2009 Annual School Report
Orara High School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Messages

Principal's message

I am proud of the outstanding achievements of the students and staff of Orara High School. Our school caters for students of all academic abilities and from a broad range of backgrounds.

I recommend this 2009 Annual School Report as an excellent insight into the complex nature of secondary schooling and into the incredible achievements of our students and staff.

The success of our school is built upon its high calibre young people, excellent teachers and a supportive parent community.

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.

Frank Stanton (Principal)

P&C and/or School Council message

This year we have welcomed Frank Stanton as our new Principal. The year has bought new challenges with changes to the education system. Frank has provided information to the P&C about any changes or opportunities to make the school experience for our children better. Many of our children were excited to receive their laptops. The implementation of the project caused problems for the school but I feel that this initiative can only benefit the learning outcomes for our children and teachers. As part of the Digital Education Revolution the school will see many exciting changes to the learning environment.

The P&C was able to raise through the canteen the amount of $30,000 for the year. This money will be put aside to assist with obtaining a grant from the Government to provide a shelter for one of the basketball courts. The most recent quote for this project is $104,000. These grants require the P&C to raise half the amount required.

One of the projects which the P&C had been working on was the shelter over the BBQ and tables in the Year 7 area. In 2009 we were finally able to fund the building of the shelter and wish to thank Julie and Peter Cross for all their hard work in completing the shelter.

The P&C was again successful in receiving a grant of $1,800 from the Coffs Harbour City Council for the Drumming Program.

The P&C was approached by several teachers to help provide financial support for the environmental groups participating in school beautification projects. The committee was happy to support these activities by purchasing tools and materials to progress their projects. We were also able to approach The South Coffs Rotary Club who donated money to buy plants. These are ongoing projects which the P&C are happy to contribute funds to, as we can see the benefits to the students who participate and the school body as a whole in having a better environment in which to learn and work.

We continue to financially support students who represent Orara High School at sporting events, following the guidelines which we put in place in the previous year. We also were able to help provide uniforms to the boys open soccer team that performed so well.

The P&C have been pro-active in trying to meet more parents by having BBQs during the parent teacher interviews. The first of these was held in September.

I would like to thank the committee, Meg, Debbie, Ingrid and Cathy for their wonderful help and contribution during the last year.

Di Kingsford-Smith (President)

Student representative's message

Orara High's student leadership team is made up of the four school captains, four representatives from each year, two representatives from Student Leadership is for Koori Kids (SLIKK) and one representative from the English as a Second Language (ESL) student body. All members have been elected by their peers in each of the respective years. The Sporting House captains are also an important part of the SRC.

SRC members welcome visitors to our school for such important events as Parent/Teacher evenings and information nights, as well as taking an extremely active and high profile role during our more formal occasions such as Presentation Day and Farewell Assemblies. Our captains run the full school assembly every week.

The SRC meets every week with the co-ordinator to discuss any issues that need to be addressed and these formal meetings are run by our elected chairperson, minutes are taken and distributed at subsequent meetings.
The student leadership team organises many school events and fundraising activities. For the past few years the SRC has chosen to raise money for our own local charities - the RSPCA and WIRES always being popular choices. We willingly assist organisations such as Legacy, the Cancer Council, and Red Cross with their annual collection days, and we donated $2000 to the Victorian Bushfire Appeal. Requests for financial assistance by sporting teams and individuals representing Orara High at regional, state and even national levels are always met with favourable consideration. The SRC organises a social each term and the chosen themes prove to be very popular. Another highlight for the SRC is organising activities and a barbecue for the Year 6 Induction Day at the end of the school year.

Our elected representatives attend District Meetings which are held each term, and also participate in the annual Leadership Camp. Students have also been involved in the Young Leaders’ Conferences held in Sydney and Brisbane. The P&C and SRC fund the captains to fly to Sydney to meet with the Governor and other student leaders each year. The captains lay a wreath at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service and the entire SRC body takes part in the march to the cenotaph.

