Our school at a glance

Students
In 2009 159 students (89 boys and 70 girls) were enrolled from Kindergarten to Year 6.

Staff
Mount Hutton teaching staff has a blend of youth and experience. Our longest-serving teacher has worked at our school for fifteen years; others are in their first years of teaching. Common to all staff is a determination that their students will be successful.

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

Significant programs and initiatives
Significant programs this year included programs in environmental education, innovations in PD/Health/PE, a continuation of the Numeracy at Home program and outstanding improvements in peer relationships and student behaviour.

Student achievement in 2009
The National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) began in 2008; this is the second year of the assessments.

Results for students in Year 3 were particularly pleasing, especially in numeracy where they scored significantly above students from across the local school group (LSG) and state. No student was assessed to be below the minimum standard.

While some Year 5 students did very well, overall the results were disappointing. Some students in each of the five aspects failed to reach the minimum standard. These students will be significantly supported again in 2010 in both literacy and numeracy.

Messages

Principal's message
Our students are drawn from a community with a long history of working in partnership with their local school. Together with the Department of Education and Training, the school and community have constructed learning facilities, shade areas and active and passive play areas. Our parent body has also contributed significantly to the provision of teaching and learning resources for literacy and numeracy. It has played an important role in ensuring every learning space is air conditioned and equipped with an interactive whiteboard. It has worked purposefully to ensure our grounds are interesting, functional and attractive.

Our community's work is a powerful example of service, a legacy that has become integral to the thinking of many of our students. At the end of 2009, in company with our students, staff and many of our families, I had the very great pleasure of listening to the campaign speeches of our Year 5 students seeking election to the positions of school captains and vice captains in 2010. No easy promises here—each student’s speech was characterised by a deep understanding of the concept of service to community. It was a very proud moment.

This year has again been one of growth and change with some real and lasting achievements. Our Year 3 NAPLAN results were amongst this school's best ever. Our focus on technology has continued; teachers in every classroom are now skilled in the use of interactive whiteboards to improve learning outcomes for students. The school's work in curriculum and pastoral care ensures our students are increasingly happy and settled. Students have a rich environment in which to spend time at recess and lunch with activities in environmental education, creative arts and organised sports and games. And 2010 will see the completion of a school hall, part of the Building the Education Revolution program. It will be a marvellous facility for our school for generations to come.

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.

Jim Findlay

P&C message
This year has seen a number of people in new roles. We have blossomed into a team of focused community members with the single vision of teaming up with our teaching staff and providing our children with the best opportunities we can.

2009 saw us hold a number of popular fundraisers, all of which were well received by the community. Our first Trivia Night for some years and the first for most of our committee was an enormous success, raising $1100. The evening brought nearly 60 people and we anticipate the 2011 Trivia Night will be even bigger. The support shown by local businesses was outstanding and much appreciated.

The Hunter Workways Project came to an end and we found ourselves truly admiring the work they were able to complete during their time here. In another project, our new Environment Committee worked with teachers, students and...
community organisations to establish a vegetable patch, worm farm and various other environmental projects.

We excitedly watched as the hall was started and classrooms were upgraded, seeing new carpets, fresh paint and additional blinds installed. The hall has progressed quickly and its opening is keenly anticipated by the community and committee alike.

This is truly an exciting time for our school. I have enjoyed my year. I have learned a lot about the community and the wonderful committee around me. I sincerely thank each and every one of you for the opportunity.

Mrs Shereen Kerr  
President,  
Mount Hutton P&C Association

Student representatives' message

This year has been a great year. We have enjoyed representing the students of Mount Hutton. We have attended special events and ceremonies such as Leaders Day, ANZAC ceremonies and special things within our school. At the beginning of the year we all had no experience of the roles and no idea of what was ahead of us. Being captains we have learnt to speak out, take pride in ourselves and to be confident in the choices we have made. Over the past twelve months we have gained skills that will remain with us forever, partly because of the inspirational people we have met and all the support we were given.

