted upon and just on half the staff who responded believe their contribution to the school is valued. As one teacher put it ‘we need more strength in welfare for each other and as a school whole. A happy staff is inevitably a more willingly productive staff ... and more positive output. This is vital for re-energising throughout the school term and year.... VITAL VITAL VITAL’

Working as a team member is valued with stage meetings providing opportunities for sharing ideas on programming, assessment and extra-curricular tasks. Teachers presented a number of comments about curriculum committees including:

- rarely meet and not a lot gets done because no-one is really very interested;
- not valued by management despite the fact that they are supposed to drive the school management plan;
- too much of a bureaucratic activity;
- difficult to get active functioning committees happening when meetings become another extra after school expectation.

Comments have been considered and in 2012 half the staff meetings in a term have been allocated to committees and stage meetings.

Students

All students from years 2-6 were given the opportunity to document their views, accessing the online survey with their class.

‘they can't improve on this school because it is perfect just the way it is!!!!’

The best thing about Bowral Public School is...

- being with friends, developing new friendships and ‘having fun with all my friends in class and out of class!’
- teachers who have ‘confidence in you to do well and try your best!!!!!!!’ when confronted with new and interesting learning tasks
- extra-curricular activities including gala days, enrichment days, excursions and self-help as well as ‘fun’ curriculum opportunities such as sport, art, maths games and computer skills
- 98% know the school rules and acknowledge the school has high expectations that students will follow those rules
- 95% of students feel safe at Bowral and are proud of their school
- 89% are challenged by the tasks set for them by teachers, with 95% indicating they know the skills they are learning will equip them for the future

The very high degree of trust the students have in their teacher, knowing their teacher takes an interest in helping them with work and that teachers and other staff listen and respond to their concerns and opinions is a credit to the professionalism and caring approach teachers bring to Bowral Public School.
Professional learning
Acknowledging classroom teachers make a significant difference to the learning outcomes of the students, teachers are supported to improve their practice by the provision of high quality professional learning. When surveyed, 42% of teachers indicated that they are encouraged to pursue professional learning opportunities. Approximately one third of our professional learning funds were expended on our commitment to Best Start and L3 – literacy initiatives for the early years of learning. All staff participated in an extensive range of professional learning sessions including anaphylaxis and CPR training. At weekly professional learning meetings, teachers engaged in workshops covering all Key Learning Areas, with emphasis on school target areas of mathematics, literacy, assessment and reporting and technology.

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. A focus for 2012-2014 is the professional learning that will strengthen teacher and leadership capacity to effectively implement the Australian curriculum.

Reading
Outcome for 2012–2014
Develop a shared understanding of evidence based approaches to teaching reading amongst staff to improve literacy outcomes for all students, including Aboriginal students.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
• Increased levels of literacy achievement for every student in line with State Plan targets
• Diminished gap in literacy achievement between Aboriginal students and all students
• Improved literacy learning in Kindergarten in line with state wide literacy continuum
• To move middle achieving students to the top bands as measured by NAPLAN data

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
• ongoing implementation of initiatives including Best Start and Language, Learning and Literacy (L3)
• promote the importance of home reading to support and enhance class based programs
• teacher modeling of specific strategies such as 3 level questioning guide, to further develop higher order thinking skills
• professional development on key elements of an effective reading program with a focus on comprehension strategies
• selection and purchase of wide range of reading resources including software for IWBs, fiction and non-fiction texts.

Spelling
Outcome for 2012–2014
Improvement in the assessment, teaching and programming of spelling K-6 as teacher confidence in the use of a wide range of strategies and resources is developed.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
• To move middle achieving students to the top bands as measured by NAPLAN data.
• To improve teacher understanding of best practice in the teaching of spelling.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
• Use of consistent assessment strategies ie. Dalwood Spelling Test to inform programs
• Participation in ISER spelling initiative with all staff represented in decision making.
• Monitor and assess current practice to inform, initiate and guide change process in pedagogies to move students from the middle to the top bands in spelling
• Parent sessions to outline and expand upon current classroom spelling strategies
• Year 3-6 preparation for Premier’s Spelling Bee Challenge.

Numeracy
Outcome for 2012–2014
Build teacher knowledge and understanding in the implementation of the Quality Teaching Framework to improve numeracy outcomes for all students, including Aboriginal students.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
• Increased levels of numeracy achievement for every student in line with State Plan targets
• Diminished gap in numeracy achievement between Aboriginal students and all students
To move middle achieving students to the top bands as measured by NAPLAN data

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Build capacity of teachers around the use of Newman’s Error Analysis
- Develop student ability to work mathematically
- Ongoing implementation of Mathletics
- Review whole school approach to teaching of K-6 Mathematics Syllabus
- Enhance student engagement by embedding elements of the Quality Teaching Framework into lessons with a focus on differentiation.
- Develop rich assessment tasks that enable students to demonstrate the breadth of their knowledge and understanding
- NAPLAN teaching strategies used for identified areas of weakness in student achievement and/or teaching programs

Leadership and Management

Outcome for 2012–2014
Enhanced leadership capacity for school improvement and strengthened teacher capacity to improve student learning outcomes with an increased number of teachers accredited with the Institute of Teachers.

2012 Targets to achieve this outcome include:
- Student leadership opportunities built upon to support ownership in decision making
- Support teachers to build their own as well as the school’s leadership capacity.
- Teacher and school leader participation in programs that build capacity to support school improvement and student learning.

Strategies to achieve these targets include:
- Refine the TARS and EARS process with a focus on meeting individual and whole school needs, goals and targets - collegial growth.
- Review supervisory roles.
- NSW Quality Teaching Model explicitly used in school professional learning to facilitate improved student learning
- School leaders participate in professional learning for career development, capacity building and school development
- Implement leadership strategies through teacher involvement in executive meetings, conferences, mentoring programs within the school and at COS level
- Facilitate teacher participation in the Institute of Teachers accreditation scheme with professional learning meeting accreditation requirements of the NSW Teachers Institute.
- Strengthen school accountability and reporting with committee and staff involvement in developing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating school plans
- Succession planning for staff roles initiatives eg. sport, SRC, Primary Proms
- Establish a successful Student Representative Council (SRC) that encourages and develops genuine leadership opportunities for students
- Define roles for student leadership ie. house captains, school leaders documented

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

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