D Rugendyke (SRC Mentor)

Management of non-attendance

Class rolls are marked at the start of each day and a swipe on card system is used to assist in monitoring late arrivals and early leavers. From this, a daily absentee sheet is produced and electronically distributed to all staff who are asked to check attendance each lesson and report unexplained absence to the head teacher administration. Parents of students not in attendance at morning roll call are notified through an SMS message. Regular letters are sent home to parents/carers of students who have unexplained absences.

Retention to Year 12

The retention rate of Year 10 completing their HSC has been relatively stable over the last few years and whilst the school’s retention rate is below the state average, it remains higher than that of other high schools in the district.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>SEG</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>61.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>60.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(SEG - School Education Group).

Post-school destinations

Year 12 students undertaking vocational or trade training

Overall, 39 Year 12 students (59%) undertook Vocational Education courses at either school or through North Coast TAFE with several attaining outstanding achievements. Bethany Spearing completed a Certificate II in Business and was a top three finalist for the North Coast Trainee of the Year award and was also nominated for the Australian Vocational Student prize for 2009. Karmen Sellings-Bibby completed a Certificate II in Aged Care and was awarded a large scholarship to continue her studies in Nursing at Southern Cross University. She was also nominated for the 2010 North Coast VET Awards. Certificate II courses undertaken included: Business Services, Hospitality, Aged Care, Information Technology and Entertainment.

Year 12 students attaining HSC or equivalent vocational educational qualification

Of the 66 students who presented for the HSC, all were successful in attaining the HSC credential. In addition to HSC courses studied, other TAFE and Framework courses were also undertaken.
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(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Teachers</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Teacher Learning Assistance</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Librarian</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher of ESL</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Administrative &amp; Support Staff (SASS)</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70.7</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The school employs a full time Aboriginal Education Officer and a full-time Aboriginal School Administrative Officer. Under the Norta Norta program the school also employs two part time Aboriginal Education tutors who work with students in the classroom to support the development of Literacy and Numeracy skills.

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>88%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional learning

Professional learning is a high priority and staff regularly participate in further developing their knowledge and skills through attending individual training programs at school, district, regional and state level.

In 2009 all staff actively participated in professional learning activities. $35,535 was expended during the year which equates to $626 per teacher. The breakdown of expenditure for 2009 was:

- use of ICT for teaching $ 3,976
- literacy and numeracy $ 5,540
- quality teaching $ 10,295
- syllabus implementation $ 5,518
- leadership $ 7,181
- welfare and equity $ 2,710
- beginning teachers $ 3,15

Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Date of financial summary: 30/11/2009

Income $ 1,561,133.56

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>352,586.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>479,182.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>549,435.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>118,561.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>17,068.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>44,297.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,561,133.56</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expenditure $ 1,120,010.14

<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>68,332.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>27,711.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>89,400.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>11,247.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>6,592.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>422,699.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>163,624.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>111,409.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>75,730.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>33,701.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>37,965.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>71,594.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,120,010.14</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance carried forward</td>
<td><strong>441,123.42</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

School performance 2009

Achievements

Arts

2009 was a highly productive and successful year for the Creative Arts faculty with pleasing HSC results and many high quality events that involved students in performances and exhibition activities.

The HSC results were very good, with many candidates achieving Band 4 and Band 5 results. Significantly, the creative arts subjects were virtually always amongst the students’ highest bands. This was a positive sign of relative achievement and student interest.

Highlights of the year included the musical production *The Commitments* which involved five months of production and the development of
significant musical, drama and theatre productions skills.

Other significant performances included the Coffs Harbour Eisteddfod, Drummin’ Up Frenze (a multicultural drumming group), Jetty Theatre performances and technical production activities, the Vietnam Veterans Remembrance Day, the Public Schools Celebrations Concert in Sydney Town Hall, the Year 9 performance tour of primary schools, the Open Arms festival and many other in-school performances.