We would like to thank Mr Findlay, Mrs Laidler, of course Mrs Whalley and all the staff who have helped us through some of our most challenging times and changes. They helped us prepare for what was ahead of us and for high school. We would also like to thank the students of Mount Hutton for giving us the opportunity to lead our school.

Finally we would like to wish the new captains all the best. We hope they cherish every experience as much as we did and that they seize every opportunity with both hands. We will never forget our time at Mount Hutton. We’ve had the time of our life.

We’ll miss you, Mount Hutton.

Allison Williams (School Captain)  
Jarrod Whyte (School Captain)  
Jessica Berwick (School Vice Captain)  
Matthew Grove (School Vice Captain)
Student attendance profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>95.4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>94.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>92.8</td>
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<tr>
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<td>94.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>95.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>93.8</td>
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<td>93.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Region</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>94.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>93.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>93.7</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.0</td>
<td>94.1</td>
<td>92.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student attendance was slightly lower in 2009 than in 2008 but still above the average of the region and state.

Management of non-attendance

At Mount Hutton teachers mark the roll as soon as students go into class for the morning session.

Attendance is formally monitored every week, and teachers devise attendance plans for students whose attendance is unacceptable. Families whose children continue to have high levels of absenteeism are referred to the Home School Liaison Program.

The school community is informed about the importance of regular attendance through the newsletter and through student progress reports.

Structure of classes

At the beginning of the school year the school had sufficient student enrolments to form six classes, with four classes with a single year cohort (Kindergarten, Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6), and two classes (3/4 and 4/5) with students drawn from more than one year.

School enrolments increased during the year and a seventh class was formed by the beginning of Term 3.

Class sizes

In March 2003 the Government announced its commitment to publish primary class sizes in annual school reports in order to provide parents with as much local information as possible.

The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2009 class size audit conducted on Wednesday 18 March 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2M</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</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

In the second half of 2009 Mount Hutton Public School had a non-teaching principal, two assistant principals and five full-time teaching positions. Part-time teachers include a teacher/librarian, learning support staff and a school counsellor.

In addition, the school has an administrative manager who is responsible for the office and an administrative officer. Three part-time learning support officers, including one with an Indigenous background, work with teachers and families to improve student attendance, foster achievement in literacy and numeracy and support the enrolment of students with disabilities.

The average length of service of our teaching staff is just over 15 years.
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>91.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial summary

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2009</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>55 026.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>115 631.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>60 016.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>37 818.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>1 905.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>2 517.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>272 914.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Expenditure</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching &amp; learning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key learning areas</td>
<td>11 697.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excursions</td>
<td>16 433.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular dissections</td>
<td>22 492.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>3 425.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training &amp; development</td>
<td>1 118.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>96 409.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual relief teachers</td>
<td>27 918.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration &amp; office</td>
<td>28 476.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-operated canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>15 522.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintenance</td>
<td>19 390.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust accounts</td>
<td>2 628.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital programs</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenditure</strong></td>
<td>245 514.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance carried forward</strong></td>
<td>27 400.52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As an explanatory note, the Parents and Citizens Association (P&C) operates the canteen and as such the accounts do not appear on this report.

The high level of retained income for 2008/2009 included some $29,000 originally allocated as part of a support program but which could not be spent at this school as a result of a change in enrolment. The funds were returned at the beginning of the 2009 school year.

Voluntary school contributions were set by the P&C at $20 per student.

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

School performance 2009

At Mount Hutton we recognise that students do best when learning programs in the key learning areas are linked to a rich and deep program of extracurricular learning experiences. Our school programs include debating, participation in arts activities and sports programs, including team competitions.

Achievements

Arts

Mount Hutton has again had an extensive program of experiences for students in the arts.

A group of five Stage 3 students attended an extension program in music for students from local schools.

The dance group, made up of 20 students from Years 3-6, performed three items in Starstruck and the Choir performed at our Awards ceremony.

One staff member presented at the Regional Creative Arts conference and led a workshop at the Hunter-Central Coast Regional Creative Arts Camp.

Creative Arts groups in Stage 2 and Stage 3 classes participated in choir, dance and visual arts in Term 1, and students in all years took part in Visual Arts workshops during lunchtimes.

Sport

In Rugby League, boys and girls played in a weekly inter-school rugby league competition, participated in the Paul Harragon Cup and a Rugby League gala day. All students took part in the Joey League program, practising skills every week for six weeks. In addition, the P&C purchased League jerseys in school colours.

Senior students took part in a netball gala day and knockout competition. The soccer and hockey teams participated in knockouts and gala days. Two students made the Hunter hockey team and received the School Blue award at our end of year ceremony.

This year saw two initiatives in sport: Mount Hutton students experienced circus skills, hip hop dancing and water games in our Active After-school Communities program, and funds from the Premier's Sporting Challenge provided resources for use in sport, PE and lunchtime active play.
Gifted and Talented: Brain Box

This year a Mount Hutton initiative was implemented across the four primary schools of the Local Management Group—Windale, Gateshead, Gateshead West and Mount Hutton Public Schools. Talented students from each school worked together in extension programs in creative arts, music and writing. Feedback about the programs from students, families and teachers was exceptionally positive. The program is to be extended in 2010 to include mathematics in a program designed and run by staff from Hunter Sports High School.

Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10. The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.

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

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

In reading, there are more students in the upper bands than in the 2006 – 2008 average. No students were placed in the lowest band.

In writing, Year 3 students are above the 2007 – 2009 school average in Band 6.

In reading, there are more students in the upper bands than in the 2006 – 2008 average. No students were placed in the lowest band.

There are fewer students in the top band than in the local school group (LSG) and across the state.
These results are higher our 2007-2009 average.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

These results indicate student achievement well above our school’s 2007–2009 average.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

There are more students in both the highest and lower bands.

As in reading, results show a high number of students with achievements in the lower bands.
Again, there is a higher proportion of students in the lower bands in spelling.

Results in grammar and punctuation for this group indicate achievements, on average, below the 2007-2009 school average and below the average of the local schools group (LSG).

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

Results in numeracy reflect lower achievements for this group, on average, below the 2007-2009 school average and below the average of the local schools group (LSG).

Progress in literacy

The progress of matched students from Year 3 to Year 5 (2007 – 2009) was lower than both the state and local school group.
While the progress of matched students in writing was the best by this group, it was still lower than that of the local school group (LSG) and the state.

Progress in numeracy

The progress of matched students in numeracy was also lower than the progress of both the local school group (LSG) and of the state.

Minimum standards

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

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

Percentage of Year 3 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All Year 3 students achieved results above the minimum standard in all five aspects.

Percentage of Year 5 students in our school achieving at or above the minimum standard in 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation and grammar</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numeracy</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In each of the five aspects some students failed to achieve minimum standards. These students will take part in an intensive program in literacy and numeracy to support their needs in 2010.

Significant programs and initiatives

Aboriginal education

Our school is committed to working with families to improve student achievement. In particular, we work closely with Aboriginal families in support of their children’s learning with the aim that their achievements will match the achievements of the broader school population.

Teachers in all classes invited Aboriginal families to work in partnership in the preparation of a personalised learning plan (PLP) for every Aboriginal student, with a focus on improved literacy, improved numeracy and improved attendance.

This year the school also worked to achieve the goals negotiated in 2008 in consultation with Aboriginal families. In our work this year the school:

- Tracked students’ attendance and learning. The data assisted the school to properly
target learning support and to inform intervention where families were struggling with regular attendance.

- Looked at how to establish a venue the possibility of a community meeting space in the school grounds (the new school hall will provide an appropriate space); and

- Worked with Aboriginal Elder Jim Ridgeway to design and, with in conjunction with students and staff, make story poles and artworks for display both in the school buildings and in the playground. Mr Ridgeway attended the school during Education Week to talk to students and families about the story poles.

All students celebrated NAIDOC Week with a program of events planned by a school committee and implemented by school staff and visiting artists.

**Multicultural education**

The school continues to promote community harmony through policies and practices which promote cultural, linguistic and religious tolerance, including our policies and learning programs, and in student participation in events such as Harmony Day. The school policy, “Cultural Diversity and Community Relations” assists the school in making decisions about school activities.

Mount Hutton PS has an Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO). This year the ARCO received one report of racist language, which was dealt with promptly and to the satisfaction of the student making the report.

**Respect and Responsibility**

Student democracy is an important facet of school life at Mount Hutton. Each semester every class elects two delegates to the student council. The council meets regularly to debate matters of concern to students, and to make representations to the principal.

At the beginning of each year each class reviews the school rules, which are an integral part of our discipline process, common to all classrooms. The process provides real opportunities for students to manage their own behaviour.

The school’s anti-bullying program continues to be a successful initiative. We survey students from Year 3 to Year 6 every year as part of the program. As part of the survey, students are asked if they have seen bullying happen "At recess or lunch", “In the classroom”, “On the way to school”, and/or “On the way home”. As part of the question, students are asked to state whether they have seen bullying “Never”, “Sometimes” or “Often”.

The graph below shows, in percentage terms, student responses for “Never” in alternating years from 2002. It is a clear indication that students at this school have an increasing sense of personal safety.

![Graph showing student responses to bullying]

**Numeracy at Home**

The program, “Numeracy at Home”, now in its second year of operation, was initiated at Mount Hutton to provide opportunities for families to work with the school in raising student achievement in numeracy.

In this evaluation, teachers and parents as well as students from Kindergarten to Year 4 were surveyed.

An analysis of family surveys indicates satisfaction, albeit with some concerns. Most people who responded used the activities every week and felt comfortable with the program. Some reported difficulties understanding the directions. Almost all responses were positive about the way the materials were packaged and their ease of
use by both adults and children. Families were also positive about the kits’ contents. The majority reported that their children found the games interesting and challenging (a typical comment: “These activities were good ideas to make my child like school”) but some 20% of respondents felt they were not sufficiently challenging and had little effect on their children’s attitude to homework.

Teachers’ responses reflected a high level of satisfaction. All agreed that students were interested and looked forward to the activities. According to teachers, the games’ contents were engaging, met students’ needs, increased interest in numeracy and improved numeracy skills. Teachers were also impressed with the language aspect of the games. One commented, “They shared the roles and explained to each other how they solved the problems.”

Of the students surveyed, about 80% reported they liked to play the games at home. Typical comments included, “They are fun and good to play”, “It’s fun with your family” and “I can learn”. Comments by students who were negative included “Too hard”, “Didn’t want to play maths games at home” and “Too easy”.

Overall the program has been well received. School and external data (particularly the 2009 Year 3 NAPLAN results) suggest that Numeracy at Home is contributing to improved achievements in mathematics.

Civics

The Civics program evolved from school practices put in place in the late 1990s, when many schools in the Hunter developed polices based on choice theory. Over time, the planning aspect of the program was revised a number of times in an effort to make it work effectively in our setting. In 2009, the school again reviewed the strategy. Most students referred for behaviour planning were boys and what was increasingly clear was that the planning strategy simply did not satisfactorily fit the students it was meant to support. The school devised a new strategy in which referred students spent some time in service activities, including assisting young students with games, helping out in the library, and helping to water and weed the vegetable garden.

The new approach has been very successful. Referrals for behaviour have reduced by some 40% and there were only two suspensions in the second semester of 2009 compared to 10 in the second semester of 2007 and 19 in the same time frame in 2008. We believe it has also positively influenced children’s perceptions about their safety at school.

Progress on 2009 targets

Target 1

When planning, teaching, assessing and reporting in literacy, teachers consistently apply the processes of the teaching and learning cycle.

We reviewed student assessment and reporting processes, including updating the student assessment schedule.

Teachers participated in training in Consistent Teacher Judgement. We continued to develop rubrics to support assessment, particularly in literacy and numeracy, but also with the purpose of demonstrating to students what needed to be done if they were to achieve the higher levels of the A-E reporting scale.

We trialled formats for a database of students to facilitate monitoring of and planning for students who are underperforming, or who have higher support needs, or who require extension in English curriculum strands.

Our achievements include:

- Analysis of teachers’ assessments and teaching and learning programs shows that assessment is the basis for learning in every setting.
- The National Assessment Program (NAP) target for Year 3 of 60% achieving at least Band 4 was exceeded.
- School assessments and the student results in the NAP suggest that the achievements of Aboriginal students are improving compared with the overall school population, although the small numbers of Aboriginal students make comparisons difficult.

Target 2

When planning, teaching, assessing and reporting in numeracy, teachers consistently apply the processes of the teaching and learning cycle.

The school is committed to ongoing improvement in its teaching in numeracy.

We continued to build on our processes for monitoring student achievement, and reviewed our understandings of the learning cycle.

We built on previous work in devising assessment tasks, with accompanying rubrics, to facilitate consistent teacher judgements about student achievement. In this task we reviewed the A-E reporting scale, ensuring progress reports to parents are an accurate reflection of how their children are learning.
We revisited the quality teaching framework and furthered our understandings about what is observable in a classroom when the principles of the framework are in place.

Our achievements include:

- The Year 3 results in numeracy in the National Assessment Program were outstanding, with this school’s average score above both the local schools’ average and the average of students across the state. Our National Assessment Program (NAP) target of 65% of Year 3 students achieving at least Band 4 was exceeded.

- The Numeracy at Home project is firmly established in the early years of schooling.

- Analysis of teachers’ assessments and teaching and learning programs shows that assessment is the basis for learning in every setting.

- As in literacy, school assessments and the student results in the NAP suggest that the achievements of Aboriginal students are improving compared with the overall school population, although the small numbers of Aboriginal students make comparisons difficult.

**Target 3**

*All teachers have a deep and shared understanding of the role and capacity of technology in teaching and learning, and particularly in the classroom use of interactive whiteboards and the Connected Classroom Facilities.*

The school’s technology coordinator has led staff in creating an information communication technology (ICT) scope and sequence which will be implemented next year. In 2010 we will use the new scope and sequence to evaluate student achievement, and develop a system to track student learning in this field.

Our achievements include:

- All classrooms have interactive whiteboards (IWBs). Every teacher uses an IWB in teaching and learning. Some staff members have very high level skills.

- Teachers and students make extensive of technology including SmartBoard, internet, book raps, online competitions, PowerPoints, e-mail assignments, clickable worksheets and book blogs. A compilation of useful sites linking with units in our scope and sequence is currently being established.

- Students in five classrooms experienced the Connected Classroom technology during 2009.

- Across the school there is agreement that technology is well maintained, ensuring continuity of access for students and teachers.

**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 Culture and Environmental Education.

**Educational and management practice**

School culture is the aspect of management practice evaluated in 2009.

**Background**

A school’s culture is the sum of its shared experiences, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours that go together to create a sense of community and purpose. A school’s culture is a powerful influence over everything that occurs in a school, including, importantly, student achievement.

The SchoolMap Survey for students, “School Culture” was completed by students in Years 4, 5 and 6. An equivalent survey was completed by teachers, and families completed the survey, “School and Community Survey”. The SchoolMap surveys present a series of 13 statements about school culture and ask respondents to select from the responses, “Almost Always”, “Usually”, “Sometimes” or “Rarely”.

Findings and conclusions

Our analysis of the survey responses indicates that students, staff and families have mostly positive perceptions of the school’s culture.

The first graph (below) records our students’ overall perceptions about school culture, collated from their responses to statements across the full survey. Particularly positive responses were made to the statement “New students are made welcome” and “The school encourages everyone to learn”.

Staff responses also indicated positive perceptions of school culture. Statement that were very positively received included “The school encourages students to do their best” (87.5% responded “Almost Always”) and “The school is continually finding ways to improve what it does” (75% responded “Almost Always”). The graph below depicts the overall teacher response to the survey.

The second six dimensions of the School and Community survey address aspects of school culture. Across the six dimensions, 97.7% of families responded they were either “very satisfied”, or “satisfied” (see below).

Future directions

While the overall response was positive, aspects for further development include ensuring students and teachers have an enhanced voice in the leading and managing of the school, and lifting our ability to value and support the contribution of new staff members to the culture of the school.

Curriculum

Environmental education is the curriculum area evaluated in 2009.

Background

The environmental education policy provides guidelines for the management of school resources in accordance with ecologically sustainable practice and serves as a starting point for addressing global environmental issues. The policy requires schools to develop a school environmental management plan (SEMP) that addresses the three focus areas of curriculum, management of resources and management of school grounds.

Environmental sustainability is a development focus for this school and for the Hunter/Central Coast Region.

Findings and conclusions

The school has worked through a number of activities during 2009 to further raise staff, student and community understanding of environmental education, and to investigate the opportunities presented by raising its profile within the school. The most important step this year was to form an Environment Group, made up of school and community members, to act as a steering committee. The committee:

- Negotiated a draft school environmental management plan (SEMP).
- Negotiated with the community organisation, Hunter Workways, to complete works including vegetable garden beds, a series of outdoor classrooms in natural bush areas in the school grounds and remove exotic plants from Scrubby Creek on the southern boundary.
- Worked with staff, students and Lake Macquarie Council to establish a worm farm, and to teach students how to maintain the farm.
- Renovated the greenhouse and worked with students to use it as a resource for learning.
- Worked with community organisations and Lake Macquarie Council to establish vegetable gardens, and to teach students how to maintain the gardens.
• Identified priorities for development, energy and other audits, a scope and sequence for environment education, recycling and managing litter.

• Was successful in an application for the program, National Solar School Funding.

Analysis of teaching programs indicated the school’s teaching practices in environmental education were not consistent across all classes.

In resource management, there was an inconsistent approach to conserving water, electricity and paper.

The school grounds have generally been well managed from a sustainability perspective. However, the natural resources on the school site have not been used to their full potential, and there continues to be an issue with litter.

Future directions
• Review teaching and learning in environmental education with a view to devising a scope and sequence which includes learning experiences addressing each of the three dimensions of the policy (curriculum, management of resources and management of school grounds).

• Conduct an audit of energy, water and paper, and if appropriate, implement conservation strategies.

• Develop strategies to deal with litter.

• Review the school’s practices in recycling.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction

We asked parents, teachers and students about their levels of satisfaction with their school.

Professional learning

Teachers and other staff undertook a broad range of training activities during 2009. There are four main avenues for formal training—school development days, after school training sessions, the teacher assessment review schedule (TARS) and provision for external training. Priorities are identified through analysis of school and other data including the Connected Learning Advisory Service which helps teachers assess their use of technology for teaching and learning.

The school aims to hold six after-school training sessions every term. Purposes for this training included aspects of literacy (including writing, spelling and text types), numeracy, environmental education, cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR), emergency care, aspects of technology, student assessment and reporting, managing anaphylaxis and managing asthma.

Aspects for external training included numeracy, drug education, the PD/Health/PE program Crunch and Sip, anti-bullying, consistent teacher judgement in assessment, text types, spelling and non-violent crisis intervention (NVCI). Administrative staff also undertook external training, including in non-violent crisis intervention, anti-bullying and school finance.
The TARS process provides opportunities for teams and team leaders to work together to enhance student learning in priority areas, usually in (but not limited to) literacy and numeracy.

School development days provide further opportunities for intensive training. During 2009 teachers and other staff, and community members where appropriate:

- Reviewed and furthered teachers’ skills in teaching and learning in literacy (text types, spelling and writing) and in numeracy.
- Review and further developed our curriculum scope and sequence in mathematics.
- Integrated spelling and grammar with text types.
- Reviewed guided reading resources and established a framework for stage-based resource links.
- Integrated technology teaching and learning into stage units and shared best practice.
- Developed a framework of intranet folders with assessment tasks, internet links and work samples.
- Developed strategies for differentiating the curriculum for lower- and higher-achieving students.
- Reviewed environmental education and identified aspects for development.
- Reviewed and developed initiatives in response to pastoral care data.
- Completed our training for child protection, asthma and anaphylaxis.

On average, some $440 was spent to train each staff member in 2009.

School development 2009 – 2011

The school plan is developed through a process which includes analysis of student performance data emerging from both internal and external assessments, consultation within the school and its community and a consideration of the targets established by the Hunter/Central Coast Region and the Office of Schools.

Targets for 2010

Our targets for 2010, for numeracy, literacy and technology continue to reflect our overall targets in the 2009- 2011 school plan.

Target 1

In the National Assessment Program in literacy:

- 70% or more Year 3 students will achieve at least Band 4 and 85% or more will achieve at least Band 3; and

- 65% or more Year 5 students will achieve at least Band 6 and 90% or more will achieve at least Band 5.

The target for Year 3 is lower than the achievements of the 2009 cohort, but significantly above the longer term average for this group. Conversely, the target for the Year 5 group is significantly above the levels reached in 2009. The school’s objective is to lift student achievement to consistently higher levels.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- Ensure all aspects (daily mental computation, ignition of the lesson, explicit teaching, guided groups and independent activities, reflection and mathematical language development) are included in scheduled maths sessions in every class.
- Continue to build on our common assessment tasks with accompanying rubrics to ensure consistency in teacher judgement.
- Develop mathematics word banks and integrate the banks into class spelling programs.

Our success will be measured by:

- Increased student engagement and improved student outcomes in mathematics.
- Analysis of student work samples and teacher assessment records indicates that all teachers are proficient in using the A-E assessment scale.
- Students have an increased ability to understand and use mathematics language.

Target 2

In the National Assessment Program in literacy:

- 70% or more Year 3 students achieve at least Band 4 and 85% or more achieve at least Band 3; and
- 65% or more Year 5 students achieve at least Band 6 and 95% or more achieve at least Band 5.

As with numeracy, the Year 3 and Year 5 targets are significantly above the longer term average for these groups.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- The school will review and where desirable, restructure the teaching and learning of text types in all years. We will continue to develop and collate for reference, common assessment tasks with reference to the A-E assessment and reporting scale.
• Teachers will use assessment data to identify and track students who are underperforming, who have higher support needs or who require extension in any English strand. Such students will be referred through the learning support team for more intensive assistance, and their continuing performance will be monitored.

• The school will establish spelling benchmarks for each year level and provide intensive support for students who are struggling to achieve the benchmarks.

Our success will be measured by:

• Improved student achievement in literacy.
• Observation of classroom practice and analysis of teaching and learning programs provide evidence that text types are taught in an explicit and systematic manner.
• Analysis of student work samples and teacher assessment records indicates that all teachers are proficient in their knowledge and application of the A-E assessment scale.
• The learning support team works effectively in its role of facilitating support for students with additional needs.
• An increased proportion of students meet the school’s spelling benchmarks.

Target 3

The library and information centre is the leader of innovation in learning and teaching practice through information communication technologies (ICT).

Our teachers are confident users of technology and enthusiastically integrate information communication technologies (ICT) in teaching and learning. Equally, students in all years are confident and engaged users of ICT. This plan provides for the creation of a formal structure for the teaching and learning of information skills in an ICT-rich environment.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

• Develop and introduce a model for teaching the information skills process in all years and train teachers in the process.
• Collaboratively plan with teachers for the implementation of information skills in the classroom and in the library.
• Develop a library web page that showcases the library program and improves access to resources.

• Develop an innovative library program which incorporates applications such as bookraps, webquests, blogs, webpages and pathfinders.
• Change the name from “Library” to “Library and Information Centre” to more accurately represent its purpose.

Our success will be measured by:

• Increased student engagement and improved student outcomes across the curriculum.
• The teacher/librarian and classroom teachers work together to maximise the range of resources available to students.
• Students demonstrate an enhanced ability to critically evaluate information from a variety of sources.
• The Library and Information Centre will be the first “port of call” for information.

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: