2009 Annual School Report
Weethalle Public School

Winner of 2009 Griffith inaugural AECG Award for Outstanding Achievement in Aboriginal Education.

Weethalle Public School
Face the Task
Messages

Principal's message
At Weethalle Public School, students, staff and community work together to promote strong, healthy relationships. Students are encouraged to participate in a broad range of activities that develop self confidence and emphasise leadership and independence. Students have been empowered to make suggestions through the SRC for changes they would like.

Students are taught a sense of responsibility and caring attitude for themselves, other people and the environment. The school’s welfare practices are based on mutual respect so that students can participate in a learning environment that fosters positive relationships. Student learning is supported by effective literacy and numeracy programs and students enjoy high levels of access to Information and Communication Technologies. The school has endeavoured to be responsive and collaborative with staff, parents and students working together to raise student achievement levels.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the teaching and support staff for their passion, energy and commitment to the students of Weethalle Public School. This year they organised or assisted in organising a wide range of sporting, cultural and performance items, as well as teaching the six KLA’s. Their dedication to the continual reflection and improvement of the quality teaching they offer has ensured a very successful 2009. Significant outcomes have been achieved which will set the foundation for years to come.

We are committed to having a school where your children: feel safe and valued, form lasting friendships, are educationally challenged, set consistently high expectations, and work each day in a supportive atmosphere that builds self confidence.

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.

Cheryle Glyde
Principal

P&C and/or School Council message
As 2009 comes to a close, we can reflect on the

P & C’s contribution to the school.
The P & C this year:
• subsidised the Canberra excursion
• held a Bulb Fundraiser
• donated Academic Awards
• donated $1500 to the school for books
• catered at our Sports Carnival;
• catered for the Maths Day;
• catered for the Bikies Lunch at the Pub – thanks to Gail & Glenn;
• held a Gannmain Pie drive;
• held BBQ’s at Bunnings – Shannon and Samantha, Lindsay and Michelle;
• held a firewood raffle (donated by Greg & Stephanie);
• put $1200 towards a teacher’s aide; and
• held a Billy Cart Race Day and Camp Oven.

As the President, and also a parent, I would like to thank everyone that assisted the P & C and School during the year, especially the canteen ladies and Leon, who kindly donated their time each week. Every contribution counts, and goes towards making the school a better place to educate our kids. Michelle did a great job organising the whole show.

I’d like to thank Ian O’Rourke for his Police Bowls Day which made over $1500 for the P & C. Michelle and Stephanie deserve a special mention for attending every meeting during the year making a valuable contribution.

Thanks also to Fred & Nicole Overall for donating and delivering pig manure for the school lawn

I’d like to thank Mrs Lumsden and Mrs Jolly for their contributions to our school over the years and wish them well for the future.

I’d like to congratulate Mrs Glyde on a productive and progressive year as Principal. Keep up the good work.

Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy new year.

Brian Johnston
P&C President

Student representative’s message
At Weethalle PS we are very lucky to have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of activities. We joined in many different sporting events including athletics, swimming, soccer, rugby league, aussie rules, netball, cricket, basketball, softball, archery and touch football.
There were so many highlights in 2009 that many will not even get a mention. Some memorable events included our excursion to Canberra, Maths Day, Aboriginal Cultural Day as a Naidoc Week celebration, KROP concert in Griffith, visiting authors, National Art Gallery visit and workshop, Maths Club and the Young Leaders Conference in Sydney. We are very lucky that we are able to do so many different things at our school. The SRC held a number of fundraising activities during 2009. We held a cake stall at school which raised $104.55 for victims of the Victorian bush fires. Our Fun Run/Cross Country raised $805.00 while our Jump Rope for Heart raised $258.70 for the Heart Foundation. Students came dressed in their favourite football team uniforms for our Footy Colours Day which raised $41.00 for Cystic Fibrosis. We also decided to hold a Crazy Hat Day on Melbourne Cup day to raise money for Ronald McDonald House, a charity which helped one of our local families. This fun activity raised $66.25. We enjoyed organising and participating in these fundraisers for the very worthwhile charities.

Now we have come to the end of primary school and look forward to high school. We will always remember our teachers and friends and the good times we have had at Weethalle Public School.

Sharnah Stevens and Simon Healy

School context

Student information

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

Student enrolment profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management of non-attendance

At Weethalle PS procedures are in place to provide ongoing follow-up with parents regarding student absences. Letters are sent home at the end of each term asking for a note to explain any ‘unexplained absences’ for their child. When there is a history of unexplained absences, the school notifies the NSW DET Home School Liaison Officer who will intervene where appropriate.

In an attempt to further improve attendance figures, the school is awarding attendance certificates at the end of every term. The issue of partial attendance is also being addressed in 2010 with regular reminders to parents in the weekly newsletter of the importance of regular attendance and not leaving school early without good reason.

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.

### Structure of classes

In 2009, Weethalle PS had two multi-stage classes, one infants class (K-2) and one primary class (Years 3-6).

<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>3/4/5/6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4/5/6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4/5/6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>3/4/5/6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/1/2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/1/2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K/1/2</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Staff information

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

### Staff establishment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary Teaching Principal</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Teacher</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Part Time Teacher</td>
<td>0.168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release from Face-to-Face Teacher</td>
<td>0.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Teacher Entitlement</td>
<td>2.436</td>
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</table>

During 2009, Weethalle Public School had no indigenous staff members.

### 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>0%</td>
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</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.
A full copy of the school's 2009 financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the School Council and/or the parent body. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Balance brought forward</th>
<th>87,343.63</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>50,916.31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>39,663.93</td>
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<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>12,833.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>3,598.23</td>
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<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>1,230.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>195,585.59</strong></td>
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**Expenditure**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching &amp; learning</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>18,986.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>6,538.68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>6,232.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>414.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>860.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>47,105.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>2,126.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>14,638.44</td>
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<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>414.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>8,914.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>3,274.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>1,441.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>110,533.92</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td><strong>85,051.67</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Achievements**

**Arts**

During 2009 Weethalle PS students have participated in a wide range of performances and cultural pursuits. Students in years 3-6 performed beautifully in the KROP Schools Spectacular held at the Griffith Regional Theatre over two days and nights. They all performed impressively and benefited greatly from their experience on the big stage in front of a huge and appreciative audience. The K-2 infants students were successful in their verse speaking performances at the Leeton Eisteddfod. The adjudicators’ comments were very complimentary and all students should be very proud of their performances.

Mandala created by the students

All students were extremely privileged to be involved in a special day “Mandala Earthworks” organised in conjunction with the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra. Two educators from the Art Gallery visited our school and provided expert tuition in a variety of artistic pursuits. Students learned what a mandala was and how they are created. They worked collaboratively to create one in our playground using environmental materials they collected from their homes and surrounding local areas. They also had the opportunity to create individual artworks using a variety of artistic techniques. This was a very popular day of activities with all students thoroughly engaged at all times. One of the most rewarding aspects the day was the positive attitude of students, especially the shift in attitude of some of the students. They had a new found appreciation of their ability as an artist. Comments from “I can’t do this. I’m no good at art.” Soon became “I didn’t know I could be such a good artist!”
Students enjoying creating art work

All students entered a variety of items in the Weethalle Show with a large number of awards being received. This showcase of student work is very popular and greatly appreciated by the entire school and wider community.

Students were again involved in the Weethalle CWA International Day, presenting projects and reports on Egypt to a gathering of the broader district CWA members, as well as members of the local community. Such participation is greatly appreciated by all involved and serves to strengthen the links between our school and the wider community.

Performances by the hosting class are presented at each school assembly. Students had the opportunity to choreograph and perform dance, singing and drama items which were developed as part of their Creative and Practical Arts classroom programs.

All students performed song and dance items while dressed in costume at our end of year Presentation Night concert. The whole school were involved in the performance of “Greetings From Sandy Beach”, a play written by Year 6 student Tahlia McKenzie. This initiative gave a huge degree of ownership to students on their special night of performance and showcased the vast talents of our students. It was very well received by students, parents and community alike. It was a definite highlight and a very positive way to finish the 2009 school year. This performance was thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed by all those involved and present on the night.

Sport

In 2009 the school has endeavoured to provide a range of sporting and fitness activities that challenge capable students and develop the skills of students still working on proficiency. Apart from weekly sport where the students are taught fundamental skills and games, the students were also involved in morning fitness sessions, followed by a “Fruit Break”, daily.

All students K-6 participated in our annual school swimming carnival, with the emphasis being on sportsmanship, participation and enjoyment. A large number of students went on to represent our school at the West Wyalong District PSSA carnival. From there three students qualified to attend the regional carnival at Dubbo.

At our school Fun Run/Cross Country all students participated with enthusiasm and a great deal of effort. They raised $805, 50% of which stayed with the school. The students decided to purchase additional sports equipment with these funds. Mia McCarten went on to represent the Western Region at the State Cross Country carnival in Sydney.

Our PP5 athletics relay team of Mia McCarten, Mathew Caldow, Josh Hanlon and Simon Healy competed at the State PSSA carnival in Sydney gaining fourth place in the final. Mia also competed in the 800m and Long Jump events.

Quality Sports Coaching Services from Orange again provided expert tuition and skill development for all students during a school visit in term 3. Students had the opportunity to be involved in archery, soccer and touch football under the guidance of highly skilled coaches.

The primary students travelled to West Wyalong to participate in the AFL/Netball Gala Day where they enjoyed learning new skills and being involved in team sport. The infants students attended the Rankins Springs Round Robin whilst the primary students were on their major excursion to Canberra. They participated in a variety of tabloid activities.

Country Rugby League Development Officers visited Weethalle PS twice during 2009, providing opportunities for all students to develop their rugby league skills. A group of our senior students joined Barellan, Ardlethan and Ariah Park CS students to form a combined Mortimer Shield team. Simon Healy and Damian Johnston, were part of a very successful team. Sharnah Stevens was an integral member of the girls Oztag team.
Simon Healy was successful in being selected in the Riverina Open Boys PSSA Rugby League team. He travelled to Griffith to compete in the State PSSA carnival.

A significant number of students K-6, took advantage of the opportunity to participate in the West Wyalong Rugby League and Oztag Gala Day. This was the first time such a day had been organised and all those girls and boys who attended had a very enjoyable day. They all came away with enhanced rugby league skills.

The last week of the school year provided all students with the opportunity to participate in a whole school swimming program at Barellan. Lessons went from Thursday through to the last Wednesday. The school covered the cost of bus transport for the first four days. Parents provided transport for the final day so as to join us in our end of year pool party. The P&C kindly provided a BBQ lunch for all family and friends present. It was a lovely way to celebrate the end of a fantastic school year.

Year 6 students saying farewell

Major Excursion to Canberra

The highlight for many primary students was our excursion to Canberra. Mrs Glyde supervised Year 3-6 students on a 5 day trip at the end of term 3. Parents Lindsay Jolly, Leanne Hanlon, Stephanie Healy and Vicki Jolly accompanied the group and provided much appreciated additional assistance. This excursion gave great significance to students who had studied State and Federal Government in HSIE lessons. The group travelled with Heffer’s Coaches from West Wyalong. Costs for this excursion were greatly reduced as the school paid for the transport using Drought Assistance funding and the P&C very kindly subsidised each student $50. It was an extremely valuable excursion, visiting and participating in a huge and diverse range of venues and activities otherwise unavailable to our isolated students. Comments received long after this visit reinforced the enjoyment and positive learning outcomes that occurred amongst all participants.

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)

Due to privacy legislation ten or more students must complete the NAPLAN testing for individual school percentages in each band; the three-year school average; and average growth information to be publicly reported. At Weethalle Public School there were three students in year 3 and three students in year 5 that sat the NAPLAN test in 2009. Therefore, because there is insufficient data to draw comparisons, results cannot be advised in this report. All parents have been advised of their child’s achievements. Should parents require any further advice or information regarding their child’s performance, they have been urged to contact the school principal.

Progress in literacy

Reading

Average progress in reading between Year 3 and Year 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>LSG</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005 - 07</td>
<td>106.9</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006 - 08</td>
<td>94.3</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 - 09</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>88.4</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Progress in numeracy
Minimum standards

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

Due to the small number of students sitting the NAPLAN tests, it would be a breach of privacy to publicly report data.

### Aboriginal education

Initiatives introduced in 2008 and continued in 2009 are now securely embedded in school planning processes.

At Weethalle PS we educate all students about Aboriginal histories, cultures and current Aboriginal Australia. Programs and strategies are designed to ensure Aboriginal students achieve broader educational outcomes that match or better the outcomes of all student's in NSW.

Year 6 students present the “Acknowledgement of Country” at the beginning of our regular student run school assemblies. A “Welcome to Country” by a former student was proudly performed at the end of year school Concert and Presentation Night.

The lack of understanding and knowledge resulted in the P&C requesting a school and community Aboriginal Education Information Session. A survey was sent home to address specific issues. This session was widely publicised through the newsletter, local community paper, community posters and individual invitations/flyers mailed to the entire community. DET Aboriginal Education Consultant and the Community Liaison Officer both from Griffith provided expert, objective information resulting in a more informed and respectful community.

### Significant programs and initiatives

#### NAIDOC Day Mural on toilet block wall

A huge highlight of 2009 was our hugely successful Aboriginal Cultural Day and NAIDOC day celebrations. We were successful in receiving funds from a DET Aboriginal Cultural Grant and Wagga Wagga ICC Aboriginal Cultural Funding Program. This enabled the school to build upon its positive efforts from 2008 and provide an exciting range of high quality, diverse activities. It was an absolutely fabulous day, utilising personnel from Griffith, West Wyalong, Forbes and Condobolin. We had six small groups rotating around various activities. We placed students into mixed age groups and presented them all with a Cultural...
Respect band to wear. We started with a Welcome to Country in Wiradjiri and then a Welcome Dance was performed by the Kalare Dancers from Condobolin. Male and female face painting was optional and proved very popular. The children then did traditional cooking of Johnny cakes with Alison Johnstone (DET Aboriginal Education Consultant), Indigenous games with Raelene Fox (Community Liaison Officer), painting of a mural on the toilet block with Carolyn Webb of Griffith, Wiradjiri language and artefacts with Leanne Hampton of West Wyalong Land Council and Linton Howarth of Lachlan Aboriginal Natural Resource Management Corporation in Forbes, a cultural awareness session/slideshow with Shanon Mallison a local parent and West Wyalong Land Council member, and Indigenous dancing with the Kalare Dancers from Condobolin. We all shared a lunch of BBQ kangaroo meat sausages, kebabs and fresh fruit. We finished the day with a final dance and presented our guests with a Weethalle PS pen as a momento of the day. For a school of 46 students it was wonderful to have extensive community support on this day. We had 19 Indigenous people and 46 non-Indigenous people in attendance, with ongoing community partnerships strongly evident.

We had parents, grandparents, uncles and one 97 year old great grandmother from England enjoy the day with us. She even asked to be permitted to add her handprint to the mural on our toilet wall. The positive responses were overwhelming and added to the fantastic atmosphere of the day. The comments that were made all day by both parents and students were priceless and contributed as evidence of growing appreciation and respect for Aboriginal Australia.

AECG Outstanding School Achievement Award
At the 2009 Griffith Indigenous Awards Night six individual students from Weethalle received a number of awards in recognition of their achievements in a variety of areas. The absolute highlight for our school on this night was receiving the Award for the most Outstanding Primary School. It was a huge honour and privilege to be the first school to be presented with this prestigious inaugural AECG award in recognition of our school initiatives in Aboriginal Education. This is an impressive achievement for our small school considering the many larger schools with more extensive Indigenous populations and programs. The whole school community shares pride in achievement.

Primary students with permission were involved in the 2009 Cuddle-Cuddie Project organised through the Macquarie ICT Innovations Centre. They joined in a couple of interactive video conference sessions on various aspects of Aboriginal culture with other schools throughout NSW.

Multicultural education
Weethalle programs and initiatives ensure an inclusive school community and a racism-free learning and working environment. During 2009 we had two Anti-Racism Contact Officers receive their update training.

Class teaching and learning programs continue to emphasise the importance of cultural diversity and racial harmony within Australian society. They are culturally inclusive and develop understanding of cultural, linguistic and religious difference. This year the whole school participated in Harmony Day. The message of how we appreciate diverse cultures and languages and how people from different backgrounds come together to make Australia a great and successful country was reinforced through a range of activities. Students came dressed in costumes of other countries and presented researched information on their chosen country. We also shared in a variety of multicultural foods.

Stage 2 and 3 students studied a unit of work on Ancient Egypt which linked with the CWA International Day country of study (Egypt) and also the Canberra Excursion visit the Egyptian Embassy (granted after special permission from the Ambassador!)

Respect and responsibility
The values of respect and responsibility are intrinsic elements of the Personal Development program at Weethalle Public School. These values are explicitly taught in the classroom and through the Peer Support program. During term 3 Year 6 students were peer support leaders. They worked in pairs with small groups of students from Kinder to Year 5. They used the peer support module called “Taking Opportunities” which focused on resilience. This module supported students to develop the skills, knowledge and
attitudes that will enable them to cope more effectively with difficult and challenging experiences. "Taking Opportunities" was written with the premise that resilience can be developed within students through recognition of the protective factors already present in their lives and by providing opportunities to foster a range of skills and coping strategies. Our school ensures that the core values we teach are actioned, modelled and reinforced everyday.

In 2009 five Year 6 students travelled to Sydney to attend the Young Leaders Conference held at the Entertainment Centre. Damian Johnston, Mathew Caldow, Josh Hanlon, Simon Healy and Andrew Jolly listened to a number of well known motivational speakers and were inspired to return to school and practise those leadership skills with greater confidence.

All students K-6 have the opportunity to lead our regular school assemblies, developing responsibility and leadership skills.

The Student Representative Council (SRC) held a number of fundraising activities for worthwhile charities during 2009. These charities included: National Heart Foundation, Cystic Fibrosis, Ronald McDonald House and Victorian bushfire victims.

CAP funds enabled our school to access a large variety of learning opportunities that would not have been possible without it. We were able to utilise teacher aide and additional teacher time to assist with both literacy and numeracy programs operating throughout the school. They were able to work closely with identified small groups of students as well as engage in resource making. Published authors Robert Tricky, Rhonda Tallnash and John Heffernan visited our school, providing reading and writing workshops for all students K-6. Many associated writing resources were purchased to support this extensive school focus on writing. Radonline was a very popular literacy online program utilised by the primary students. The PM Writing program including Big Books, were purchased to provide very explicit writing lessons for the infants students. Other literacy resources purchased included comprehension Reading Boxes and Readers Theatre box sets.

CAP funds also allowed the purchase of extensive hands on maths resources for use in both the infants and primary classes. Mathletics, an online maths program allowing students 24/7 access to quality activities at school and home, was overwhelmingly the most popular purchase with both students and parents.

Brain based learning resources and professional learning were also opportunities provided by CAP funding, with staff attending a district initiative at Ungarie CS featuring American expert Marcia Tate.

Computer software was purchased to engage all students in a variety of ICT activities such as digital storytelling, writing and publishing quality graphic texts. Experts were engaged in the classroom, providing excellent instruction and support for students learning these new skills. Staff professional learning was also a benefit, building capacity within the school.

Year 6 students attended the Young Leaders Conference in Sydney, helping build student leadership capacity within the school and enabling individuals to learn more about what is involved in obeying school rules and acknowledging the strengths and abilities of students.

Responsibility is demonstrated by including in school rules strategies to reinforce appropriate behaviour as well as consequences for breaking rules. Classroom evidence of this value includes self-discipline, modelling expected behaviours and involvement in strategies to encourage compliance with school rules.

Country Areas Program (CAP)

Students were also involved in many community service and environmental activities such as Schools Clean Up Australia Day, Schools Tree Day, a trip to the Lake Cowal Environmental Education Centre, Recycling Week school visit and the community ANZAC Day march. As Principal, I was asked to be the guest speaker at the ANZAC service to talk about my experience on the Kokoda Track. Involvement in such community service builds a strong sense of school and community pride and further strengthens this already strong partnership.

Evidence of respect in our school includes regarding as important the opinions of parents, accepting the right of others to hold different views to your own, listening to others without interrupting,
being a great leader. CAP funds covered the travel, accommodation and entry tickets. This opportunity would not have occurred without the benefit of this funding.

Transport costs were also heavily subsidised by CAP funding, ensuring no student was disadvantaged as a result of isolation from events or activities. All students K-6 were able to travel to various performances, day trips and the annual school swimming program with minimal cost involved.

Weethalle Public School is extremely fortunate to be the recipient of CAP funding and appreciate the opportunity it gives to the students of our beautiful little school. Other programs

Maths Club and Small Schools Maths Day

A significant initiative implemented during 2009 was the introduction of Tuesday afternoon Maths Club. Students K-6 had the opportunity to stay after school until 4.30pm to receive additional tuition with all aspects of mathematics. The online Mathletics program, a variety of games/activities and individual or small group lessons designed to address identified areas of weakness were the main components of the session. This initiative was an attempt to improve the schools poor numeracy results. It proved an extremely popular initiative with both students and parents alike. Attendance rates averaged 65% of the total school population. On a number of occasions numbers reached over 75%. Maths Club is loved by the majority of students who felt it was a very worthwhile activity which definitely improved their maths. It contributed to a positive shift in cultural attitudes towards maths where the majority of students love it and many say it is their favourite subject.

Small Schools Maths Day

Weethalle PS also hosts a Small Schools Fun Maths Day during Literacy and Numeracy Week. In 2009, students, staff, parents and community members from Tallimba and Rankins Springs joined us for the day. Students were placed in small groups based on their ability in the strand of Working Mathematically and rotated around a variety of hands on games and activities. Each group was supervised by a teacher or parent to ensure maximum engagement in tasks. A huge thank you must go to our very supportive parents who are an important component of this day. It was a fantastic learning experience for all involved.

Other Programs

Weethalle PS offers Year 3-6 students the opportunity to participate in the ICAS tests. Students from ten countries compete in these challenging assessments. In 2009 a small number of students sat the English, Mathematics, Writing, Spelling and Computer competitions.

The 2009 NSW Premier’s Reading Challenge was successfully completed by 69% of the total student population which is a 6% improvement on 2008 involvement. During 2009 our school was involved in the NSW Premier's Spelling Bee for the first time. Kelsey Hanlon, Brendan McKenzie and Tahlia McKenzie represented Weethalle PS at the regional finals. These students performed extremely well, reaching the 5th or 6th round of the competition. All agreed it was a very worthwhile learning experience.
NSW Premier’s Reading Challenge Certificates

Year 6 students travelled to the Riverina Environmental Education Centre in Wagga to participate in a Talented Students program. They were involved in a variety of thought provoking activities which thoroughly engaged each student. Positive responses to these activities resulted from all students.

All students K-6 were involved in a number of workshops with published authors who visited our school. Robert Trickey conducted writing workshops over 2 days exposing students to all aspects of publishing a book. With follow up work students aimed to write, illustrate and publish their own books. Rhonda M. Tallnash introduced students to the art of writing books using rhyme. John Heffernan inspired students with storytelling, sharing many of the stories from his published books. All authors contributed to the writing skills of our students and motivated them to improve the quality of their own writing.

Workshop with children's author John Heffernan

Progress on 2009 targets

Target 1 Writing

75% of students achieve stage appropriate outcomes in writing

Our achievements include:

- Benchmarking of all students in Term 1 and Term 4 using stage writing outcomes indicating pleasing improvements;
- Accessing published authors to instruct and role model successful writing strategies designed to maximise engagement and improve the quality of writing;
- Students successfully achieving 2009 target with the majority of students being able to write accurately according to a given set of criteria.

Target 2 Numeracy

75% of students achieve stage foundation statements in mathematics strand of Working Mathematically

Our achievements include:

- Benchmarking of all students in Term 1 and Term 4 using stage foundation statements for the Working Mathematically strand of mathematics;
- Improved performance in NAPLAN;
- Providing teachers provided with professional learning in the Working Mathematically area especially in the classroom use of Newman’s Analysis strategies.
- Teacher programs including a regular reference to explicit working mathematically lessons. TARS program includes ongoing discussions/feedback, reflecting a deep understanding of the Working Mathematically strand;
- The purchase of extensive resources to support hands on classroom lessons;
- The successful introduction of Maths Club after school on Tuesdays; and
- Successfully achieving our 2009 target.

Target 3 Environmental Education and School Sustainability

Whole school community participation in planning and implementation of sustainability initiatives.

Our achievements include:

- Establishment of a school vegetable garden planted and maintained by the student population with assistance from the school General Assistance;
- Plans and support for building a chook yard from the P&C in 2010;
- Students and staff collaboratively being involved in sustainability practises such as ensuring lights and taps are turned off when not in use; and
- Students ownership of a worm farm, recycling appropriate food scraps.
School Vegetable Garden

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 Leadership and Mathematics.

Educational and management practice

School Leadership

Background

Surveys relating to School Leadership were given to all parents, staff and students Years 3-6. Results were collated and will be used to guide future improved practices.

Findings and conclusions

The school received less than 36% (8 families) of the surveys on leadership distributed to parents which were to be returned to school.

- 88% of parents, 100% of staff and students surveyed were very satisfied with the effectiveness of educational leadership within the school.
- 100% of parents and 95% of students indicated ‘Almost Always’ and ‘Usually’ that ‘Our school leaders introduce changes that are good for the students’, ‘The school is always looking for ways to improve what it does’, ‘The school involves all groups within the school community in deciding what it is aiming to achieve’.
- A small sample of responses from parents and students indicated that school leaders need to discuss ways to improve children’s learning.
- 95% of students indicated ‘Almost Always’ and ‘Usually’ that ‘Staff, parents and students are encouraged to take leadership roles at the school’.
- 100% of staff indicated ‘Almost Always’ that ‘Leaders improve the school through an understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses’, ‘School leaders build relationships based on trust, collegiality and mutual respect’, ‘School leaders demonstrate an interest in, and an accountability for student learning outcomes’, ‘School leaders effectively implement change processes which result in improved student learning outcomes’ and ‘School leaders encourage staff to constructively challenge educational practice’.

Future directions

The school appears to have excellent support for the leadership that is occurring. There is an indication that perhaps there needs to be more regular informal discussions with parents and students indicating ways to improve student learning. This will be reinforced in 2010 via staff meetings, TARS processes and student goal setting.

Curriculum

Mathematics

Background

School trend data indicated Mathematics as an area of concern. School planning focused on the improvement of this curriculum area. All students K-6, staff and parents were surveyed to evaluate current teaching and learning practices in Mathematics across the school.

Findings and conclusions

98% of all student responses agreed that they enjoyed maths lessons and that it is important to learn Mathematics. Between 80-85% like hands-on Maths work, working with other students and using computers in Maths (95% infants). 85% of infants students thought they were good at maths while 84% of primary students agreed they were getting better at Number and Measurement.

When asked what the best thing about Maths lessons was, the online Mathletics program was overwhelming popular.

Other responses included:
- learning maths different kinds of ways;
- not copying off other people and doing it by yourself;
• getting lots done and feeling good about me and using the computer;
• I get help all the time and it's good;
• all the games and activities;
• it is my favourite subject; and
• learning a heap that you didn’t know how to do.

Responses to the question ‘The worst thing about Maths lessons is…’ include:
• working out hard things and some things are too hard;
• I feel under pressure doing big, long pages and get angry;
• when you get stuck on something;
• dividing/multiplication; and
• nothing at all - I don’t have trouble with anything.

All teachers ‘Agreed’ or ‘Strongly Agreed’ that their students are demonstrating achievement of syllabus outcomes and enjoy participating in Mathematics activities, their assessment is based on syllabus outcomes, they use a variety of teaching strategies when delivering learning activities and they have adequate resources to teach Mathematics effectively.

Of parents surveys, 100% strongly agreed that Mathematics is an important subject for their child. 100% agreed or strongly agreed that their child enjoys mathematics, is developing his/her ability to work mathematically and that the school has plenty of equipment to teach mathematics. A small number of parents expressed concerns at the frequency of reporting in Mathematics and the need for the school to keep them well informed about the teaching of mathematics, as well as not understanding how mathematics is taught at school and not feeling confident to assist their child with mathematics at home. These issues will be addressed during 2010.

Future directions.

In response to a number of parent concerns about the teaching of mathematics at school and their ability to help their child at home, information sessions and regular inserts in the weekly newsletter will endeavour to improve parent confidence, knowledge and understanding of the mathematics syllabus.

Other evaluations

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school. Their responses are presented below.

Responses were collated from the 15 Community Engagement surveys received from staff, parents and community members. Between 80% and 100% of respondents ‘Agreed’ or ‘Strongly Agreed’ with the schools statements of effective practice. Of those, 5% to 20%'Disagreed' or 'Strongly Disagreed' with statements that "parents and carers are supported to provide help for their child’s learning at home" and "the school talks with families when there are important decisions to make about what goes on in the school". 94% ‘Agreed’ or ‘Strongly Agreed’ this is a school where.....

• Staff and parents/carers regularly use a number of ways to communicate information about the school's programs and activities;
• Teachers encourage ongoing communication about student learning between home and school;
• Parents/carers are encouraged to be actively involved in their child’s learning;
• Community representatives on school committees are valued and listened to;
• Parents and community members take on leadership roles within the school;
• Members of the community come together regularly to support student learning; and
• Community resources and skills are used to support student learning.

When asked what the most successful things that the school and community do together to improve students’ learning outcomes responses included: CWA International Days/Projects, reading, Maths Club, Maths Fun Days, ANZAC Day, Presentation Night at the hall, Open days, excursions around town, value parent contributions, newsletter/ Weethalle Whisper, great support for each student, student respect and ability to get along with each other, student, teachers, staff enthusiasm, Weethalle Show involvement, and Senior Citizens morning tea.

The things that the school and community could do better to improve student learning outcomes responses included: training days for parents – reading and maths; more reading helpers; less staff interruptions - children suffer because of lack of continuity in the classroom; teachers need to stay at school more; new learning material; involve experts/parents from the community to
help teach the students e.g. local community history; volunteers to work with students with learning difficulties; remain positive about school, the value of education and involvement in planning.

There were a number of concerns expressed regarding the amount of time teachers were off class or away from school. There needs to be further information provided to parents regarding the importance of professional learning in improving the quality of teaching their children receive.

Student welfare and discipline also caused concern and confusion among a small number of parents. Student Welfare policies will be revisited and reviewed with students, staff and parents in 2010 in accordance with the School Plan.

We can perhaps improve parent satisfaction with aspects of school operations with a number of key strategies. In 2010, the school will focus on greater involvement of parents and community members in the planning process. More support will be provided to parents to enable them to better help their child at home by consciously increasing communication about a child’s learning and also by providing training opportunities to familiarise them with all KLA syllabus. There will be an ongoing emphasis on raising parental expectations of their child’s education.

The majority of students indicated they enjoyed coming to school and were very satisfied with the friendships they made whilst attending Weethalle PS. Most students enjoyed attending a small school, did not mind being in a composite class and thought they were being taught by quality teachers. Teachers indicated that there was a growing positive partnership with the community and that the school is well resourced with a dedicated staff and a developing atmosphere of enhanced student expectations.

Professional learning

Professional learning activities were offered to all teaching and non teaching staff throughout 2009 in the form of school staff development days, staff meetings, external courses and combined conferences. Support staff were also encouraged to attend.

$3,436 of Tied funds was allocated on teacher professional learning. Being an incentive school also enables each teacher access to 4 additional teacher professional development days which does not appear in the school budget. CAP funding also contains a proportion of professional learning. Enhanced professional learning needs to focus specifically on those targets and focus areas for improvement as identified in the 2009-2011 School Plan.

School development 2009 – 2011

Weethalle Public School has established the following target areas for 2010. These are taken directly from the 2009-2010 School Plan which was derived from a review of data collected during the self-evaluation process.

Targets for 2010

2010 will be the second phase of the new 3 year plan. The new targets will specifically focus on strengthening areas in need of improvement and are long-term targets which commenced in 2009.

Target 1 Writing K-6

80% of students achieve stage based outcomes in writing

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Syllabus links to SMART data teaching strategies used to develop Individual Learning Plans and focused lessons for targeted groups of students (Reform 4);
- Engage published children’s author to conduct school based writing workshops for ALL students K-6;
- Professional Learning component of staff meetings to include Consistent Teacher Judgement (CTJ) and quality assessment tasks as a basis of A-E grading at least once per term;
- Accelerated Literacy training for staff to provide an inclusive pedagogy which integrates NSW syllabus requirements and the Quality Teaching Framework; and
- Support increased use of ICT within classroom activities. Utilise Quality Teaching experts in technology to mentor staff and students to build capacity within the school (Reform 2)

Our success will be measured by:

- National Assessment data and student work samples demonstrating that an increasing % of students are meeting syllabus outcomes;
- School trend data in writing in 2010 SMART data demonstrating improved growth; and
- Accelerated Literacy results indicating significant improvement in literacy.
- School demonstrating effective use of the full range of ICT learning tools and interactive technologies (Reform 2,3,4,6)
Target 2 Numeracy

80% of students achieve stage foundation statements in Mathematics strand of Working Mathematically

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Staff participation in Best Start professional learning and using analysis of data to inform individual student learning needs;
- Conduct parent information sessions to provide understanding of the mathematics syllabus with a particular focus on the development of Working Mathematically across all numeracy strands and the online ‘Mathletics’ program; and
- Reflecting on current teaching practices, ensuring Quality Teaching dimensions are present in mathematics lessons, with a focus on ‘hands on’ maths activities.

Our success will be measured by:
- Best Start analysis evident in Kindergarten numeracy program;
- Parents reporting greater understanding of student expectations and ability to assist their children at home; and
- Teacher registration of successfully incorporating Quality Teaching elements and Working Mathematically strategies into mathematics lessons.

Target 3 Environmental Education/School Sustainability

Strong supportive and productive relationships between all members of the school community

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Effective environmental education integrated into all stages and KLA's, where appropriate;
- Raising awareness about school grounds, surveying and planning grounds and events e.g. development of vegetable gardens, compost bins, worm farm, chookyard and outdoor learning spaces;
- Fostering partnerships between the school and external agencies that assist schools in their journey towards becoming a sustainable school; and
- Conducting community workshops in sustainability.

Our success will be measured by:
- Evidence of promotion and support of environmental education/sustainable schools in authentic learning and engagement of students;
- Grounds management being consistent with the principles of ecologically sustainable developments and are developed and maintained within the school community;
- Increased community participation in school sustainability initiatives; and
- Strong cooperative and supportive learning relationships.

Target 4 Student Welfare

Review and revise all Student Welfare Policies in consultation with the whole school community

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- Providing parent/community information sessions on all Student Welfare school policies e.g. Anti-Bullying, Discipline, Behaviour, Anti-Racism;
- Promoting high standards of student behaviour, civic responsibility and citizenship by increasing and supporting student welfare activities; and
- Maintaining the focus on good discipline and effective learning.

Our success will be measured by:
- Student and parent feedback indicating positive responses to all student welfare issues; and
- A reduction in the incidence of reported student discontent and increased harmony.

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:


KROP Performance at Griffith Regional Theatre