The significant role of the Entertainment students in providing the means of “putting the show on” must be noted, with many hours of staging, lighting and sound work being done at a high level, including the TAFE Training Awards (a big logical event), lots of gigs at the Jetty Theatre, plus numerous individual work placements.

The main activities for art students were the “Meet the Artist” workshops which involved students working with practising artists, and the display of Year 12 student artworks in August. These works were of a high quality and showed a variety of concepts and media which reflect the creativity, diversity and multicultural nature of the school population.

Sport

2009 witnessed many great achievements from swimming, cross country and athletics, to the many teams fielded in CHS competitions.

The year saw a pleasing number of students competing at the Mid North Coast and North Coast Athletic Carnivals, representing the school with distinction. Five students went on to compete at the State Titles later in the year, with David Sheridan progressing to national competition.

David excelled in athletics, particularly in the 100m and 200m sprint events. He attended the North Coast Athletics Carnival, Excelling in numerous events before progressing to the State All Schools Athletics Championships, finishing fourth in both the 100m and 200m. His excellent sprint times qualified him to represent NSW at the Australian All Schools Athletics Championships in Tasmania where he was placed twelfth in the 100m and eleventh in the 200m, achieving a personal best of 24.74 seconds.

David also demonstrates exceptional ability in rugby league (Buckley Shield) and his progress is being monitored by the Brisbane Broncos youth development program.

In cross country, a large contingent of students qualified for the Zone Carnival. Moses Malual, Stephanie Mann and Joshua Chapman excelled at the North Coast Trials and represented Orara strongly at the NSW Titles.

2009 was an outstanding year for Joshua Chapman, where he excelled in swimming, cross country, open boys cricket and 15 boys soccer. Josh was also Age Champion at the North Coast Surf Life Saving Carnival for the second consecutive year. He represented the north coast at the State Championships for swimming and cross country.

In representing NSW at the School Sports Australia National Swimming Championships in Perth, Josh won three silver and four gold medals as an Athlete With a Disability (AWD) competitor and his time in the 100m Freestyle was a national record. He also swam in the able bodied Open Boys 4x50 metre freestyle team which finished fourth.

Josh was 13-15 Years AWD Age Champion at the North Coast Cross Country. He then attended the NSW Cross Country Championships where he was placed 1st in both CHS and the All Schools AWD based competition.

Three Orara High sporting teams achieved outstanding success in CHS knockouts in 2009.

- The open girls basketball team was North Coast champions. In recent years this team has continually progressed past the North Coast final, often making it into the final eight in the state.
- The 16 years boys futsal team was North Coast champions. The boys were also the Vikings Futsal Australasian Champions and boast a very high level of skill, fitness and determination.
- The open boys soccer team was north coast champions. This team achieved the biggest surprise by progressing well into the state championship. Expertly coached by Mr Paul Moss, the team blew the early opposition away with their solid defence and flair in attack. The team’s run was halted by Blaxland High School. Had they won they would have been placed in the top eight in the state.

Academic

In the National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), 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.

For Year 7, achievement ranges from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest).
For Year 9, achievement ranges from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest).

In the Year 10 School Certificate the performance of students is reported in performance bands ranging from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest).

**Literacy – NAPLAN Year 7**

NAPLAN (Literacy) replaces the former ELLA Literacy Assessment and reports on the areas of reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Each of the graphs below compare the percentage of students in each band with: the state average, the school average from 2007-2009 and schools of similar socio-economic drawing area (Like Schools Group or LSG)

There has been a small improvement in our higher achievers at the higher Bands 7 to 9 in reading, and also a small improvement in our higher achievers at the higher Band 9 in grammar & punctuation compared to the average over the last few years. The school’s focus remains on improving the area of writing.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 7

NAPLAN (Numeracy) replaces the former SNAP Numeracy Assessment.

The school remains focused on moving a greater number of students into the higher bands through its application of the Quicksmart program in numeracy.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 9

2009 was the second time Year 9 have been involved in a national literacy assessment program. NAPLAN (Literacy) and reports on the areas of reading, writing, spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Progress in literacy

It is pleasing to see there is a movement towards students achieving in the higher bands of 9 and 10 compared to other schools in our district in the areas of reading, writing, and grammar and punctuation.
Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 9

2009 was the second time Year 9 have been involved in a national numeracy assessment program. NAPLAN (Numeracy).

Progress in numeracy

Results show a pleasing improvement in the number of students achieving in the higher bands of 8 and 9 compared to other schools in our district.

School Certificate

Results in all external exams are shown below.
School Certificate relative performance comparison to Year 5 (value-adding)

The school’s average value added performance in English, Mathematics, Science, Australian Geography Civics and Citizenship and Australian History Civics and Citizenship remain within the expected state performance ranges and student performance in Computer Skills has continued to be pleasing.

Higher School Certificate

The graphs below show the performance of students in subjects presented at the 2009 HSC.
Higher School Certificate relative performance comparison to School Certificate (value-adding)

Results in the 2009 HSC were very pleasing with students from all ability ranges performing above or close to state expected growth. Students of higher academic ability improved significantly more than schools with students of similar socio economic background (Like Schools Group) and students in the lower ability ranges improved well above state average expectations.

Minimum standards

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

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below.

Percentage of Year 7 students achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>90.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Year 9 students achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>78.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>91.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

Currently 12% of students at Orara High School identify as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander (ATSI).

In the areas of Literacy and Numeracy, our ATSI students are showing, on average, to be performing within the state average range over the past few years.

The school has a full time Aboriginal Education Officer, and also employed two part-time Aboriginal in-class tutors to work with individual students and to assist Aboriginal students in both main stream classes and with the Quicksmart numeracy program.

In 2009 the school received additional funding, through the junior Norta Norta state initiative, to support students in the areas of literacy and numeracy through one on one or small group tuition. In the senior school, the Norta Norta program provided funding for teacher mentoring and a range of initiatives were trailed to identify the most suitable/applicable practices. This support will continue in 2010 with a major focus being literacy.

A number of celebrations of Aboriginality form part of the school calendar including NAIDOC week. In 2010.
the school aims to introduce further opportunities for Aboriginal students to develop leadership skills.

In 2009 the school was involved in the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) program that operated in collaboration with Southern Cross University (SCU). This provided additional support for Aboriginal students in Years 9 and 10 to attend a 17 week program at SCU that focused on building pride, belonging, leadership and academic skills. Through SCU, the school also introduced a homework study centre during lunchtime which operated two days per week. Both programs provided positive experiences and were well supported by students.

In 2010 the school will work to increase broader parental involvement as it moves towards the development of Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs) for all Aboriginal students.

Multicultural education

Orara High School has a number of students from Non-English-Speaking Backgrounds (NESB). More recently, these have been refugee students from Africa. To assist, the school has an ESL program that caters for students from diverse cultural backgrounds and catering for a number of languages. Communication with Anglicare and other support agencies and families continues to improve and the school has been recognised across the state for the outstanding work done for these students. A strong network of support staff and volunteers also contribute to the learning and social needs of the ESL community.

Respect and responsibility

The school uses a merit system to provide tangible rewards for students who show respect for others rights to learn and act responsibly.

The Peer Support program for Year 7 continued to work well and helps promote respect and responsibility. Students find that it helps bring about a smoother transition from Year 6 into high school by helping develop a sense of connectedness. The development of optimism, empathy, positive self talk, perseverance, resilience and coping strategies are developed through the use of Year 10 students, who act as mentors. Peer Support leaders nominate when in Year 9, undergo training and start assisting at the Year 6 orientation day.

Peer Support leaders ran regular weekly sessions during Weeks 1 to 4 of Year 7, followed by a Peer Support camp in Week 5.

Feedback from Year 7 students shows they valued being led by older students, with many stating that they would like to be Peer Support leaders in the future. For Year 10 Peer Support leaders, this provided the opportunity for them to accept a leadership role with all gaining much from being a mentor.

Other programs

Priority School Program (PSP)

Orara High School just completed the fifth year of the PSFP program that commenced in 2005 and will continue until 2012. In 2009 some $94,153.00 was expended several areas including the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Teaching</td>
<td>$62,644.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources: teaching and learning</td>
<td>$539.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Aide</td>
<td>$8132.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Liaison Officer, parent &amp; community development / initiatives</td>
<td>$20,648.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Student Learning Camps</td>
<td>$400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Competitions</td>
<td>$577.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The PSP program provides the school with a significant boost through supporting many programs and initiatives including; the Year 10 Portfolio Project, the Planning Room, Quicksmart, Gifted & Talented programs, Peer Tutoring and Peer Support.

A part-time Community Liaison Officer was employed to improve communication between the school and its community, and an attendance monitoring system has been implemented aimed at improving school attendance.

The planning room, which is a significant part of the PSP program, was evaluated in 2009 and details of this evaluation can be found on page 13 of this report.

Special Education

Orara High School has a Special Education Unit that caters for students with moderate or severe intellectual disability. In 2009 there were 22 students enrolled in the unit. These students access a specifically designed Life Skills curriculum which covers all KLAs.

The school also had 29 students in the mainstream, who access funding support.

Progress on 2009 targets

Target 1 Increase retention (and attendance) rates Years 10-12

Our achievements include:

- The student portfolios and interview process received very positive reviews from community members involved, parents and students.
- A new timetable structure was introduced with Year 11 to provide a condensed timetable over four days each week allowing flexibility for
students to undertake further TAFE training, complete extension courses or engage in part time work.

Target 2 Improve communication between the school and its community and enhance community perceptions

Our achievements include:
- the establishment of a transition team to overview and plan activities that link with feeder primary schools;
- increased Year 7 enrolments over previous years;
- implementation of an interim Year 7 report focusing on effort and application over Term 1 of high school;
- increased attendance of Year 7 parents at transition meetings and school activities; and
- regular inclusion of school successes published in newsletter and local media.

Target 3 Improve outcomes for all students in Literacy and Numeracy

Our achievements include:
- Quicksmart, in-class tuition and homework centre programs being established for Aboriginal students in Literacy and Numeracy;
- improved NAPLAN results for Year 9 in Literacy compared to expected state growth;
- significant improvement in Year 12 HSC value added results showing performances greater than other Local School Groups; and (Refer to HSC relative performance to SC graph on page 10)
- significant improvement of Year 9 Aboriginal students over their Year 7 NAPLAN results.

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 the school looked at evaluating part of its welfare policy and in the curriculum areas in evaluating Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA) and Special Education.

Educational and management practice

WELFARE – evaluation of the Planning Room

Background

The school, as part of its positive behaviour program, operates a Planning Room which aims to promote students taking greater responsibility for their actions and subsequent learning. The initiative, funded through the Priority Schools Program (PSP) has been operating since 2006. The school maintains detailed records of all KLA referrals, with referrals also entered on to the school’s Record of Individual School Contact (RISC) database which creates individual student profiles. RISC is widely used by all staff as a central register of academic and welfare related matters.

Findings and conclusions

It was reassuring that 85% of staff felt that students were less confrontational when they applied the "HELP" process which involves a series of questions being asked of students. Findings also showed that 72% of staff indicated they would like to see other programs operate that support students in behaviour management such as preventative programs (like Rock & Water), alternative programs for difficult students, and anti bullying, etc. Some 85% of staff felt that the success of the program has been largely due to the way it has been run and organised. Unfortunately, only about 25% of staff were in strong agreement that the "HELP" process assisted students to reflect on their behaviour and 32% were in strong agreement the process assists students think about choices and responsibility.

The tables below show the number of total referrals by term and by year group over 2008 and 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 9</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Comparison</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall Literacy</td>
<td>41.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>+ 8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>40.5</td>
<td>+ 6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>+ 5.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above information shows a fairly consistent usage in referrals over 2008-2009.

An analysis of Planning Room usage showed that the number of staff who made 40 or more referrals per year to the planning room dropped from 26 in 2008 to 18 in 2009. Student usage showed that, while there were a number of students referred throughout the year, there was only a relatively small number of students who were often referred to the Planning Room. The table below shows the relative pattern of usage of the higher users of the Planning Room.
Room for student, Years 7-10, having 20 or more referrals over the year in 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>No. Students using PR 20+ times / yr</th>
<th>No. Days in PR for yr</th>
<th>Average student use days / yr</th>
<th>Average PR usage days / wk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>22.75</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: 40 referrals / student / year equates to one referral per week)

The above information indicates a possible discrepancy between the perceptions by staff in the use of the Planning Room, compared to the actual referral rate of students.

Planning Room issues identified include:

- Students sent in the last 5-10 minutes of the lesson, sometimes in multiples of 2-5 students.
- Students sent without the questions having been asked.
- Planning sheets not being signed by staff when students present their sheets. They are sometimes told to come back later or even told they are not signing the sheet.
- Staff not spending time with students to discuss the return plan.
- Students sent for arriving late for a class as this disrupts the classroom.
- Students remaining in the Planning Room for excessive periods.
- Too many levels and students, in reality, not able to work their way down other than get suspended.
- Students sent for being out of uniform.
- Students returning from suspension expected to get their plan approved when suspension results in a return to Level "0".
- Students sent for minor issues that could be dealt with by the teacher or head teacher.
- Students sent to the Planning Room because they choose or want to go.
- Students in the Planning Room not being allowed to do catch up work.
- Students expected to have work completed before their plan is signed, yet not being given work they are missing out on while in the Planning Room.

- Students sent on the first instance of a classroom infringement.
- Students not having their plans signed because they have not been in the Planning Room long enough.

Future directions

Suggestions for improvement:

- Reduction in the number of Planning Room levels.
- Students allowed to ‘catch up’ on class work while in the planning room.
- Increased Head Teacher involvement.
- Introduction of alternative intervention programs such as Rock and Water, or remedial/enrichment programs for targeted students, including peer mentoring of Year 7.
- Explore alternatives to building positive behaviour, such as the Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) program, to change the culture of student behaviour management.
- Explore an alternative approach to classroom student behaviour management.

Curriculum: Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA)

Background

The Creative Arts play a major role in the life of the school. With art, music, drama and VET (entertainment) being very popular electives. These subjects allow for a wide range of personal and cultural expression which is vital in a school with a high proportion of Aboriginal and a wide variety of ethnic groups. They also help teach the vital vocational skills of creative and critical thought, independent work and organisational ability along with self discipline and motivation.

Findings and conclusions

Academic results in the faculty were very pleasing in 2009. Visual arts students achieved very good results with every student achieving their top, or equal top, band with marks 5.8% above their average HSC result. In drama this pattern continued with most students achieving their top, or equal top, band with marks 5.8% above their average HSC result. Music results were also pleasing, with every student achieving their top, or equal top, band with overall results being 6.1% above their average HSC result. It is also notable that 94% of students in the faculty achieved a Band 4 or better with many Band 5s, which is indicative of above state average performances.
Quality teaching highlights throughout 2009 include the CAPA night performances, theatre sports, the drumming group, rock bands and HSC Artworks exhibition.

Future directions
Challenges for the future include maintaining the standards of three very long serving teachers: Mrs Kerry Stewart, Mr Graham Knowles and Mrs Deb Hillier who have retired in close succession. A second challenge is integrating new technology in an appropriate way to create learning experiences and improved educational outcomes for our students.

Other Evaluations

Curriculum: Special Education

Background
The Support Unit was established in 1992 and consisted of one class, one teacher and one teacher’s aide. Those early days were focussed on settling in to a new environment and forging links within the school and in the community.

In 2010 the Support Unit now consists of four classes, six teachers and four School Learning Support Officers (Teachers’ Aides). Throughout the past eighteen years, the Support Unit has grown into a strong, secure and dynamic educational facility.

Findings and conclusions
The Support Unit’s success is due predominantly to a committed, cohesive, energetic and happy team. The teachers and School Learning Support Officers work together to provide a variety of learning environments for the students that facilitates and encourages individual growth, independence, confidence and positive outcomes.

The Support Unit enjoys strong and positive relationships with the parents of the students. The parents are invited to participate in the planning and implementation of school and community programs and communication lines are active through the daily use of student communication books and regular parent meetings. Supportive and involved parents are integral to the Support Unit team.

As well as subject based class programs, the students are involved in a number of very successful and enjoyable school and community programs such as: cooking, textiles, agriculture, PE, work placement and transition.

It is important to acknowledge those school facilities and community organisations and businesses that support us so willingly and regularly. These include: the school library, school canteen, school Ag Farm, COLES – Palm Centre, Coffee Club – Plaza, Challenge Inc., PCYC, Sportz Central, Busways and Key Employment.

Future directions
The Support Unit is moving, with the rest of the school, into an exciting new phase with the introduction of 'Smartboard' technology and laptops for students. The teachers are familiarising themselves with this new technology, constantly exploring and researching teaching materials in all subject areas and enjoying the positive and excited responses from the students as these programs are delivered.

As the local community grows and develops, so too do the opportunities for the Support Unit to further strengthen and broaden its links with new and varied businesses and organisations. The Support Unit embraces and delivers Aboriginal Education programs across a number of subject areas; however future plans include a more integrated approach involving members of the local Aboriginal community.

There will also be significant staff changes over the next two years and these changes will undoubtedly bring new vigour, enthusiasm, ideas and the assurance of continued growth and success of the Orara High School Support Unit.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.
Their responses are represented under the “Key Evaluations” section of this report.

School development 2009 – 2011
The school is following a three year improvement plan and has chosen to retain consistent targets.

Targets for 2010
Target 1 Increased retention for Years 10-12 and attendance/participation rates

Strategies to achieve this target could include:
• strengthening the School to Work interview and transition program;
• reviewing alternative timetable structures for the senior school and explore joint curriculum options with neighbouring high schools to increase flexibility and curriculum choice;
• increasing the focus on achievement and study skills for Years 10-12;
• increasing the monitoring of attendance patterns;
• investigating alternative programs for improving student learning/welfare; and
• increasing student leadership opportunities, in particular for Aboriginal and ESL students.

Our success will be measured by:
• improved retention to further education and training;
• alternative timetable structures and improved liaison with neighbouring high schools bringing broader curriculum choices;
• increased involvement of students by improving work ethic and study skills;
• programs improving learning and welfare established;
• improved attendance patterns for junior and senior students;
• decreased suspension rates and levels of suspension; and
• the number of senior students participating in library study activities to increasing application and performance.

Target 2 Improved communication between the school and its community and enhance community perceptions

Strategies to achieve this target could include:
• greater use of the community liaison officer to strengthen links and communication with the community;
• proactive implementation of the Year 6 into 7 transition program;
• more proactive use of local media;
• establish a proactive Aboriginal Education team involving parents in developing Personalised Learning Plans (PLPs);
• evaluating the impact of funding/grants on promoting positive achievement of ESL and Aboriginal students;
• consideration of options for building more regular reporting to parents; and
• investigate options for addressing welfare, mentoring, leadership and trauma management programs for ESL students.

Our success will be measured by:
• an increased number of parents attending or participating in school activities;
• improving access to increase student use of laptops in the classroom; and
• establishing “how to” protocols for students and staff in the use of DER laptops;

Our success will be measured by:
• an increase in number of staff utilising technology training courses;
• an increased number of lessons utilising technology;
• increased teacher confidence and skills in accessing laptops for learning;
• an increased number of more technology based assessment tasks; and
• greater utilisation of technology in the development of Year 10 portfolios.

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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Di Kingsford Smith  P & C President
Andrew Minisini  Deputy Principal
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Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: